

INTRODUCTION

The humanitarian situation for people in Syria remains severe, as decades of political instability and armed conflict have limited the country's economic growth. Since 2011, the gross domestic product has shrunk by more than 60%¹ due to destruction of infrastructure, loss of lives and human capital, and disruption in trade and markets. The protracted crisis and consequent displacement have impacted businesses, job creation and people's ability to access employment opportunities.

The situation has further exacerbated due to the impact of COVID-19, price inflation, and the devaluation of the Syrian pound (SYP), compounding the strain on all populations.² A United Nations (UN) inter-agency socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 found that 15% of businesses had permanently closed due to COVID-19 and its associated measures; 40% had paused trading; and 30% reduced their activity.³

According to the [REACH Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria \(HSOS\)](#), livelihoods has consistently been reported as one of the top priority needs among all population groups across Northern Syria. An understanding of the profile of the labour force, market demand, and various sectors of employment and professional networks is necessary in order to provide support to conflict-affected populations in accessing livelihood opportunities, finding decent employment and in the long run becoming economically resilient and self-reliant.

OBJECTIVE

REACH conducted a labour market assessment in select urban cities across Northern Syria **to identify current and potential key employment sectors** for conflict-affected populations to engage in.

The assessment aimed to **understand the existing gaps in employment opportunities between the supply (workers) and demand (employers)** by highlighting the **barriers faced by workers in accessing employment, and the challenges faced by employers in hiring skilled and semi-skilled labour**. The study further **determined growth opportunities in key employment and business sectors, and any constraints faced by business enterprises**.

Ultimately, the findings aim to inform humanitarian actors in design of potential programs and strategies towards increased livelihoods and economic opportunities for vulnerable populations in the assessed locations.

METHODOLOGY

REACH pursued a mixed-methods approach for this assessment using a combination of structured and semi-structured tools to address the research objective. Taking a two-way approach to the labour market, REACH collected information on both the supply-side (workers/ labour force) and demand-side (employers/ businesses).

A secondary data and literature review (SDLR) was first conducted to evaluate and synthesize key existing research on the current state of labour market in the assessed locations, to identify key information gaps, and to inform the development of the individual interview (II), and key informant interview (KII) questionnaires.

The structured individual interviews with workers/ labour force (Labour IIs) collected information to gain understanding of the supply-side of the labour market across various themes like employment sectors that the assessed populations generally work in, access to employment, challenges and barriers to gaining employment, skillsets that the assessed populations generally have to offer, and any differences between host and internally displaced persons (IDPs) or male and female workers in their ability to access livelihood opportunities. Labour IIs included those workers who were 18 years old or above, and those who, at the time of the interview, were either working (employed) or looking for work (including those who reported being unemployed).

The structured KIIs with local business owners (Business KIIs) collected information to gain understanding of the demand-side of the labour market across various themes like key sectors that the businesses in the assessed locations operate in, and what were their organizational characteristics and profiles. Information was also collected on the types of challenges and barriers businesses faced in operating their activities, their hiring practices, and skillsets that the employers/ businesses generally looked for in their workforce.

Further, in-depth interviews utilizing semi-structured interviews, in each city, were conducted with key informants (KIs) like community leaders and local representatives/ council members (Community leader KIIs), and sector and programming experts (Sector expert KIIs). These provided a holistic view of the trends and patterns among respective communities, and helped to understand the key employment sectors, and overall barriers and potential opportunities for economic growth in the assessed locations.

All data collection and analysis activities for the assessment were conducted in accordance with IMPACT's minimum standards requirements and checklist for structured and semi-structured data processing and analysis. Every effort was taken to protect the anonymity of participants involved in this study by removing all personally identifiable information from the data.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Business and management skills: The abilities to run a business efficiently, utilising attributes such as problem-solving and decision-making, in addition to having a broad knowledge of disciplines in human resource management.⁴

Computer skills: Basic computer skills courses cover the most common usages of a computer, including a majority or all of the following: understanding the basic notions of computer manipulation; managing computer files, word processing, using spreadsheets and databases; creating presentations; and finding information and communicating using computers.⁵

