



**BULLYING**  
**IN LEBANON:**  
**RESEARCH SUMMARY**



Save the Children

**LEBANON**  
OCTOBER 2018



**Save the Children**



**BULLYING CAN LITERALLY DESTROY A CHILD'S LIFE.** *-Parent*

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## INTRODUCTION

Bullying is defined as repetitive behaviours of harassment, intimidation and social exclusion of the victim that implicate diverse forms of physical, psychological, or verbal violence. It decreases children's educational attainment and disrupts their social development—bullying is a global epidemic to which Lebanon is not immune.

That is why Save the Children Lebanon commissioned a report\* to study how bullying manifests in local schools and communities. We discovered that bullying occurs in diverse contexts throughout Lebanon and harms children regardless of their national origin or gender. Nevertheless, the following data demonstrate that existing vulnerabilities aggravate the damage bullying inflicts on children.

All children have the right to learn and grow in their communities without fear of violence or intimidation. But bullying threatens this right and the phenomenon must be confronted wherever it occurs.

*\*The study was carried out by Statistics Lebanon.*

# METHODOLOGY

The study involved Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian children and caregivers through surveys and interviews in order to ascertain their perceptions on the prevalence, forms, causes, effects, and solutions for bullying via Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

For the purpose of the study, three groups were interviewed: **Total People Interviewed: 2,033 Interviewees**



