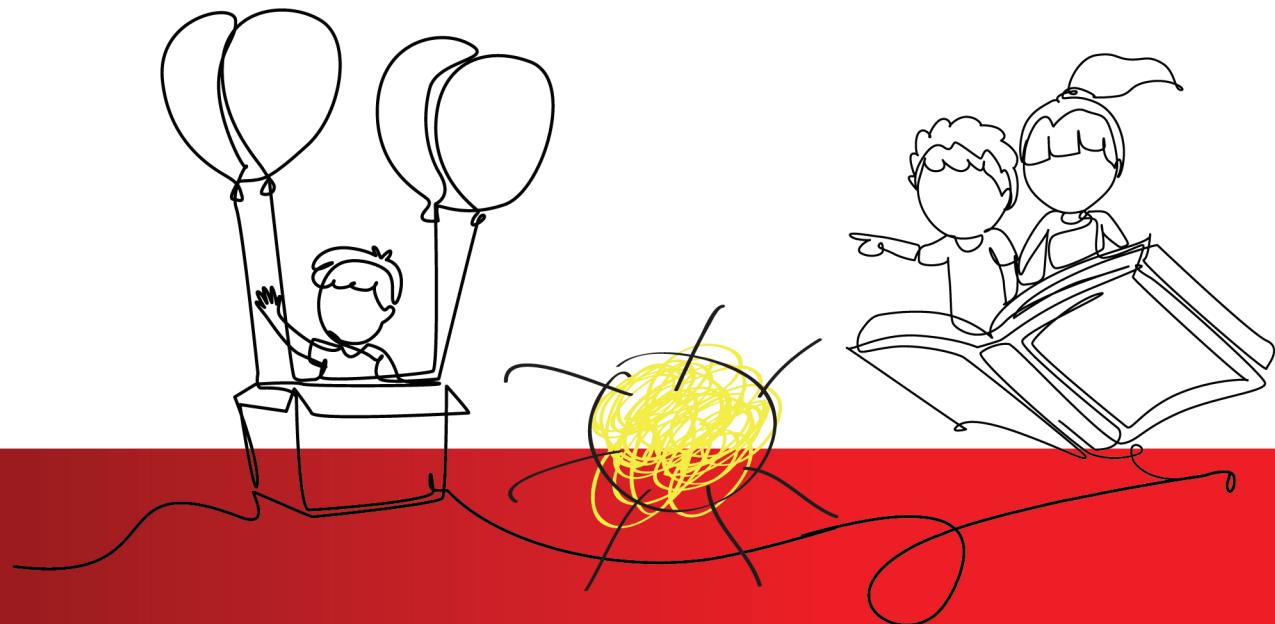


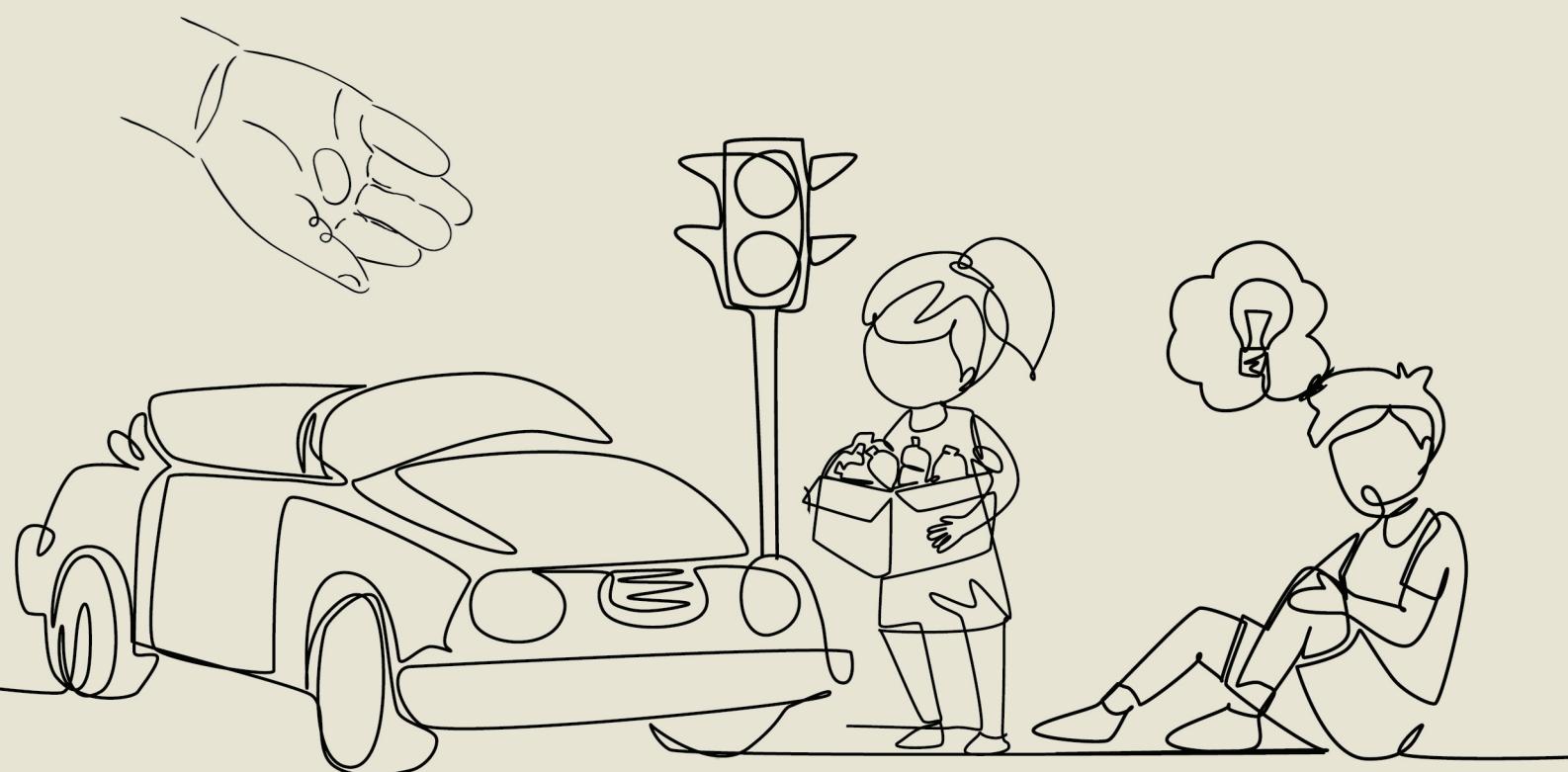


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The Invisible Children: Voices of Children in Street Situations

April 2024



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Save the Children Jordan is grateful to the **children and families** for their trust in sharing their stories, aspirations and voices for the betterment of the future of children engaged in begging. Their insights, personal experiences and views of what they want the different stakeholders to know, based on their actual experiences and needs, is invaluable and insightful and will be used dutifully.

As special recognition also goes to **Analysis Research Company** for their professional support throughout conducting the study.

Disclaimer

All illustrations included in this study were created by children in street situations. These drawings were produced during awareness-raising and advocacy sessions conducted by Save the Children - Jordan as part of the project's implementation. Individuals portrayed in the photographs within this study are professional actors and do not represent actual victims or survivors. The photoshoot was conducted under the supervision of guardians and with the expertise of child protection specialists.

**Names of children throughout the report were changed to maintain anonymity.*

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How Children Define Beginning

Begging is asking a person directly for money without offering a product in return.

In 2022, Save the Children Jordan (SC Jordan) commenced work with a group of children in street situations(CSS), particularly begging children who were, at some point, admitted to care and rehabilitation centers or were at the center at the time of the program intervention. The work was part of a broader program aimed at (1) strengthening and institutionalizing national legislation and regulations that advocate for the rights of CSS; (2) enhancing the capabilities of national service providers to offer targeted support for CSS and their families, and (3) promoting public awareness regarding the rights of children in street situations.

During its work with different stakeholders to develop recommendations to enhance national response efforts to address this issue, SC Jordan wanted to bring the voices of concerned children and their families, particularly children entrusted at care and rehabilitation centers, to the forefront for consideration by stakeholders involved.

In this report, we share the summary of the study findings and insights to ensure that children's voices contribute to a better understanding of children in street situations and guide solutions development by the relevant stakeholders concerned.

“I don't beg, I sell chewing gum.”

Dhleil Center, 13

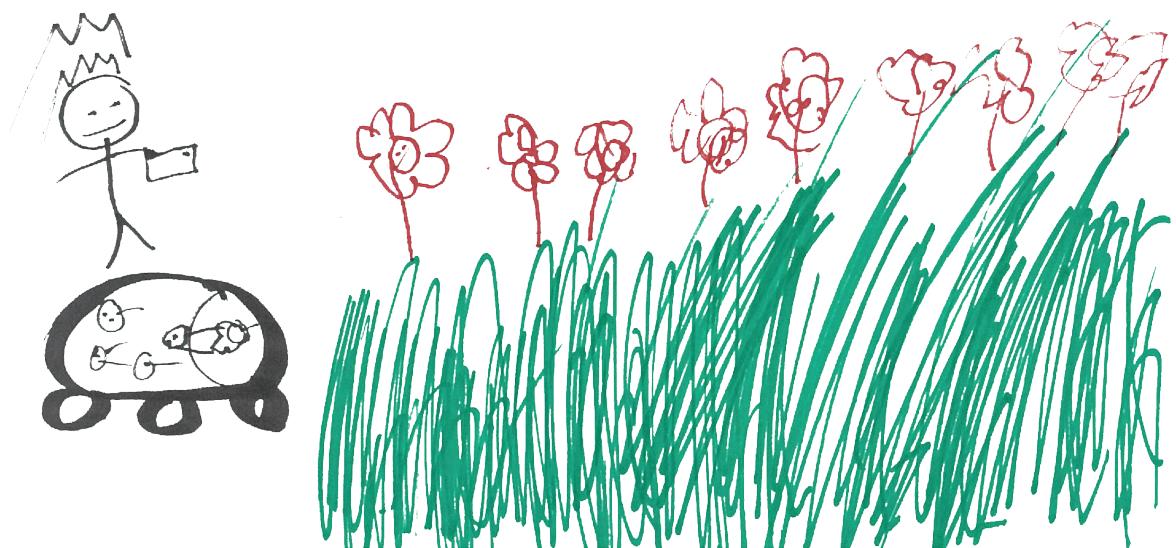
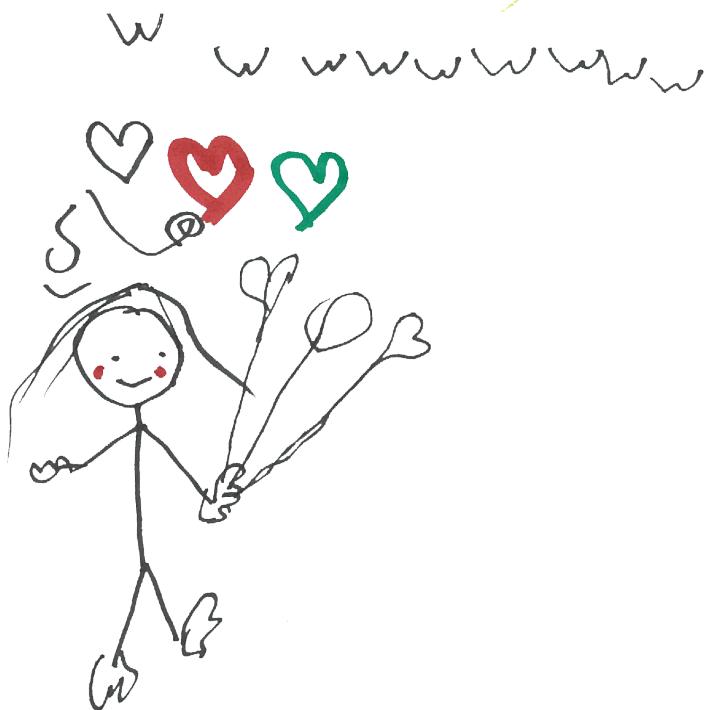
something we heard most children tell us during our year-long work with and for them.

I. Introduction

Contrary to the common belief that begging children belong to one socioeconomic group, the results of this study reveal that begging children come from various economic and social backgrounds that compel them to beg. This underscores the necessity of re-evaluating the approach to addressing the issue of begging, particularly among children.

The study findings indicate that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective in addressing the needs of these children. Instead, interventions to mitigate begging and protect children must be tailored to individual circumstances and requirements.

While this study sheds light on the experiences, aspirations, and perspectives of begging children who, at some point, stayed at care and rehabilitation centers, the need still exists for a comprehensive study to map out the families and children involved in begging for broader understanding and more customized interventions design.



II. Research Methodology and Sample

Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods research approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods involving child beggars at care in rehabilitation centers in 2023 and their parents or caregivers. While statistical inferences to the broader population are not possible with this sample, the study yields valuable insights representative of this specific subgroup. To fulfill the study's objectives, purposive sampling, a non-probability technique, was employed. The study also utilized the maximum variation sampling method, encompassing children withheld at MoSD care and rehabilitation centers, those previously withheld and released, as well as their parents or caregivers.

In the quantitative research (face-to-face interviews) part of the study, a random selection process was applied within the care and rehabilitation centers over an 8-week duration, excluding children under the age of 8 to ensure comprehension of research questions. It's essential to note that children as young as 5 were at the centers during the study period, impacting the sample's demographic representation. Their views are not included as part of this report. Parents and caregivers participating in the quantitative research (face-to-face interviews) were randomly selected from those with children



repeatedly sent to care and rehabilitation centers in 2023. The qualitative research (face-to-face in-depth interviews) included a random selection of smaller samples from children at the centers (at the time of the study, also excluding children under 8), those previously released, and parents of children entered the centers during 2023.

Common to qualitative research, the findings from this study may not universally represent the perspectives of all child beggars in Jordan. The insights garnered from both sets of surveys shed light on the demographics, perceptions, and behaviors of child beggars and their families, many of whom entered the centers multiple times due to their involvement in begging activities. Consequently, this report incorporates findings from the mixed methods utilized, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods into one comprehensive analysis.

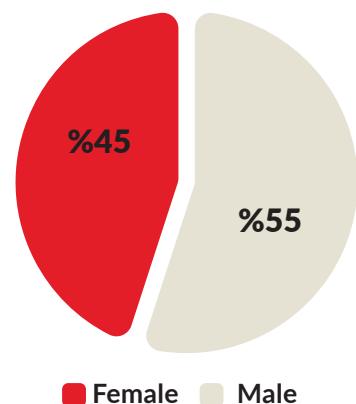
Sample

Quantitative sample

In the quantitative research (face-to-face interviews), 94 children were interviewed, 45% females and 55% males. The majority of children who took part in the survey were 14-15 years old (37%) followed by 11-13-year-olds (29%).

The vast majority were Jordanian (87%), 10% Syrian and 3% Palestinians, mainly from Gaza. 86% of the interviewed children are residents of Amman while 14% were from other governorates (Aqaba, Irbid, Mafraq, Madaba, Zarqa).