Financial skills: Skills related to the understanding, evaluation and management of the financial resources needed to set up a firm and develop successful, innovative, and sustainable initiatives within it, including knowledge related to accounting and book-keeping.⁶

Key employment sectors: Key employment sector or key sectors of the economy represent areas of the economy in which groups of businesses share the same or related business activity, product, or service. These sectors represent a large grouping of companies with similar business activities and provide livelihood opportunities for the work force. These sectors may include agriculture, manufacturing, construction, finance and related services, retail and commerce, etc.⁷

Labour force: The labour force comprises all persons of working age who furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services during a specified time-reference period. It refers to the sum of all persons of working age who are employed (already working) and those who are unemployed (but seeking employment).⁸

Literacy skills: The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.⁹

Sector specific skills: Sector specific skills are technical, job-specific abilities and special attributes that are needed for performing an occupation in practice. Learners often acquire these as a result of their participation in post-basic education, including through highly-specialised professional trainings or extra-school courses. These skills could relate to a specific job, task, or academic discipline (e.g. teacher, geographer, medical doctor or journalist).^{10, 11}

Vocational skills: The knowledge, practical competencies, knowhow and attitudes necessary to perform certain trades or occupation in the labour market which relate to fulfilling the requirements of daily basic needs of maintaining habitation. These include carpentry, plumbing, electrical and wire-works, tinsmithing, etc.^{12, 13}

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

1. Only the findings from the labour IIs are representative at 95% level of confidence and a 10% margin of error at the city-level. All other findings from the business KIIs, community leader KIIs, and sector expert KIIs should be considered indicative only.
2. Presence of female enumerators in the team conducting data collection for the individual-level labour surveys was ensured so that female respondents in the labour IIs would feel more comfortable to speak and give consent to being interviewed. However, despite the presence of female enumerators conducting the randomly-selected interviews, male respondents are still overrepresented in this assessment. Field teams further reported low number of female workers being found through the random selection of interviews. This further underscores the limited participation of women in the local labour market in Idleb city, and a more targeted approach in the future to select female respondents, and assess their circumstances is highly recommended.
3. Owing to the social context, operational capacities, and time constraints, it was not possible for REACH field networks to identify and interview female-owned businesses as originally planned. As such, gender-based perceptions on challenges and issues faced by businesses in conducting their activities are missing. This further contributes to the indicative nature of the findings within this report.
4. All the findings presented are based on self-reporting. Due to inherent biases in self-reporting, there may be under-or over-reporting of certain indicators. This could be particularly likely for indicators which are considered sensitive, such as those relating to the reporting of discrimination and challenges in engagement with local stakeholders.

CONTEXT

The city of Idleb is located in the northwest governorate of Idleb, in Syria. The city's population is currently estimated to be around 165,500.¹⁴ Pre-conflict, the city and the countryside around it was a major production centre for olives, cotton, wheat and fruits.¹⁵ But, conflict- and climate change-driven disruptions such as the attacks on water facilities in the region¹⁶, drying of Duwaysat dam, etc.¹⁷, have played an important role in the loss of livelihood activities and contributed to negative health outcomes. Infrastructure damage, continued hostilities and resulting economic decline have exacerbated the humanitarian needs in the city. Further, the rise of basic commodity prices and lower wages have contributed to a reduction in the average households' purchasing power, leading to increased food insecurity across the region.¹⁸

KEY FINDINGS

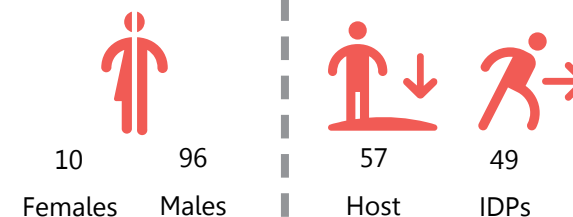
- The main sectors in which workers from the labour IIs reported to be mostly working in were found to be wholesale and retail trade (13%), construction and manufacture of construction related material and education (10% each), healthcare (8%), transportation and repair of vehicles (7% each), and agriculture and livestock rearing (6%).
- Industrial manufacturing and processing of food items and beverages was noted by the business KIs (13) as the sector high in demand, and thus likely to be the most profitable.
- Construction and infrastructure rehabilitation sector was rapidly growing in the city due to high demand for housing needs, according to the sector expert KI and was an emerging sector in Idleb city.
- While a large proportion of workers in the labour IIs reported that they relied on their personal connections like friends (67%) and social media (51%), to find work, all business KIs noted that they mostly hired new staff through their own networks (14).
- Vocational skills (13) and literacy skills (10) were the skills deemed as most desirable in new staff while making hiring decisions, according to business KIs.
- Most of the business KIs (11) reported that their business income or profitability had increased compared to one year ago.
- Computer/ information and communication technology (ICT)/ digital skills (49%), and vocational skills (27%) were reported as the main skills that workers would be most interested in learning.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

