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**Skills4Sports**

**Increasing the Employability of NEETs by tackling the skills gap for  
the Sports Sector**

### **A.3.2.1**

## **Situation Analysis & Report**

WP3 – Research Tools & Development



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The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.



# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1. Skills4Sports framework	8
<b>2. Methodology</b>	<b>9</b>
1. Keywords & Abbreviations	9
<b>3. Portrait of the Region</b>	<b>11</b>
1. National Key Facts and Overall Data	11
1. Historical Perspective	11
2. Political System	12
3. Geographical system	12
4. Economic system, Data & Indicators	14
1. Inflation	16
2. COVID-19 economic effects	17
5. Population factors in Lebanon	18
1. NEETs population in Lebanon	21
• Characteristics of the labour market	22
2. Industry, Services & Agriculture	24
3. Female and Male Percentage in Agriculture, Industry & Services.	24
<b>4. Sports Sector</b>	<b>25</b>
1. Historical & Legal Background	25
2. Political & Economic system	27
3. Sports & Sectarianism in Lebanon	29
4. University & School Sports	34
1. Football	35
2. Women Football	37
3. Grassroots Initiatives	37
4. BasketBall	39
5. Women Basketball	40
6. Grassroots Initiatives	41
7. Olympics	41
8. 2021 Tokyo Olympics	43
9. Rugby & Ice Hockey	44
10. Rugby	44
11. Ice Hockey	45

12.	Swimming	46
13.	Martial Arts	46
<b>5.</b>	<b><i>Education in Lebanon</i></b>	<b>47</b>
1.	Sports In Education	48
<b>6.</b>	<b><i>Main Challenges</i></b>	<b>49</b>
1.	What We Can Build on	50
<b>7.</b>	<b><i>Interviews</i></b>	<b>52</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b><i>Bibliography</i></b>	<b>53</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b><i>References</i></b>	<b>54</b>



# *LEBANON*

## SITUATION ANALYSIS REPORT

### Skills4Sports

*Beirut*  
*2021*



This document is being prepared by the consultant Dr. Mayssam Daaboul.



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## 1. Introduction

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“Skills4Sports” is an international network aiming to increase the employability of “*not in employment, education or training*” NEETs by tackling the skills gap in the sports sector. The project covers Greece, Malta, Italy, Spain, Palestine, Lebanon by finding the right skills for the sports sector rising needs. This analysis will focus on Lebanon and is key to exploring and understanding the different economic, cultural, geographic, political and business dimensions affecting the current situation. The aim is to identify the required skills and further develop them to efficiently rebuild the sports sector in Lebanon. Skills4Sports promotes social inclusion and the fight against poverty, increasing exponentially due to the various economic, political, and health challenges the country is facing.

This report will offer a detailed, clear and accurate description of the situation by describing the opportunities, resources, challenges and barriers regarding the sports skills development and the sports sector in Lebanon. Skills4Sports offers a stable overarching solution through the situation analysis, which will identify the different macro and micro dimensions that play crucial roles in increasing the employability of NEETS and youth in Lebanon. The sports sector has the advantage of targeting young people through its divergence, attractiveness, and essential role in personal and social well-being. Building a multilateral cross-border cooperation setting allows Skills4Sports to close the skill gap in the sports sector by training NEET and the youth. This training and education range from technology, digital software, new academic and business curricula that allows them to increase their knowledge, build their assets and have a healthier and more productive future for themselves and society. The “Strategic Alliance for Skills4Sports” offers individual, social and economic solutions by creating opportunities for the most critical demographic section in our country, the youth.

### 1. Skills4Sports framework

In the Mediterranean region, youth unemployment is twice as high as adult unemployment. In the Southern Mediterranean, young people are three times more likely to be out of a job than adults (International Labour Organisation, 2017). On the other hand, we see a rise in the sports sector in Lebanon through several initiatives yet what we notice is the lack of specialized skills, knowledge, digital infrastructure and, most importantly, human resources, collaboration and proper governmental support. This creates an imbalance between the sports sector rising need and the skills gap, as mentioned earlier. Skills4Sports aims to rectify this situation; starting with an overarching situation analysis that details the *what? where? why? And how?* That allows them to properly assess the problem and tackle it with the best measures, opening the door to youth employment and reducing poverty by significantly affecting the lives and future of many youngsters.



The European Association of Sports Employers and the UNI Europa Sports (European trade union federation) observe skills shortages and mismatches and gender inequalities in this sector. Furthermore, the Union for the Mediterranean has identified digital skills as a key for employability in the region, especially for NEETS and youth. Despite the very tough situation Lebanon is going through, identifying the sports sector as a growing market and providing skilled, capable and technical human resources among the youth rectifies the imbalance/gap mentioned earlier. This critical approach benefits the sports sector and creates more opportunities for NEETS and youth by offering them a unique set of skills and knowledge to empower them and build a better future for themselves and their society.

As mentioned earlier, the rise of the sports sector in a struggling country offers a unique opportunity. According to the Skills4Sports Greece situation analysis report: *“The sports industries of the Mediterranean region are showing a significant rise in employment. The highest Annual Average Growth Rates, between 2012 and 2017, were observed in Greece (+19%) and Malta (+12%), accounting for 0.8% of total E.U. employment, with 4 in 10 workers being aged 15-29”.*

The identical challenges and characteristics of the NEETS of the Mediterranean, as well as the frequent mobility of athletes and sports professionals, call for a cross-border approach to reduce the skills gap, offering new career opportunities.

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## 2. Methodology

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The project’s scope is an exploration of the local and regional analysis of the sports sector. We will use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Data collection will be at the centre of our framework, mentioned as “main tasks”.

Work will involve data mining, conducting interviews and writing the situation analysis.

- Data mining
- Interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project
- Literature Review
- PESTLE Analysis report/ SWOT Analysis report-*Linked in Google Docs.*

The main results, references, and essential information from our data mining are portrayed at the end of the report. Also, references are linked in the text for more accessible and more straightforward navigation.

### 1. Keywords & Abbreviations

Exploring the sports sector in Lebanon will entail first an overall understanding of the country and then the different sports elements. This section will portray the keywords and abbreviations that we need before moving forward.

## NEETs

NEET is an acronym for *‘not in employment, education or training’*, used to refer to the situation of many young persons aged between 15 and 29. The NEET concept aims to broaden the understanding of young people’s vulnerable status and better monitor their problematic access to the labour market (Eurofound).

## Lebanese Sectorialism

*‘Lebanese Sectorialism, the Lebanese political and religious/sectoral culture, system, status-quo’* all address the single and most fundamental issue that affects Lebanese sports; the political and sectoral cultural divisions in Lebanon and their profound negative effect.

## Key Stakeholders & Federations

An individual, group, or organization that might affect, be affected by, or perceive itself as affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project (PMBOK Guide, 2017). Stakeholders include governmental agencies, federations and ministries: The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOY), the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), The Lebanese football association (LFA), the Lebanese Basketball Federation (FLB), The Lebanese Rugby League Federation (LRLF), The Lebanese Ice Hockey Federation (LIHF), The Lebanese Olympic Committee (LOC).

## Skills development

The process of identifying the skill gaps and developing and honing these skills. It is essential because skills determine the ability to execute any plans with success.

## Sports sector

The sports sector is where people, activities, businesses, and organizations are involved in producing, facilitating, promoting, or organizing any activity, experience, or business enterprise focused on sports.

### 3. Portrait of the Region

Lebanon is a country in Western Asia. Lebanon's location at the crossroads of the Mediterranean Basin and the Arabian hinterland has contributed to its rich history and shaped a cultural identity of religious diversity. It covers an area of just 10,452 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of some 6.8 million, and is one of the smallest countries in Asia (Figure 1). It lies on the western coast of the middle east and is located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. A location that makes Lebanon an integral hub for trading, logistics and culture for the long duration of its existence.

The capital of Lebanon, Beirut, is the biggest city in the country followed by Tripoli in the North. Beirut's population increased from 1,990,000 in 2010 to 2,434,609 people, with an average annual change of 0.42%; while Tripoli's population is around 230,000 people (World population Review, 2021).

#### Lebanon

##### Country Map



Figure 1 Map of Lebanon (2021, Country watch).

#### 1. National Key Facts and Overall Data

##### 1. Historical Perspective

Lebanon is the historic home of the Phoenicians. The coastal plain of Lebanon is the historic home of a string of coastal trading cities of Semitic culture, which the Greeks termed Phoenicia, whose maritime culture flourished there for more than 1,000 years. Ancient ruins in Byblos, Berytus (Beirut), Sidon, Sarepta (Sarafand), and Tyre show a civilized nation with urban centres and sophisticated arts.

Phoenicia was a cosmopolitan centre for many nations and cultures. Phoenician art, customs, and religion are widely discussed in literature and history. This ancient land went through several challenges over the years—historically known as traders, travellers, and the vast diaspora worldwide. Lebanon is a multi-sectoral country that historically embedded several cultures.

## 2. *Political System*

Lebanon's recent political history has been nothing short of turbulent. In 1943, Lebanon achieved its independence from the French mandate, and after few years of stability, the civil unrest spanned from 1975 till 1990. This last period left the nation in disarray. A new constitution was established, the Taif Agreement in 1990, stopping the military violence and reinforcing the original 1943 National Pact stating that the president should be a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament a Shia Muslim. The Taif Agreement introduced amendments giving some presidential powers to the Council of Ministers, expanded the National Assembly from 99 to 108 seats, and divided those seats equally between Christians and Muslims. It is impossible to understand Lebanese politics outside this sectoral and religious status quo that embodies a culture. This status quo will repeat itself through our analysis since it directly affects politics, economics, business, and other Lebanese functions. The sports sector, as we will see later in the report, is not excluded.

The Taif agreement also applied a new free-market economy and a robust laissez-faire approach, relying very much on the private sector and debt. This period also carried turbulent political situations with many of Lebanon's neighbours. Currently, and in addition to the Covid pandemic and after the 4<sup>th</sup> of August explosion Lebanon is sadly going through one of its most profound political crises as a state. The previously described political system, after the civil unrest, has leftover 80 Bil. USD in debt (Lebanon country review, 2020).

## 3. *Geographical system*

Lebanon stretches along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and its length is almost three times its width. From north to south, the width of its terrain becomes narrower. Lebanon's mountainous terrain and the economic and religious movements that either originated in the region or crossed through left an imprint upon Lebanese society, giving form to the country's history. Its coastline is about 225 km (150 miles) in length and is, on average, 45 km (30 miles) and hosts the five famous cities of Beirut, Byblos, Sidon, Tripoli, and Tyre. Its geography illuminates Lebanon's beauty, its narrow coastal plane and two parallel north/south mountains (the mountains of Lebanon and anti-Lebanon). The fertile Bekaa valley, with its Litani and Orontes Rivers, separates these mountains and nourishes the terrain increasing the agricultural land to 63.3% ([Consulate General of Lebanon, Los Angeles](#)).

Lebanon is bordered by Syria (North and East), the Mediterranean (West) and Palestine (South). The Beqaa Valley is part of the Great Rift system, stretching from

southern Turkey to Mozambique in Africa. Like any mountainous country, Lebanon's physical geography is complex; landforms, climate, soils, and vegetation differ markedly within short distances.

Lebanon enjoys a moderate and Mediterranean climate and 300 days per year of sunshine. The winter is mild on the coast and snowy in the mountains, while the summer is hot on the beach and mild on the mountains. As famously known, it is possible during the spring months to ski in the mountains and swim on the coast on the same day. Lebanon classifies into 9 central governorates and 12 major cities (Table 1). As mentioned earlier, the most significant cities are all on the coast: Beirut, Byblos, Sidon, Tripoli, and Tyre (Figure 2).

Governorate	Capital City
Akkar	Halba
Baalbek-Hermel	Baalbek
Beirut	Beirut
Beqaa	Zahle
Keserwan-Jbeil	Jounieh, Jbeil
Mount Lebanon	Baabda
Nabatieh	Nabatieh
North	Tripoli, Zagharta
South	Sidon, Tyre

Table 1: Lebanon's Governorates



Figure 2: Lebanon's Governorates & Cities.

#### 4. *Economic system, Data & Indicators*

Lebanon has a free-market economy and a strong laissez-faire commercial tradition. The government does not restrict foreign investment; however, the investment climate suffers from red tape, corruption, arbitrary licensing decisions, complex customs procedures, high taxes, tariffs, and fees, archaic legislation, the 4<sup>th</sup> of August explosion and inadequate intellectual property rights protection. The Lebanese economy is service-oriented; main growth sectors include banking and tourism. We previously mentioned the sectoral/religious status quo that is at the heart of the Lebanese culture. This issue also extends to the economy.

