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Education and rural development : comparisons between rural and urban Lebanon

Sharp inequalities often exist between urban and rural educational facilities. These take many forms of which the difference in physical facilities, availability of schools and the level of training of the teachers are only a few examples.

In addition to inadequate teacher training the "very standards to which many educational institutions—aspire are inappropriate, irrelevant or sometimes positively harmful to the development of the country" (JOLLY, 1971, p. 209). One result of this inadequacy is the familiar development of social attitudes that can be detrimental to development. For example, the emphasis on the academic rather than applied or manual work has led to wage and social value differentials. The end result is often fewer students undergoing technical, applied training that has direct application to the manpower needs of development today in many less developed countries.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: (a) to look briefly at the geographic distribution of schools and educational facilities (b) to outline the content of the curricula in Lebanon. In this manner it is intended to show that rural students have less opportunity for formal education than urban students and that what they do learn does not prepare them to play an active role in the developmental problems of their present rural environment.

We may very well ask: "So What?" The answer to this is to mention the extensive rural to urban migration going on in the Middle East and the resulting problems due to slow industrial growth and subsequent slow absorption of labour and over urbanization (1). One can conclude that education for rural development would play a role in controlling these problems and that therefore it is a very important part of any national strategy for development.

POPULATION FIGURES

The following population figures are relevant as background information. Results of the November 1970 survey (Republic of Lebanon, 1972. L'enquête par sondage...) gave the following estimates: 538,410 or 25 % of the total population of 2,126,000 were actively employed; 101,760 or 4.8 % of the total population

(or 18.9 % of those actively employed) were employed in the agricultural sector; 207,765 or 9.8 % of the total population (or 38.6 % of those actively employed) were employed in rural areas of which 94,095 (4.4 % of the total and 17.5 % of those actively employed) were employed in agriculture in the rural areas (2).

Thus a substantial number of the total population and of those actively employed are employed in the rural areas, and in agriculture. The total urban population was estimated at 60 % compared to a rural population of 40 % of the total population. Of this 40 % (850,400), 432,654 (or 50 %) were in the age group 5-19 years.

STUDENT POPULATION FIGURES

Total primary, complementary and secondary school students numbered 732,741 (3) (or 34 % of the total population) in 1970-71 of whom 37 % were attending government public schools and 63 % were attending private schools (Table 1). Private schools were especially prominent in primary education. In fact, it would appear that the government has allowed the private sector to dominate the educational system in Beirut and areas of Mount Lebanon near Beirut and this is particularly true with primary schooling (Table 2). The corollary of this would appear to be a subsequent shortage of primary schools in other areas, and, in particular, rural areas. Thus 840/1772 (or 47 %) of the total primary schools were in Beirut, Beirut suburbs and Mount Lebanon and these areas included roughly 432,654/732,741 or 59 % of all students in the pre-university categories (4).

With regard to overall student distribution, roughly 74 % were in primary schools, 18 % in complementary and secondary schools, 2.6 % in technical schools and only 4.5 % in tertiary schools for the year 1969 (UNESOB, 1971, p. 48). The number of students in technical schools as a % of those in secondary school declined from 20 % in 1957-58 to 12 % in 1968-69 (UNESOB, 1971, p. 256). The number of diplomas from the new technical and complementary schools (5) had increased from 52 and 131 in 1959 to 249 and 196 in 1969, respectively. However,

(1) These problems have been outlined in another publication on Lebanon (Greene, 1973).

(2) The active population was defined as those between 20 and 65 years of age and was estimated at 897,172 or 42.2 % of the total population. Of this number, 538,410 were actively employed. Palestinian refugees in camps were excluded.

(3) Figures from the 1970 survey show that in the age group of 5-19 which would span primary, complementary and secondary schooling, there were 820,435 potential students. Without considering repetition of grade or drop outs which would add considerably to the potential number of students, the maximum student ratio would be 732,741/820,435 or roughly 88 %. Actual estimates are around 70 % (UNESOB, 1971, p. 48).

(4) Distribution of the 5-19 age group in Beirut and its suburbs was 438,180/487,110 or 71 % of the total urban population in this age group. This would show the need for emphasizing the educational system in Beirut and its suburbs. However, estimates of numbers of primary schools per thousand registered population show shortages in greater Beirut (0.36) compared to N. Lebanon (1.15) S. Lebanon (1.04), Beqa'a (1.23).

(5) These schools teach electromechanics, electricity, automobile mechanics, and other similar subjects; they also include the Hotel schools.