In total, 123 in-person interviews were conducted in Idleb city between 24 and 30 November 2021. The breakdown of these interviews according to the different methods of interview and the demographics of the interviewees are given as follows:

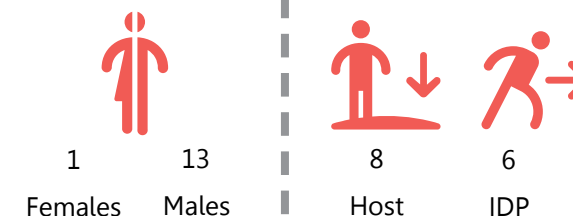
106

Labour IIs



14

Business KIs



2

Community leader IIs



- One informal representative of the IDP community
- One community leader: religious

1

Sector expert II



- Labour market expert

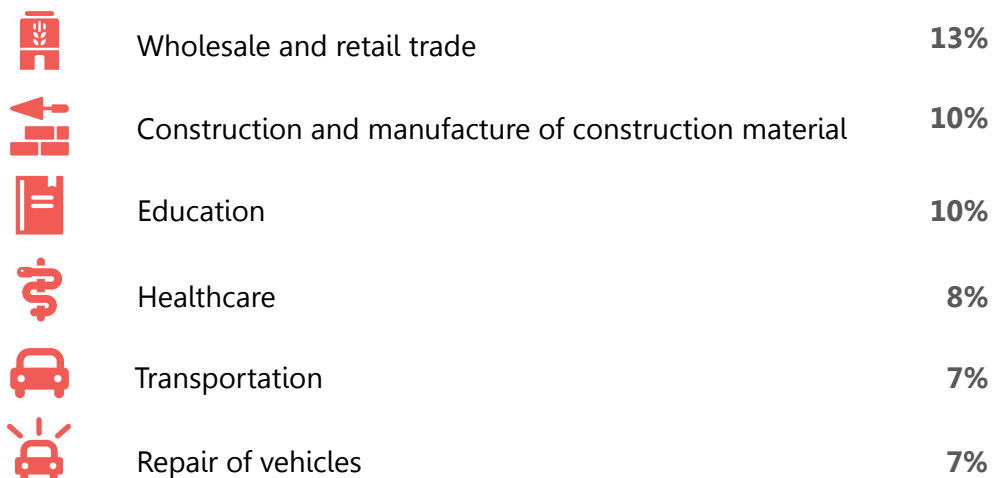
KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

The income-generating activities that people mostly engaged in Idleb city, according to the community leader KIs, included construction, wholesale/ retail of grocery items and clothes, industrial manufacturing and processing of food and non-food products, agriculture and poultry farming, official and administrative work, humanitarian and NGO work, education, and other vocational trades such as carpentry and woodwork, plumbing, tinsmithing and metal work, sewing and stitching, and hairdressing and grooming.

As per the sector expert KI and business KIs, there also existed local businesses that operated in sectors such as fuel trade, shipping and transportation services, printing and publishing services, and healthcare.

Both community leader KIs noted that the employment available in construction and construction-related sectors was for daily-wage labour. This corresponded with the responses of the workers in the labour IIs as well, where all, but one, workers who noted that they worked in the construction sector also noted that they were employed as daily-wage workers (10/11). All the workers who reported working in the construction sector were men.¹⁹ This corresponds with SDLR findings which suggested that female participation in labour-intensive jobs was generally absent and these industries have traditionally been male-dominated.