The detailed segmentation of the face-to-face interviews



Qualitative Sample

In November and December 2023, in-depth interviews were conducted with 36 children and caregivers (22 interviews with child beggars and 14 interviews with parents and caregivers of child beggars). These interviews encompassed child beggars who were at the time of the study at the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) care and rehabilitation centers and those who had left the centers.

The detailed segmentation of the in-depth interviews

CHILDREN	Male		Female		Total
	17-13 Year Olds	14-17 Year Olds	17-13 Year Olds	14-17 Year Olds	
Inside Care Centers	3	3	3	3	12
Outside Care Centers	3	3	1	3	10
TOTAL	6	6	4	7	22

PARENTS	Fathers		Mothers		TOTAL
	2		12		
					14

It is important to highlight that recruiting fathers of child beggars proved challenging for various reasons, with the most common being their refusal to be interviewed or their unavailability due to factors such as abandonment of the family or imprisonment.



III. Research Objectives

While the quantitative analysis provided a baseline understanding of children and families demographics and their socioeconomic circumstance, the qualitative research aimed to inform enhancements to response measures related to addressing child begging from the perspective of children and parents/caregivers based on their socio-economic status and previous engagement with national response mechanisms. These interviews sought to unveil and document a thorough understanding of child beggars, providing qualitative insights into the socio-economic risk factors, and the impact of child begging on children and their parents to enable a more comprehensive approach to addressing the situation.

The qualitative study aimed to:

1

Identify the intersecting socio-economic factors and drivers associated with child begging, starting points and begging dynamics.

2

Understand how children and their parents perceive child begging and what dangers they face while on the streets.

3

Learn from children and caregivers what they would like changed and enhanced to institutional and non-institutional interventions based on their experiences and needs.

We also asked children about their aspirations and dreams which we share with readers at the end of the report.



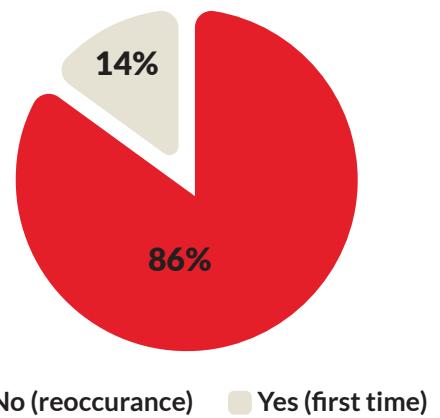
IV. The Reality of Child Beggers

1. A Closer Look

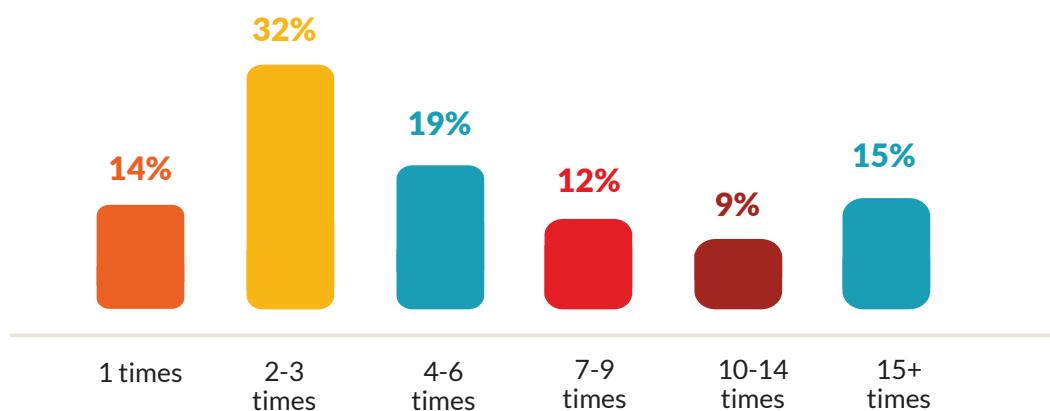
Confinement Trends

Of the 94 children interviewed in care and rehabilitation centers as part the baseline (quantitative) survey, 86% of them were previously placed at the centers, while only 14% were first time entrants. A significant portion of children had experienced apprehension at least 2-3 times (32%), followed by 19% who were apprehended 4-6 times. Moreover, 15% of the total sample had been apprehended more than 15 times.

Is this your first time in the center?
(Children)



Number of times in Care & Rehabilitation Center - (Children)



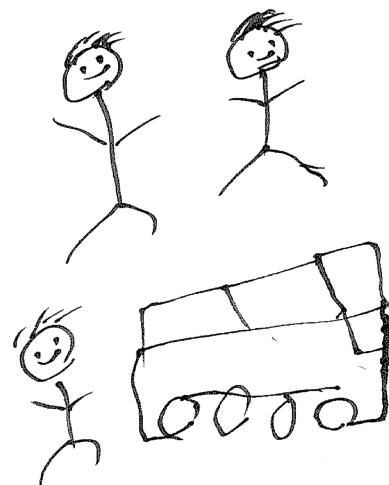
The quantitative study also underscored that a majority of child beggars interviewed at the care and rehabilitation centers were frequent visitors to these facilities. Among the 22 children interviewed, 6 had experienced apprehension in care and rehabilitation centers at least once. In contrast, the majority had encountered this situation a minimum of 4 times, with eight children disclosing more than 10 apprehensions. Notably, a few children reported being caught 18 times, and three admitted to losing count of their apprehensions. An extreme case involves an 11-year-old who estimates being taken to the center over 30 times, expressing, "they have my record, I don't keep count of how many times I've been in and out of here."

“They've memorized me, maybe because I'm fatter than the other kids; whenever they see me, they pick me up .

I told their manager once, why do they only pick on me, what have I done to them?

They take me specifically every time they see me... I even joked with him and said maybe I should change myself to a girl or do plastic surgery, so they no longer recognize me. ”

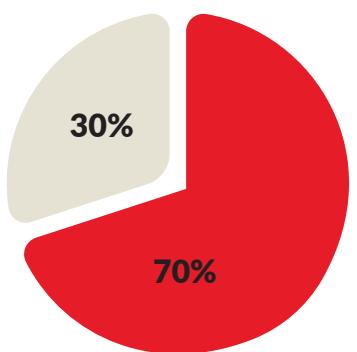
During the interviews, many children thought shared a common perception, as well as their parents, that they are deliberately apprehended due to their familiar faces, while unfamiliar beggars are left untouched. The frequency of apprehensions, exceeding 18 and 20 times for some, raises questions about whether this is purely coincidental or intentional. One instance involves a 15-year-old male who, after being released from the Madaba center, was sent to it again the next day despite asserting that he was not begging but returning home from vocational training;



Education and Literacy

The frequency of children's placement at centers has implications on their education and school enrollment. Based on quantitative survey finding, two out of three child beggars are school dropouts (70% vs. only 30% who report to being currently registered at school), with over one quarter being illiterate (29% vs. 71% who got some primary education). The last school grade attended for the larger proportion of child beggars who participated in the study was middle school, grades 5-8 (49% vs. only 13% who have reached high school, grades 9-11 and 37% who only have some primary school education (grades 1-4).

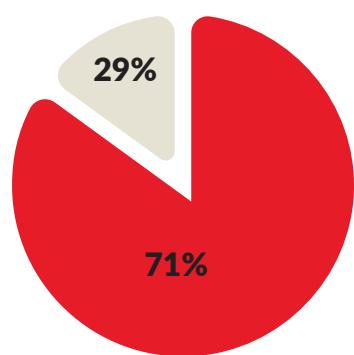
Surveyed children's educational status



■ Dropped out

■ Registered at school

Highest educational level attained



■ primary education

■ Illiterate

This was also affirmed by the qualitative research findings whereby most of the interviewed children (15 out of 23) also dropped out of school, while some mentioned that they had never enrolled in school.

“ I've never been to school, not even once. And I never asked my parents to take me to see any school because how would they be able to enroll me. ”

Madaba Center,13

“ It was my dream to see the inside of a school classroom, and when I did and went to school briefly, my notebook was full of stars from the teacher. ”

Dhleil Center, 15

Even within this group of enrolled students, the majority admit to having contemplated dropping out of school. When children are placed in care and rehabilitation centers, they miss out on school, sometimes for a few weeks, depending on the duration of their placement. This absence from school, particularly for older students, can pose a significant challenge as they lose valuable school time and struggle to catch up.

A 15-year-old female expressed this dilemma, stating,

“ When I was caught this time, I decided to drop out once I'm released from the center, although the teachers at the center told me that I was very clever because I know how to read and write, unlike the other girls in here. I've been here for two weeks and have one more week to go. **”**

The majority of participants discontinued their education during the primary years, specifically in grades 1-3. Only three stated that they dropped out in grades 5-10. The majority of the interviewed children who dropped out of school were unable to demonstrate to the interviewers their literacy ability. However, despite the passage of several years since they dropped out,

most were quick in expressing pride that they were proficient students who achieved high grades, and yet harbor a sense of shame due to their inability to read or write.

“ They gave us a lecture about bullying at the center the other day. The instructor gave us a paper that read "no to bullying.

I couldn't read it ... when I see other children who read it upsets me, and I wish that I could also read. **”**

Madaba Center, Male- 15YO

During the initial baseline assessment, children were asked to respond to a number of questions to gain better understanding of their views with regard to the value of education and the impact it would have on their lives and future, and this is what they shared:

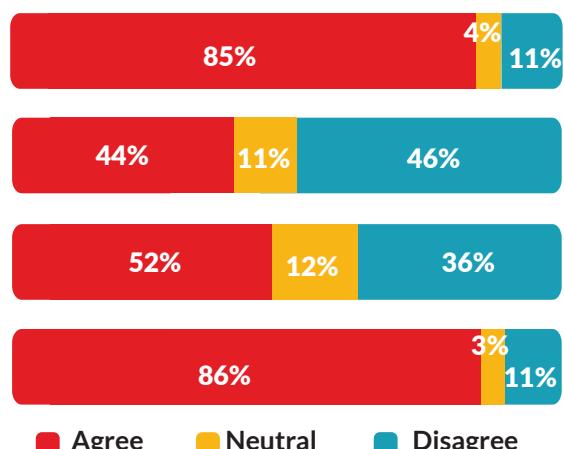
How do you view education?

if had an educational or vocational training opportunity, I would stop begging

I do not have the time or opportunity to complete my studies

Lack of access to education is one of the reasons for resorting to the phenomenon of beggary

Education is a way to earn a stable income in the future



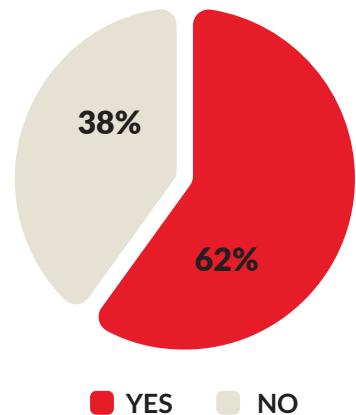
It is clear from the responses that children, if afforded, would want a chance to continue their education. However, it is apparent that the issue of family livelihood and need for immediate income is a dominant factor that comes into play.

Financial and Living Conditions

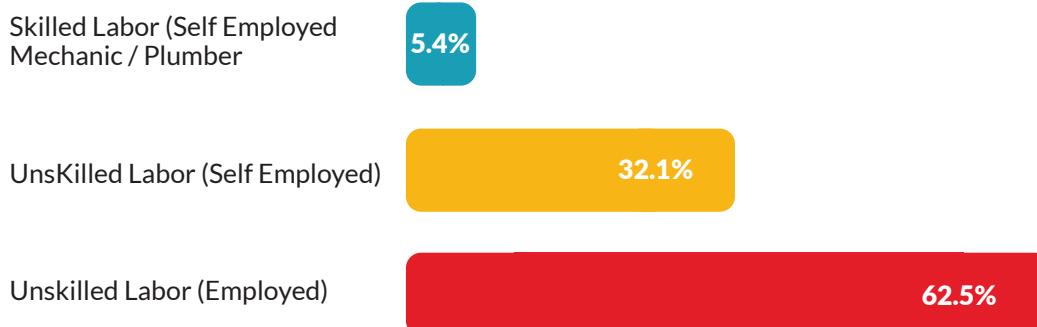
When asked, during the quantitative survey, about their parents' or caregivers' employment status, 62% of children responded affirmatively, with the majority engaged in unskilled labor (62%). These jobs often involve activities like selling newspapers for a publisher, working as dustmen for the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), or selling various products in retail shops, car washes, restaurants, or coffee stalls. 32% are self-employed in unskilled labor, primarily engaging in street vending of vegetables, corn, or juice, as well as selling items at traffic lights, collecting scrap for resale, or undertaking miscellaneous daily jobs that involve lifting, carrying, and moving items for a daily wage. A few children mentioned that their fathers work as mechanics or plumb-

ers, while others noted that their mothers work as house cleaners. Conversely, when caregivers were asked about having a reliable job, 93% reported not having one, and only 7% affirmed having stable employment.

Does your parent/ caregiver work?

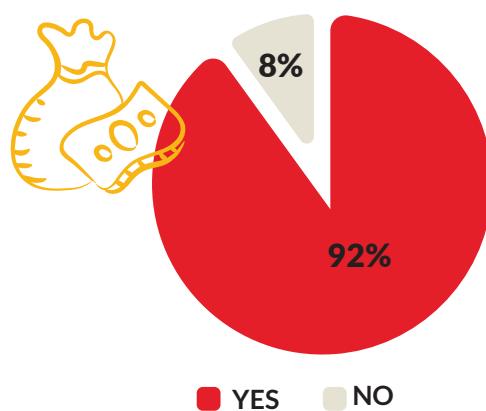


Job of Caregiver/ Parent



Throughout the in-depth interview, similar responses were shared. For those whose fathers are alive but not working, various health conditions pose significant obstacles, such as strokes, blindness from diabetes, epilepsy. In some cases, the fathers are wanted and cannot leave their homes for fear of arrest, or fathers are incarcerated, and therefore unable to work.

Are you in debt? (Caregivers)

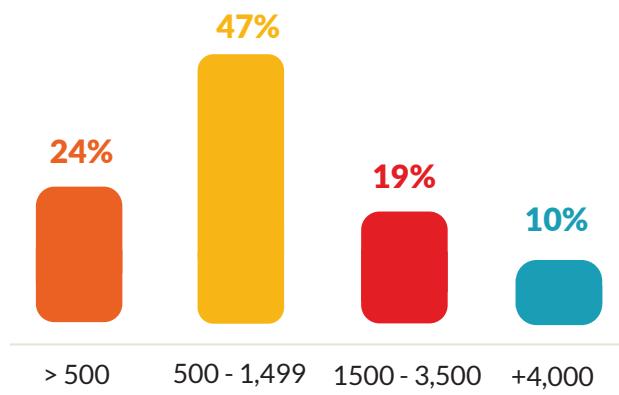


While many stated that their mothers have never worked, citing medical reasons or the belief that a mother's role is in the home and not income generation, 14-year-old Hamad explains that his mother cannot work due to a nerve injury (sustained when his father attacked her with a knife). Among the children whose mothers work, three out of the 22, reported that their mothers engage in activities like collecting junk or stale bread for resale from the streets.