**Children aged 9-12**  
**214 Children**

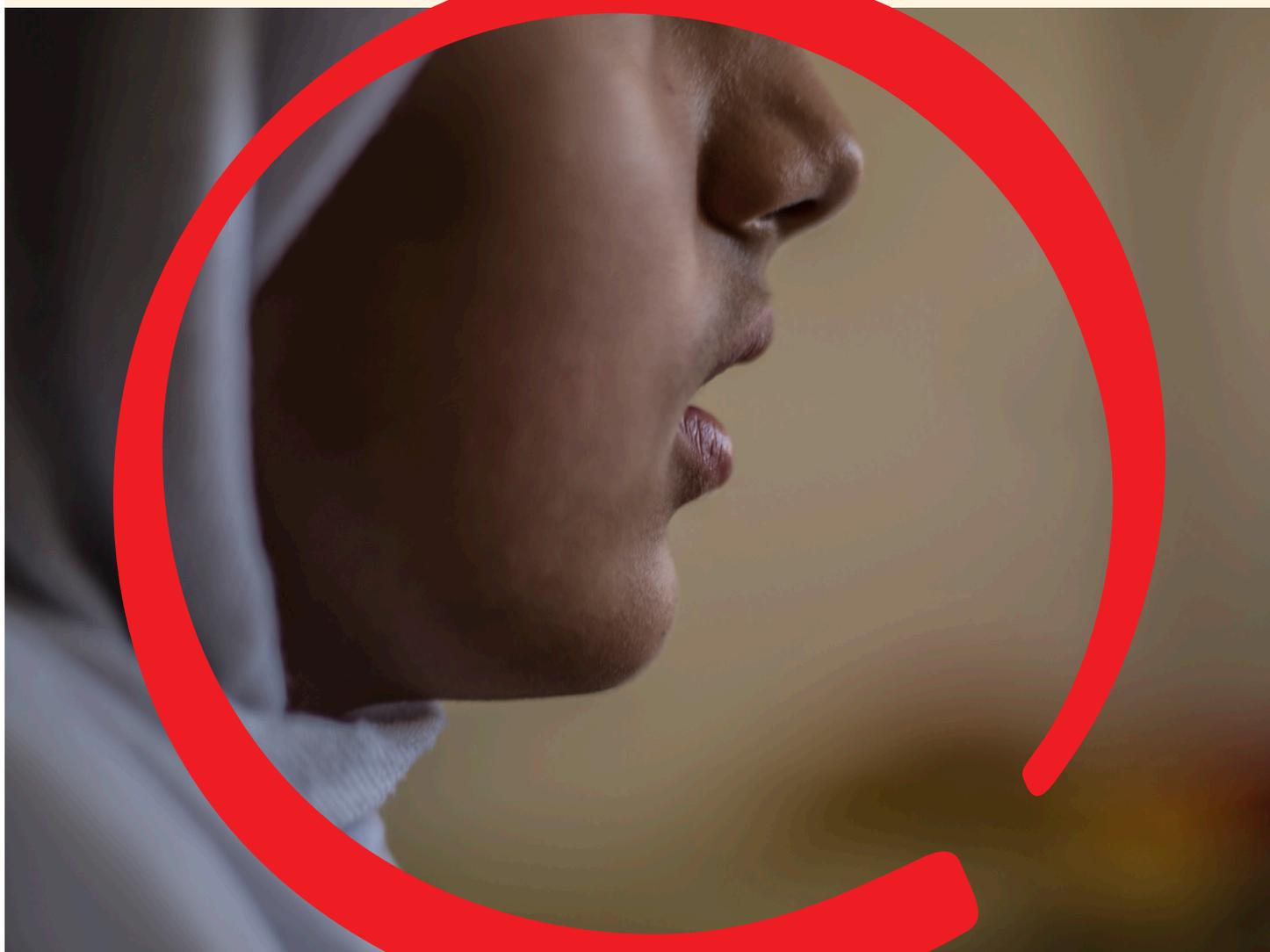


**Children aged 13-18**  
**269 Children**



**Female Caregivers of  
Children aged 6-18**  
**1,550 Caregivers**

The sample is representative of Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian populations across Lebanon.



# KEY FINDINGS

## 1. RATE



1 out on 2 children have been bullied at some point in their lives.

**59%** Children 9 -12 years **45%** Teenage Children

Children between 9 and 12 years old (59 percent) report higher rate of bullying than teenage children (45 percent).

**54%** Boys **46%** Girls

Boys (54 percent) are slightly more likely than girls (46 percent) to be bullied.

**50%** Lebanese **51%** Syrian **58%** Palestinian

Bullying is nearly equally present among Lebanese children (50 percent) and Syrian children (51 percent). Palestinian children reports the highest levels of bullying (58 percent).



**42%**  
Physical  
Bullying



**30%**  
Verbal  
Bullying



**22%**  
Social  
Bullying



**6%**  
Cyber-  
Bullying

Physical bullying (42 percent) is the most common form of bullying, followed by verbal (30 percent), and social bullying (22 percent). Cyberbullying affects 6 percent of children.



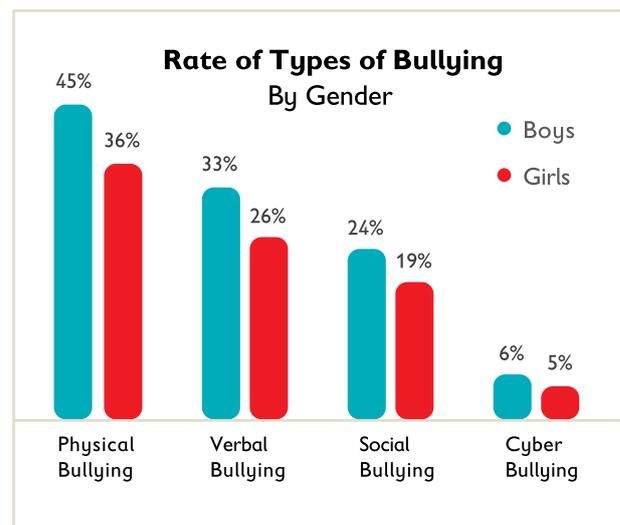
**41%** Physical Bullying  
**6%** Cyberbullying



**32%** Verbal Bullying

Lebanese children are more likely to experience physical bullying (41 percent) and cyberbullying (6 percent), but Syrian children are more likely to experience verbal bullying (32 percent).