Top five sectors of work in which workers from labour IIs reported mostly working in



More than half of the workers reported engagement in some form of informal work in Idleb city (54%)²⁰

34% workers reported engaging in informal daily-wage work²¹

20% workers reported to be employed with verbal or no contract

13% workers reported having a written contract with their employer

While the informality in contracts was mostly in line with the information provided by business KIs, where 12 out of 14 KIs reported that they had verbal contract with their employees, 2 business KIs also noted that they had written contracts with their employees. These business were reported to be in the education and healthcare sector. According to the sector expert KI, formal jobs existed only in the public sector affiliated with the local authorities. The sector expert KI also noted that the jobs in the education sector in the city were regulated/ managed by the local authorities, with an absence of private education centers.



Most businesses in the city were micro- (1-9 employees) or small-sized (10-49 employees), according to the sector expert KI

The size and scale of businesses, on the basis of the number of employees, corresponded with the information provided by the business KIs, where the number of workers employed by them mostly varied between approximately 3 to 51 employees. However, two businesses also reported having more than 50 employees, indicating presence of some medium-sized businesses in the city as well.

CHANNELS TO FIND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES






A large proportion of workers in the labour IIs reported that they relied on their relationships and personal connections like friends (67%) and relatives (43%), to find work.*

Half of the respondents also reported that they found work through social media like WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages (51%). The sectors in which workers noted that they found jobs through social media varied with no specific trends and included sectors such as education, healthcare, transportation, carpentry, plumbing, and repair of electronic devices, electrical appliances and vehicles.

While the community leader KIs noted that open vacancies were also published in local newspapers and job notice boards, none of the workers from the labour IIs reported finding work through these mediums. In fact, the high proportion of workers reporting finding work through technological mediums perhaps indicate that those seeking employment are well-connected to technology and businesses could probably attain wider outreach by posting their vacancies on these platforms.

While both the community leader KIs noted that everyone was able to access the local labour market, they noted that lack of job opportunities, high competition for available jobs, and lack of necessary experience among job seekers were some of the main challenges that job seekers in the city generally faced in finding work.

Top five most commonly reported barriers in finding employment, according to workers from the labour IIs*

	Not enough job opportunities	64%
	High competition for available jobs	52%
	Do not have enough connections	27%
	Do not have the necessary skills or education	15%
	Want to start own business but lack resources to do so	14%

RECRUITMENT PRACTICES OF BUSINESSES






Most business KIs reported that they hired new staff through their own friends, relatives, or through friends or relatives of workers who were already employed with them (14)

Attributes such as work experience (11), punctuality (10), skills and qualifications (9), and honesty (9) were the top three qualities reported by business KIs when asked which were the most important factors they looked for while selecting potential employees to work in their business.* However, many business KIs also noted that they preferred hiring younger and male workers in their businesses (12 and 9 respectively).* This preference suggests that age and gender biases and discrimination potentially pose a challenge for older and female workers and may put them to a disadvantage in terms of competition for jobs they may also be qualified for.

All the business KIs noted that it was easy for them to find workers in the city who possessed the technical skills required by their company/ business (14). However, an absence of experienced workers in the city was noted by the sector expert KI who further suggested that people with proper expertise from outside areas should be encouraged to work for businesses based in the city in order to bring in knowledge and experience.

Top three obstacles reported by business KIs in finding/ hiring new employees*

	Workers demanding high salaries	13
	Lack of workers with the right experience	8
	Workers mostly unaware of vacancies/ difficult to advertise jobs	5

While, more than half of the business KIs reported that they would be willing to hire vocational training attendees (9) after course completion, 5 KIs reported that they would not hire the trainees.