Three children mentioned that their mothers are involved in selling homemade food, preserved items like olives and pickles, janitorial work, or agricultural work, which involves picking and packaging fresh produce.

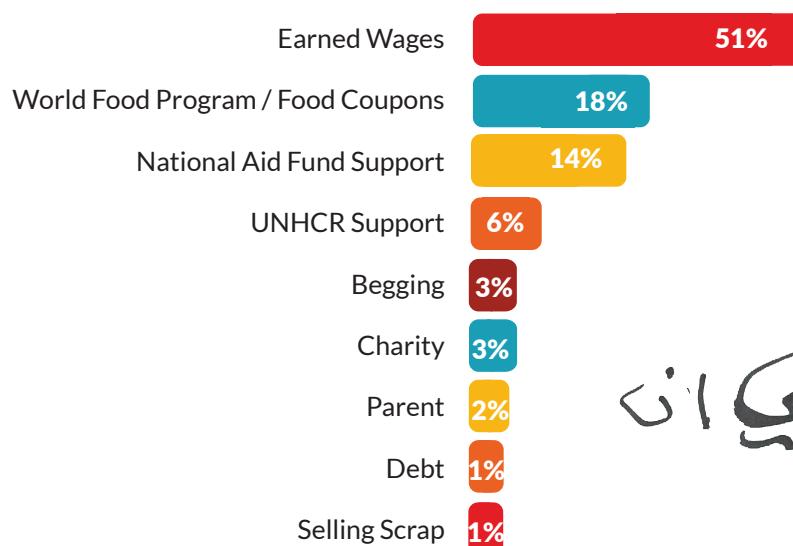
Furthermore, and according to the children's responses, over half of their families (53%) are burdened with financial responsibilities, predominantly in the form of personal debt (68%) and short-term loans (48%). On the caregiver side, 92% acknowledge having debts, with a significant percentage (47%) holding debts ranging from 400-1,500 JD, 24% having debts less than 500 JD, and 10% carrying debts of 4,000 or more.

What is the debt amount (JD) (Caregivers)



Quantitative survey indicate that caregivers employ diverse methods to cover expenses, utilizing earned wages (51%) and money acquired through begging (3%). It remains ambiguous whether earned wages encompass money gained from selling items at traffic lights. Furthermore, 18% receive aid from the World Food Program (WFP), 14% from the National Aid Fund (NAF), and 6% from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Additionally, 3% obtain assistance from sporadic donations, and 1% resort to borrowing money and another 1% resort to selling scrap to manage their financial needs.

Source of income during the past 30 days. (Caregivers/ Parents)



According to their accounts, the overall financial situation of child beggars appears challenging, and they express being under heavy financial burden. As one child asserts “when we don’t have money, we don’t eat anything.” During three home visits, when the research team interviewed parents, the households were devoid of furniture, featuring simple seating on floor mattresses, and the kitchens and refrigerators were empty. Most families grapple with the burden of high monthly rent, averaging between 80-100 JD. While a few mentioned receiving financial support from NAF.

“ We get 160 JD from MoSD, we pay 100 for rent, and my father has 60 JD left to spend on us, and we are 7. We usually don’t eat very well, and only have lunch or dinner. Sometimes people send us cooked food meals from a restaurant. ”

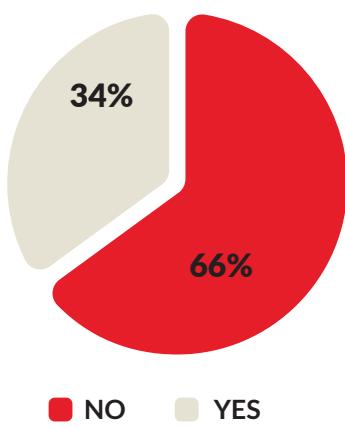
Outside Center, Female, 16

“ Our situation is very bad, especially since my father got ill and cannot work. I wish I could work and help, but I need to focus on my studies. ”

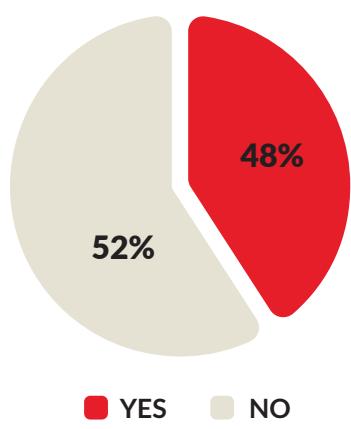
Outside Center, Male- 13

A noteworthy revelation from the quantitative survey with child beggars is that one in three (34%) shoulder significant responsibilities for their families.

**Are you responsible for your family?
(Children)**



**Do you work for a certain wage
(daily/monthly)? (Children)**



When asked to express their sentiments regarding bearing such responsibilities, one girl said

“ I know it is not my responsibility. This is my father's and my brother's responsibility. Seeing as my father left us, and my brothers are spending on their wives, I am obliged to sell... I have to spend on my younger siblings. My older brothers told me not to sell anymore, and that they would support us... I stopped going to the streets a while back, but what they were giving us wasn't enough for water and electricity bills. Last winter, our electricity cut off. We had a major leak inside the house, it was terrible. So, I had to go back to the streets for money we needed for the maintenance and to pay the bills. **”**

Dhleil Center, Female- 15

Three female children who are primary financial supporters for their families expressed concerns about their family's well-being and financial stability during their placement at the care and rehabilitation center.

Dania, for instance, adopts precautionary measures by hiding money around the house, ensuring her mother has access to it when she calls during her apprehension. *She explains,*



“ If I earn 15 JD, I give my mother 10 and keep 5. I always hide money somewhere, and when I call her when I'm caught, I tell her where to find it. Every time we eat here at the center, I wonder if they got to eat back home. **”**

Likewise, Shahira follows a similar practice, occasionally saving 5-10 JD and keeping it at a nearby supermarket. *She mentions,*

“ When I see my mother upset, struggling financially, or in need, I run to the market, take the money, and give it to her. **”**

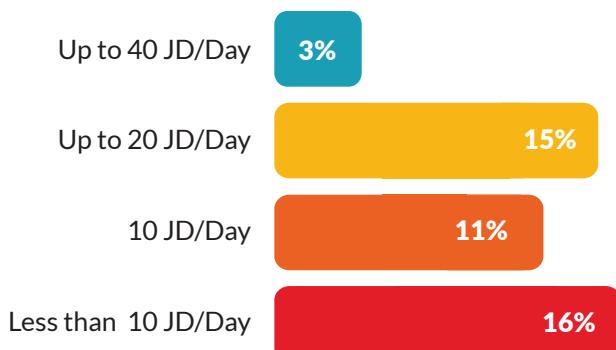
These poignant accounts shed light on the challenging circumstances these children navigate as responsible members of their families.

While the majority stated that they do not shoulder the sole responsibility for their families, most of the participants contribute in various ways, often as part of a collaborative effort within the family unit. The nature of this familial teamwork varies; in some families, both boys and girls are actively involved, while in others, it may be primarily the boys engaged in activities such as selling, begging, or undertaking menial jobs.

To gain a deeper understanding of their economic circumstances, the child beggars surveyed were also asked whether they worked for a daily or monthly wage, along with details about their earnings, working hours, and days.

The findings reveal that **almost half of the interviewed child beggars (45 children)** are also engaged in child labor, receiving daily pay ranging from 5 JD or less up to 40 JD.

What is the range of your wage daily wage?



Notably, a significant number of children entered the workforce at a very young age, with some indicating they started as early as 5 years old. *For instance, Salah shared,*

“ I never took an allowance from my mother; I never asked her for anything. When I was 7, I used to sell coffee and tea on a street stall and would earn my spending money. ”

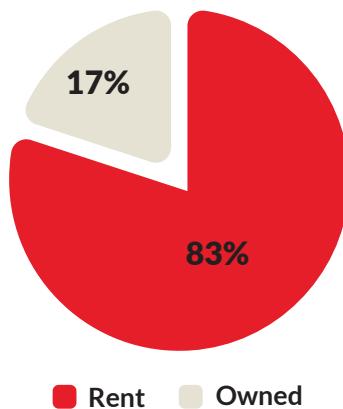


Faris mentioned that he began selling coffee at the age of 6, earning 2 JD daily, which he would give to his mother.

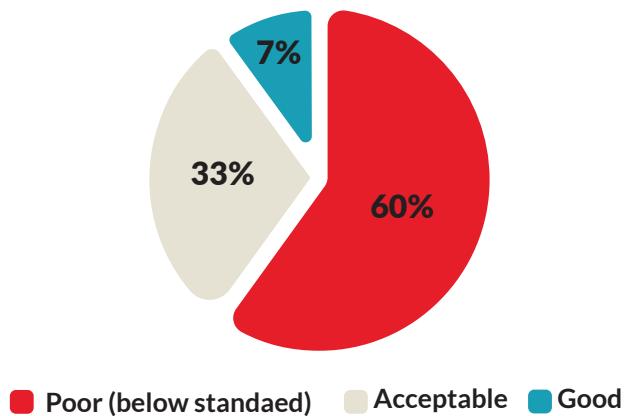
In terms of housing status, children and parents describe their living conditions as poorly, as one child describes, "it's a destructed house, with only one room and broken walls". The houses are usually small, and don't fit all the inhabitants, as one explained "it's a two-bedroom apartment with one kitchen and one bathroom. Sometimes my parents

and brother and sister sleep in the backyard, and we sleep in the bedrooms. It's very noisy when the kids play." The survey findings reveal that 83% of parents-caregivers of child beggars live in rented homes, and around half of them report that they are under threat of being evacuated because of overdue rent. 60% describe their homes as 'poor and below standard', whereas 33% report that their home is 'acceptable' and only 7% describe their home as 'good'. 10 caregivers report living in an incomplete or abandoned building.

Housing Status (Caregivers/ Parents)



Housing Status (Caregivers/ Parents)



Family Dynamics

The in-depth interviews unveil valuable insights into the complex family structures and living arrangements of these vulnerable children. A notable distinction emerges between those who reside within their nuclear family, with both parents, and those who live with a single parent (often the mother) or those who live with other family members/caregivers (often grandparents, cousins) due to diverse circumstances.

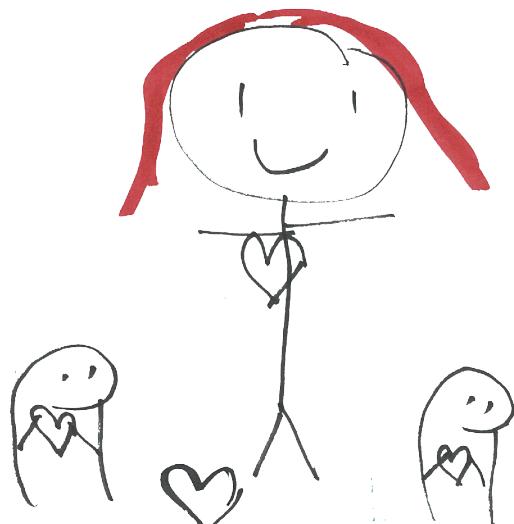


Most Syrian families seem to be more “typical”, with children more likely to be living with both parents, but where the father does not work anymore due to unemployment or illness preventing him from work. As refugees who fled the war in Syria to Jordan, they relied mostly on financial aid and support received from UNHCR and other organizations, which has been gradually reduced over the years. Fathers have engaged in some skilled and unskilled labor since their arrival to Jordan, but in all families interviewed, are currently unemployed due to lack of work opportunities, or illnesses preventing them from work. Syrian mothers engage in some unskilled labor work to help support, such as cleaning homes, selling food...etc. In a few cases, the father has abandoned the family, who have not had contact or support from the father for years.

Conversely, many of the Jordanian children interviewed come from non-typical families and live with one parent; their mother or father, with the possibility of relocation in scenarios where the mother is deceased or remarries, or when the father is deemed unfit due to substance abuse or other undisclosed reasons. Some children describe being entrusted to the care of their grandparents, uncle, aunt, or in certain instances, cousins as Jihad explains

In most cases, the parent; mainly the mother, does occasional unskilled labor work, in an attempt to keep her children out of the streets.

“ I have two sisters ages 7 and 8 who live with my grandmother since they were 5 years. I’m not sure why they live with her, but they live nearby, and I see them from time to time. ”



This diversity underscores the myriad challenges faced by these children, encompassing parental loss, subsequent remarriages, and the incapacity or irresponsibility of parents in providing adequate care. Moreover, the study reveals the exposure of these children to unconventional circumstances, with family members frequently facing incarceration, often for charges of theft, drug dealing, unpaid child support owed to a previous spouse, or abuse, coupled with instances of violence and crime. The situation of 14-year-old female is particularly indicative of an extraordinary and intense family dynamic.

She explains,

“ My mother and siblings and I live together. My brother Basil’s wife and their 5 children reside with us because he’s in prison for a year. My other brother has also been in prison multiple times for drug consumption and drinking... when he drinks, he becomes intolerable. The police always come to collect him. My sister Sahar and her 3 children are also with us; her husband is in prison for 2 years on drug charges. Additionally, I have 6 stepsiblings from my father’s wife who also live with us. ”

“ My mother has passed away, and my father is currently wanted by the police. There is a court case against him to pay alimony and child support to his ex-wife. His daughters are not registered under the civil status department; he has registered one daughter, but there’s still one more left to be registered. Once he completes the registration, he will be finished. If they catch my father, he will be imprisoned because he needs to pay around 1,500 JD, which he doesn’t have. It’s challenging for him to come up with this amount of money. He brings in 5 JD a few times a month for us to buy food. I don’t know if he used to work in the past or not, but currently, he doesn’t work. ”

Dhleil Center, 15

“ My father was a drunk, and my mother would always scream at him, which is so wrong... she should have just let him be... he would be sitting drunk alone and wanting to go to sleep, why did she have to scream at him all the time. But my father stopped drinking now. ”

Madaba Center, 13

The narratives shared by the children reveal the complexity of the family dynamics, as well as the pervasive violence and criminal behavior within households and by members of their family.

For instance, a 13-year-old male shares that his mother has 50 criminal records, in his words,

“ My father chose not to undergo surgery so he could use the funds to secure my mother's release from Juwaideh prison. She was apprehended at the traffic lights, resulting in a one-month sentence. Soon after she lost her national ID, and upon seeking a replacement she discovered an extended sentence of 3 months, so she surrendered herself, served the sentence, and has since refrained from returning to the traffic lights. **”**



Similarly, Rania nonchalantly recounts

“

I lived with my uncle and aunt from birth until I turned 13, when he passed away and I was subsequently sent back to live with my father. Currently, my aunt who played a significant role in my upbringing, is serving a prison sentence of 3 years. Her predicament arose from an abusive marriage in which her husband not only subjected her to physical abuse, but also seized all the money she earned. Faced with desperation and with the desire to get revenge, she stole and sold all the furniture in his brother's house, leading to her imprisonment. **”**

Omar aged 14 stated that he had never seen his father who had passed away. A conversation with Omar's mother unveiled the harrowing ordeal of an abusive husband and father who attempted to murder her in their home, with her children as witnesses. After stabbing her and losing consciousness, Omar and his brother intervened to protect their mother, resulting in the father getting stabbed. Although the father's death did not directly result from the injury, both boys were subsequently sent to prison.