Lebanon today is facing one of the worse political and economic crises in its history as a nation. The previously mentioned investment climate after 1990 severely damaged the state's functioning leaving us today with very high debt; [Inflation](#) reached triple-digit while the [exchange rate keeps losing value](#); poverty is rising sharply. To concisely and adequately summarize: Lebanon's economic state is abysmal. The United Nations has released several reports and taken action regarding the effects of this crisis on the Lebanese society as a whole, especially the young and NEETs.

Table 2 describes the main characteristics of Lebanon in terms of economy, CPI, labor, trade, wages & salaries, trade, government, demographics and sectors. The imbalance between the sectors is evident. The service sector holds 86%, while manufacturing and agriculture have 2.7% and 2.5%. Recent drastic events have increased the depth of the problem, as evident today.

[According to the Ministry Of Finance, Lebanon](#), the government Budget decreased to -16.50% GDP in 2020 from -10.50% GDP in 2019.

<b>Economy</b>			
	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Units</b>
<a href="#">GDP</a>	2020	33.383	Bil. USD
<a href="#">GDP Growth</a>	2020	-20.3	%
<a href="#">GDP per capita</a>	2020	4.891	USD
<b>Price</b>			
<a href="#">Consumer Price Index (CPI)</a>	2020	240.369	Index 2010=100
<b>Labor</b>			
<a href="#">Unemployment Total</a>	2020	6.61	% of total labor force
<a href="#">Unemployment Females</a>	2019	9.77	% of Female labour force
<a href="#">Unemployment Males</a>	2019	4.84	% of Male labour force
<a href="#">Labor Force</a>	2020	2,317,840	#
<a href="#">Labor Force-Female</a>		24	% of total labor force
<b>Wage &amp; Salaries</b>			
<a href="#">Wage &amp; Salaries workers</a>	2019	62.53	% of total employment
<a href="#">Wage &amp; Salaries Females</a>	2019	84.99	% of female employment
<a href="#">Wage &amp; Salaries Males</a>	2019	55.61	% of male employment
<b>Trade</b>			
<a href="#">Imports of Goods&amp; Services-Total</a>	2020	14.967	Bil. USD
<a href="#">Exports of Goods&amp; Services-Total</a>	2020	8.977	Bil. USD
<a href="#">Imports of Goods&amp; Services</a>	2020	44.833	% of GDP
<a href="#">Exports of goods &amp; services</a>	2020	26.891	% of GDP

Government			
<a href="#">Outsourcing Public Dept</a>	2021	130,784	Bil. LBP
<a href="#">Outsourcing Public Dept-Foreign</a>	2021	36,681	Mil. USD
<a href="#">Outsourcing Public Dept-Domestic</a>	2021	75,487	Bil. LBP
Demographics			
<a href="#">Population</a>	2020	6,825,442	#
<a href="#">Birth Rate</a>	2019	17.377	per 1,000 people
<a href="#">Death Rate</a>	2019	4.457	per 1,000 people
Sectors			
<a href="#">Service Sector</a>	2020	86.361	% of GDP
<a href="#">Manufacturing</a>	2020	2.699	% of GDP
<a href="#">Agriculture, forestry, and fishing</a>	2020	2.504	% of GDP

Table 2: Indicators. WorldBank, Moody's Analytics. Note: hyperlinks included for every indicator

## 1. Inflation

According to the [Central Administration of Statistics, Republic of Lebanon](#): "Lebanon's consumer price inflation rate fell to 119.8% year-on-year in May 2021, the lowest since last July, from 121.7% in the previous month, as food inflation slowed to a 12-month low of 226.1% in May from 228.6% in April. Also, prices increased softer for clothing and footwear (302.8% vs 337%), furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance (446.4 % vs 501.4 %), restaurant and hotels (293.9 % vs 400.6 %), and miscellaneous goods and services (219.1 % vs 299.9 %). Meanwhile, prices rose more for housing (34.7% vs 32.4%), transportation (255.8 % vs 239.5 %), and recreation, amusement, and culture (166.2% vs 165.0%). On a monthly basis, consumer prices advanced 6.1% in May, easing from a 7.8% gain in April". [Lebanon Inflation Rate | 2008-2021 Data | 2022-2023 Forecast | Calendar | Historical \(tradingeconomics.com\)](#).

Inflation consumer prices increased from 3% in 2019 to 84.864% in 2020 (annual %), which will not stabilize soon due to the several critical challenges the country is going through. These numbers show the severity of the situation yet opening the door for more investors carrying



foreign currencies. Due to inflation, international investors and agencies like Skills4Sports can positively impact during these challenging times.

## 2. COVID-19 economic effects

According to the WHO, Lebanon recorded [550942 cases](#) and [7885 deaths](#), with almost [530000 recovered](#) (tradingeconomics, 2021). The Lebanese economy wasn't in its best shape before the COVID-19 pandemic, the country is going through severe political and economic changes, and the pandemic only aided to increase the suffering. Lebanon relies primarily on personal remittances received from abroad that decreased from [7.41 Bil. USD to 6.298 Bil. USD from 2018 to 2020](#), a number that undoubtedly further decreased due to the banking crisis.

Although tourism increased in [2019](#) to 8,717 Bil USD, it did decrease naturally due to the banking, inflation, political and ultimately COVID pandemic. [Lebanon visitors arrivals](#) decreased from 4,756,735 in 2018 to 4,460,771 in 2019. [Lebanon's visitor arrivals growth](#) also decreased from 37.8 in 2017 to -6.22 in 2019. [Lebanon's tourism revenue growth](#) decreased from 9.6 in 2017 to 0.2 in 2019. [Employment to population ratio, 15+](#) fell from 44.63% in 2019 to 42.32% in 2020. [Female employment increased \(15+\) steadily from 2015 to 2019](#) to reach 20.85%, only to fall due to the recent, previously described crisis. All these numbers have further decreased since 2019 due to the different challenges the country is going through. The pandemic effect on poverty was very high, lowering the remittance inflows from over [20% of GDP pre-2010 to around 13% in the years since 2017](#). Foreign direct investment declined from over [11% of GDP pre-2010 to less than 5% since 2017](#).

	2018	2019	2020 e	2021 f
<b>Real GDP growth, at constant market prices</b>	-1.9	-6.7	-20.3	-9.5
Private Consumption	-1.3	-5.7	-10.7	-7.2
Government Consumption	6.7	-6.2	-55.4	-8.5
Gross Fixed Capital Investment	-0.2	-16.9	-59.3	-57.3
Exports, Goods and Services	-4.7	-1.2	-53.5	3.7
Imports, Goods and Services	1.2	-9.2	-46.6	-8.0
<b>Real GDP growth, at constant factor prices</b>	-1.7	-5.3	-16.0	-9.8
Agriculture	-4.0	6.0	29.7	-9.5
Industry	-4.2	-17.4	-15.8	-9.4
Services	-1.1	-4.0	-19.0	-9.9
<b>Inflation (Consumer Price Index)</b>	6.1	2.9	84.3	80.0
<b>Current Account Balance (% of GDP)</b>	-24.3	-21.2	-11.0	-6.7
<b>Net Foreign Direct Investment (% of GDP)</b>	3.7	3.4	9.3	4.9
<b>Fiscal Balance (% of GDP)</b>	-11.0	-10.5	-4.9	-2.8
<b>Debt (% of GDP)</b>	154.9	171.0	186.7	180.7
<b>Primary Balance (% of GDP)</b>	-1.2	-0.5	-2.7	-1.1

Source: World Bank, Poverty & Equity and Macroeconomics, Trade & Investment Global Practices.  
Notes: e = estimate, f = forecast.

Table 3: Macro poverty outlook indicators (WorldBank,2021)

We previously portrayed the political and economic crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic further increased the problem by affecting tourism, remittance from Lebanon in diaspora, travel restrictions, country lockdown and strongly affecting local business and payment of salaries.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet raised the alarm on Lebanon's socio-economic crisis on 10 July 2020. Her statement cited Lebanese and U.N. figures that estimated 75% of Lebanon's population need aid. The national currency, as mentioned earlier, had lost more than 80% of its value. In addition, Lebanon hosts millions of refugees and migrant workers. Ultimately, the pandemic's effect on NEETs and the youth was severe on the social, psychological, economic and education levels.

## 5. Population factors in Lebanon

Lebanese population is increasing steadily since 1990, [rising from 2,802 032 in 1990 to 6,825,442 in 2020](#); A good and positive trend on many levels. This indicator would typically boost economic productivity, production and other economic indicators. The [fertility rate](#) in Lebanon follows a steady trend from 2010 to 2019, increasing from 1.966 births per woman to 2.075 in 2019. On the other hand, the [birth rate](#) increased from 16.28 (per 1000 people) to 17.74 in 2016, only to drop in 2019 to 17.37.

Population-Lebanon			
<a href="#">Population Female</a>	2019	49.688	% of total population
<a href="#">Population Male</a>	2019	50.312	% of total population
<a href="#">Population Female</a>	2020	3,389,696	#
<a href="#">Population Male</a>	2020	3,435,746	#
<a href="#">Population ages 0-14</a>	2019	25.572	% of total population
<a href="#">Population ages 15-64</a>	2019	67.382	% of total population

Table 4: Population statistics. *Note: hyperlinks are included for every indicator.*

Table 4 shows an almost equal distribution of females and males, while figure 3 below shows how population growth (annual %) increased from 2.86 in 2010 to 6.56 in 2013, only to decline to -0.05 in 2019. This decline is another dangerous indicator resulting from the previous challenges Lebanon is going through. The steep decline in the below figure raises alarms on several levels.

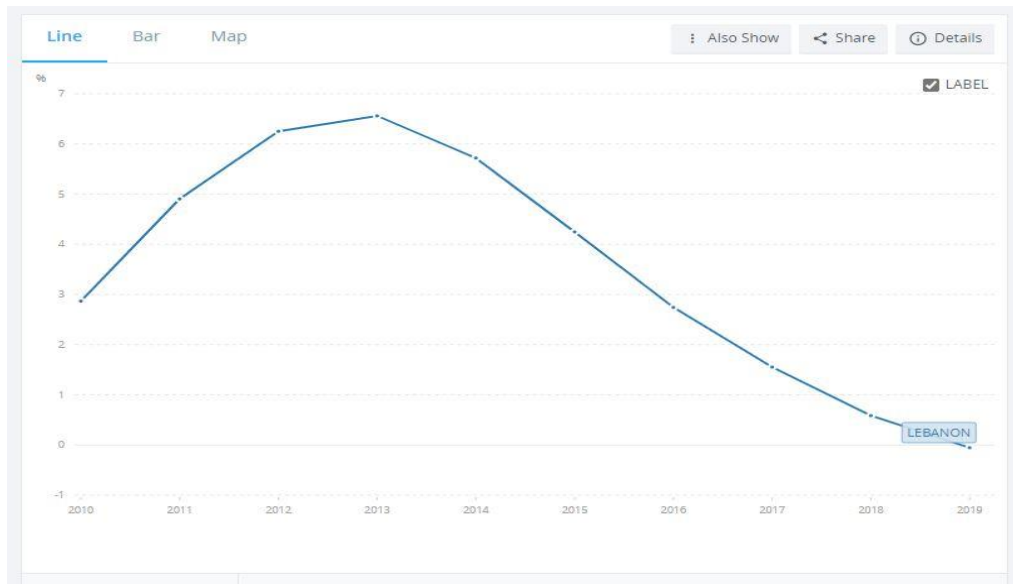


Figure 3: Population Growth (annual %)-Lebanon. [WorldBank](#)

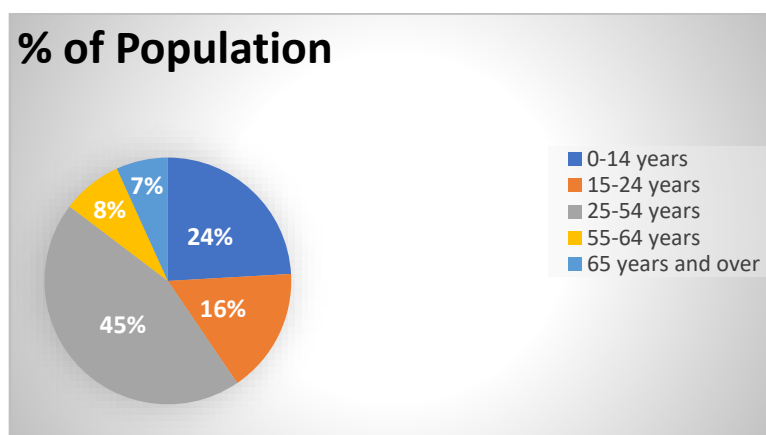


Figure 4: Percentage of different age population groups in Lebanon (*Moody's Analytics 2017*)

Figures 4,5 & 6 portrays the different age groups, sex and their percentage in Lebanon. We see that the NEET make up 16 % of the population while 25-54 years make up the majority of 45%. We also note an almost equal distribution of males and females in the different age groups. Although population growth is recently declining, Lebanon has seen a rise in its population and some other strong indicators that can be used to build on for the future.