TABLE 1

Distribution of primary, complementary and secondary schools and students, Lebanon, 1970-71 (*)

Type of School	No. of Schools	%	No. of Students	%
Government				
Primary (1)	770	28	192,633	26
C & S (2).	540	19	75,789	10
Subtotal.	1,310	47	268,422	36
Private				
Primary.	1,002	36	380,177	52
C & S	472	17	84,142	11
Subtotal.	1,474	53	464,319	63
TOTAL	2,784	100.0	732,741	100.0

(1) Primary School may include preparatory or kindergarden plus 5 years at the end of which is the exam for the certificate d'études primaires.

(2) Complementary schools (Moyennes) have 4 years with the exam for the "brevet" (Brevet d'études élémentaires) at the end. Secondary schools have 3 years with the exam for the Baccalaureate Part I at the end of the 2nd year, and for the Bac. II at the end of the 3rd year.

(*) Source : Republic of Lebanon, Recueil de Statistiques libanaises, § 7, 1971 : p. 442.

TABLE 2

Private and Government Schools classified by number of schools, teachers and students, Lebanon, 1970-71 (*)

Mohafazat	Private Schools				Gov't Schools			
	P	C & S	T	S	P	C & S	T	S
Beirut	151	114	5,499	127,204	18	39	1,678	25,042
Mount Lebanon.	458	243	9,081	213,237	213	153	3,811	67,171
North Lebanon.	198	45	2,353	56,931	223	144	4,094	75,100
South Lebanon	80	33	1,247	30,156	180	119	3,339	64,417
Beqa'a	115	37	1,584	36,791	136	85	2,109	36,692
TOTAL.	1,002	472	19,764	464,319	770	540	15,031	268,422

P : Primary school.

C & S : Complementary and secondary schools.

T : Teachers.

S : Students.

(*) Source : Republic of Lebanon, Recueil de Statistiques libanaises, § 7, 1971, pp. 447-451.

the greater part of these were diplomas from the Hotel school. Similarly, the number of University students studying science declined from 20 % in 1962/63 to 15 % in 1968/69, those studying Medicine declined from 9 % in 1962/63 to 3.5 % in 1968/69 while those in the Humanities increased (UNESOB, 1971, p. 263). Drop out of students was about 67 % and 45 % in primary public and private schools, respectively. It was around 50 % for both complementary and secondary cycles (UNESOB, 1971, pp. 242 and 247). Finally, illiteracy in the age group 15-24 years, male and female, was around 10.4 % in 1962 (UNESOB, 1971, p. 43). This represented a 14.6 % illiteracy for females and 6.8 % for males in this age grouping (6).

SELECTED URBAN-RURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Geographic

Looking at the geographic distribution of primary and complementary schools should point up differences in opportunities for formal education between urban and rural students. Without considering the question of migration and rural development, these differences alone would normally mean fewer chances for rural students of moving into higher income brackets in the urban setting. Most of them along with their families end up in a slum environment with all the accompanying characteristics. But from a point of view of rural development fewer rural students are obtaining higher levels of formal education (whether or not this education is relevant to rural development problems).

(6) Comparable figures for other M.E. countries were: Illiteracy for male plus female: Saudi Arabia (95 %), Iraq (70 %), Jordan (38 %), Syria (56 %), Yemen (94 %), Kuwait (70 %) for the years 1960-1962. Female illiteracy in all the above was from 50 % to 99 %. Lebanon is therefore the most advanced in terms of overall educational characteristics. Expenditure on education represented around 14 % of total budgetary expenses in 1968 (U.N., 1969).

TABLE 3

Distribution of primary and complementary schools and students by geographic location, Lebanon, 1969 (*)

Mohafazat	URBAN				RURAL			
	P (1) Schools	P Students	C (2) Schools	C Students	P Schools	P Students	C Schools	C Students
Greater Beirut (3).	30	19,764	62	10,339	—	—	—	—
Mount Lebanon . .	22	3,113	44	1,573	224	21,998	77	4,636
North Lebanon . .	31	16,553	40	5,925	198	26,733	74	5,918
South Lebanon. . .	20	7,285	14	3,037	197	30,023	74	5,010
Beqa's	14	3,848	12	1,702	150	17,118	45	3,152
TOTAL	117	50,563	172	22,576	769	95,872	270	18,716
RATIOS.	P/P (4) = 432		C/C (5) = 131		P/P = 125		C/C = 69	

(1) P : Primary. (2) C : Complementary. (3) Beirut plus suburbs. (4) Primary student schools. (5) Complementary students schools.