Lebanese and Syrian children experience bullying at nearly equal rates (21 percent and 19 percent respectively).





## 2. AWARENESS



**39%** Children

Only 39 percent of children have heard of the term “bullying” in either **Arabic, English, or French**.



**47%** Adult

When adult respondents were asked if they have ever heard of “bullying,” only 47 percent said they were aware of the term.

### 3. PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES



Sixty-one percent of children believe there is a bullying problem in their schools.

Slightly fewer (56 percent) believe there is a bullying problem in their communities.



Even though 51 percent of children report having been bullied, only 27 percent of caregivers believe their children have experienced bullying, indicating that many incidents go unreported.



Caregivers responsible for children between 6 and 12 years old are more likely to report their child has been bullied (74 percent) than those with teenage children (26 percent).



Over three-quarters of caregivers (76 percent) believe that there is a bullying problem in Lebanese society.

### 4. ENVIRONMENT



Ninety percent of bullied children report being bullied at school. Within schools, this bullying usually takes place on the playground (58 percent) and in the classroom (51 percent).



In the children's communities, bullying usually occurs in the neighbourhood (92 percent) and on the way to and from school (30 percent).

### 5. FREQUENCY



One in five victims (21 percent) report being bullied several times a week. An additional seven percent say they are bullied once a week and four percent bullied daily. In total, about a third of children (32 percent) are bullied at least once a week.

Most victims report that school performance (45 percent) is the focus of their bullying, followed by national/regional/ethnic/racial origin (34 percent), culture (19 percent), perceived gender expression (14 percent), and appearance (13 percent).

## 6. REPORTING

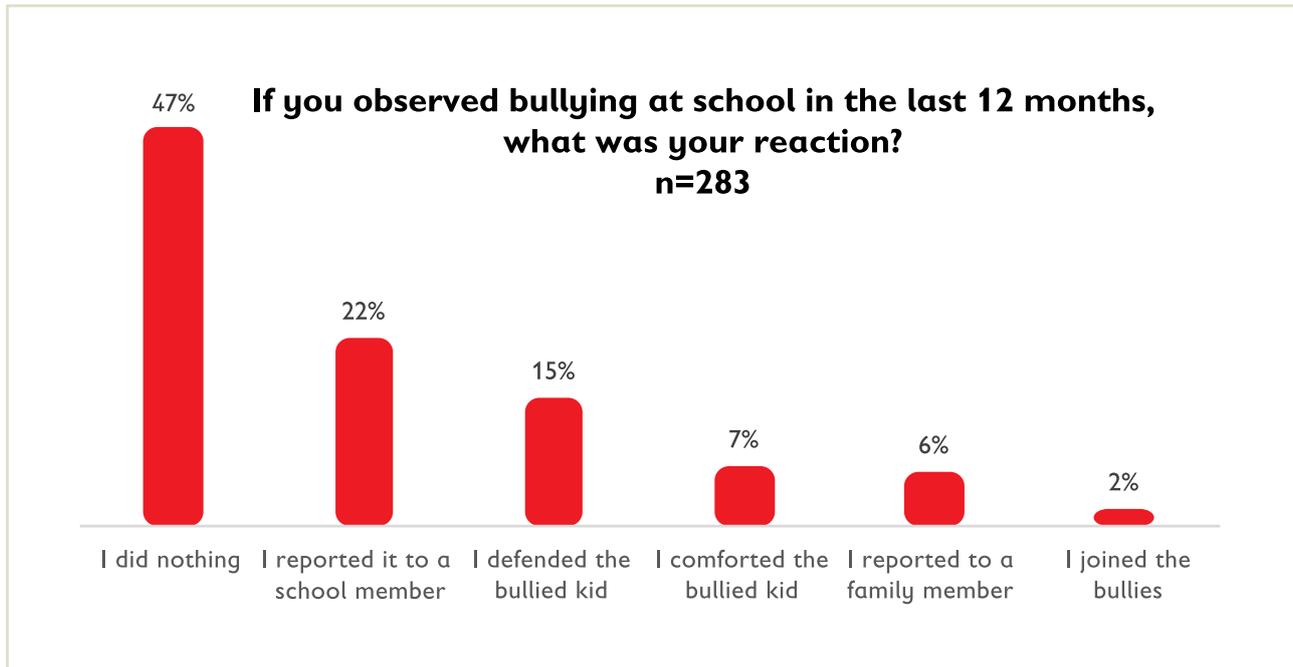
Nearly half of children (47 percent) who have witnessed bullying in the last 12 months say that they did nothing in response. Only one in five children (22 percent) reported it to school staff.