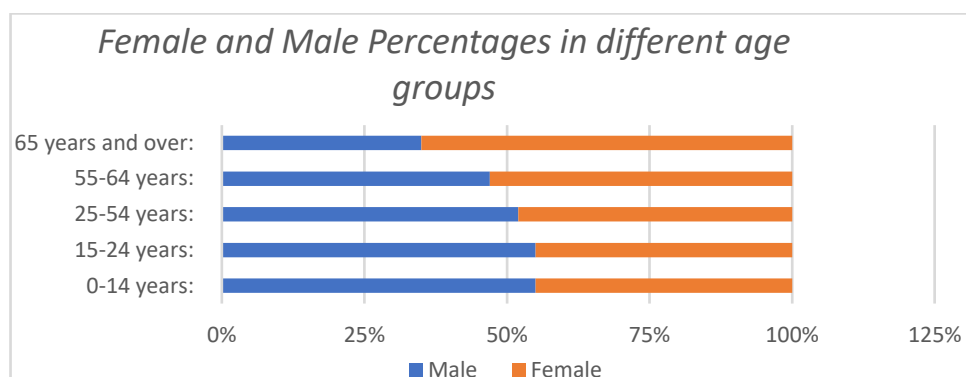


Figure 5:Female and Male Percentages in different age groups. *WorldBank, Moody's Analytics.*

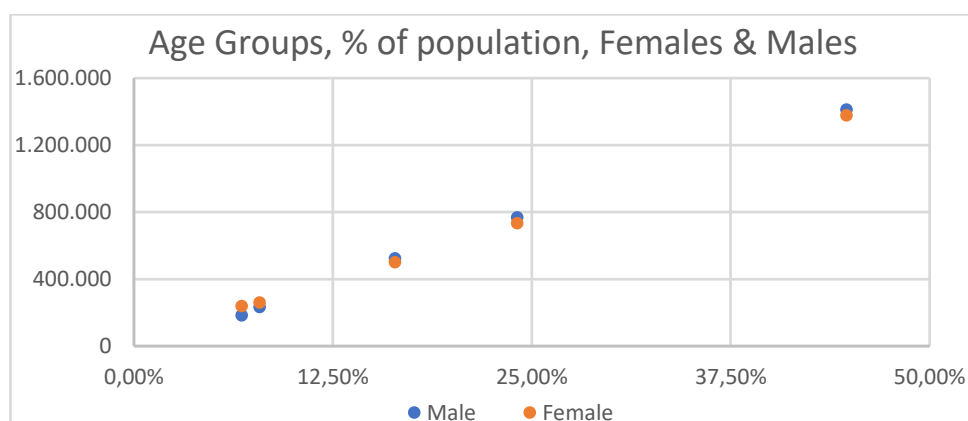


Figure 6:Age Groups, % of population, Females & Males (*Moody's Analytics 2017*)

As mentioned earlier, female and male distribution in Lebanon is almost equal. On the other hand, the [female to male labour force](#) participation rate dropped from 32.34% in 2010 to 31.58% in 2015. The percentage then rose to 32.03% in 2019. Female's highest participation is in the service sector, with 77.5% of the total female labour force working in services.

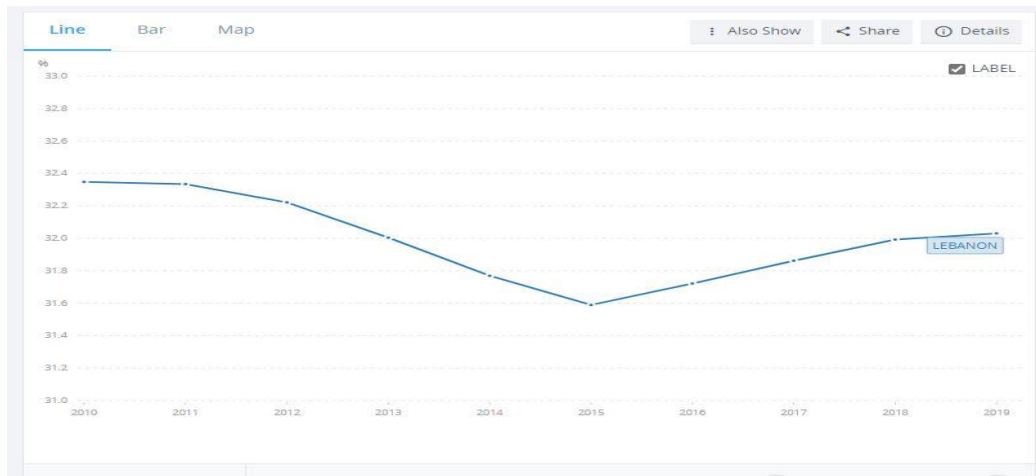


Figure 7: Ratio of female to male labour force participation rate (%). *WorldBank*.

### 1. *NEETs population in Lebanon*

The “not in employment, education or training” NEET population in Lebanon is as follows:

-Age 15-24 (women): 499,582 (48%)

-Age 15-24 (men): 523,380 (52%)

-[Age 18-23 \(total\)](#): 707, 34- Change: -1.91%

NEET employment in Lebanon is increasing since 2011 from less than 230,000 to almost 300,00 in less than ten years. [Males employment](#) in this age group increased to 215,204 in 2019, while [female employment](#) peaked at 86,247 in 2016 and steadily decreased to 82,597 in 2019.

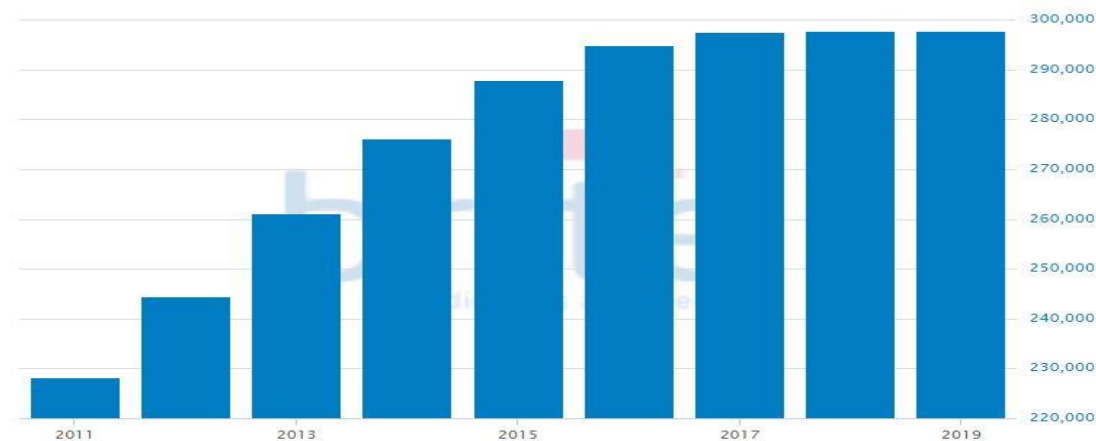


Figure 8: Employment 15-24 years old.

[The unemployment rate for people between 15-24 years](#) old in Lebanon decreased from 17.66% in 2011 to 17.10% in 2019. We also see similar trends for [unemployed males](#) in this age group,

dropping from 16,06% in 2011 to 15.49% in 2019. [The female's unemployment rate](#) decrease from 21.23% in 2013 to 21.02% in 2019. Yet, our reality today is different. These numbers explain the situation until 2019. Due to the previously mentioned challenges and the 4<sup>th</sup> of August explosion, the United Nations is increasingly calling for actions against child abuse in Lebanon and is constantly warning about the nation's crisis effect on the young. The disaster profoundly affects the children and NEETs, and the urgency of taking action, similar to Skill4Sports, is at its highest.

- **Characteristics of the labour market**

The previously detailed economic, political and pandemic effects are profoundly illustrated in this section. We will cover the sharp increase in the unemployment rate, the loss of jobs, and employment in all sectors. We will also cover the percentage of females and males in the several main sectors: industry & manufacturing, agriculture and services.

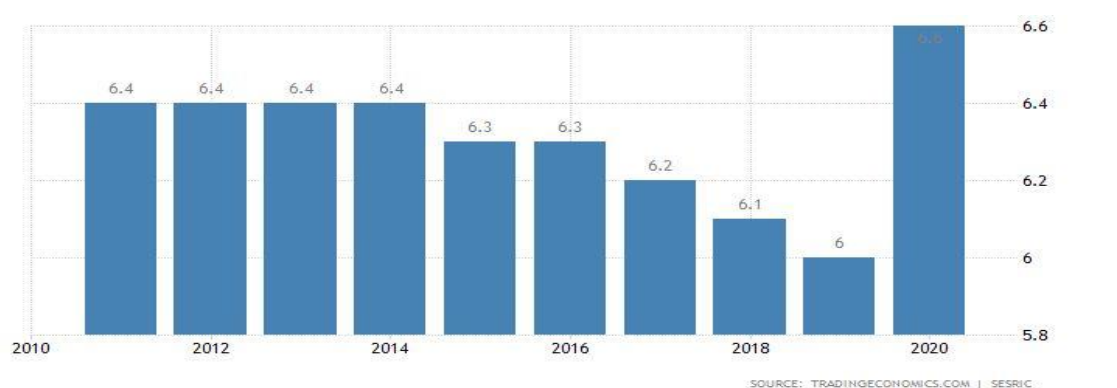


Figure 9: Unemployment rate. [Lebanon Unemployment Rate | 1991-2020 Data | 2021-2023 Forecast | Historical | Chart \(tradingeconomics.com\)](#)

Figure 9 shows the steep rise of unemployment to 6,6 % in 2020. It was previously decreasing from 2014 to 2019. The lack of governmental or private efforts to steer the country in these challenging times shows no positive change. The need for interventions like Skills4Sports is essential to cover some of the gaps. Studying the sports sector and identifying the needs in the skills gap plays a vital role in attempting to correct this.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Labor Force</b>	2,221,024	2,296,526	2,348,425	2,387,681	2,432,712	2,317,840
<b>Unemployed (%)</b>	6.31%	6.26%	6.18%	6.10%	6.04%	6.61%
<b>Unemployed</b>	140,146	143,762	145,132	145,648	146,935	153,209

Table 5: Labor Force and Unemployment %.

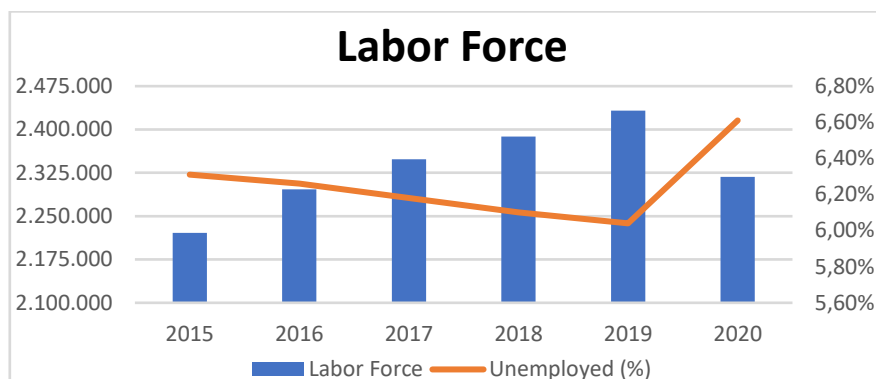


Figure 10: Labor Force and Unemployment %.

Table 5 and figure 10 portray the unemployment rate in contrast to the total labour force in Lebanon. It clearly illustrates the decline in the labor force and rise in unemployment, and corrective measures should be taken to reverse this.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total Population</b>	6,532,681	6,714,281	6,819,373	6,859,408	6,855,709	6,825,442
<b>Employment (%)</b>	43.84%	43.92%	44.01%	44.22%	44.63%	42.32%
<b>Employment</b>	2,863,274	2,948,912	3,001,206	3,033,230	3,059,702	2,888,527

Table 6: Total population and employment %.

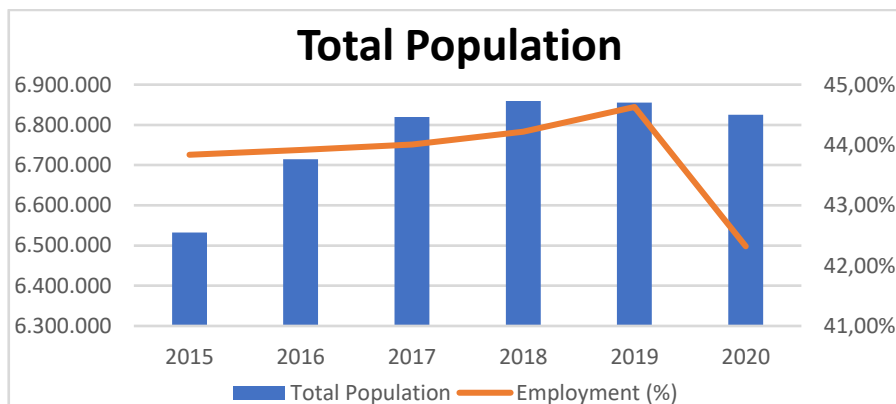


Figure 11: Total population and employment %.