(*) Source : Republic of Lebanon, Statistiques de l'Enseignement officiel, 1968-69, pp. 15, 23. The urban-rural classification was discontinued after 1969.

TABLE 4

Total Number of public primary and complementary schools per thousand estimated urban and rural population by Mohafazat, Lebanon, 1968-69

Mohafazat	Total Population (1)	URBAN					RURAL				
		Population (2)	P (3)	P/P	C (3)	C/P	Population (2)	P (3)	P/P	C (3)	C/P
Beirut.	474,870	474,870	18	0.04	30	0.06	—	—	—	—	—
Mount Lebanon . .	833,055	560,006 (4)	22	0.04	44	0.08	273,049	224	0.82	77	0.28
North Lebanon. . .	364,935	94,883	31	0.33	40	0.42	270,052	198	0.73	74	0.27
South Lebanon. . .	249,945	64,986	20	0.31	14	0.22	184,959	197	1.06	74	0.40
Beqa'a.	203,520	52,915	14	0.26	12	0.23	150,605	150	0.99	45	0.30
TOTAL	2,126,325	1,247,660	117	0.09	172	0.14	878,665	769	0.87	270	0.31

(1) Recueil de Statistiques libanaises, § 7, 1971, p. 70.

(2) 26 % of the total population was in towns other than Beirut and suburbs and 74 % was in rural areas. Using this ratio of urban to rural, estimates of urban and rural population were made for each Mohafazat (p. 12, Recueil de Statistiques libanaises).

(3) Numbers of schools found, p. 15. Statistique de l'Enseignement officiel, 1968-69. These are public government schools.

(4) 464,070 out of 833,055 were in the Beirut suburbs. Therefore, urban population was estimated as 464,070 plus 26 % of 368,985 for a total of 560,006.

The ratio of primary students to primary schools was 432 in urban areas compared to 125 in rural areas. This ratio for complementary students to complementary schools was 131 in the urban compared to 69 in the rural areas (Table 3). This difference in average size reflects the larger number of schools of small size in the rural areas. This in itself may be a strong point. Thus, without going into details, the ratio of public primary schools to every thousand total estimated resident population was higher in rural areas than in urban areas (Table 4). This imbalance

in favour of the rural areas would be partially removed if the private primary schools were included as these are concentrated in urban areas (7). This was also the case with the total average number of public complementary schools.

On looking at one or two details, a different picture emerges. Thus 93 % of all rural schools compared to 78 % urban consisted of ordinary buildings converted into a school (p. 64); rooms available for

(7) Distribution of private schools on an urban-rural basis was unavailable.



laboratories, libraries, or sports were in the ratio of around 1:2 in favour of urban schools (p. 71); 90 % of all schools in rural areas were classed insufficient in libraries as compared to 60 % of those in urban areas (p. 80); roughly 90 % of rural schools had no laboratories as compared to 50 % of the urban schools (p. 80); the numbers of geographic and scientific posters were about the same in urban and rural schools (Statistique de l'Enseignement officiel, 1968-69).

Teacher qualification

Looking now at the distribution of teachers in the urban rural areas, the main point is the great preponderance in rural areas of teachers having the brevet as their qualification (Table 5). This diploma is obtained at the end of the complementary school which is only 4 years beyond the primary school. The majority of teachers in all areas but especially in rural areas had no formal instruction in how to teach. For rural areas this amounted to 72 % (8) of all teachers in primary and complementary schools as compared to 66 % (9) in urban schools. If one includes those teachers with the Normal Primaire which is obtained after the certificate examination i. e. after only primary education, then the figures become 99 % for rural areas and 94 % for urban areas.

Student teacher ratio

These ratios were in almost all school size categories higher in the rural areas than in the urban (Table 6). These represent only the public schools. In general, for all school size categories, a greater % of total student population were in the smaller school size category in the rural areas than in the urban areas. The % of students in larger schools in rural areas fell off rapidly after the size category 211-400.

(8) 5,265 out of 6,895 — See Table 5.

(9) 3,030 out of 4,495 — See Table 5.