The research reveals that most of the interviewed child beggars experienced a lack of support from their fathers. Various reasons, ranging from fathers abandoning their families by leaving the country to incarceration, death, drug addiction, or incapacitation due to illness, contribute to the absence of paternal support.

Among the 22 children interviewed, four shared experiences of paternal abandonment, each with unique circumstances. Hiba's father departed for Canada five years ago, severing communication and financial support. Lama's father moved to Germany a decade ago, taking only the boys and leaving her, her sister, and their mother without support. During an interview with Lama's mother, she reveals that her husband deceived her into thinking they would join him, prompting her to sell household items for the promised journey. However, he cut off contact after receiving the money. Faris's father fled to Syria and then to Turkey in 2015 due to work-related dispute, leaving the family without financial assistance.

Sami's father has been incarcerated for drug dealing since Sami was 13, a reality he faced growing up with his father involved in both dealing and consuming drugs. While he doesn't share this part of his childhood, an interview with his mother reveals that his fa-

ther made Sami deliver drugs to his customers; "he would tell him to open his mouth, put a plastic bag containing drugs into his cheek, and instructed him to deliver the contents. He would remind him not to open his mouth until he arrived at his destination." Ramez's father, initially a drug addict left the children to be raised by their grandparents. Although he later reformed, Ramez's childhood involved selling items at traffic lights to support the family, a practice that continues today.

“ My father is in prison. I love my father, he's a good man, but my mother decided lately that she wants to divorce him. Before he was imprisoned, he was using drugs regularly. Maybe she doesn't really want to divorce him but wants to teach him a lesson... but this time she's been insisting on divorcing him. My father used to earn a good income, but he was greedy.

He was a drug dealing, he used to sell powder (Cocaine), and Captagon... he would bring it from Amman, and sell it in Amman. Most of his work was at night, and he sold in specific areas and had customers who would call him for drugs to be delivered to them. He would always get drugs, sell them, and then go out and get more to sell more.

He was greedy like that. I think this last time when he went to prison (3 years ago), he realized his mistake. **”**

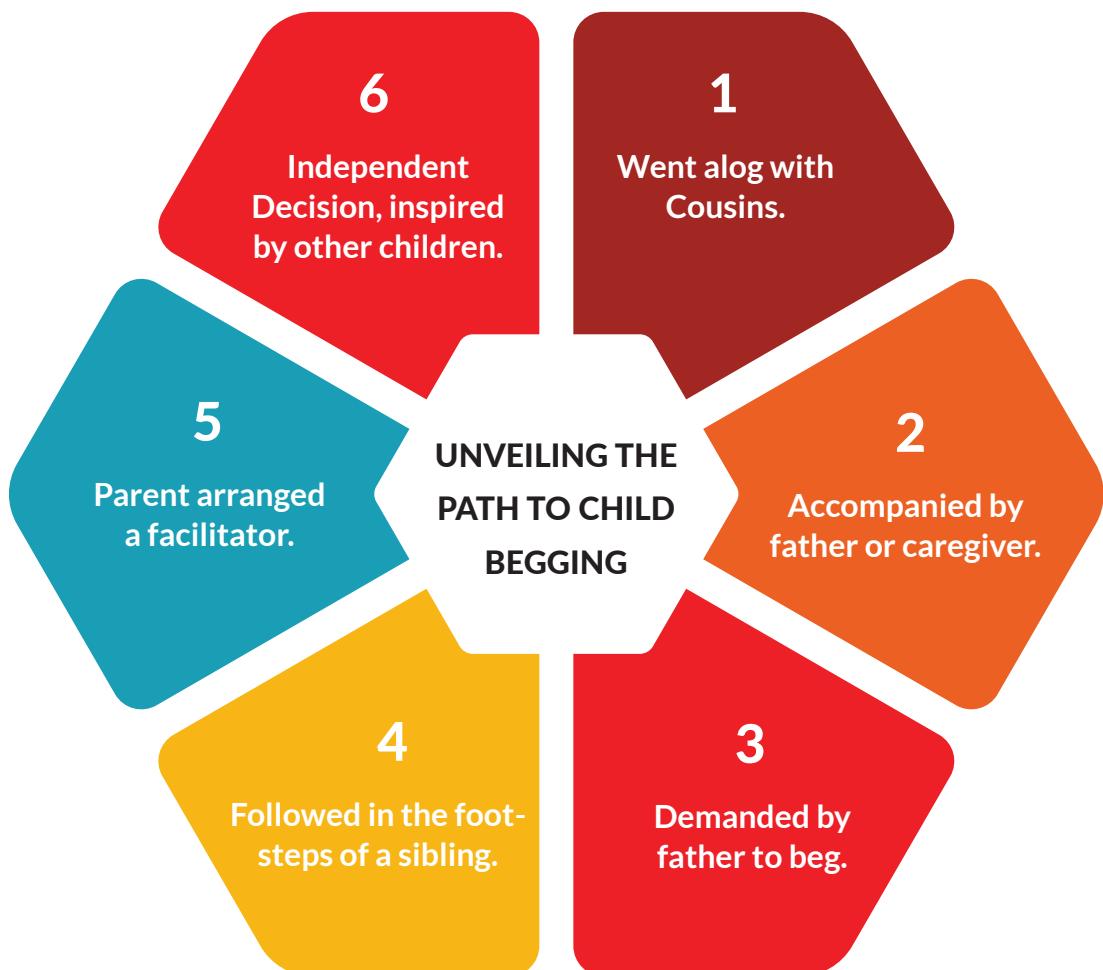
Outside Center, Male, 16

2. The Begging Journey and Experience

Do you remember that first day you went out to the streets?

The initiation of child beggars into begging varies, unfolding in diverse ways and under distinct circumstances. The narratives disclosed typically fall into one of two scenarios depicting the inception of their journey: those who autonomously decided to beg (constituting the minority) and those who were prompted by family members to engage in begging (comprising the majority).

FIGURE X- Initiation of Child Beggars into Begging



Self-Determined Choice: Among the 22 interviewed child beggars, 6 revealed that their initial journey into begging was prompted by observing other random children selling items at traffic lights. The common motivation cited was a compelling desire to assist their parents.

“ I used to see other kids sell, and I heard adults speaking to my mother, saying that those who sell at traffic lights make good money. One lady was telling my mother that her son makes 30-20 JD daily... One day I thought why don't I do the same to help my mom... but I got scared, I didn't last long.

Outside Wasan 15 **”**

“ I would make 10 JD and run to the store buy things for the house and food for my siblings... I would rush back home so happy that I earned money. When my mother asked me how I got the money, I explained, and she was angry at first, but eventually she began warning me to be careful. My brothers keep telling my mother's not to send me, and telling her to work, but my mother is sick with Arthritis, she can't work.

Dhleil Center, Female 15 **”**

“ No one encouraged me at all, I took my own feet and dragged them to the streets because I had seen other kids do it. I wish I never went to the traffic lights; I regret it terribly. **”**

Madaba Center, Male, 14

Family Encouragement:

Among the 22 children interviewed, 16 disclosed that various family members played a role in encouraging them to embark on begging. Six children mentioned learning the practice from and initially starting with their cousins. Two children followed the lead of their siblings; for instance, 11-year-old Hisham, driven by envy of his brother's earnings to support their parents, decided to join him instead of feeling useless at home. Sami and Mazen, two boys, were initially accompanied by their fathers to the traffic lights.

Mazen's father would prepare balloons for him to sell, while Sami's father sat nearby as his son begged from passing cars. Both boys vividly recall the excitement of running back to their fathers upon receiving money from generous passersby. Additionally, three children reported being instructed by their fathers to go to the traffic lights to procure needed money, as there were no alternative means available.

“

The first time I went to beg I was selling bunny shaped balloons with my father. My father would blow them up and I would take my younger brother and walk around with a whistle and the balloon. That first day I got my father 15 JD. When I turned 11, I started going alone.

Madaba Center, 13

First time I went with my father... he asked me: do you want to go to school or to the traffic lights? I chose traffic lights. I thought it would be an amusement park at first. I wasn't selling anything, I would just go up to the cars and say: please help me... one lady gave me a 50 JD bill, and I went running to my father... every time someone gave me money I'd run back to my father and give it to him. My father took the money and told me I shouldn't go back so they don't take me to prison... but I wanted to go back, because I liked it. Eventually I met people who became familiar faces.

Outside Center, Male 16

No one encouraged me, I was jealous from my brother because he was helping my parents while I was sitting at home being useless... So, I felt obliged to go buy products and sell them.

Madaba Center, 11

My brothers used to go, but the money wasn't enough to pay the rent and feed everyone. So, I started going with them. Our relatives also beg; my brother had seen them, that's how he started.

Outside Center, Female, 13

We were living in Marka. When we moved closer to my uncle's house, they started telling my parents, send her to downtown to beg with her cousins, that I would get them money. My mom objected, but I said I would go and try... so we learned from them. All of my cousins beg, as well as my uncle's wife.

Dhleil Center, 15

”

The research also highlights that some Syrian child beggars were prompted by their parents to beg with the assistance of a 'begging facilitator.' This facilitator, recommended by family or acquaintances of the parents, is considered a trustworthy person capable of creating opportunities for their children to earn money through begging or selling products. According to the accounts provided, the facilitator picks up the children from their homes, buys products for them to sell, transports them to a perceived "safe" location, and waits nearby until they complete their activities, and safely returns them home. The facilitator charges children for the purchased products and takes a portion of their earnings, covering transportation, supervision, and "protection."

A few interviewed Syrian mothers acknowledge this practice, expressing a lack of pride in sharing such information. They reveal that challenging economic conditions have left them feeling helpless and indebted, making it difficult to meet their household's financial demands. Recommendations from friends in their neighborhood who had done the same with their children, led them to a "trusted person" who could assist in gener-

ating income by taking their children to sell products. In one instance, a 13-year-old boy was apprehended, leading his mother to vow never to send him again. In another case, a 15-year-old girl ceased participation because the "facilitator" encountered trouble with officials.

“The taxi driver we used to ride with was the guy who would get the products from outlet stores... a box was for 1.5-1 dinars... I would make 5 JD from each box. Sometimes the driver used to stop in front of a restaurant and ask us to go down and beg for free food for him.... If I made 5 JD, he would take 3, and I would keep 2. He would know if you were hiding some of the money, he would search the kids, but he never searched us girls... he would consider us as his sisters. He would drop us off at the traffic light and then wait for us at a corner. He also taught us what to say to people... we stayed with him for a year, and then he got into trouble with the ministry. **”**

Outside Center, Female 15



At What Age Did You Start Begging?

The findings reveal that children begin begging at a very young age, as young as 5 years old. Several started at between the age of 10-12, and a minority mentioned that they began begging when they were older than 13 years of age.

“ At the center here, they started bringing in very young girls, some are 5 and some are 6. ”

Dhleil Center, 13 YO

During discussions, there was a consensus that younger children have the potential to earn more through begging, as people tend to sympathize and give more generously to them. One participant remarked, “I used to earn much more when I was tiny and could barely reach the window.” However, as boys mature and develop facial hair, the level of generosity from people decreases.

“ I used to average 70-60 JD daily, but I make 20-15 now. Little children make more, when I was tiny and could barely reach the window, I would make much more. Begging is only for the little children, when you grow a mustache, I promise you they stop opening the window for you. ”

Outside Center, Male, 14

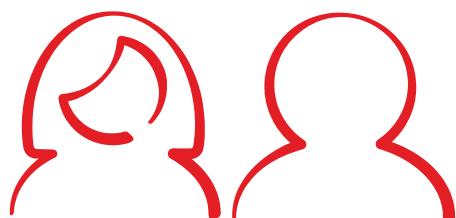
“ Most start at the age of 5 with their parents, because younger kids make much more money than their parents, because people feel sorry for them. ”

Madaba Center, 13 YO

There is also a belief amongst some of the child beggars that people generally give more to girls than boys when it comes to begging.

“ Girls make more money than the boys, because people feel sorry for girls... but it's better for the boys to be the ones begging. ”

Outside Center, Female 17

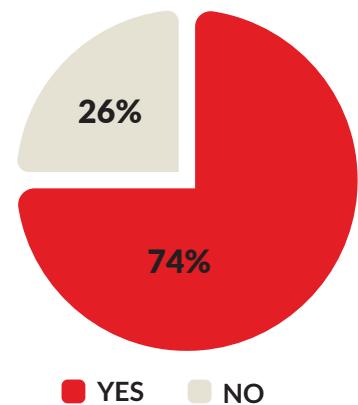


What, If Anything, Do You Sell?

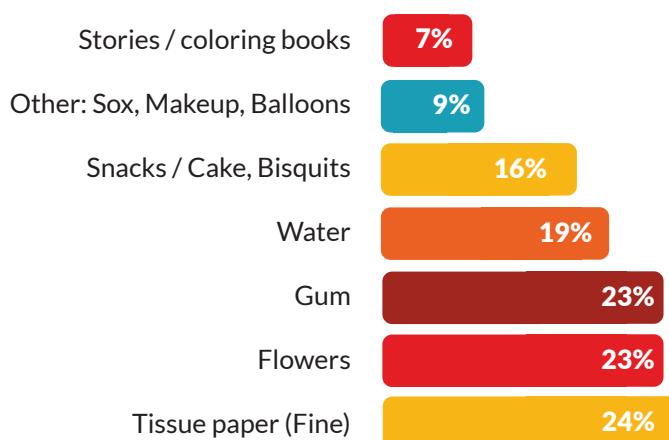
According to the survey results, 74% of participating child beggars engage in street vending, while 26% beg without offering any items. Among those who engage in street vending, a diverse range of items is traded namely tissue paper, flowers, and gum.

During the IDIs it was found that child beggars exhibit preferences in the products they choose to sell, often influenced by their experiences and a consideration of what proves to be more lucrative for them. Some, however, report that the product is irrelevant, and that any product works, and that it's the style of begging that influences how much money is collected. Only a small number of respondents mentioned not selling any products and relying solely on begging without items for sale.

Do you sell any product?



What product do you sell? (Base 74% n=70)



“

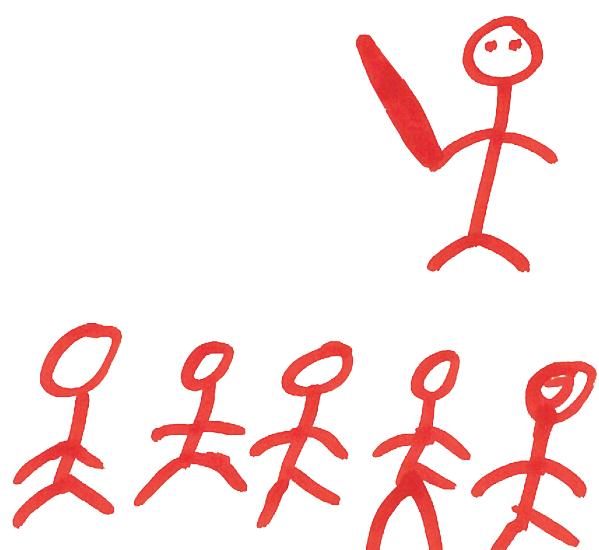
It really doesn't matter what you hold in your hand (to sell) at the traffic lights, what is important is your style, politeness that will make them want to buy from you. And it happens that people give me 2 JD and don't take anything in return.