Table 6 and figure 11 illustrate the decline in employment % in contrast to the total population. We saw here another steep drop from almost 44.5% in 2019 to 42% in 2020. Sadly, this trend is continuing, and we expect a further decrease in a short time.

## 2. Industry, Services & Agriculture

The service sector has been by far the most predominant since 1992, taking more than 86% of total GDP. Naturally, employment in both females and males is highest in the services sector. Services sectors include F&B, banking, tourism and others. The industry and agriculture sectors are very poor with 2.699% and 2.504% respectively. [Industrial permits](#) fell from 144 in Aug 2019 to 32 in Jun 2020, while [total new establishment](#) fell from 1,053 in April 2013 to 442 in Dec 2014.

Employment	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<a href="#">Technicians &amp; associate professionals</a>	212,953	218,234	221,066	224,525	227,212
<a href="#">Clerical support workers</a>	166,052	170,501	172,433	177,033	179,298
<a href="#">Service &amp; sales workers</a>	265,771	272,222	277,471	282,249	283,365
<a href="#">Craft and related trade workers</a>	381,182	396,483	404,994	413,986	422,489
<a href="#">Plant &amp; machine operators, and assemblers</a>	186,663	193,700	197,579	202,742	204,783
<a href="#">Elementary occupations &amp; skilled agricultural, forestry &amp; fishery workers</a>	357,841	373,355	381,572	392,292	402,699
<a href="#">Professionals</a>	234,512	241,043	249,874	251,608	256,931

Table 7: Employment in different sectors. *Brite by BLOMINVESTBANK*

## 3. Female and Male Percentage in Agriculture, Industry & Services.

In the middle east and Arab world, Lebanon shows a very positive and robust indicator of women's participation in the Labour force. The highest is in the services sector with 75% of total female



employment. We also see the lagging of agriculture and industry compared to the services sectors portrayed earlier in our study.

Sectors		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
<b>Agriculture</b>		12.81%	12.45%	12.08%	11.69%	11.32%	% of Total Employment
	Male	13.03%	12.67%	12.35%	12.05%	11.88%	% of Male Employment
	Female	12.09%	11.71%	11.19%	10.50%	9.49%	% of Female Employment
<b>Industry</b>		25.33%	25.06%	24.70%	24.24%	23.59%	% of Total Employment
	Male	28.80%	28.51%	28.12%	27.62%	26.87%	% of Male Employment
	Female	13.83%	13.67%	13.48%	13.24%	12.93%	% of Female Employment
<b>Services</b>		61.87%	62.50%	63.22%	64.07%	65.10%	% of Total Employment
	Male	58.18%	58.82%	59.53%	60.33%	61.25%	% of Male Employment
	Female	74.08%	74.63%	75.33%	76.26%	77.59%	% of Female Employment

Table 8: Female and Male distribution in Agriculture, Industry & Services.

## 4. Sports Sector

### 1. Historical & Legal Background

Looking back at the literature and history of sports in Lebanon takes us into the deep political and sectoral conflicts that start at the legal and governmental levels. Political tensions affect schools and universities regulations, federations legislative and operational activities, organizing events and competitions, hindering clubs and federations, and giving access to a more extensive political base and audience by controlling sports from legal to funding, ownership, governance, and other aspects.

The negative effect of the political and sectoral structure on Lebanese sports is extensively studied by Blanc (2004), Boukhater (2004), Reiche (2011), Nassifa & Amarab (2015), Nseir (2012), Nassif (2014), Maugendry (2018), Mouawad (2018), Rahal, Campillo & Genty (2018) and others.

These studies aim to detail and portray the scale of dominance that politics has over sports. In our analysis, we will describe the essential and needed material that pertains to our needs. It is essential to note that the political and religious system is a key element to understanding the different and various difficulties that challenge the Lebanese sports sector.

From 1991-1999, the government and the MOY took very few official measures towards the sports sector in Lebanon. The ministry advisor Mr Joseph Sacre submitted a report in the late 1990s, which was never applied. All investments in sports were made independently, separately and with no coordination. We summarise the main governmental decisions taken since 1990:

- 1993- The higher education sector granted universities the first permits to begin establishing physical education and sport programmes.
- 1997-According to decree 10227, physical education and sports was registered as an official school subject in the Lebanese school curriculum.
- 2000-The first drafted law aiming at defining national sport organization was submitted under decree 247. The General Directorate of Youth and Sports is transformed into the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS).
- 2000-A Sport and Scouting unit was created inside the Ministry of Education to develop school sports.
- 2000-The monitoring of the National Olympic Committee (NOC), National Federations, and Sports Associations have subsequently become the privilege of the newly established ministry, whose budget was voted upon and whose actions were supervised by the Youth and Sports Committee the Lebanese parliament.
- 2001-The decree 6997 was ratified by the Lebanese government, which defines the rules of every sports institution, whether the NOC, Sports Federations & Sports Associations, including the relation of these structures with the Ministry of Youth & Sports.
- 2004-The Youth and Sports Committee in the parliament voted law 629 that elaborated the regulations governing the internal functioning of the MYS.
- 2005- The French Embassy and the MYS signed a collaboration program, and two French sports experts, Henri-Pierre Gazzeri and Jean-François Isnard were nominated in 2005 to study the possibility of creating a coaching diploma (inspired by the French coaching diploma) in Lebanon.
- 2007- The decree 213 came to replace the decree 6997 signed in 2001. The main difference between the two is about university sport.
- 2010-A historical event- The President of the Youth and Sports Parliamentary Committee, Deputy Simon Abi Ramia, demanded every sport association and federation to submit a financial report for 2010.
- 2010- The MYS and the Youth and Sports Parliamentary Committee, Deputy, attempted to reduce the political interference by studying a law that would 'force' the Minister to decide about the spending for only 20% of the budget. The other 80% would automatically be

allocated to the Lebanese sports movement (Lebanese Olympic Committee, sports federations and associations) based on performance and number of participants and would therefore be protected from any political interference.

According to Hassan Chararah, advisor to MYS and interviewed for this analysis, this would prevent political parties from influencing the Minister's decision to support sports federations and associations connected with his/her political party and religious community. The outcome of the law project is yet to be seen.

- April 2011- Antoine Chartier, President of the Lebanese Olympic Committee, requested the 32 federations recognized by the LOC to submit a financial report for the year 2010. Like Deputy Simon Abi Ramia, they did not receive anything due to political backup.
- 2016- Decree 3196 and 4481 pertain to organization and staffing of the MYS and structuring youth and scouting services.

We clearly see a lack of governmental and legal attempts to empower the sports sector in Lebanon; even when some individuals attempt otherwise, and there have been many, they are blocked by the political and sectoral status-quo.

## 2. *Political & Economic system*

The budget for the Ministry of Youth and Sports is only \$2-3 million in Lebanon, according to the 2010 President of the Youth and Sports Parliamentary Committee, Deputy Simon Abi Ramia. A deficient number and many questions are raised as to how and to whom they are distributed. The ministry of youth and sports has officially released reports on their spending, 2017 (in references) and [2018](#).

Data in Lebanon is very lacking, especially in the sports sector. We found the primary data from international highly accredited organizations like WorldBank, Moody's Analytics, etc. These platforms focused on economic and social data without referring to the sports sector. The focus is on the service sector and the leading industries: Tourism, Banking and others. The sports sector in Lebanon is tiny, with most investments being from the private sector with no coordination or government support whatsoever. As previously mentioned, political and sectoral lobbies either initiate the funding for their own purposes or jump in as soon as they see an opportunity.

The need arises for a comprehensive study to see the size of the sports sector in Lebanon. Its size is relevant to the country's GDP, the number of employments by age, sex, region and education levels and several other indicators.

Sports in Lebanon is managed and controlled by the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#). Figure 13 portrays the ministry's organigram.

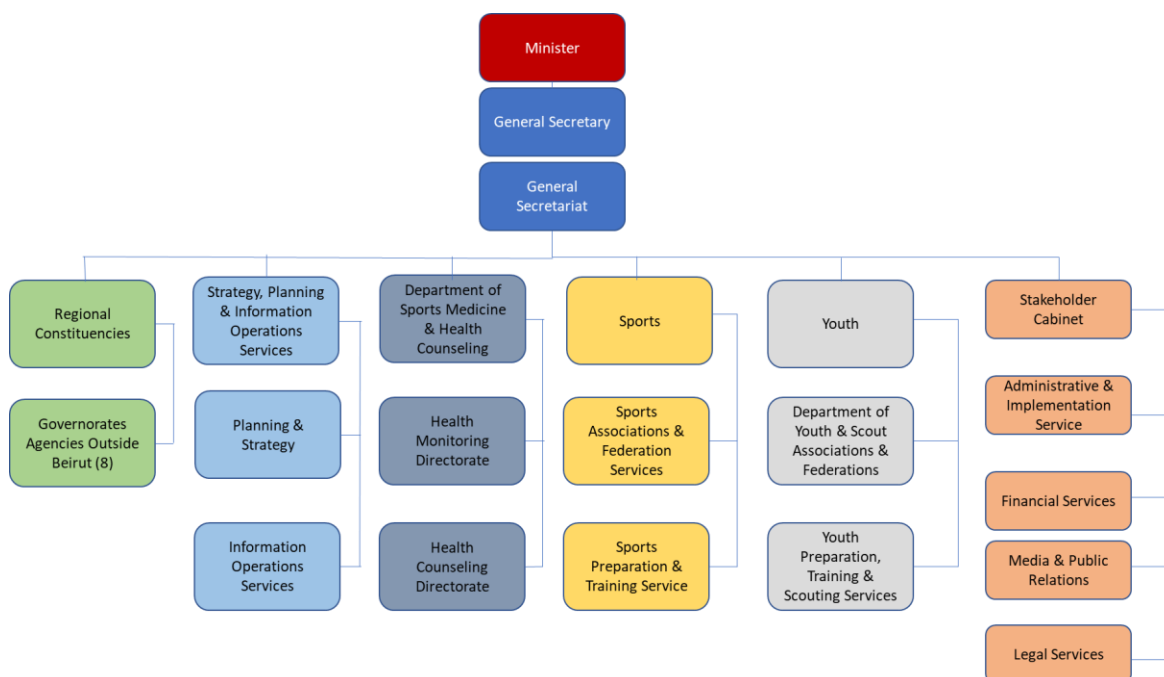


Figure 12: Ministry of Youth & Sports-Lebanon

Funding in Lebanese Lira (L.L)		Sports Federation s	Clubs	Individual	Municipalities	Department of Youth & Scout Associations & Federations
Number of accepted/Total submitted	Application application	33	121/159	13	45/51	26
Funding-2017		2,170,000,000	25,500,000,000	87,500,000	4,000,000,000	693,000,000
Number of accepted/Total submitted	Application application	36	146/152	19	40/57	29/30
Funding-2018		1,940,000,000	2,298,000,000	104,000,000	3,485,000,000	668,000,000

Table 9: Funding 2017-2018. Ministry of Youth & Sports.

[www.minijes.gov.lb/AnnualReport/AnnualReport2017](http://www.minijes.gov.lb/AnnualReport/AnnualReport2017)

There are 34 total sports federations in Lebanon detailed in table 10. Also, we can find the list of all sports organizations and associations on the [MOY website](#). The most recent is the Lebanese Ice Hockey Federation establish in Canada in 2019; an exciting and aspiring case that offers windows of solutions.

Lebanese National Sports Federations				
Rugby	Taekwondo	Table Tennis	Swimming	Rowing
Ice Hockey	Wushu	Kick-Boxing	Weight Lifting	Fencing
Volleyball	Canoë Kayak	Squash	Boxing	Chess
Badminton	Muay-Thai	Gymnastics	Wrestling	Athletics
Sailing	Dancesport	Shooting	Tennis	Paralympics
Cycling	Karate	Football	Skiing	Basketball
Archery	Handball	Water Skiing	Equestrian	

Table 10: Lebanese National Sports Federations

### 3. Sports & Sectarianism in Lebanon

*The principal goal of governmental sport policy in Lebanon is to contribute to the representation of a community in the leading positions of the Lebanese sport structure. This concern for political balance is the predominant factor of the country's sport policy and prevails over concerns of national identity or reconciliation, let alone the country's achievements in sports.*-Nassif(2014)

Sports & sectarianism have a severe and complicated effect on the sports industry in Lebanon. Litterature and studies on the relationship between both is front and centre for researchers aiming to improve the sports sector in Lebanon. Through research, interviews, and observation, it is evident that the embedded relation of politics and sectarianism in Lebanese sports is the most fundamental point to tackle.