**47%**  
**Nothing in Response**



**22%**  
**Reported to School**



**70%**  
**Teacher Punished**



**17%**  
**Teacher Ignored**

Only 60 per cent of victims reported the bullying to a teacher, and 54 per cent reported it to a parent or caregiver. Most bullying victims say that teachers punished, reprimanded, or scolded the bully (70 percent). However, 17 percent of children report that the teacher ignored the bullying. Only 11 percent of children say that teachers respond with classroom activities and discussions related to bullying.

## 7. CONSEQUENCES



**16%**  
**Skipped School Days**

According to children, 16 percent of children who experienced bullying skipped one or more school days, and 12 percent totally dropped out.

**12%** Dropped Out

Seventeen percent of victims say their grades declined as a result of bullying. Twenty nine percent of caregivers say their children's grades dropped.

**17%**  
**Grades Declined**



**70%**  
**Felt Upset**

Seventy percent of children said they felt upset as a result of being bullied.

Twenty seven percent of caregivers say their children withdrew from social activities.

**27%**  
**Withdrew from Social Activities**



## 7. POLICY AND PREVENTION



**27%**  
**No Rules at Schools**

A quarter of children (27 percent) say that there are no rules at their schools to prevent bullying.



**20%**  
**No Action**

One in five children (20 percent) say that teachers do not take immediate action to stop bullying.