Dhleil Center, 15

”

The first time I bought a box of cake... I sold it so fast; I didn't even feel the time passing. To my surprise it had earned me 40 JD. I couldn't believe what had happened. A box of cake costing 1.5 JD got me 40 JD. I went and bought 10 boxes of Fine tissue paper... and I swear to you in two days I relieved my mother from all her financial problems in two days... I was young, so young that I didn't reach the window of the cars.

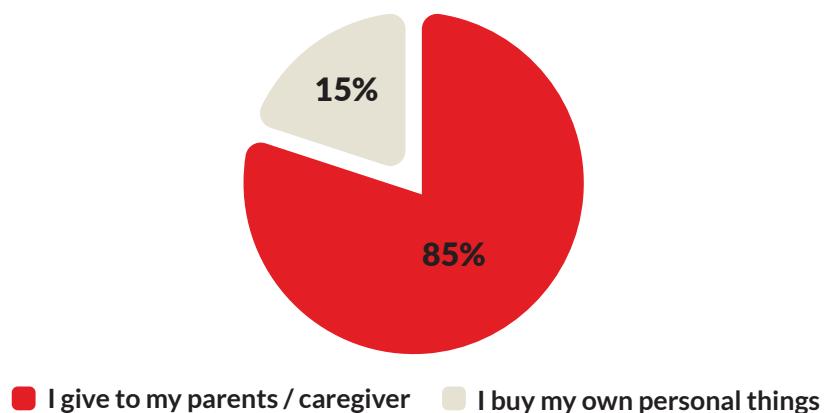
Outside Center, Male, 14



What Do You Do With the Money?

The survey findings reveal 85% of child beggars give the money they get from begging to their parents or caregivers, only 15% report to using the money to buy their own personal items.

What do you do with the money you get?



During the IDIs, many of the children elaborate that they usually keep a portion of the money they earn and give the bulk to their parents to use for household expenditures such as rent, food and medical fees. A few females mentioned they often hide portion of the money they collect, either in preparation for unforeseen emergencies, or to ensure that they have funds to leave for their parents in case of apprehension. Similarly, a male respondent shared that he makes a daily practice of saving a portion of his earnings but did not specify for what reasons.

“

I take half a JD to buy myself chocolate ice cream and give the rest to my father.

Outside Center, Male, 10

”

I earn 20 JD, I give my father 10, I put 7 JD in a piggy bank, and I keep 3 JD for me to spend.

Madaba Center, 15

I give all the money to my grandparents, and they spend on us. They never leave us in need... they buy us things, clothes... but I keep some money to go to the supermarket and buy food, clothes, or makeup for myself sometimes.

Dhleil Center, 13

How Much Time Do You Spend on the Street and How Much Do You Earn?

On average, child beggars reported spending approximately 4 hours at the traffic lights. While some said that they spend around 2 hours daily, and a few reported longer durations, ranging from 6 to 8 hours.

“ We used to go for 10 hours sometimes but we weren’t working in all 10 hours, we play a little, rest a little. I also didn’t go on Friday’s or when it was raining. ”

Outside Center, Male 13

Children also shared that they collect between 10-25 JD daily. Some mentioned that their daily earnings ranged from 40 to 70 JD, and many noted an increase in income during Ramadan. An intriguing observation is that the youngest interviewed children, aged 10-13, Syrian refugees, reported lower daily earnings, ranging between 3-8 JD.

“ In Karak, we usually make 15-10 daily, but during Ramadan we make more, around 20, and during Eid we make 35-30. ”

Dhleil Center, Female 13

- **Daily Average Targets:**

Many child beggars set specific daily targets that they aim to achieve at the traffic lights. In several cases, the research findings indicate that the set targets are based on child beggars past experiences reflecting their average daily earnings; one example was shared by 11-Year-Old Hisham “I make around 8, my brother makes around 5.” If they achieve their target early, they are more likely to utilize the remaining time to accumulate additional earnings. Siblings who beg together, often wait for each other to reach their individual targets before leaving together.

“ I usually leave school at 12:30 pm as I’m in the morning shift. I go back home, eat, and then go to the street till around 2:30 pm. If I get 10 JD, I leave, I don’t stay longer... sometimes I only have 5 JD by 2:30 pm, so I leave, whatever God gave me that day I’m satisfied with.... During Ramadan, I make 20 daily and some people would donate food. ”

Dhleil Center, Female 15

“ I make 5-4 JD per day. Some make 20 and 30, but I don’t, because I only make what I need. ”

Madaba Center, Male, 13

- **Unusual Circumstances:**

Child beggars, particularly those aged 14 and above, whose families rely on their contributions for various expenses, tend to spend longer hours during specific circumstances. These situations may include the need to repay a loan, cover rent, address home maintenance, or handle medical checkups or medication expenses for their parents.

“ I start in the afternoon and stay till evening. I usually have a target of 20 30 or 40 JD, and I wait around until my brothers finish so that we can all leave together. But I don't work (beg) daily. When there isn't work for me to do at the bakery, I stand at the traffic light. ”

Madaba Center, 17

“

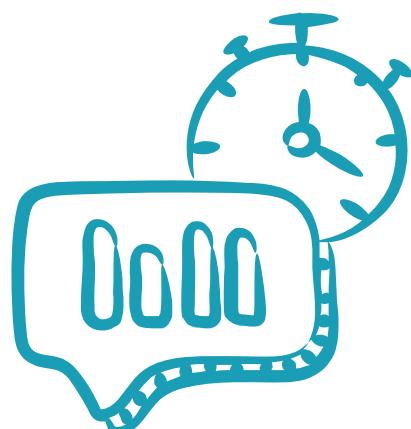
Years ago when I was younger, on the last day of Ramadan, I collected 950 JD. I gave my mother 20 JD as she was unaware of the total amount. With the rest, I purchased a PlayStation, a computer, a router, a bedroom for my brother and me, and new clothes for Eid. It was a thrilling experience, and I spent it all. However, I must admit, there is no blessing in money earned at the traffic lights. Acquiring money at the traffic light is simple, but spending it is even simpler; it disappears. Eventually, I had to sell the PlayStation, the computer, and the bedroom because we had a loan of around 7,000 JD. We've been repaying this loan for a considerable time and have settled most of it, with only 400 JD remaining. ”

14 year-old Salah



- **Weather Conditions & Seasonal Influences:**

Some child beggars note a correlation between their time on the streets and weather conditions. Specifically, they are more inclined to be out during warmer and more pleasant weather, unless they are really in need for instant cash. Additionally, several mention spending increased hours during significant occasions such as Ramadan or Eid, when people are more inclined to be in a giving spirit

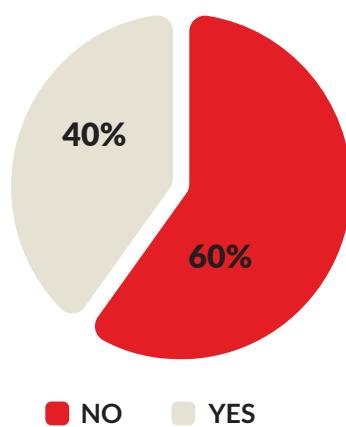


What Are the Preferred Locations?

The overwhelming majority of interviewed child beggars expressed a preference for specific locations where they regularly engage in begging. Some opt for locations near their residences, particularly those living in proximity to bustling commercial areas.

With the youngest children interviewed, it was apparent that they typically engage in begging nearby their homes. Others, however, travel greater distances to areas in West Amman, including Al Rabia, Khalda, Sweifieh, Deir Ghbar, and Shmeisani, or Downtown, with the expectation of collecting higher amounts of money. A few respondents even stated that they travel from Zarqa or Madaba to engage in begging in Amman. The quantitative survey with children revealed that 40% travel from one district or governorate to another for begging purposes.

Do you travel from district/ governorate to another in order to beg? (Children)



It was frequently noted that certain child beggars develop friendly relationships with drivers who regularly pass by specific roads and consistently contribute to them. These drivers are often referred to as "friends." This camaraderie likely contributes to the preference for begging at the same location and a perceived entitlement to certain traffic lights. For example, the Deir Ghbar traffic light is associated with a specific begging group originating from the same neighborhood, primarily comprising relatives.

“ My cousin would make more than me, because people used to know him and buy from him, but I was still new. ”

Outside Center, Male 10

“ There were people that would pass by the same traffic light regularly and they know me. They would help me especially during Ramadan. ”

Dhleil Center, 15

Some, like Shahira, mentioned that changing traffic lights can sometimes result in higher earnings since different faces are encountered. She specifically highlighted the Rawan cake traffic light as particularly lucrative, with the Hamzah traffic light also being favorable. However, Shahira cautioned that the MoSD patrol bus frequents the Hamzah traffic light, making it challenging to beg there without being apprehended. Several children revealed

that they are aware of the regular timings of the MoSD patrol buses and often manage to avoid them. For instance, 15-year-old Ramez shared that he has befriended some building guards who allow him to hide inside a building until the patrol bus leaves

“ There are certain hours that I avoid, and I’m afraid that the MoSD will show up, they usually come around 6 pm. I usually leave the traffic light and go to a building and sit on the roof... there’s a building guard who always tells us to go up and hide there when the ministry staff show up. He always assures me that he won’t tell them that we’re hiding in the building. **”**

Madaba Center, 15

Unspoken rules govern the interactions among child beggars and their groups, emphasizing a mutual understanding not to intrude on each other's territories. Those with years of experience in begging are acutely aware of specific locations marked for certain families or groups. Nouf, a 13-year-old, illustrates this awareness, stating, "There are many children who beg at traffic lights in Karak, some are my relatives, but we don't sell at the same traffic lights. Each group has its own location." Another child proudly declares ownership over a particular traffic light in Shmeisani, emphasizing that "no one, not even close friends, is permitted to come near that territory" when he's there.

One male respondent vividly describes the seriousness with which this entitlement is regarded, explaining, "If you want to beg, you

are free to go to any traffic light you want. But when our group from my neighborhood is standing at a traffic light, it is prohibited for someone say from Irbid to come and stand where we are. The traffic light is ours, and the people that pass through are our customers. They know us and they give us money regularly." Violating these unspoken rules may lead to consequences, such as physical confrontation or reporting the offender to the Ministry's patrol officers. A respondent shared an incident where her sister was reported by fellow child beggars because she had prohibited them from begging at the same traffic light. Throughout the IDIs, it became evident that while some younger children may be oblivious to these territorial dynamics, others recognize certain traffic lights as exclusive to specific groups.

“ There are 4 traffic lights in all of Madaba. Even though it is filled with members of the Dom community, it is impossible for anyone to reach the area I’m standing at. **”**

“ Impossible! No one dares come near me. They’re all scared of me, even though I never take money from the younger beggars, and I never did anything to harm anyone... I’m not sure why but they all fear me. **”**

Outside Center, Male 14

“ You know each person has his own traffic light... if you go near someone else's you might risk being beaten up. **”**

Outside Center, Female 15

Do You Work Individually or in Groups?

56%

With Family member
(siblings or parent- caregiver)



According to quantitative findings, 56% of child beggars are typically accompanied by other family members, with 29% being accompanied by a parent or caregiver and 27% by a sibling. About one in three child beggars (34%) report begging alone, while 11% beg alongside other children.

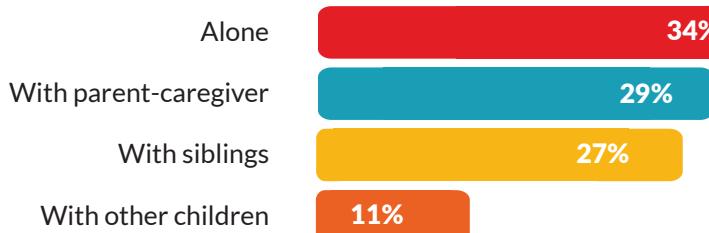
The insights from the IDIs also uncover that the majority of children involved in begging do so with family members, including siblings, parents, caregivers, and cousins. Those whose parents also engage in begging mentioned accompanying them from a young age when they first started. Some respondents noted

the involvement of nieces, nephews, step-sisters, brothers' wives, or stepmothers in begging. Among the 22 children interviewed, ten revealed that a significant portion of their immediate and extended family members partake in begging. Six out of the 22 children disclosed that most members of their immediate nuclear family are involved in begging.

The remaining six children indicated that they either beg alone or with neighbors or friends. For those who mentioned begging with friends, it is noteworthy that these friends are individuals they met on the streets while engaging in begging. Many report sharing transportation, leaving, and returning home together. While on the streets, they watch out for each other, wait for everyone to reach their targets, and warn one another when they spot the MoSD patrol buses passing by.

Who do you usually go to beg with?

(Children)



“

Me and my brothers, we go in the same taxi, and we stay together.

Outside Center, Male 13

My father, brothers, uncle's wife all beg. My younger cousins are too young they don't, but only one of them she's 12 she sells in downtown. She got caught so many times, maybe over 12 times.

Madaba Center, 13

My sister Ghofran no longer sells gum, because when I called her after I got caught, I told her that the ministry is being very strict... All of my cousins sell as well, when they caught me this time, they all ran away.

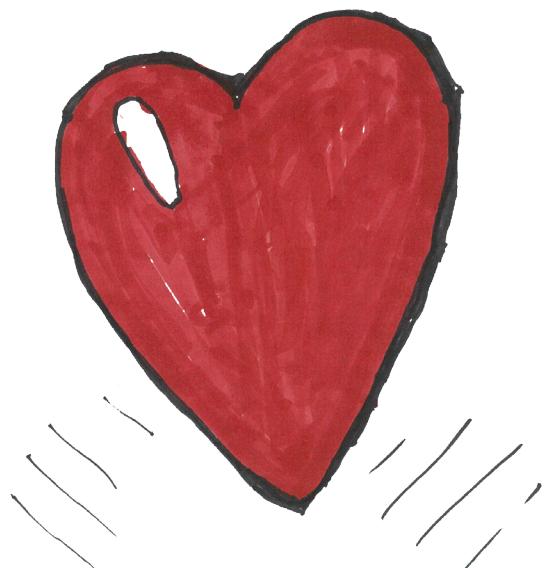
Dhleil Center, 10

My brother and siblings also beg... my brother he can't speak. He got caught with us this time, but he really wasn't selling. He went to the supermarket to buy bread it was closed so he was going to the other store when the bus caught the poor thing.

Dhleil Center, 13

”

سأذهب
أكون



14-year-old Shahira, a member of the Dom community, was interviewed at the Dhleil care and rehabilitation center. She shares that most of her immediate family members and cousins engage in begging.

“ When we go to the traffic lights, it's me, my sister Nada, my sister Sahar comes sometimes. My aunt and her three daughters- she usually puts two of them to sleep on her lap while she begs.