In this section, we will detail the several dimensions of this relationship. Starting with leagues and clubs to the method, these leagues and clubs take their decisions, choose and elect advisory boards and run their everyday operations. One profound notion is that federations and clubs in Lebanon can't work on an institutional level. In other words, processes and governance never follow proper institution guidelines but rather are politically influenced. We will highlight this point,

later, during our analysis of Basketball in Lebanon. In 2003, only four federations combined Muslims and Christians among 32 federations (12%). Similarly, in 2008 and 2009, this number increased to 21%, a total of seven clubs, which is still a tiny figure. 80% of these federations are managed by Presidents and general secretaries from the same community. In 2012, a study was done to determine the religious majority among 34 federations. Results show that 16 (47%) have a ratio exceeding 80/20% in favour of one of the communities, while 24 (70%) have a ratio exceeding 70/30% in favour of one community. Only one federation had a 50/50 ratio. The same goes for football and tennis. Among 133 associations, in football, 85% are composed of Muslim members, while among the 22 tennis associations, in 2010, 71% were Christians (Nseir, 2012; Nassifa & Amarab, 2015). To give a strong statement explaining this relationship. Nassifa& Amarab (2015) describes the decision to elect the Lebanese Olympic Committee: *“In January 2013, it was announced in the media that the election for the Lebanese Olympic Committee will be taking into account the confessional belonging of each member. The lobbying of the political parties created a situation where the President of the Committee had to be Christian, the General Secretary Muslim Sunni and the treasurer Muslim Shi’a”*.

In his article entitled *“War Minus the Shooting? The politics of sport in Lebanon as a unique case in comparative politics”*, Danyel Reiche gives a solid portrait of the sports sector in Lebanon amidst the complicated sectoral and religious system. In Lebanon, clubs and leagues affiliations follow the political and religious system and can only lead to failure. Football and Basketball teams feed the different sects, while the national football and basketball teams serve for brief moments of unity, as we will portray later on. With political tensions fueling the sports industry, political and religious clashes during league games is sadly a usual sight. Sports & Secteriasnism is not new. The most famous examples are in Scotland and Northern Ireland, yet in Lebanon, we are talking about 18 different religious sects that clearly complicates the matter. Understanding the deep relation between religion and society in Lebanon is key to capturing the truth and knowing how to move forward. Below we will portray two tables, one for football teams and the other for basketball teams and their religious and political affiliations, according to the study done by Danyel Reiche. Both tables below powerfully illustrate the complicated and negative relationship between politics, religion and sports. It is evident that every club is affiliated politically and religiously. These affiliations run to the very core of the government and institutions. This issue affects governance, operations, choice of advisory board and Presidents/General managers, funding, media affiliations, sponsors and ultimately the young and the fans.

Club name	Sectarian affiliation	Political affiliation
Al-Ahli Sidon (Saida)	Sunni Muslim	Ahmad Hariri/Future Movement (March 14)
Al-Ahed (Beirut)	Shia Muslim	Hezbollah (March 8)
Al-Ansar (Beirut)	Sunni Muslim	Saad Hariri/Future Movement (March 14)
Al Islah Bourg Shemaly (Sour)	Shia Muslim	Amal Movement by Nabih Berri (March 8)
Hikmeh (Beirut)	Maronite Christian	Lebanese Forces (March 14)
Al-Mabarra (Beirut)	Shia Muslim	March 8
Shabab Al Ghazieh (Ghazieh)	Shia Muslim	Amal Movement by Nabih Berri (March 8)
Nejmeh SC (Beirut)	Transformation process from Shia to Sunni Muslim	Saad Hariri/Future Movement (March 14)
Racing Beirut (Beirut)	Orthodox Christian	Saad Hariri/Future Movement (March 14)
Safa Sporting Club (Beirut)	Druze	Walid Jumblat/Progressive Socialist Party (Former March 14 ally, sided with March 8 as of January 2011)
Shabab Al Sahel (Beirut)	Shia Muslim	March 8
Tadamon Sour (Tyre)	Shia Muslim	March 8

Source: Compiled by the author from interviews and press articles.

Table 11: Football Teams, Lebanese Premier League Clubs, 2009-2010. (Reiche, 2011)

Club name	Sectarian affiliation	Political affiliation
Anibal Zahle (Zahle)	Maronite Christian	Aoun/Free Patriotic Movement (March 8)
Antranik SC (Antelias)	Armenian	Ram Gavar (March 14)
Blue Stars	Maronite Christian	Aoun/Free Patriotic Movement (March 8)
Champville SC	Maronite Christian	Aoun/Free Patriotic Movement (March 8)
(Deek El Mehdi)		
Hikmeh (Beirut)	Maronite Christian	Lebanese Forces (March 14)
Hoops club	Shia Muslim	March 8
Kahraba Zouk	Maronite Christian	Lebanese Forces (March 14)
(Zouk, Keserwan)		
Al Mouttahed Tripoli	Sunni Muslim	Safadi Foundation (March 14)
Tripoli)		
Sporting Al Riyadi (Beirut)	Sunni Muslim	Saad Hariri/Future Movement (March 14)
Tebnin SC (Tebnine/Sour)	Shia Muslim	Amal (March 8)

Source: Compiled by the author from interviews and press articles.

Table 12: Basketball Teams, Division A, 2009-2010. (Reiche, 2011)

The same article also draws a framework that links sports and sectarianism in Lebanon. Lebanese sports clubs suffer from low ticketing returns; they eventually heavily rely on sponsors and media outlets. Typically, these sponsors and media outlets are also politically and religiously driven, turning the clubs even more dependant. This vicious cycle inevitably affects schools, fan base and all other social aspects. There is no governmental follow-up, severe lack of university and schools programs, lack of funding in several sectors. Understanding this framework allows us to better analyse the status quo and help clubs self-sustain to reduce the influence from sponsors.



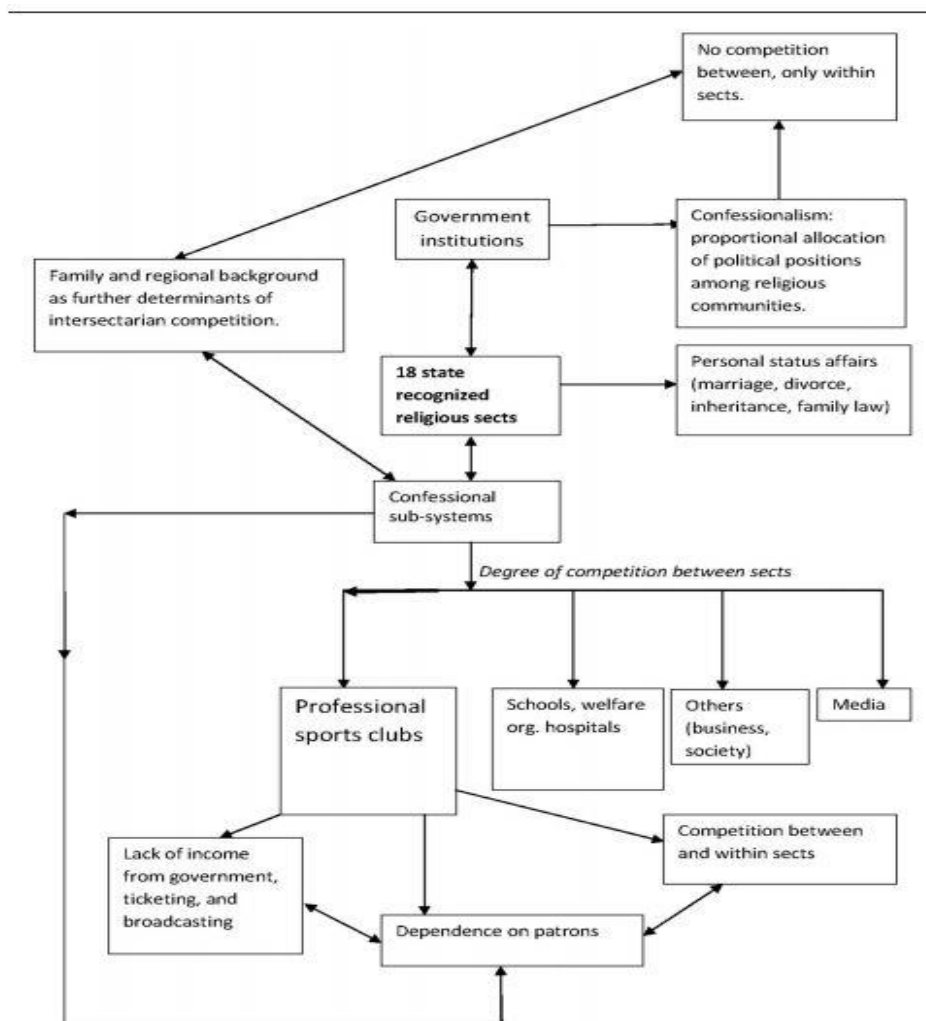


Figure 13: Secteriansim & Sports in Lebanon. (Reiche, 2011)

Another study was done to explore the impact of religions and politics on Basketball in Lebanon. Rahal, Campillo & Genty (2018) did a survey involving 95 people in different fields and specializations in the sports sector. STAP "sciences et techniques des activités physiques et sportives" or Physical and Sports Scientific & Technical Activities.

The article shows how most participants: players, students and professionals, males and females, agree that religion and politics have damaging effects on the sports sector in Lebanon. According to the survey, more than 75% agree that religion negatively impacts, while 90% believe that politics negatively affects Basketball in Lebanon.



Statut	N	%	Homme	Femme	Impact religieux		Impact politique	
					Positif	Négatif	Positif	Négatif
<b>Joueurs Professionnels</b>	70	73.7%	60	10	11	59	1	69
<b>Professeurs de STAPS</b>	10	10.6%	6	4	2	8	3	7
<b>Etudiants en STAPS</b>	15	15.7%	10	5	9	6	5	10
<b>Total</b>	95	100%	76	19	22(23.3%)	73(76.7%)	9(10%)	86(90%)

Table 13: Religious & Political Impact on Lebanese Basketball. *Rahal, Campillo & Genty (2018)*

Sports and sectarianism in Lebanon are very alarming and complicated phenomena. Rahal, Campillo & Genty (2018) perfectly envelop the cycle in Figure 14. Religious divisions directly affect control of sports leagues and clubs, which in turn directly affects many supporters, ticketing, participants, professional athletes and coaches; media coverage and eventually negatively affect youth sports.

Most investments in sports are politically and sectorally driven. Politicians and their media channels primarily invest in sports clubs to increase their popularity or push a particular political agenda. Naturally, these attempts never last long, cannot add value to the sports industry and end up causing more harm. Political tensions are usually the first to appear in sports, mainly football and Basketball, as the new most famous sports in the country.

Several other studies were done on the complex relationship of politics and religions with Lebanese sports. *Ethnography of the Lebanese Football Clubs*, (Maugendre, 2018); *Sport, policy and politics in Lebanon*, (Nassif & Amara, 2015); *Lebanese Football: Imagining a Defiant and United Lebanon*, (Mouawad, 2018); *Corruption in Sports: The Case of Lebanon* (Nassif, 2014) and others exploring and highlighting the negative relationship of sports and sectionalism.

To give a firm summary, Nassif (2014) provides a solid statement to explain the situation: “Today, sport policy is subject to a structure mechanism and a financing system defined and implemented by the government. Therefore, if a country has a public sector tainted with corruption, it is very likely to affect the whole government apparatus, including the sport sector.”

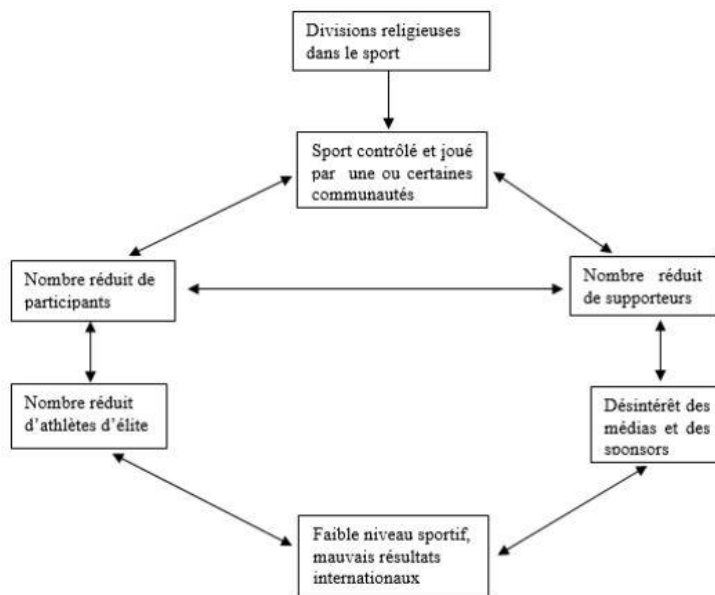


Figure 14: Effect of Religious Divisions on Lebanese Sports. *Rahal, Campillo & Genty (2018)*

The need comes for a third party, non-political, to invest in the sports industry in Lebanon to develop youth, empowering sports as a unique and distinctive function and, most importantly, fend off all political affiliations and attempts to politicize it. An issue proved very hard by history and especially since the 1990s.