**29%**  
**Encourage Students to Speak Up**



**26%**  
**Facilitate Group Discussions**



**25%**  
**Create Anti-bullying Policies and Rules**



**13%**  
**Train Teachers**

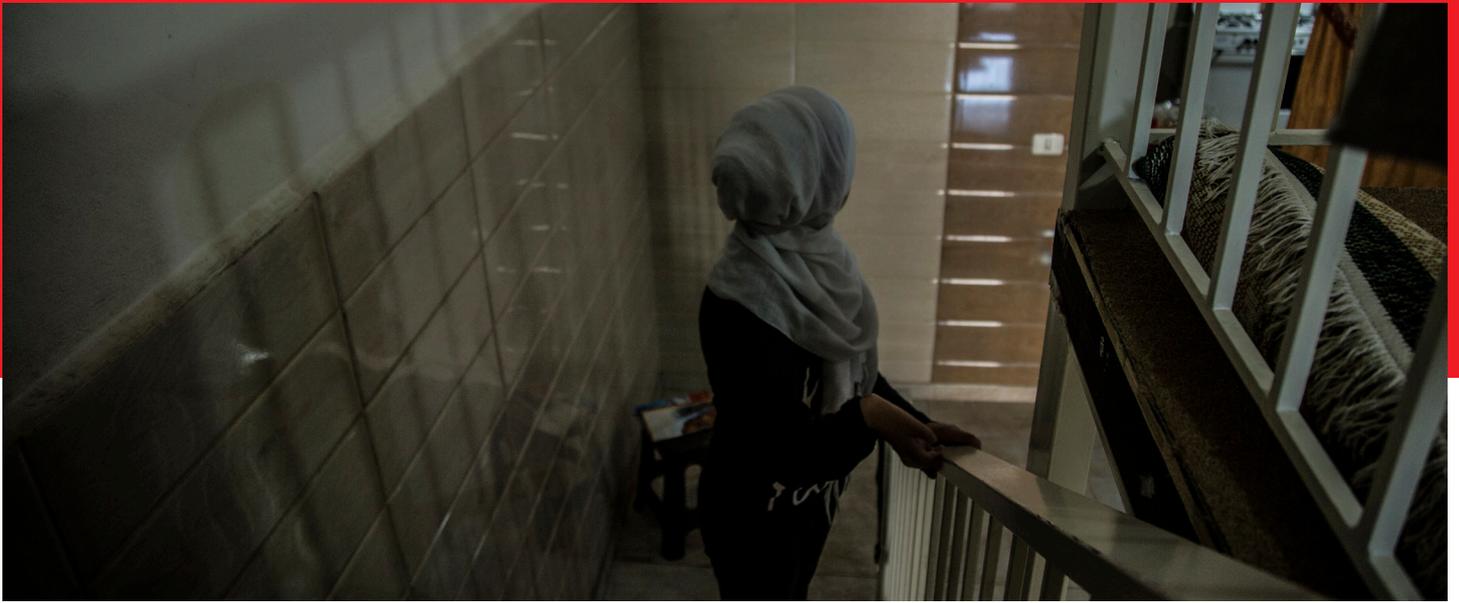
An overwhelming majority of children (93 percent) want their schools to take immediate action to prevent bullying. Teenagers believe that the best ways to prevent bullying include encouraging students to speak up (29 percent), facilitating group discussions (26 percent), creating anti-bullying policies and rules (25 percent), and training teachers on how to prevent and deal with bullying (13 percent).



**90%**  
**Need for Bullying Prevention Programs in Schools**

Ninety percent of caregivers (90 percent) believe there is a need for bullying prevention programs in schools.





## 8. SAVE THE CHILDREN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research, Save the Children recommends:

### **Recommendations for Teachers and School Administration:**

1. To become familiar with the Child Protection Policy endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to ensure prevention of bullying and enforce the policy and the code of conduct.
2. To ensure close and enough supervision during recess periods, hallways, bathrooms, and areas where bullying is most likely to take place
3. To attend professional development trainings on: bullying prevention and their obligations as a teacher related to this, positive discipline in teaching, classroom management, and participatory approaches with children.
4. To raise awareness for teachers and students on bullying and consequences / impact of bullying.
5. To create a safe and violence free school environment; this may include having the presence of school counsellors or a staff member that students would trust within their staff structure.

### **Recommendations for Parents and Children:**

1. To talk to children and ask them if they've ever faced bullying. Parents should also make sure children their children know that bullying is never acceptable.
2. To conduct awareness sessions for both parents and children on certain issues related to bullying. Specifically, for children, raise awareness by providing them with information to understand bullying and emphasise that certain beliefs about bullying are false. For example, the belief that bullied students are partly to blame for their victimisation, that bullying makes the victims tougher, and that teasing is just done for fun.
3. To be aware of indirect and subtle bullying such as social isolation or exclusion, especially among girls.
4. To encourage Children to speak up and the importance of telling adults about bullying they see or experience bullying.

### **Recommendations for Civil Society and NGOs:**

1. To raise awareness within communities, social media, and NGOs on prevention strategies for bullying and presence of bullying in communities.
2. To ensure participation of all key stakeholders, particularly parents and children, for national intervention programs that strengthen awareness and prevention of bullying
3. To develop a national campaign in coordination with Government of Lebanon and key stakeholder in an effort to eliminate bullying in schools and communities in Lebanon.
4. To advocate for national law among Civil Society to ban violence in Lebanon.



# Save the Children

Save the Children has been transforming lives in Lebanon since 1953, using rights-based approaches to increase children's access to quality education and allow them greater participation at family, school and community levels. Save the Children Lebanon Country Office, through three field offices, delivers comprehensive interventions that target children across all communities.



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