TABLE 5

Number of teachers classified by selected types of school, level of qualification and location, Lebanon, 1969 (*)

Level Qualification	URBAN				RURAL			
	Total No. (*)	School			Total No.	School		
		P	P + C	C		P	P + C	C
Teacher's Licence (1) . . .	106	29	74	3	42	10	31	1
Normale C (2)	43	4	36	3	7	1	6	0
Normale P (3)	1,224	267	922	35	1,542	448	1,090	4
Bacc. II (4)	648	160	470	20	932	306	620	4
Bacc. I (5)	372	73	388	9	501	184	316	2
Brevet (6)	1,714	569	1,129	17	3,519	1,586	1,933	0
No Diploma	295	80	207	8	315	127	188	0
Other	94	30	61	2	35	12	21	3
TOTAL	4,496	1,212	3,287	97	6,893	2,674	4,205	14

(1) Requires a University Degree.

(2) Normale complémentaire requires the Brevet or either of the two Baccalaureats Certificates.

(3) Normale Primaire. Requires the Primary Certificate.

(4) Obtained after 3rd. year of Secondary School.

(5) Obtained after 2nd year of Secondary School.

(6) Obtained after 4th year of Complementary School.

(*) Source : Republic of Lebanon, Statistiques de l'Enseignement officiel, 1968-69, pp. 43-47. Includes male and female teachers, directors and supervisors (p. 38).

TABLE 6

Student teacher ratio and % of students classified per size category of total public schools by location, Lebanon, 1969 (*)

School Size (1)	URBAN		RURAL	
	% Students	Student / teacher	% Students	Student / teacher
35	0.09	20.5	3.86	18.3
36-70	0.47	18.5	6.26	24.1
71-105	0.87	14.8	8.32	23.6
106-140	1.11	18.1	7.43	24.7
141-175	3.01	19.3	7.50	22.6
176-210	4.32	19.0	7.36	21.9
211-400	32.64	21.2	36.36	22.8
400-600	36.35	23.5	19.41	25.4
601-1 000	17.32	24.6	3.50	26.6
1 000	3.81	21.9	—	—
TOTAL . . .	99.99		100.0	

(1) Number of students.

(*) Source : Republic of Lebanon, Statistiques de l'Enseignement officiel 1968-69, pp. 28, 40. Includes male and female.

TABLE 7

Number of students classified by type of school,
location and Mohafazat, Lebanon, 1969 (*)

Mohafazat	URBAN			RURAL		
	P	C	% Total Drop out	P	C	% Total Drop out
Greater Beirut. . .	19,764	10,339	48	—	—	—
Mount Lebanon. . .	3,113	1,573	49	21,988	4,636	79
North Lebanon. . .	16,553	5,925	64	26,733	5,918	78
South Lebanon. . .	7,285	3,037	58	30,023	5,010	83
Beqa'a.	3,848	1,702	56	17,118	3,152	82
TOTAL	50,563	22,576	55	95,872	18,716	80

P : Primary school.

C : Complementary school.

(*) Source : Republic of Lebanon, Statistiques de l'Enseignement officiel, 1968-69, p. 23. Includes male and female.

complementary schools showed an average drop out rate of 67 % in rural areas as compared to 64 % in urban areas. In all cases, the rural areas exhibited a greater degree of drop out.

CURRICULA

TABLE 8

Estimated total drop out rate of students in public primary
and complementary schools, Lebanon, 1969 (*)

Mohafazat	URBAN		RURAL	
	P ¹	C ²	P ¹	C ²
	%		%	
Greater Beirut.	50	66	—	—
Mount Lebanon.	42	61	50	69
North Lebanon.	50	66	51	64
South Lebanon.	40	58	52	67
Beqa'a.	44	58	52	69
TOTAL	48	64	52	67

(1) Total drop out between 1st and 5th year of public primary schools (p. 24).

(2) Total drop out between 1st and 4th year of public complementary schools (p. 25).

(*) Source : Calculated from Republic of Lebanon, Statistique de l'Enseignement officiel, 1968-69. Includes male and female.

It would appear from an inspection of the official government curricula that they are heavily concentrated towards the academic rather than the applied at those levels that are most relevant to our discussion i.e. the primary and complementary levels.

Thus at the primary level, 27 % of the total hours of instructions are in English, a language which will have little application in rural areas (Table 9). Only 8 % are in science and 9 % in practical work. The latter involves such things as knitting for the girls and school gardens for the boys in a few cases only.

In the complementary school (or intermediate level) a similar picture emerges with somewhat greater emphasis on science subjects than at primary level. However, English and Mathematics are still dominant. Practical work has declined even further in importance.

There are several differences in the present curricula as compared to that used prior to 1963. At that time, both primary and complementary curricula included a substantial amount of drawing and art, singing and music (CHAPMAN, 1964, pp. 13-17). Other than that, the relative importance of the subject matter areas has remained about the same.