#### 4. University & School Sports

University and school sports in Lebanon are one of the biggest victims of this sectoral system. Nassifa & Amarab (2015) describe the historical context: “The decree 213 placed the Lebanese Federation of University Sport (LFUS) under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The President of the LFUS, Nasri Lahoud, opposed the decision on the basis that Article 14046, signed in 1946, stipulated that the LFUS was an independent federation recognized by the Lebanese government. According to George Nader, former basketball player, sports teams’ director in Notre Dame University and General Secretary of the LFUS, the Ministry of Education wanted to set the foundations of a new federation for university sports and thus to dismantle the LFUS. Furthermore, in Nader’s terms, the Ministry of Education wanted to manipulate university sport without proposing any budget, and hence the decision was definitely based on political motives. It should be mentioned that the LFUS President is the sibling of the President of the Republic, Emile Lahoud (who was still the President in 2007, when the decree 213 was signed), the political rival of the Future party, which controls the Ministry of Education. Thus, the dispute over university sport constituted one of the arenas of conflict between, on the one hand, the Future party, founded by former Prime Minister

*Rafik El-Hariri, who was assassinated on 14 February 2005, and President Emile Lahoud*". This explanation perfectly summarises the deteriorating effect of politics in sports, leaving us unable to agree on the legal infrastructure. The damage continues to affect school sports. The decree 213, mentioned above, was signed in 2007 and replaced the decree 6997 signed in 2001.

- Decree 247-2000: Unlike university sports, school sports are under the Sports and Scouting Unit (SSU) of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education
- Decree 213- 2007: The MYS and the Youth and Sports Committee in the Parliament hoped to change this by 'annexing' school sports to the MYS.
- Decree 147/3/2011-2011: Aimed at 'transforming' the SSU of the Ministry of Education into a 'future' Lebanese Federation of School Sports, which is formed and financed by the school sports associations. Schools must form sports associations and pay annual enrolment fees to participate. Money will be used to organize inter-school league competitions.

The issue stayed at a gridlock, and Adnan Hammoud, director of the SSU, states that school sports and its federation should always be under the ministry of education according to section 4 of Article 629 of the MYS. Hammoud's point of view: *the MYS is controlled by the Amal party, while the Ministry of Education belongs to the Future party, and both parties are rivals*. The political rivalry continued, and it exploded during the Pan Arab School Games in Beirut, July 2010. The MYS stated that it had to be in control of the competition. Adnan Hammoud answers and declares that: *"certain people want to put their hands on the Lebanese Federation of School Sports because they know that it will become the largest in Lebanon in terms of the number of affiliated sports associations, and they can, thus, stuff their pockets with the great amounts of money that will flow from the participation fees in the federation (emphasis added)"*. (Nassifa & Aramab, 2015).

The state of schools and university sports in Lebanon is in decay with weak governmental, legislative, and profound political and sectoral conflicts. Unable to do progress legislatively puts strong hurdles to building sustainable youth strategies in the different sports in Lebanon; starting with the ministries to federations, clubs and the public.

## 1. Football

Football is the most famous sport in Lebanon; it exceeds all sports attendance, participation and broadcasting (Maugendre, 2018). Football in Lebanon receives the most funding. According to (Reiche, 2011), Lebanon gets 98% of its budget from private sponsors, a behaviour very different from other nations; a pattern that makes clubs and the federations further dependant on the political system.

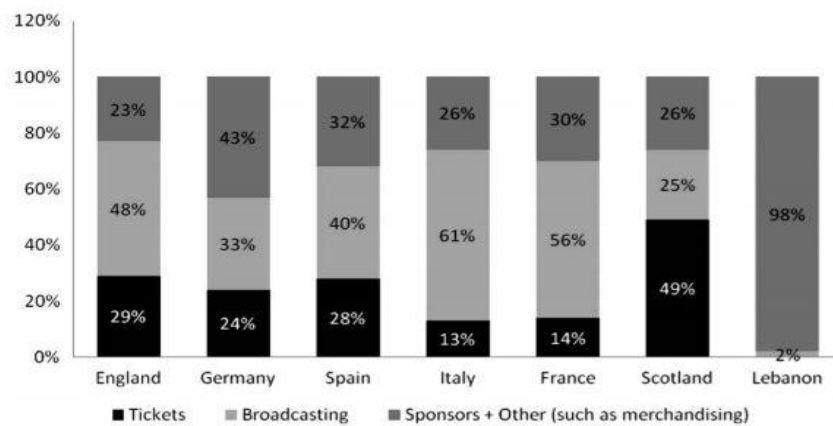


Figure 15: An international comparison of football club revenues (season 2007–08).

The [Lebanese football association](#) has three leagues: Premier League, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> divisions; The premier league comprises 12 clubs, the 2<sup>nd</sup> division also 12 clubs and the 3<sup>rd</sup> division 28 teams.

Funding, as mentioned before, is totally dependant on the patrons. After the 2006 war, football stadiums saw violent clashes between supporters of the clubs (which are also religiously and politically affiliated, as detailed earlier). These clashes ended with supporters not being allowed to attend games in stadiums from 2006-February 2010. Even after that, the pick-up was very slow. Only four teams receive more than a thousand spectators per game: Salam Zgharta, Al Nejme, Al Ansar and Al Ahed. Also, Al Nejme is the only club to receive more than ten thousand spectators at each home game (Maugendre, 2018). This total lack of revenues from supporters, merchandising, and other aspects make the clubs totally dependant on the political sponsor, worsening the situation.

One aspect discussed earlier was media groups. Yet, here again, we go back to the political affiliations since politics is naturally into media. Several third parties attempted to invest only to face several challenges. Al Jazeera sports once paid \$800 000 for broadcasting rights (Reiche, 2011) only to meet low attendance and lack of excitement in the stadiums. Coca-Cola also attempted to invest only to end up financing three different clubs of three different religious affiliations. Examples show the complicated relationship between sectarianism and sports in Lebanon and how hard it is for multinational companies to invest in sports. Given that the political affiliations run from top to bottom, we can only imagine how the whole system keeps this viral status-quo.

Lebanese law does not consider football as a profession, a case that further reduces the likelihood of its success. Since it is not a profession, a young player would not aim and work on his talent for a future job. In that case, this will lead to much lower participation and interest and extend to investors, broadcasters and supporters. The average wage in the LPA was 500-2500 USD per month, which is much lower today due to the recent economic and inflation challenges,

discussed earlier. Another weak dimension is infrastructure; there are only nine stadiums for 12 clubs. A situation made harder when visiting fans were not allowed to attend from 2011-2017. Since more than one team had the same stadium, the term home fans is now defined on a religious and political dimension.

## 2. Women Football

The Lebanese Women's Football League has one league with 11 teams and 22 other teams participating in the league for at least one season. Although women's football is less politically and religiously oriented, there is a large discrepancy in funding, wages, broadcast and overall interest in woman's football vs men's football. According to Reiche (2011), it is far cheaper to run the woman's football team that *"the sponsors only have to add a small percentage to their financial support for the men's team."* Even then, some owners still think it's too much, and some clubs shut down their women's team to shift all resources to the men's team; an example is Ansar before the 2009-2010 season.

Out of eight women teams in the 1st division, only two clubs granted a salary of a few hundred dollars per month for the best Lebanese players and a few foreigners. The rest of the clubs only offer foreign players a job or the amount of their residential rent. The women's championship league only last for four months compared to the whole year in the men's league, and games are attended by an average of 100-300 fans per game despite the rising popularity. (Maugendre, 2018).

## 3. Grassroots Initiatives

The Lebanese Football Association started a strong initiative for the Grassroots development program in football with the Asian Football Association (AFC) [Grassroots - Home | Facebook](#). Lebanon was awarded the [AFC Grassroots Charter Bronze Membership in 2019](#); marking a new and immense step towards developing better training opportunities for the youth. This program was the first of its kind to help build a stronger football foundation for the youth in Lebanon [Lebanese Football Association - Home | Facebook](#).

Several interviews were conducted to further understand the impact of this collaboration. Since 2019, the LFA launched the program with great success. The program succeeded in incorporating football clubs around the country, all academies must be part of a club for better and more efficient organisation and management; in addition to providing financial support, maintaining and equipping facilities. Mr Bassem Mohamad-Technical Director @LFA, Mr Rabih Hamdan-Grassroots Manager @ LFA and Mr Hachem Haidar-Former LFA President were all invaluable to explain this initiative and the football and sports sector in Lebanon. The LFA receives still less support from the MOY, which increased the responsibility of the LFA to carry the burden. Mr Hachem Haidar, LFA President, stated in our interview that the MOY normally offers 25 Mil LBP

as funding for clubs; rendered to no value due to the recent economic crisis and inflation. Figure 16 portrays the main pillars that the LFA-AFC collaboration focuses on



Figure 16: LFA Grassroots Program Pillars

On the other hand, and due to the weak sports infrastructure, this program has faced several challenges along the way, and this is one of the main aspects that capture our attention for our analysis.

- *COVID*: The pandemic had major implications of stopping the flow of the program. Children and the youth are unable to continue their regular sporting activities which greatly affected the programs
- *Low number of Facilities & Stadiums*: Facilities are poorly equipped with lots of work in maintenance and upgrade.
- *Financial*: Financial challenges are clearly an obstacle and especially with the current crisis. Lack of funds to purchase the basic necessities: Sports equipment, electricity, fuel and all other utilities.
- *Poor Technology Infrastructure*: According to our interviews, up to 50% of Lebanese clubs lack basic digital and technological infrastructure: Computers, emails... which greatly affects the work process in our day and age
- *Poor Human Resources*: Human resources are needed in several areas, organizing sports events, technical managers and directors, administration, upgrading technological systems and operations and others.

- *Criteria:* According to the AFC, clubs must attain a minimum level of criteria to gain a higher ranking. Several clubs lack several conditions like Goalkeeper coaches, experienced administrative staff and others.

#### 4. *BasketBall*

Lebanon is one of the top teams in the FIBA Asia area after coming runners up on three occasions during the 2001, 2005 and 2007 FIBA Asia Championship and hosting it in 2017. The Lebanese national team also participated twice in the FIBA World Championship in 2002 and 2006 and finally has 5 gold medals and 4 silver medals in the West Asian Basketball Championship (WABA), ranking 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Basketball in Lebanon saw its rise from 1994-2004. Media mogul Antoine el Choueiry invested in the club La Sagesse and drove it to success. During his reign, La Sagesse made history in Lebanon by winning several local, Arab and Asian competitions from 1993-2006. 15 local league and cup wins, 2 times Arab club championship, 3 times FIBA Asian Champions cup and 3 times WABA Champions cup. This push allowed Rafic Hariri, previous Prime Minister, to invest in the rival club Al-Riyadi Beirut. Although both clubs were politically and religiously motivated, we see positives achievements. La Sagesse successes fostered competition, and Al Riyadi also invested heavily in Basketball, amassing several titles: 34 local wins, 2-time FIBA Asian Champions cup, 5-time Arab club championship and 4 times WABA Champions cup. Lebanon ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in total medals (12) in the FIBA Asian Champions cup. Al Homenetnem also won the Arab Club Basketball Championship once in 2017, and Champville won the WABA champion's cup once in 2013.

This success greatly affected Basketball as a whole, and media investments and sponsors increased exponentially. The fan base also grew, making tickets and merchandising a viable source of income for Lebanese Basketball teams. Mr Choueiry also invested in Arab and Asian fronts. Our interview with Mr Hassan Sharara shows us how Mr Choueiry drove Basketball in Lebanon to market saturation; Mr Choueiry now aimed to do a regional super-league with Syria and Jordan. Although Jordan did accept, the Syrian sports minister and, during a live interview with Mr Sharara and Mr Choueiry on TV, announced that the Syrian government is unwilling to invest in this new sports league. Again, politics comes in to hinder the growth of one of Lebanon's best attempts to empower sports in Lebanon. Despite that, Basketball remains a successful sport in Lebanon with 15000 licenses. Basketball, like all sports, is also subjected to the political and sectoral culture. Funding and sponsors are primarily politically driven, as was the case also of Mr Choueiry. Up to 80% of players are of the same religious groups of their clubs; it is rare to see otherwise. Despite that, Basketball saw a growth in many areas detailed in Table 14.