My uncle's wife also comes, and she also puts two of her daughters on her lap, and one of them begs. My brother's wife and his son who is 13 also come with us. We usually ride in 3 taxis, and we stay together.

My aunt whose daughters are 5 and 6 are also sent with us to be while my aunt stays at home. **”**

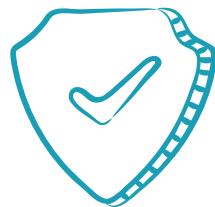
During IDIs with parents, and while exhibiting more reluctance concerning their female children engaging in street vending and begging, they still permit it when deemed necessary. In certain instances, particularly among Syrians, external pressures from neighbors and friends play a role in encouraging parents to send their daughters to the streets, driven by a sense of limited alternatives. One mother, initially hesitant but influenced by her neighbor, shared,

“ I did not want to allow her to sell on the streets, but my neighbor convinced me. She told me, *“look at your situation, no one is going to save you.”* And that's how I started sending my daughter. **”**

She acknowledges the impact on her daughter's reputation but asserts that, given her circumstances, she felt she had no other choice. Another mother, who allowed her daughter to sell briefly before prohibiting it, emphasizes the potential dangers her daughter avoided, stating,

“ My daughter tells me now how glad she is that I stopped sending her because who knows what could have happened to her. Someone could have kidnapped her. We hear stories about girls who sell on the streets and talk about them... what if something like that happened to my daughter, God forbid. **”**

Do You Feel Safe While On the Street?



In general, child beggars encounter a large number of people on the streets, with some reporting instances of extreme kindness, compassion, and assistance, while others can display anger, rudeness, and even violence. Overall, the children unanimously agree that most people they encounter are usually neutral and treat them with respect, or at worst, ignore them. Some mentioned instances where they were verbally or physically assaulted.

For instance, 16-year-old Sultan shared an example, stating,

“ When I was still very young, in Kindergarten, my father was looking for me, he thought I was at the traffic lights... a girl named Suzie (I will never forget her, she was blonde and drove a small jeep), took me to buy Nutella, chips, and juice, and two outfits and a nice jacket and even gave me 50 JD. Later, she came to our home to see our situation... she became my friend... and every time she would see me, she would check up on me. I no longer see her anymore. **”**

Dania shared similar experiences,

“ There were people who would sometimes take my mother's number and come to our house and gift us Eid clothes. **”**

Some instances also reveal another, more dismal, side of interactions with people on the streets, including those who are verbally abusive towards beggars, insulting them, cursing at them, physically assaulting them or, in some instances, sexual harassment advances.

When asked about the dangerous situations encountered by child beggars while on the streets, the findings reveal a recurrent list of dangerous circumstances, outlined below:

- **Car Accidents:**

The most commonly shared danger is the risk of being run over by a car on the streets. Seven out of the 22 children interviewed have experienced being accidentally hit by a car. In most cases, the incidents were minor accidents that left them unharmed or with minor skin scratches, or a nosebleed. However, there have been instances where one child suffered a broken hip and leg as a result of the accident.

“ The traffic lights bring a lot of danger to us, especially to the younger children. They risk being run over by cars, or even a car running over their feet while they're standing. Many, including my younger brothers, have been run over by cars in front of my eyes, and we've had to hurry them to the hospital. **”**

older male



“ I was hit by a car once, but it was nothing. They took me to the hospital, and I was fine. nothing happened to me.

Outside Center, Male 10

When my brother was run over by a car, I saw it happen. The driver told my brother to move as the traffic light turned green. He started running, but he hit him by mistake. We took him to the hospital, and the man made sure he was ok. He even came to visit us at home, paid for all the medical bills, and bought him medication and gifts. He even offered my father to request any amount of money, but my dad refused.

Madaba Center, 15 **”**

● Assault:

Risk of being assaulted while on the streets was shared by the majority of respondents. Several male respondents recounted incidents of assault, particularly during their younger years. They reported instances of assault by older child beggars who took their money, as well as encounters with car drivers.

“ Some people beat us up on the streets and take our money. They will say 'give me a quarter or half', and if you refuse to give them money, they take it by force... they're usually -17-16year-old.

Outside Center, Male, 10

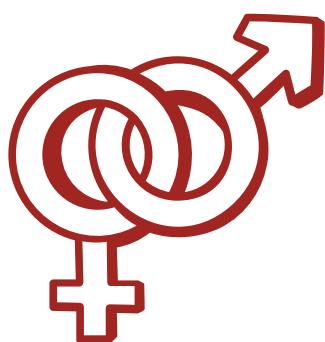
“I've had someone pull up a gun at me when I was persistent and wanted him to give me more than the half JD, he gave me.

” Outside Center, Male, 16



- **Attempted Sexual Assault:**

According to many respondents, female child beggars in particular, risk being sexually assaulted while on the streets. Several female child beggars disclosed that they frequently encounter attempted sexual assault, receiving requests from men to "get in the car" with them, with the proposition that they could demand any price they wanted.



“ There were a lot of men who would tell us girls to get in the car with them. They try to offer buy us whatever we want.

Outside Center, Female 15

Girls are in more danger than boys... girls can be kidnapped or sexually assaulted.

Outside Center, Male, 13

- **Smoking, Substance and Drug Use:**

Although most children acknowledged that child beggars might adopt negative habits like smoking, drug use, or alcohol consumption, only a few confessed to experimenting with drugs or glue sniffing. Many of the interviewed children admitted to smoking, with one disclosing that he started smoking at the age of 7.

“ I used to take Captagon so that I could stay at the traffic lights for hours. Sometimes I would be out for two days without sleep. I smoke 3-2 packs of cigarettes daily, it helps me release some of my anger and frustration.

Outside Center, Male 14

Children learn things from other children at the traffic light. -11year-olds learn how to sniff glue... and children like to imitate each other, so they might end up trying things.

Dhleil Center, 15



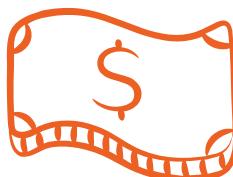


V. What Do Children and Caregivers Say About Street Begging

How Do You Perceive Child Begging?

46%

consider begging a viable profession and a source of income highlights

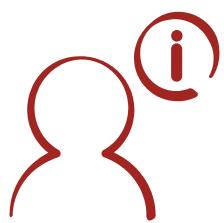


The fact that 46% consider begging a viable profession and a source of income highlights the normalization of this practice among a significant portion of the surveyed children. Furthermore, 43% of respondents view begging as a solution to all their problems or an escape from life's challenges.

The survey findings reveal a complex set of attitudes and perceptions among child beggars regarding their engagement in begging. One in four child beggars who participated in the survey, believe that begging is preferable to working for income, signaling potential challenges in understanding the value and impact of education and other avenues for personal and financial growth.

One in four child

beggars who participated in the survey, believe that begging is preferable to working for income.



The majority of respondents (61%) demonstrated awareness of the adverse effects of begging on individuals and the community, indicating a level of understanding regarding the broader consequences of their actions. In the IDIs, a few respondents highlighted some of the negative impacts of begging, particularly in relation to harming one's reputation and limiting opportunities.

One female respondent mentions that if someone seeks a girl's hand in marriage and discovers a record of begging charges, it may jeopardize the marriage proposal as the potential groom might refuse to proceed due to her involvement in begging. Hisham, an 11-year-old, recounts an incident where his older brother, on the verge of marriage, faced rejection from the bride's family upon the discovery of begging charges on his record.

I want to make sure I sort myself out, because I don't want to face what my brother did. When he wanted to get married, they found out that he had begging charges on his record, and they wished us the best and told us that we would not have the fortune of having their daughter as our bride.

Madaba Center, 11

Contrastingly, Shahira notes a unique perspective within the Dom community, where members apparently prefer girls engaged in begging. She states, "They've asked for my hand in marriage multiple times because I'm a beggar, but both my parents and I didn't approve. We usually marry from each other. These are the traditions and norms of the Dom community; the men want to marry a beggar."

Are children familiar with the consequences of begging?

I am familiar with the negative effects of begging on individuals and the community (on me and those around me).



I consider begging to be the solution to all my problems in life (an escape from my problems)



I consider begging among the professions available to me, and consider it as a source of income.



Begging is better than working to receive income



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

How Did You Feel When You First Went Out to the Streets?

Children expressed a spectrum of emotions related to their early experiences. Some initially recalled feeling "afraid" or even experiencing shame when they first began begging. However, as time went on, a shift occurred, and many began to feel a sense of pride in contributing to their families. Eventually, these children stated that they came to accept the idea that being on the streets is part of their daily lives. Some of them even find it a way to pass the time, transforming the experience into something that made them feel mature and older, especially since they were actively supporting their families.

“ I was so happy the first day I went. I felt I was a grown up... but when I got caught, I started to worry a little more.

Outside Center, Female, 13

Sometimes I used to be upset, but I'm used it to now, I got so used to it that I have to go daily, I love going to the traffic lights, I waste boring time.

Dhleil Center, 14

I bought Fine for 2 JD and went to the traffic lights and sold them. I was afraid that day ... but I got used to it with time.

Dhleil Center, 15

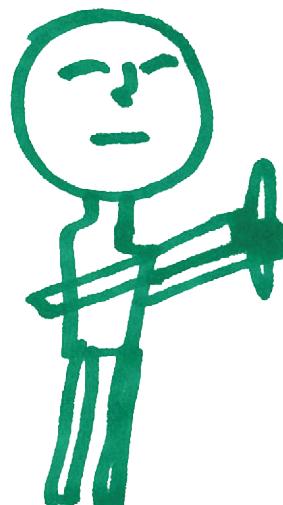
I felt ashamed. It was insulting. I was scared... I didn't know it's the MoSD that apprehend us, I thought it was the police.

Outside Center, Female 15

A few older respondents mention that they regret that they started begging in the first place; as one stated

“ if I can go back and change anything about my past, I would make sure I don't go to the traffic lights. I really regret starting. ”

This expression reveals a feeling of remorse and a tendency to develop an addiction to the street life, driven by the exhilarating experiences and the independence of earning money without relying on someone else.





VI. How Children Describe Their Experience with National Entities Entrusted with Addressing Child Begging

How Were Children Confined?

Children interviewed were asked to recount the circumstances leading to their recent admission to MoSD center. Three scenarios are shared, a) those who claimed they were unjustly taken in, b) those who admit to being seized in the act of begging and c) those who deliberately sought to be caught in act.

A number of those interviewed (6 out of 22 children) said that they were “unjustly taken in by MoSD employees”. They expressed a perception that the authorities recognize them and apprehend them without valid cause, even when they assert not engaging in begging at the time.

“ This time they took me unjustly. I was on my way to Aqaba because I got a work opportunity there... there's a man at the MoSD, who said to me that I looked familiar. I asked him, what do you mean? He asked me to get into the bus while he checked my name in the system. They kept going around in the bus for hours, until he took me to Tabarbour. ”

Madaba Center, 17

Several children admit to being caught in the act, attempting to flee but failing to do so, as a 13-year-old recalls "As I started running, my brother screamed, telling me to run towards the roundabout... I ran as fast as I could, but he caught me. So, I stopped, and I didn't know what more to do. They put me in the bus and sent me to Dhleil."

Three children stated that they deliberately sought to be apprehended for various reasons, with two boys expressing chivalrous intentions, as described in the following verbatim.

“ I stopped begging 5 months ago and haven't been going out on the streets. However, this time, I intentionally let them catch me because my friend Joud, who is 8 years old had been missing for some time.

I looked everywhere for him but couldn't find him even during the first two times I was caught. On the third time, I found him at the center. I don't know Joud's contact information, or his parents, his mother is divorced, his father is incarcerated. He lives with his aunt. I was really worried about him.

Madaba Center, 11

I gave up begging over a year ago, but this time I intentionally got caught because they caught my younger brother. He doesn't stop crying for the entire week when he's caught, so I thought it's better if I'm there with him. ”

Madaba Center, 13

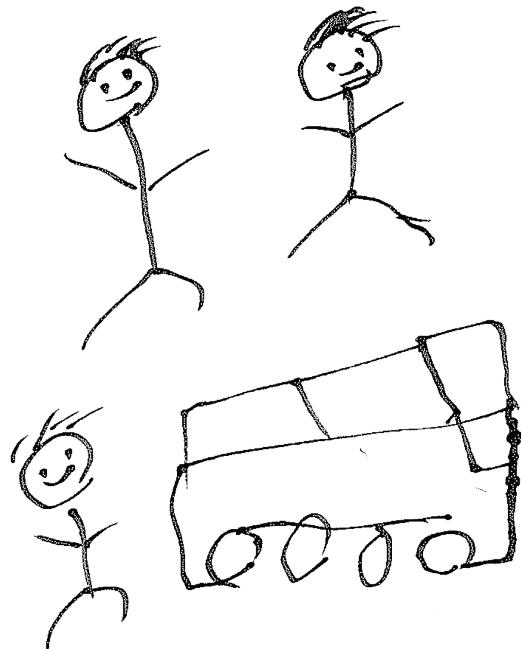
One 14-year-old female's recount is quite revealing on multiple levels. She narrates, "I saw the MoSD bus coming down the Shabsogh hill. I didn't run. I thought to myself, I haven't seen the Dhleil center in 6 months. I used to come here more often, back to back. I watched the bus drive down, and the driver parked for more than half an hour. I think he was watching to see whether I would run or not. I carried on begging in front of them as they watched for half an hour, probably waiting for me to run. I went up to the bus, and told him, I'm not running, went into the bus and asked them to take me to Dhleil." Shahira finds solace in visiting Dhleil occasionally, considering it a respite from her demanding life, filled with significant responsibilities for a 14-year-old. As per her account during the interview, she feels secure, gets to enjoy good food, and can rest while at the center.

The findings unveil a subgroup of child beggars who have been in and out of the centers for several years, starting as young as 6 or 8 years old. Those who repeatedly find themselves in Dhleil and Madaba centers appear more resigned and accustomed to their apprehensions. Conversely, first-timers and younger children express greater fear during inspection patrols, recounting instances of screaming, crying, pleading for release without success.

“ My face is familiar to them, and I don't know how to escape them. When they apprehend me, I become overwhelmed, crying and pleading with them to release me. They consistently inquire about why I engage in begging, questioning my ability to defend myself if confronted on the streets. I admit my vulnerability, and in response, they assure me that the center they are taking me to is a secure place free from danger, aimed at helping me break free from begging. They emphasize that if I cease begging, they will refrain from apprehending me. Despite promising not to beg anymore and pleading vehemently for release, they assert that, regardless of my protests and tears, they will not let me go. **”**

Dhleil Center, 10

He notes that in the past, inspectors were not permitted to apprehend anyone under the age of 10, but the situation has changed, and younger children are now targeted. These children are also familiar with the center staff, recognizing them by name.



Just as some youth claim familiarity with the MoSD inspector patrols, the inspectors, too, have become recognizable to them. Some individuals have been repeatedly apprehended for over 7 years and have developed strategies to evade capture. A male participant recalls,

“ The first time I was taken was 7 years ago, I was 8 years old... when they used to catch us, they would ask: how old we were. If you replied with 10 or above, they would take you in the van. I learned early on to lie about my age, I would say 8, and they would let me go. **”**

Why They Think They Were Apprehended?