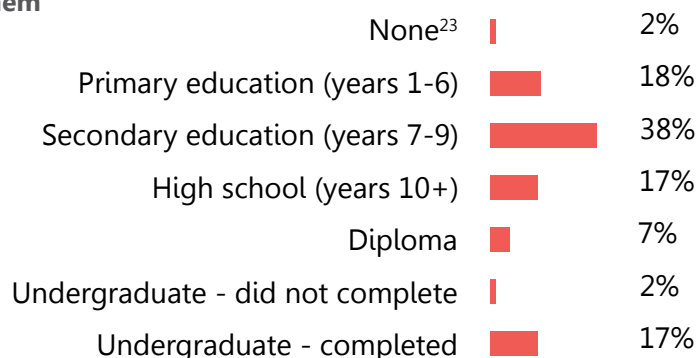
All five business KIs who noted that they would not hire vocational training attendees after course completion noted that they would not hire them because they did not anticipate any vacancies in their business.

*Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.

FEATURES OF THE LOCAL LABOUR FORCE

Education levels

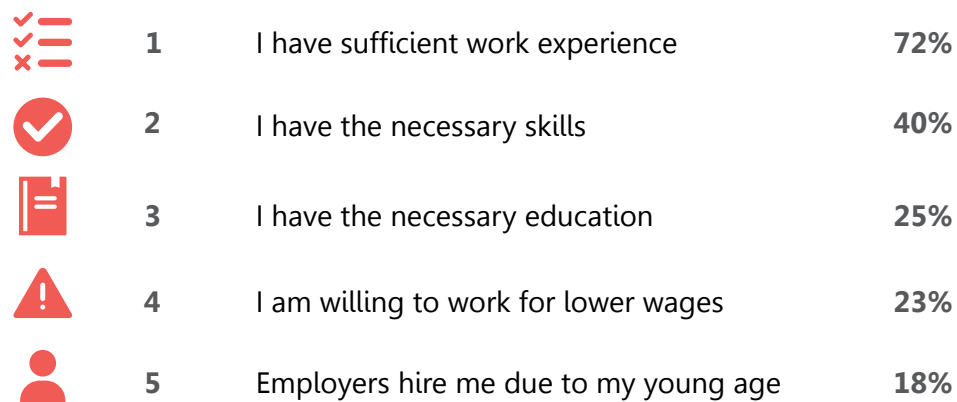
Proportion of workers reporting on the highest levels of education attained by them



There were no specific trends observed between the level of informality in employment and education levels of those workers who reported having higher education (completed undergraduate or post-graduate). However, out of those workers who reported having attended school only at the primary-level, or not having attended school at all, most respondents reported working in informal jobs (16 out of 21).

Factors affecting employability

Top five reasons reported by workers as to why they were more successful in finding employment in comparison to others^{*22}



*Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF SKILLS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Top four skills that workers reported having*

Top four skills that workers reported having*	Top four skills that employers look for when hiring new employees, according to business KIs*
Literacy skills (68%)	Vocational skills (13)
Skills specific to my sector (48%)	Literacy skills (10)
Communication skills (24%)	Computer and digital skills (2)
Vocational skills (20%)	Communication skills (7)

Less than one-fourth of the workers reported having vocational skills while the same was noted by a majority of business KIs as one of the most important skill they looked for in new employees underscoring a gap between the supply and demand of required skills

According to the community leader KIs, besides possessing basic skills needed for daily vocational crafts and trades, some people also had highly specialized certifications in skills related to technologies in Photoshop and AutoCAD, which were an important asset to have to work in sectors related to marketing, advertising and publicity, and architecture.

In fact, there also seemed to be a desire among workers to learn digital skills. Out of those workers who acknowledged that there were skills which they lacked or needed to have which could increase their chances of finding employment (63%), 54% of respondents reported that they lacked computer/ information and communication technology (ICT)/ digital skills and acquiring them would increase their employability. This was followed by 27% of respondents who reported that they lacked vocational skills.* Further, 25% of respondents also reported that they lacked business and management skills, in addition to financial and administrative skills, which were reported by 19% of the respondents.*

BUSINESS CONDITIONS AND INSIGHTS INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

None of the business KIs noted that they anticipated a contraction in their business when asked what they think would happen in their sector in the next two years. In fact, the business KIs noted that their sector would either grow (9) or remain same (5). These responses could indicate a fairly positive perception among business owners that conditions to run businesses in the city would either remain stable or be more favourable, signaling an expansion of economic opportunities.