One can conclude that the primary and complementary curricula are academic in nature. Except for the science subjects, there is little that can be applied to the needs of the rural areas. Even in the science subjects, the limited amount of practical work either in the open air or in a laboratory would suggest an emphasis on memorization of a body of material with little practical application. One could conclude that the student has now spent roughly 9 years in primary and complementary schools and has learned very little that can be immediately applied to the problems of the rural areas. Given several years of repeating a particular year, this period is often much longer.

Dropouts

The overall population of students in public primary and complementary schools in 1969 was estimated at 182,727. Looking at the distribution in terms of numbers of students attending primary and complementary schools, the total drop out rate for all reasons ranged from 78 % to 83 % in rural areas and 48 % to 64 % in urban areas (Table 7).

Looking more closely at figures for public primary schools, the average total drop out between the first and the fifth year of primary school was around 52 % in rural areas compared to 48 % in urban areas (Table 8). Similar figures for public



In regard to private schools, these generally follow the government curricula with exceptions related to the particular ethnic or religious denomination of the school. Thus, other languages may be taught so that one has primary schools that teach in Arabic and French, Arabic and English, Arabic, French or English, or all three.

Vocational courses are available for students who have passed the primary certificate exam as well as for those passing the brevet exam at the end of the complementary cycle (10). In 1968, students in technical schools were 12 % of those in secondary (complementary and secondary) schools (UNESOB, 1971, p. 256).

In 1957-58 the comparative figure was 20 % and in 1960-61 it was 23 %. So there has been a decline in relative number of students attending vocational schools. Of a total of 18,480 students in 1968-69, 16,600 or 90 % attended private technical schools and 10 % (11) attended government schools (UNESOB, 1971, p. 253). Of the latter, 53 % of the diplomas awarded in 1969 in the higher technical schools were from the Hotel School and 41 % of those awarded in the new complementary schools were from the Hotel School. A small number of diplomas were in other technical subjects (Table 10). The number of public new secondary schools was evenly distributed by Mohafazat and numbered 34, 38, and 39 in 1968-69, 1969-70, and 1970-71, respectively. A number of these included technical courses.

However, when we consider that in 1969, as previously mentioned, only 2.6 % of the student population was attending technical schools, the relevance of the previous discussion with regard to rural development takes on depressing dimensions. How many of the technical schools whether public or private are in rural as compared to urban areas? This question needs to be answered. What relevance do the subject matter areas available in these schools have for rural development? This question needs to be asked as well as answered.

(10) Niveau technique supérieur and Niveau complémentaire or the New (Higher Technical) secondary school and the new complementary school.

(11) 1,880/18,480 or 10 % were in public technical schools.

TABLE 9

Hours of instruction per subject matter for primary and complementary public schools, Lebanon, 1970-71 (*)

Subject	Primary School		Complementary School	
	Hours/week (1)	%	Hours/week (1)	%
Religion.	—	—	4	3
Arabic	38	25	27	22
History & Geography . . .	11	7	12	10
Ethics.	—	—	4	3
English	40	27	27	23
Math.	25	17	20	17
Science	12	8	14	12
Physical Education	10	7	8	7
Practical Work.	14	9	4	3
TOTAL	150	100.0	120	100.0

(1) 8 hours per week of Arabic in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd years plus 7 hrs in the 4th and 5th years total 38 hours. This is not total hours/year but only a relative measure.

(*) Source : Republic of Lebanon, Curriculum of Education. 1970, 1971, pp. 4, 6, 12.

TABLE 10

Number of diplomas granted by New Higher Technical and New Complementary Schools, Lebanon, 1959 and 1969 (*)

Subject	School			
	NTH		NC	
	1959	1969	1959	1969
Electromechanics.	13	7	—	—
Electricity.	—	16	32	31
Civil engineering.	13	21	—	—
Others	14	74	47	53
Automobile Mechanics . . .	—	—	11	15
Mechanical engineering. . .	—	—	19	16
Subtotal.	40	118	109	115
Hotel School.	12	131	22	81
TOTAL	52	249	131	196

(*) Source : UNESOB, 1971, pp. 260-261.

The objective of this short paper was to try to point out by using secondary sources of data some inequalities that exist between urban and rural educational facilities in Lebanon.

It has been shown: (a) that the geographic location of public primary and complementary schools is largely urban, and that urban schools have higher general standards than rural schools; (b) that teachers with poor qualifications are more numerous in rural schools than in urban schools;