As previously stated, there is common perception among child beggars and some parents that they are deliberately apprehended due to their familiar faces (the usual suspects), while unfamiliar beggars are left untouched.

“ This is my 7th time this year. When I see the MoSD van, I can't escape. They always manage to trap me. The inspection patrol staff know my face. I can't escape them.

Dhleil Center, 15

This is my 5th time, I usually stay for a week, sometimes two weeks. My mom used to bail me out, but it didn't work this time. I was worried about her leaving the house and walking in the cold, because she suffers from arthritis. When I spoke to her, I told her I had one more week left and that I would just serve it.

Dhleil Center, 15

Some parents hold the perception that MoSD patrol officers selectively apprehend individuals, as mentioned by one father:

“ there are some beggars that they never apprehend. But those engaged in street vending, they capture immediately. **”**

Upon sighting the MoSD patrol officers, all the children make concerted efforts to escape. While some may succeed and consider themselves fortunate, others describe their attempts as exceptionally unlucky, expressing an inability to outrun the officers who are deemed to be exceptionally fast.

“ If I manage to run, I hide in one of the buildings nearby, and then I whistle to my friends and cousins to warn them, so they can run. **”**

Madaba Center, 15



What They Say About MOSD Inspection Patrols

According to their stories, child beggars are rounded up by inspection patrol from the MoSD. Subsequently, they are transported to a police station and then to care and rehabilitation centers, following the confiscation of their money at the station. Upon reaching the care and rehabilitation center, they undergo another search. Although some children report being informed that their money will be returned upon release, this assurance is never honored. A few children have learned the routine of having their money confiscated, prompting them to develop various methods of hiding it. While some successfully conceal their money, there are instances where their hiding spots are discovered, leading to the confiscation of the funds.

“At Tabarbour, the moment you step inside, they confiscate all your money. The second time I was detained, I was with four friends, all street vendors like me. I had 400 JDs on me (eight 50 JD notes). To safeguard it, I hid four bills in my shoe and four under my clothes.

Outside Centers, Male- 14

“Four times I was apprehended, and they took my money, and they never returned it. Once they took 7 JD, another time 8 JD, but this time they only got half a JD, I didn’t have more on me.

Madaba Center, 13

All children unanimously stated that from the moment of they are caught until they arrive at the care and rehabilitation centers in Madaba or Dhleil, they have no communication with their parents. Some children shared experiences of waiting in the patrol bus for extended periods, up to 9 hours, as it traversed the town for other beggars. This was corroborated by several interviewed mothers who expressed deep concern when their children did not return home on time, especially since there were no mobile phones to reach them. It is crucial to note that this parental distress is particularly impactful during the initial apprehension, as parents are left anxious and uncertain about the whereabouts of their children. Eventually, they come to realize that their children have been taken by MOSD to the care and rehabilitation centers.

Throughout the interviews, diverse opinions regarding the patrol officers emerged. A few children commended certain officers, highlighting their politeness and respectfulness towards them. However, the majority expressed general dissatisfaction with the patrol officers, which is unsurprising given their role in apprehending the children, disrupting their income-generating activities, separating them from their families, and restricting their freedom during their placement period at the centers. The study indicates that the children's discontent is not primarily directed at the care and rehabilitation cen-

ters themselves, but rather stems from the sense of having their freedom curtailed. In their own words, they feel "imprisoned" during their stay in these centers. Although the children do not explicitly label the care centers as prisons, they do refer to 'official records' when discussing their experiences within the centers. For instance, a child who has been apprehended 10 times might convey, "I have 10 records on my file."

Those who spoke positively about the inspection patrol officers, occasionally mentioning specific individuals by name, praised their politeness and respectfulness. One female, in particular, was pleased to share that she occasionally approaches them to say hello and even offers them a gift from the key chains she sells. At times, she requests to be taken to Dhleil, expressing a desire for the comfort of the center. It appears that even small acts of kindness from the patrol officers have a significant impact.

“When my sister and I went up to the bus, we told him to take us to Dhleil. He said I'll come back for you another day, and that on that day they were not capturing children, they were there to have Knafeh.”

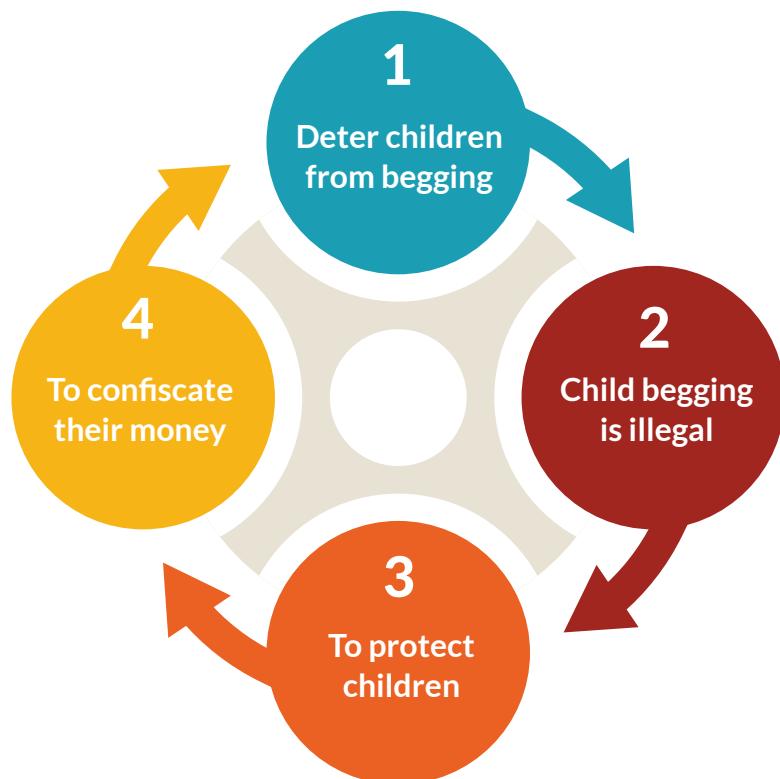
Dhleil Center, 14



Why Do You Think Child Beggars Are Placed at Care and Rehabilitation Centers?

When asked about why they believe the Ministry of Social Development takes them off the street and place them at designated centers, a significant number of children highlighted the illegality of begging, emphasizing the ministry's aim to discourage children from engaging in begging activities. Notably, 16-year-old Sami expressed a belief that MoSD staff have the best interests of the children at heart. Despite acknowledging the challenges they pose, "such as surveillance, difficulties, and imprisonment," Sami believes that the ministry's actions stem from genuine concern for the well-being of children. Interestingly, some children admitted that they are unsure about the reasons behind their apprehension.

Perceived reasons by child beggars as to why the MoSD confines them:



“ They worry these children might get run over by cars... they worry about the children. Also, begging is prohibited.

Madaba Center, 17 **”**

“ Because begging is banned and sometimes, they take our money from us, and even selling at traffic lights they call it begging, it's prohibited.

Madaba Center, 12 **”**

Is Placement at MOSD Centers a Good Solution?

When questioned about whether placement of child beggars at care and rehabilitation centers achieves its intended goal of deterring children from begging and facilitating their rehabilitation, the prevailing sentiment among the majority of respondents was that children do not undergo any significant change and are likely to return to the streets. During the IDIs with children in the care and rehabilitation centers, when asked about their intentions post-release, the majority openly acknowledged their plans to return to begging. Many continue to beg despite the repeated interventions and extended duration of stay at centers. A male at the Madaba center provided insight, stating,

“ The center does not help deter us from going out to the traffic lights... the boys leave the center and go straight to the traffic lights. ”

He pointed out a specific example of his cousin who left the center on that day and predicted his swift return within a few days. He also continued to share that “there’s a boy from the Turkman here with us, he says he’s resting in the center for 10 days before he gets out and travels to Turkey.

“ I swear to you they won’t succeed in changing anyone’s mind. Ask any girl in here, and she will promise you that when she leaves the center, she is not going to beg anymore.. but as soon as they’re out, they go back to begging. I am intending on quitting school, and will start going out from 10 or 11 and finish by 3-2 pm, and that way I’ll have time to rest and sleep. ”

Dhleil Center, 15

“ No matter how many times you catch them, and imprison them, they will still beg. When people get used to something it’s very hard to stop a habit. I was sentenced two months and was back to begging two weeks after I was released. It is impossible for us to stop begging. Some of the girls in here have 15-10 records in the system. ”

Dhleil Center, 15



A few children, who frequently cycle in and out of the centers, utilize this time as an opportunity to unwind and reenergize. A female candidly shared that she has, on multiple occasions, requested the MoSD inspection patrol to transport her to Dhleil. Once inside, she is relieved from the obligation to stand for extended hours selling items at traffic lights to support her family, allowing her to rest and recharge. One male participant emphasizes the helpfulness of the centers for orphaned and abandoned children. He recounted the story of an orphaned boy, describing how the Madaba center serves him; “his clothes are dirty, and he sleeps outside on cardboard... sometimes we used to take him into our home and let him sleep with us. For someone like him, the center is a safe space; the teachers here provide him with clothes too because he has no caregivers.”

Another female also admits that

“ life here in the center is better. I get to study, color, and do sports, and the teachers are so nice. ”

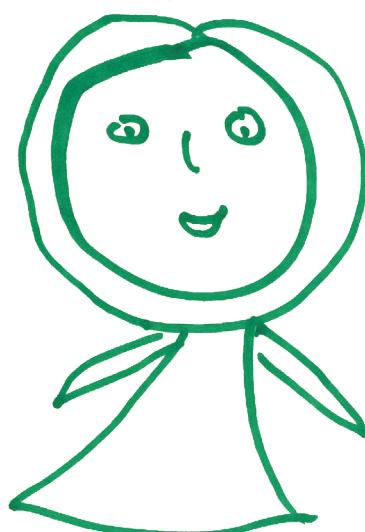
This highlights that certain child beggars, particularly those facing exploitation by their parents and caregivers and burdened with the expectation to beg for hours, and possibly living in uncomfortable housing conditions, find comfort in the care and rehabilitation centers.



What They Say About MOSD Care and Rehabilitation Centers

How Do You Spend Your Time at the Center?

The boys at the Madaba Center stated that they spend a considerable portion of their day sitting around with minimal activities. Younger children mentioned engaging in play sometimes, while older boys admitted to spending the entire day watching television. Some boys reported participating in cleaning activities in the morning, such as mopping floors and scrubbing bathrooms. One 13-year-old boy shared, "I spend half of my time here scrubbing bathrooms and mopping floors, I eat and drink and watch TV. Sometimes they allow us to play billiards, but there are no poles, so we use the mopping sticks to play." In addition to these activities, some boys mentioned participating in educational lectures, particularly on subjects like anti-bullying.



“ There was a TV, but I didn't feel like watching so I went to the room and sat alone but they made us play together, and I didn't want to play, so I did for a bit and walked out.

Madaba Center, 13

Some teachers come to teach us and to talk to us about different issues... but I don't like school. I mean not all boys study... there is not a single one of us at the center that studies... they all play.

Madaba Center, 11

“I came in recently and found a gym with weights, billiards, and play station... there's a school room upstairs, and a theater inside, with activities that are very useful to 10–8year-old. The younger ones will love the center.

Madaba Center, 17 **”**

The Dhleil Center provides more structured activities for females, including lessons in English, religion, and math, as well as opportunities for exercise and engagement in arts and crafts. Many girls expressed a preference for educational activities, particularly schooling and arts and crafts such as drawing. Additionally, several females enjoyed participating in sports, physical activities, and spending time at the playground. A comparison of responses between boys and girls indicated distinct experiences at both centers. While the girls at Dhleil seemed to have a variety of structured daily educational and physical activities, the boys at the Madaba center, appeared to engage in fewer activities.

“

I like to go down and play in the outdoor area and do sports...I love to study here. I'm always the first one in class when they say we're studying. They offer us religion, English language, and math lessons.

Dhleil Center, 15

They teach us how to make key chains and charms... I know how to make bracelets out of old pajama fabrics... I make them for the girls here and outside I sell them on the streets. They also taught us how to make bracelets for girls.

Dhleil Center, 14

Once they took us down to play on the swings... we also used paint and leaves as stencils... we also drew the school... they teach us the letters of the alphabet on a board, and we play with blocks.

Dhleil Center, 10

They had us paint on the walls of the school... we played with balloons, and a ball. They also take us outside to play. Inside we learn how to do crafts, and they teach us how to use the computer, I don't know how to use it, but the girls taught me how. We used it to draw and play games.

Dhleil Center, 13

”

What Do You Like and Dislike at the Center?

89%



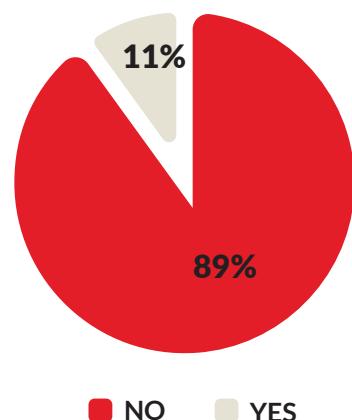
child beggars took part express a dislike for the care and rehabilitation centers.

The survey findings indicate that a significant majority of child beggars (89%) who took part in the study express a dislike for the care and rehabilitation centers. The children's discontent is not primarily directed at the centers themselves but is rooted in various reasons. The most significant factor, accounting for 58% of responses, is the overwhelming sense of missing their parents, family, and home. This was also evident during the IDIs, where younger children, in particular, expressed their dislike for the centers due to being separated from their families.

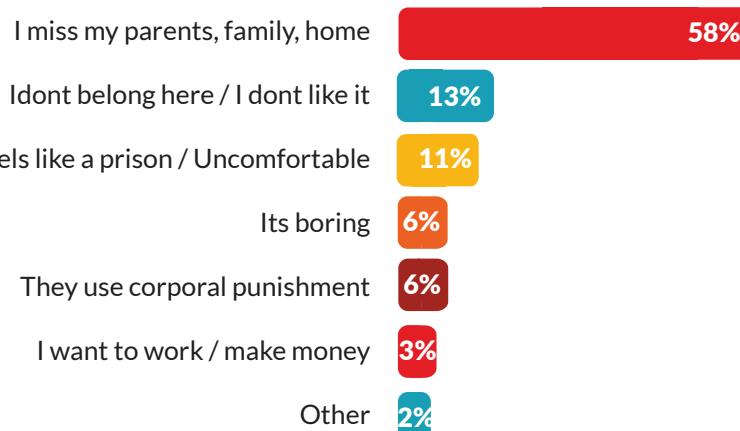
Another notable reason is a feeling of not belonging in these centers, with 13% of the survey respondents expressing this sentiment. As described by one 13-year-old during an

IDI, "I will confess to you, I cry here every day and pray that I can leave. But I never allow the other boys to see me crying. All I think about all day is my parents... And each day spent here feels like a hundred years. Even though my parents do beat me up sometimes when I leave the house without them knowing, I would still rather be with them." Another 13-year-old shared that he feels uneasy when away from his mother and father, rarely choosing to separate from them.