Year	1992	1997	2004	2010	2016
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<b>Licenses total (#)</b>	200	2000	9000	15000	14000
<b>License price to Copyright Lebanese Basketball (USD)</b>	N/A	200,000	250,000	300,000	350,000
<b>In- court Price Average of Advertising pannels (USD)</b>	N/A	5,000	10,000	12,000	15,000

Table 14: Evolution of total licenses, broadcasting copyright and Advertising Pannels. *Rahal, Campillo & Genty (2018)*

This rise did eventually stop; one essential element was the factor that Mr Choueiry himself faced: the inability to “institutionalize” sports in Lebanon. This is a powerful and recurrent theme in all literature and interviews done for this analysis. To adequately explain this point, we will use the example of Mr Choueiry and his club, La Sagesse.

After heavily investing in Basketball from 1994-2004, Mr Choueiry realized that it desperately needed to separate from politics and sectarianism to provide sustainability and longevity to Basketball institutions in Lebanon. His vision was that Basketball clubs had to be run as independent sports organizations that are self-funded and outside the political scope- “institutionalize”. This sadly seemed impossible; the success in Basketball was not going to be bypassed by political lobbies; instead, they saw it as the perfect opportunity to further reinforce their power to maximize their political and financial gains. The result was deeply politized Basketball matches, and similarly to football, games were covered with political and religious chants, insults and clashes that ultimately deteriorated Basketball. Rahal, Campillo & Genty (2018) show that 83% of their survey respondents agree that politics and religion are the key reason for the decline of Basketball from the 1994-2006 era.

One incident that portrays this decline is when FIBA sanctioned the Lebanese Basketball Federation and all Lebanese teams and the national team from international tournaments for 4 years beginning in 2013. In their address, FIBA addressed the political and religious culture as the reason. This was a massive setback for a sport that was gaining a lot of ground and potential.

## 5. Women Basketball

Lebanese women basketball has seen several successes despite the low support on many dimensions in Lebanon. Although it is increasing in popularity, it still lacks the minimum variables needed. Lebanon has played in 3 Asian Championships, taking 5<sup>th</sup> place in the 2011 FIBA Asia



Championship for women. Lebanon won their first Pan-Arab Games basketball competition in 2004, Algeria; and their 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2011 in Qatar. Similarly, the Lebanese women have big success on the club level, amassing 8 total championships and 2 bronze in the Arab Women's Club Basketball Championship. Since 2014, Lebanese women have dominated this championship-winning 5 out of the last 6 tournaments. 2 Al Riyadi, 2 Homenetmen and 1 Beirut Club.

Despite all the difficulties this sport is going through. Political and religious affiliations, low infrastructure, finance, lack of human resources and others. Lebanese women show, another time, how to excel in sports and keep a strong will and dedication despite dire situations.

## 6. *Grassroots Initiatives*

Basketball grassroots initiatives in Lebanon are dominant. Clubs and athletes both invest in youth academies across the country; professional basketball players Ralph and Rodrigue Akel started [“The Brainers Academy”](#), Nadim Soueid started [Nadim Soueid Academy \(NSA\)](#) and has now transitioned to building a basketball team that competes in the lower leagues. The most prominent is Fadi Al-Khatib's [Champs Sports & Fitness Club](#). [Fadi Al-Khatib](#) being arguably the most famous Lebanese Basketball player. These initiatives increase exposure and give the NEETs and youth direct access to strong and valuable training and knowledge.

The Lebanese Basketball Federation is also working on several grassroots programs with the Asian Basketball Federation (FIBA) to empower the youth, improve training facilities, coaching and staff training and certificates, overall basketball programs, training referees and others according to Mr Tony Dib Member of Lebanese Basketball Federation, Basketball Coach and ex-Professional Basketball Player and the person responsible of the collaboration program between the LBA and FIBA.

The economic crisis did hinder the basketball grassroots program in addition to the COVID pandemic. Also, the federation lacks financial and technical support and many clubs in remote areas lack facilities, funding and overall structured support. The need focuses also on building a strong collaboration network between the different initiatives across the country.

## 7. *Olympics*

The Lebanese Olympic Committee was founded in Lebanon as an independent organizing sports entity by national decree number 1350, dated 28/12/1946. The IOC officially recognized the NOC of Lebanon on 22/11/1947. The aim of the Lebanese Olympic committee is portrayed on their webpage: [About Us – Lebanese Olympic Committee \(lebolymp.org\)](#).

Lebanon participated in its first Olympic games in 1948 and sent athletes to all but one summer Olympic game. Lebanon also participated in most winter Olympic games and missed 1994 and 1998. 2010 marked the first youth Olympic games participation. Lebanon has a total of 2 silver

and two bronze medals in 1952, 1972 and 1980. Three in wrestling and one in weightlifting. Lebanon has better records in the Pan Arab Games, organizing it in 1957, 1997, amassing 78 gold, 119 silver, 123 Bronze, and 320 medals. Lebanon was supposed to host the Pan-Arab games in 2015, but the competition is on hold since 2011 for political conflicts in the region.

Lebanon's participation in the Olympics is considered weak. The leading cause is the lack of governmental, legal and cultural support described earlier. Reiche (2016) studies why developing countries struggle in the Olympics. In addition to the political agenda in sports in Lebanon, the study found other external reasons that affect third-world countries abilities to grow in the Olympics. Reiche summarises it in the following statement: *“developed countries increase government involvement in the elite sport sector, greater expenditures on competition in international sport, and the adoption of similar (best practice) elite sport policies, developing countries such as Lebanon lack such a strategic approach.”* The weak governmental support, lack of funding, and professionalism forced the NOC to depend on external help, such as athlete scholarships from the IOC, to field teams to the Olympic Games. Another strategy is to identify strong talents from the diaspora and ask for a specific personal budget to boost skills. Such a strategy was used several times and did lead to success in the Pan Arab Games. In general, the interests of developing countries in the Olympic Games are, at the political level, global recognition and, at the sporting level, the preparation for regional Games where sporting success is more likely than at the international level. Athletes mostly rely on self-funding and their own will and passion to compete for their home country; an element that continues to be the main driving factor in Lebanese sports.

Summer Olympic Games		Winter Olympic Games	
Year	Participants	Year	Participants
1948	8	1948	2
1952	9	1952	1
1960	19	1956	3
1964	5	1960	2
1968	11	1964	4
1972	19	1968	3
1976	3	1972	1
1980	15	1976	1
1984	22	1980	3
1988	21	1984	4
1992	12	1988	4
1996	1	1992	4
2000	6	2002	2
2004	5	2006	3
2008	6	2010	3
2012	10	2014	2
Total	172	Total	40

Table 15: History of Lebanese Participation in Summer & Winter Olympic Games.  
Reiche (2016)

Understanding the Olympics in Lebanon requires us to go into the details of some of the few success stories. Olympians in Lebanon never rely on the full support of a governmental sports program, as mentioned earlier in the article by Reiche (2016). Instead, when an individual, is

identified with high potential (we should note that the identification method is nothing close to systematic), there is a sort of pooling of resources to aid that individual to succeed. Most of the work has to come from the will and dedication of the athlete her/himself.

When identified, the athlete, in some cases, can gather resources from the ministry, LOC, family, local sports clubs and others. The pooling efforts are done mainly out of dedication, emotional support and a deep conviction to succeed; all essential but without a proper framework, insufficient. In fact, most resources come from the athlete and the family.

## 8. 2021 Tokyo Olympics

Currently and in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, Lebanon is represented with 6 athletes, 3 less than the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil.

Sports	Name	Information & Quotes
<b>Judo</b>	Nassif Elias	<i>"Lebanon offered to pay me to enter eight competitions per year, whereas the Brazilian national team would pay for three or four at most".</i> Nassif also represented Lebanon in the 2016 Summer Olympics.
<b>Sprinter</b>	Noureddine Hadid	Noureddine set the 200 meters national record of 20.84 seconds after competing in the 2019 World Championships in Doha. He has competed in 11 competitions since 2014 and will compete in the Men's 200 m race at this year's Olympics
<b>Trap</b>	Ray Bassil	Ray is probably the most prominent Lebanese Olympian. She has won multiple awards including the ISSF World Cup event and the gold medal at the 2015 Arab shooting championship. This will be her third time representing Lebanon at the Olympics.
<b>Swimming</b>	Munzer Kabbara	Kabbara is one of Lebanon's future potentials. He is only 19 years old and has been swimming for around nine years. He is a full-time swimmer alongside pursuing his studies and other personal activities and has been on the national team since the age of 14.
<b>Swimming</b>	Marie Khoury	Marie has represented Lebanon at 2015, 2017 and 2018 Arab Championships, in addition to the 18th FINA World Championships in 2019.

		Khoury is the highest-ranking swimmer of her category in Lebanon, which is the Women's 50-meter freestyle.
<b>Weightlifting</b>	Mahassen Fattouh	Mahassen is the first-ever Lebanese woman to take part in the Olympic weightlifting competition. She has been lifting since the age of 15, with two USA national titles under her belt. In 2017, she placed in the top 10 in the World Championships and in 2018, she became the first-ever Lebanese woman to medal in an international competition at the Mediterranean Games. In 2019, she won in the 64K weight class at the Arab Games.

Table 16: Lebanese in 2021 Tokyo Olympics. [Meet Lebanon's delegation for the Tokyo Olympics - Beirut Today \(beirut-today.com\)](https://www.beirut-today.com/en/meet-lebanon-s-delegation-for-the-tokyo-olympics)

Despite all the difficulties, Lebanon has had solid participation and a high number of high potentials in the Olympics. The absence of support is the distance between them and the gold medal. Although some has had some support from their federations, most athletes rely on their own passion to excel. [Beirut today interviewed Munzer Kabbara](#) where we get to meet this Lebanese young star, 19 years old. In 2017, he competed in the Texas State Championships and won. That same year, he was selected to go to the Junior World Championships in Indianapolis to represent Lebanon.

#### 9. Rugby & Ice Hockey

The experience with the Lebanese diaspora in Rugby and Ice Hockey prove valuable lessons. Facing the political and sectoral culture, Lebanese living abroad took the opportunity to establish legal documents in the country of residence, in this case, Canada and Australia. They later on established federations in Lebanon but under the oversight of the main league in the original country. This approach can protect the sport from Lebanese political influence.

#### 10. Rugby

The Lebanese Rugby League was formed in 1997 in Sydney when a team comprised of Australian-based players of Lebanese descent participated in an international tournament. The Lebanese national team later qualified for two rugby league men's World Cups (2000 and 2017). It is remarkable that Lebanon, a small developing country in the Middle East with a population of

approximately six million (one-third of whom are refugees), can qualify for a world championship or the Olympic Games in a team sport (Reiche, 2019).

Lebanon first qualified for the rugby league World Cup in 2000, which was also the first time a Lebanese team attempted to qualify for the event in history. At the time, the sport did not exist in Lebanon, and the Lebanese national team was comprised entirely of Australian-based players of Lebanese descent. Nearly two decades later, the national team still relies on Australian–Lebanese players. Still, the sport has developed remarkably in Lebanon, a significant feat stimulated by the appearance of the diaspora team at the 2000 World Cup.

The [LRLF – Lebanese Rugby League Federation Official Web Site \(lebanonrl.com\)](http://lebanonrl.com) was founded in 2003 and backed up by the Lebanese diaspora in Australia that built a strong base for rugby in Lebanon. Sponsors and funding were acquired from international agencies and companies. Lebanon is also the HQ of Middle East Africa RL and has the most extensive staff and technical expertise.

The rugby league has three division championships for men and one for women:

- Lebanese Rugby League Championship-LRL
- Women’s Rugby League-WRL
- Collegiate Rugby League Championship-CRL
- Schools Rugby League Championships-SRL. It plays Rugby League for 10-months of the year and has over 1000 registered participants.

The rugby federation also built The Cedars (National Team), Liban Espoir (U20s), Youth (U18s), Junior Cedars plus the grass-roots enthusiasm of more than hundreds of regular competition participants and the unbridled fun and opportunity that comes to find Rugby League. In August 2011, the LRLF became a Full Member of the Rugby League European Federation (RLEF), and in May 2012 achieved the same status within the Rugby League International Federation.

The rugby league did release a [financial report](#) in 2017. As of March 2018, Lebanon is ranked 9th by the Rugby League International Federation (RLIF) World Rankings. Both AUB and LAU were essential in establishing a rugby league in Lebanon. There are an estimated 250,000 Lebanese–Australians, approximately 70,000 of whom were born in Lebanon. In Australia, 75% of Lebanese–Australians are concentrated in NSW, the hub of rugby league, most of whom reside in the state capital Sydney.

## 11. Ice Hockey

The Ice Hockey league was established recently. The Lebanese Ice Hockey Federation (LIHF) received in the Lebanese Ministry of Sports official decree as the official federation representing ice hockey.