Do you like coming to the center?- (Children)



Reasons for disliking the center?- (Children)



- **Educators and Supervisors at the Center:**

Numerous children have expressed appreciation for the supervisors and teachers, especially the female children. Some boys have even recalled the names of teachers and supervisors whom they admired and who consistently treated them with respect. While a few boys have raised concerns about specific male teachers and supervisors, they commend the female staff at the Madaba center for their kindness and warmth. One female participant shared her gratitude for feeling loved by the teachers at the center, stating, "They love us, and of course, we love them back. They worry about us a lot, making us feel at home, even though it's not really home." She further mentioned that the teachers at the center taught her the balance between feeling loved and being cautious, regaining her trust in people while maintaining a vigilant perspective, ensuring she wouldn't blindly trust strangers.

Positive feedback was received for the teaching style employed at the centers, with many children expressing gratitude for learning new skills. Numerous children praised the various activities, games, and training sessions provided to them. Notably, females exhibited greater appreciation for the schooling and learning opportunities at the center, whereas boys, with the exception of a younger boy expressing dissatisfaction with lessons, did not extensively comment on this aspect. One 15-year-old female, for

instance, expressed her gratitude for the educational opportunities, stating, "I learned so many new things... I find the opportunity to study for 1-3 weeks while I'm in here and learned how to use the computer." The children also valued engaging in sports, learning new skills, and enjoying outdoor play during their time at the center.

“ I love to come here because they teach me new things. I miss the teachers when I’m outside. We take lessons daily, math, Arabic and English, they are teaching me how to read, and they even taught me how to write my own name. ”

Dhleil Center, 14

“ Mr. N gives us training workshops. I have fun with him. ”

Madaba Center, 11

”

- **Reported instances of corporal punishment (CP):**

According to 6% of survey participants (representing 6 children), they dislike the use of CP by certain teachers and staff at the centers. Additionally, during individual interviews, several boys expressed the same sentiment. Notably, girls did not report the use of corporal punishment in the Dhleil center.

“ Mr. X beats us sometimes... but you have Mr. Y who is very respectable and does not use CP, unless someone really did something wrong and deserves it.

Madaba Center, 17

At the center, different employees are responsible for different groups. Our supervisor was very nice, he allowed us to watch the Barcelona football match till 3 am with him. But the older children here are really annoying and they're troublemakers, so their supervisor wasn't as nice with them.

Madaba Center, 13

- **Sense of Safety and Personal Wellbeing:**

Initially, some children expressed fear upon their first apprehension, expecting to be taken to a cold and intimidating prison-like facility. However, upon arrival, they discovered a sense of safety and comfort. Regardless of the children's sentiments about the care and rehabilitation centers and their yearning for home, a consistent theme emerges from their direct and indirect expressions. The centers offer comfort, providing essential amenities such as warm water for personal hygiene, three prepared meals daily, and a secure and comfortable place for rest and sleep. A female mentioned that many girls at the center openly admit that "it's better to be in the center than outside in their homes," suggesting that, in some cases, these children do not feel safe and protected within their own homes.

“ There's a girl here who has been sentenced to serve 1 year. She told us that it's better here than being outside. When she was still out, she would wish that they would take her whenever they saw her. Maybe she was beaten and degraded at home, and that is why she was begging.

Upon interviewing the mentioned girl, who had never attended school, her enthusiasm was palpable as she expressed,

“ I study here, learn new skills in beauty and sewing, making jewelry, and engage in many fun activities. By the time I leave the center, I will have certificates, and I can work and live comfortably.

She emphasized the center's safety, stating,

“ It is safe in here; no one can offend you; no one can harm you; no one can walk in on you. No one can scream at you.

A noteworthy observation is that numerous children expressed gratitude for the center's instruction on personal hygiene. This aspect was particularly valued by them, and many identified it as a positive aspect of being at the centers, where they have the opportunity to shower daily.

“ I feel very comfortable here... they prepare our breakfast in the morning...The first time I got caught I was so scared, I thought they were taking me to a place like prison, but I felt comfort from the moment I got here the first time.

Madaba Center, 13

The good thing about here is we wake up in the morning, we shower, and we have breakfast and watch TV.

Dhleil Center, 10

They don't say much about the centers... but I think they're used to it by now.

Mother, NJ

Among the reasons for disliking the centers include bullying by other children, both boys and girls (mentioned during some of the IDIs). Some children even stated that they had been hit by other children at the center. This was shared by a few mothers as well. Some also complained about younger children who make a mess and are very noisy and naughty. This was mentioned throughout the IDIs by a few children. Others dislike the centers, finding them 'boring' (7%). A smaller percentage (4%) expresses a dislike for the centers because they would prefer to be outside working and earning money.

“ I don't like the other kids they're annoying.

Madaba Center, 11

It's better if I was working and feeding my siblings, than being stuck in here.

Survey Respondent

Appealing Elements	Unappealing Elements
Good food	Being away from family
Teachers and Supervisors at the center	Boring, nothing to do
Activities, Games & Toys	Male Teachers use of CP
Education, Schooling, Workshops	Bullying and Violence by older children
Care for personal hygiene	Prevents them from earning an income
Familiarity, "used to it"	Feels like a prison
Availability of TV and Computer	

VII. What do Children and Parents Ask for to Enhance National Protection Response Measures

The recommendations given by child beggars shed light on their perspectives regarding potential enhancements for care and rehabilitation centers. Throughout the IDIs, the children offered feedback outlining ways they would enhance the Madaba and Dhleil care and rehabilitation centers, and the ensuing recommendations are as follows:



1. Mentoring and Counselling:

Offering mentoring and counselling to child beggars during their stay at the centers, focusing on the reasons why engaging in begging is discouraged and prohibited by law. This emphasis on mentoring and counselling indicates a recognition of the importance of psychological support.

2. Focus on Education, Schooling and Vocational Training:

Offering more vocational training that will equip children with valuable skills was recommended. Vocational courses in areas such as barbering, or phone repair specifically mentioned, providing children with the chance to engage in constructive activities during their time at the center. Additionally, the idea of offering longer training programs with certification was put forward, aiming to enhance the employability of older children upon their departure from the center. Some boys also expressed the need for increased activities. The collective call for heightened educational, vocational, and skill-building initiatives indicates a desire for a more enriching learning environment within the centers. Notably, the emphasis on vocational training reflects an awareness that acquiring practical skills can empower these children for future employment, potentially discouraging them from resorting to begging.

“ Give them training, and then find them jobs, so that when they leave the center, they can have a steady income through work. You can also mentor them and guide them on the types of jobs that can earn them an income.

Madaba Center, 17

“If they gave courses like barber, or how to fix mobile phones, it would be nice. Once the boys are out, they can get a job at a store, and that can make them secure an income... slowly they can grow in that field, and become experts, and then maybe one day open their own store and hire others to work for them.

Madaba Center, 15

“If I was the minister, I would change everything here, I would turn it into a school, and make all the kids learn.

Madaba Center, 11

3. Secure jobs and career counselling:

Securing jobs for child beggars so that they don't need to resort to begging, or alternatively provide mentoring and career counselling on types of jobs and how much they can potentially earn in different fields. One suggestion was to teach children how to search for jobs online, especially once they've acquired new vocational skills at the center. Empowering older child beggars with information about potential career paths and teaching how to search for jobs online could contribute to their self-sufficiency.

4. Facility upgrades:

Several recommendations have been proposed to upgrade and improve the facilities of the centers. These include the addition of dedicated play areas for younger children. Some propose the creation of separate multipurpose rooms specifically designed for younger children, emphasizing the importance of providing engaging play spaces with an ample supply of toys to keep them entertained. A young boy expressed dissatisfaction, noting that the variety of toys during his last visit was much better. In addition, suggestions from older children involve enhancing the sports offerings at the center. They recommend incorporating more sports equipment and introducing activities such as kickboxing. Furthermore, there is a desire for increased opportunities for outdoor football play. One female contributor recommended injecting more vibrant colors onto the center's walls to create a livelier and visually appealing environment, particularly catering to the preferences of younger children.

“ There used to be nicer toys here, but I’m not sure where they’ve gone. The toys here now are not good.

We want guns and police toys.

Madaba Center, 13

You know on Fridays the younger girls get so bored; they spend the entire day watching TV. So, if there was a play area for them, they could spend their time playing there, and it wouldn’t be so boring.

Dhleil Center, 15

5. Increased staff, both teachers and supervisors:

Particularly those skilled in handling troublemakers and older boys. This suggestion indicates the need for adequate staff to provide individualized attention for each child and address disruptive behavior on an individual basis, safeguarding the overall experience at the center for the rest of the children.

“ I would let the children play football and increase the number of supervisors. Some of the older boys that come in here, no one can control them. So just in case one of them escapes, who’s going to take responsibility? So, I would make sure there are supervisors who can handle them.

Madaba Center, 17

6. Children’s needs assessment:

Attentively listening to the needs and support necessary for the children. This underscores the importance of involving them in decision-making processes, and understanding their opinions, preferences, and needs, in order to better serve and protect them.



VIII. What Support Do Child Beggars and Their Families Need

We asked children and their parents/caregivers about the support they anticipate upon leaving care and rehabilitation centers, along with the services they believe would discourage children from resorting to begging.

When asked about the importance of post-departure support for child beggars and whether they would appreciate follow-up, the overwhelming majority expressed a need for such support. Many children emphasized the significance of regular home visits, allowing for check-ups, updates, and assessments of their living conditions. Some seemed hopeful that these visits might result in additional support. A few readily confirm that their parents would welcome visits from organizations that help.

“ Home visits are important so that you can speak to the mother and father and find out whether they are really in need and that's why they're sending their children to beg, or if they're just doing it for extra money. **”**

Madaba Center, 15



The respondents were also asked about the services and activities they would like to receive and whether they would be interested in attending a support-oriented center. A significant majority of child beggars and parents affirmed the necessity of a center that can offer support and impart new skills to them.

According to their feedback, engaging children in various activities within these centers is seen as a strategy to mitigate the prevalence of begging. Some propose that these centers should establish trust with parents by clarifying the advantages of their children's participation, ensuring them that their children are safe and well-cared-for during their time at the centers.

“ They should establish a center for these children... teach them how to read and write, teach them skills they enjoy, such as electrical work for cars. I want my son to become a car mechanic specialized in electrical cars. These are good skills, and they're new in Jordan. I don't feel teaching them bartering is very useful. I think it would also be useful if the center can visit homes to assess their situation and provide support accordingly to prevent the children from begging.

Father, Abu Mahmoud **”**



أكون معلم في المدرسة
وأذبح



The following outlines the list of essential support that is needed:

1

Financial Support:

It goes without saying that financial assistance takes precedence in the recommendations. The primary driver behind their engagement in begging is financial hardship, and addressing their financial challenges is considered the most effective way to eradicate begging.

“ Some children drop out of school to work... maybe they can pay them to study and offer them free university to encourage them to stay enrolled. ”

Outside Center, Female 16

2

Education-Related Support:

Many children and some parents emphasize that a support-oriented center should offer educational opportunities, particularly for those who are illiterate, providing fundamental literacy skills. A significant number of children also express the desire for assistance from an organization that can facilitate their enrollment in public schools. For those already enrolled, there is a need for afterschool support in specific subjects like math, English language, or science.

“ Teach them how to read and write, give them certificates for attending... then they can work someplace. ”

Madaba Center,15

3

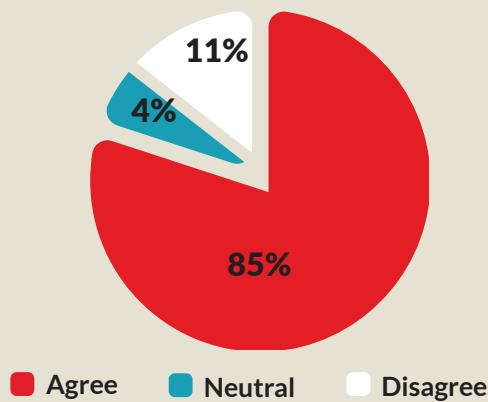
Vocational Training:

Many respondents highlight the importance of a center providing vocational training courses in various areas. Such training not only piques their interest but also equips them with skills that can lead to future employment, potentially deterring them from begging. Some parents also suggest providing vocational training to parents alongside their children. The survey findings underscore the potential impact of educational or vocational training opportunities, with 85% of children expressing a willingness to cease begging if provided with such opportunities

“Once they learn a vocation, you should make sure to find them a job so that they can help support their parents.”

Madaba Center, 15

**If i had educational or vocational training opportunity,
I would stop begging- (Children)**



4

Facilities:

The inclusion of sports facilities such as football and basketball courts, along with children's playgrounds, is suggested to attract attendance. Some mothers propose having wide outdoor gardens and spaces that can provide a safe space for their children to be outdoor and relieve some of their worries and stresses. Some also propose holding training camps during holidays as an effective means to keep children off the streets

5

Community Center/ Activities:

Parents suggest having a community center, a place where their children could socialize and play. Children advocate for a diverse range of activities to attract a larger participation, including art classes where they can engage in enjoyable and beneficial pursuits. A few recommend organizing regular educational and recreational field trips to both entertain and educate children, keeping them occupied and away from the streets.

“ It would be nice if they took the children on field trips every once in a while. I would also like to have someone I could speak to for advice. If I experience something or see something on the streets, I could come for advice, or someone to speak to like we are speaking right now.

Dhleil Center, 15

It would be very useful if there was a center for the kids to go learn and play.

Mother, Fatma

”

6

Securing jobs:

Both parents and children propose that the center should assist those who successfully complete vocational training by aiding in job placement and connecting them with work opportunities upon completion. Some recommend issuing certificates of completion that individuals can utilize in their job searches. Additionally, one respondent suggests extending support to parents in securing employment, alleviating financial burdens on their children.

“ I don't want you to give us financial support. I want you to find my children work, in a safe place where no one will exploit us, and no one will sexually harass us. I'm trying to find places where my children can work, build stronger characters while I make sure they are protected... Before we left Syria we were emotionally broken, and since we arrived to Jordan our emotional state is still broken. It's tough here. Very tough.

Mother, Bdour

”

7

Counselling and Mentoring (Psychosocial Support):

Several respondents children express the need for someone to talk to when feeling upset or lost, emphasizing the importance of counseling and mentoring services. Some suggest that counselors should conduct awareness sessions with children, educating them about the perils of begging in the hope of altering their perspectives. Some parents also asserted the importance of having psychosocial support for their children whom they feel are upset, angry and frustrated.

“ It would be nice to have someone to talk to if I was upset about something or needed advice about something specific.

Dhleil Center, 13

I really need someone to help me with counselling my children. They are mentally not ok. If the center could have psychiatrists, I would register my children, both boys and my daughter. I feel they are not ok.

Mother, D

”

8

Parents and Caregiver Awareness Sessions:

Many children recommend providing awareness sessions for parents. Some even propose punitive measures by officials for parents who coerce their children into begging, as a means of deterring such actions.

“ You need to talk to the parents . . . but I assure you my father doesn't force me to beg... if he did, I would go and report him to the family protection and told them that my father forces me to work.

Madaba Center, 11

”

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