- The LIHF is based in Montreal, Canada, with youth operations based in Beirut, Lebanon.
- The LIHF manages the Lebanese National team at international tournaments and exhibition games.
- The LIHF created their own Lebanese By-Laws (Registered names & logos, office, Bank's account, etc.) and submitted the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) application in April 2019.
- In September 2019, the federation became an official member of the IIHF and one of the youngest federations approved by the IIHF.
- In February 2020, the LIHF became an official member of the Lebanese Olympic Committee.
- In December 2020, the LIHF was assigned by the IIHF to Hockey Canada as the Lebanese IIHF Mentor. A decisive point in allowing the steady growth of Ice Hockey in Lebanon.

Both the rugby and ice hockey examples show the detachment of the Lebanese political and sectoral background by initiatives done by the Lebanese diaspora. Since they understand the root of the problem, they have created the federations and tied them through official support with their respective countries' counterparts. These types of international partnerships put sports outside the scope of the Lebanese political status quo. There is a relationship of mutual dependence between diaspora and homeland: without its diaspora, Lebanon could not participate in the World Cup

## 12. *Swimming*

The Lebanese Swimming Federation or in French "Fédération Libanaise de Natation" is founded in 1961. Lebanese swimming federation has the responsibility for elite performance, doping control and international relationships and events for the sports and is an active member of the International Swimming Federation (FINA) and Asia Swimming Federation (AASF).

Lebanon's history in Olympics and swimming goes back to the summer Olympics in Mexico in 1968. The female participation was straight afterwards in the Summer Olympics in Germany, 1972; highlighting, even more, the depth, history and strength of Women in Lebanese sports. Since 1968, Lebanon has sent athletes to the [Summer Olympics except 1976 and 1996](#). Also, Lebanon has a long history of participation in different [swimming competitions](#): local, Arab and Asian.

## 13. *Martial Arts*

There are hundreds of Martial Arts academies in Lebanon and the country has several federations. Lebanon historically does invest in Martial Arts due to the high number of participation among the young and the NEETs.

Lebanese Martial Arts federations: [Lebanese Taekwondo Federation](#), [Sport Kickboxing Federation Lebanon GM Yassine](#), [Lebanon Mixed Martial Arts Federation - My Next Match](#), [Lebanese Muay Thai Federation / تاي للمواي اللبناني الاتحاد - Home | Facebook](#), [Lebanese Kyokushinkai Federation - Home | Facebook](#), [Lebanese Federation of Kickboxing - Savate Official Website \(lfks.org\)](#), [Lebanese Judo Federation & D.A | Facebook](#).

## 5. Education in Lebanon

As mentioned in an earlier section, the Ministry of Education & Higher Education in Lebanon governs sports in schools and universities. Without the need to elaborate on the political problem this has caused with the MOY, the Ministry of Education & Higher Education is responsible for adopting healthy physical education to children from an early age in the school's curricula. Although the data, in table 16, give us nothing beyond 2016, we can easily conclude that recent economic and political challenges negatively impact the negative.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>% of Primary School Age Children</b>	90.2	89	83.9	83.6	84.3
<b>Female: % of Primary School Age Children</b>	87.1	86	81.3	80.9	81.7
<b>Male: % of Primary School Age Children</b>	93.4	92	86.5	86.4	86.9
<b>Adolescents Out of School: % of Lower Secondary School Age</b>	23.7				
<b>Adolescents Out of School: Female: % of Female Lower Secondary School Age</b>	26.1				
<b>Adolescents Out of School: Male: % of Male Lower Secondary School Age</b>	21.1				
<b>Children Out of School: % of Primary School Age</b>	9.7	10.9	16	16.3	15.6
<b>Children Out of School: Female: % of Female Primary School Age</b>	12.8	13.9	18.6	19	18.2

<b>Children Out of School: Male: % of Male Primary School Age</b>	6.5	7.9	13.4	13.5	13
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Table 17: Statistics among the NEETs in the educational sector. [Lebanon / Education Statistics / CEIC \(ceicdata.com\)](#)

## 1. Sports In Education

The Ministry of Education & Higher Education is responsible for implementing physical education lessons in school programs: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education, and is usually taught once a week. Physical education is necessary for the students to enter into the deep meaning of sports, teamwork, the mental peace from a very young age. Physical education is essential for the psychological and physical health and the character-shaping of a student.

The activities are as follows:

1. **Primary education:** activities aimed at psychomotor education (e.g. dancing), individual and team sports (football, volleyball, Basketball, swimming etc.), and gymnastics.
2. **Secondary education:** individual and team sports such as Basketball, volleyball, football, handball, gymnastics, dancing, fitness and different competitive level of school events in various sports.
3. **Higher/Tertiary Education:** There 6 universities that offer bachelor in Physical Education. The Department of Physical Education at the [University of Balamand](#) is the only one that offers BA, MA and Teaching Diploma degrees in the field of Physical Education. [The Notre Dame University \(NDU\)](#), [The Lebanese University \(LU\)](#), [The Lebanese Canadian University \(LCU\)](#), [the University of Sciences & Arts Lebanon \(USAL\)](#), [The Universite Antonine \(UA\)](#) offers a bachelor in Physical Education while [the Lebanese German University \(LGU\)](#) offers a BS, MS and Doctorate in Physical therapy.
4. **Technical College:** We also saw the first Technical College in Physical Education and Sports in Lebanon- [SAS](#) with several partners, including UA; the college offers certified coaching degrees in Basketball, Football, Sports injuries, strength & conditioning, swimming and fitness facility management. [STEPahead](#) also provides certificates in physical education, sports management, nutrition, management and others. [The Sports Technical School](#) and, most prominently, the [Athletico S.C](#) were approved as a one-star academy by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).



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## 6. Main Challenges

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Our analysis portrays the sports sector in Lebanon and the needs of the youth and NEETs. We will highlight the challenges:

- *The Political/Sectoral Culture:* it starts with the culture to expand to politics, organisation, management and decision-making. We explored the depth of this issue and analysed its level of effect on several fronts.
- *Weak governmental sports infrastructure:* The MOY and MOEHE are responsible for sport in Lebanon from youth to professionals. Both ministries lack legal and technological infrastructure, proper support and are direct victims of the before mentioned sectoral system.

The political tensions between the MOY and the MOEHE largely hinder progress regarding schools and universities sports legislation in Lebanon. The political tensions stop the process of empowering the governmental and legal infrastructure to build a strong sports system for the youth. The physical infrastructure is also very weak, with very few, under-equipped facilities for a large number of students.

- *Unsupported Federations:* Federations also suffer from the sectoral system on a financial and organizational level. They also lack the technological infrastructure that empowers the federation's efficiency and ability to support their respective clubs and youth academies. Federations can barely fund, govern and manage youth sports initiatives, they lack technical and operational support in a country where the public sector is still very weak technologically. Administrative, digital and specialised human resources are needed to properly address the needs of the youth in these clubs.
- *Clubs & Athletes:* Naturally and eventually affected. Lack of funding and physical/technological infrastructure. As mentioned earlier, up to 50% of football clubs lack the basic needs of computers and emails. Lack of certified professionals, certified and administrative staff affect the ability to build strong youth academia within clubs.
- *COVID:* Adding to the negative impact on the economy as a whole, the pandemic also affects youth academia and activities across the country. Most activities for the youth, whether from federations, clubs or other initiatives were all hindered. COVID also harmed universities ability to fund and manage sports events.
- *Collaboration:* The Lebanese sports sector investment and enterprises are overwhelmingly private initiatives. They suffer from a deep lack of collaboration and organization to achieve a well developed and sustainable sports sector in the country. These initiatives are mainly for financial profit or political/social exposure. The lack of collaboration greatly reduces the efficiency of building a strong youth infrastructure.

- *The Fans*: Inevitably one of the most important variables. The public is clearly affected by the political and economical challenges and the sectoral tensions within the country. We have seen how the Lebanese, and despite the different crises, have shown massive support for the several brief successes over the years; but the lack of a sustainable sports vision and the sectoral conflicts always end up negatively affecting. This overall tension reduces the youth motivation and the parent's will to invest in their children in sports.

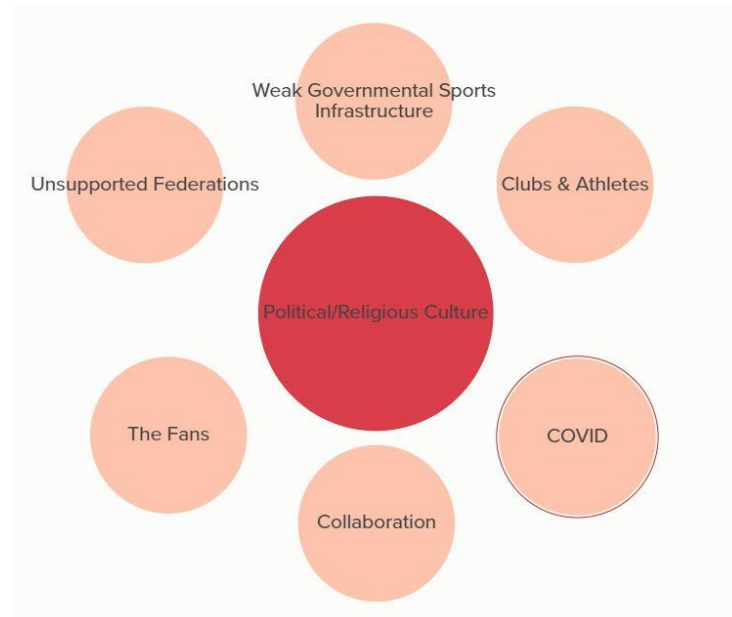


Figure 17: Challenges

## 1. What We Can Build on

Despite the several Challenges, We have had several successful experiences that we can use to build for the future.

- *Superior Female Performance*: The most notable element is the role and success of female athletes both individually and in team sports. Lebanese women have shown superior performance, historically, driven by their sheer passion. They do so despite the overwhelming challenges they face in a Middle Eastern country added to the normal political, social and economic challenges. The need to empower women's sports in Lebanon especially among the young and NEETs is an essential pillar to building a robust sports sector in Lebanon.
- *A Strong Will & Passion*: If there is one factor that has pushed the Lebanese to succeed in any and all sports endeavours; it is this. This point is most clearly portrayed, specifically, in the Lebanese women athletes. Several examples mentioned earlier show the length and

dedication that Lebanese are willing to invest to succeed and raise their country's name in both individual and team sports.

- *Solutions Are Already Given:*

Government Infrastructure and the Role of MOY: Despite the several challenges, many solutions were applied and others were discarded due to political tensions. One example is the study done By Mr Hassan Sharara regarding the restructure of the MOY. The study (*linked in Bibliography*) and Mr Sharara's interview for this analysis offer major solutions on how to strengthen the MOY to properly and efficiently offer legislative, governmental and operational support to the sports sector in Lebanon. In this aspect, we strongly recommend his study which was also done building on another analysis between 2012-2018, yet it was also discarded due to political reasons. Mr Sharara's study, *Research in Strategic Planning & Modernizing the Ministry of Youth & Sports, Lebanon*(Sharara, 2019), and his expertise offer keen and expert insight into the governmental and legislative role of the MOY in Lebanon and how it can properly address the needs of the youth.

Diaspora: The Lebanese diaspora proved very valuable for the growth of Lebanese sports. Individually, athletes from the diaspora play a major role. Several examples are given in this analysis show that we should empower the search, identification and proper funding and preparations for the millions of Lebanese living abroad that are willing to compete for their home country. The diaspora also plays a key role in team sports, the rugby and Ice Hockey examples mentioned earlier show how collaborations starting at the federations levels can empower the sports immunity to the sectoral system, lack of funding and professional and technical expertise. The diaspora can also be used to support initiatives also focused on the youth where international collaboration can greatly increase the wealth of knowledge and technical abilities we can offer to the young in Lebanon.

- *Grassroots Programs:* Working with the AFC, the LFA did start a strong partnership to empower youth football in Lebanon, yet it is not without some challenges that we explored earlier. Nonetheless, it is a very good experience we must build on. Grassroots programs are also applied across the country in Basketball, Martial Arts, Swimming and others,
- *Youth Academia Growth:* Lebanon saw a rising interest in empowering the youth in many sports. Although mostly financially funded, yet they offer a groundwork where we can build collaboration and a sustainable system for long term success.

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## 7. Interviews

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- Hassan Sharara-Advisor of MOY, Head of Sports in NTV
- Hachem Haidar-President of LFA
- Mr Tony Dib- Member of Lebanese Basketball Federation, Basketball Coach and ex-Professional Basketball Player.
- Talal Makdessi-Previous President of LFA
- Bassem Mohammad-Technical Director @ LFA, Sports unit- Football-school activities
- Abdo Asmar-Entrepreneur, Certified coach and Manager in Sports Academics.
- Mr Maher Nakib-Certified Basketball Coach and Manager in Sports Academics.

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## 10. Annexes

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### 1. Annex 1. SWOT Analysis