However, when the business owners were asked whether they had plans to expand their existing business in the next two years, the responses were divided: eight KIs noted that they planned to expand their business, while six KIs noted that they did not plan to do so. Three of these KIs cited insufficient capital as a reason why they did not plan to expand their business, whereas, one KI noted lack of equipment. Two other KIs cited personal preference to not plan any expansion.

When asked about the perceived reasons as to why some businesses fail to be successful in their respective sectors or the local area, the vast majority of business KI noted that lack of good business management (10) and lack of adequate initial capital were the main reasons (8).^{*} This was followed by lack of knowledge of the market and market prices, and inability to source enough supplies/ raw material (6 each).

Number of business KIs reporting that they hired new employees in the past one year

14



3

0



11

Number of business KIs reporting that they were planning to hire new employees in the next one year

Why businesses do not plan to hire new employees in the next one year^{*24}



I don't have any vacancies

11



Insufficient profit to hire extra staff

3



The available workers are not willing to work due to low market rates/ wages

1

^{*}Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.



Level of market competition had increased across all business sectors²⁵

Number of business KIs reporting change in business income in comparison to the income one year prior to the interview



Decreased (1)

Increased (11)

Remained same (2)

Business KIs who noted that their income/ profitability had increased compared to one year ago from the time of interview (11), noted that this was because their sector of business was growing in demand (10), they were able to buy necessary equipment/ machinery (8), they had been able to expand the coverage of their services (7), they had been able to hire skilled workers (5), and they had been able to procure supplies/ raw materials for their trade (2).^{*}

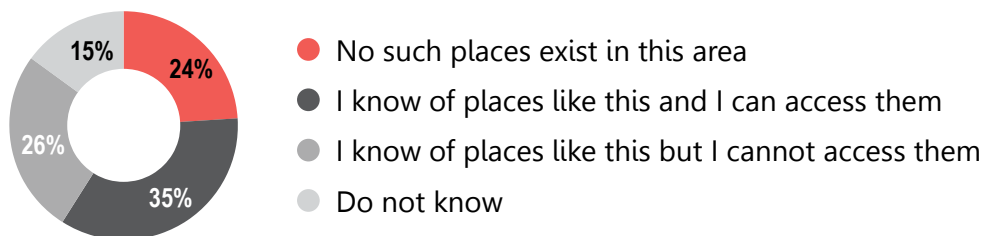
SDLR highlights that low levels of rainfall and resulting water shortage across Syria have reduced production of agricultural crops²⁶. As a result, livelihoods of people reliant on farming and livestock rearing have been severely affected.

Reflecting this, one business KI with their activities in the agriculture and livestock sector noted that their business income had decreased as compared to one year ago. The KI attributed this decrease in income to natural disasters/ affects of climate change (flooding, drought, etc.).

Additionally, lack of capital, high taxation on basic commodities and goods, restrictions on exports of local products, and supply chain issues creating obstacles in procurement of raw material were noted by the sector expert KI as challenges that businesses faced in conducting their activities.


AVAILABILITY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB SEEKERS

Proportion of workers reporting on availability of opportunities where they could go to learn new skills or receive any trainings







While training opportunities were available in the city, according to workers from the labour IIs, 26% of workers noted that they were unable to access them. Financial barrier due to trainings being too expensive was cited by a majority of these respondents as the main reason why they were unable to access the training opportunities (71%). This was followed by 57% of respondents who reported that they could not attend these trainings because they had to take care of family obligations.*

 **People with disabilities and special needs faced issues in accessing trainings, as per the sector expert KI**

 **No specific training programs in place that targeted the youth and encouraged their development, according to the sector expert KI**

Proportion of workers reporting on the actors who provide trainings in the city*

-  Private trainings institutes (83%)
-  NGOs and local humanitarian organizations (38%)
-  Local authorities (17%)
-  Business enterprises (2%)

The community leader KIs reported that trainings were available on project management, capacity building, use of computer, foreign languages, some limited vocations and trades such as sewing and stitching, carpentry and woodwork, and repair and maintenance of phones and electronic devices.







*Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.

Further, the community leader KIs suggested that establishment of mentorship programs as a follow-up to training courses, introduction of modern techniques and technologies for agriculture (winter cropping, use of fertilizers), and other sectors would sustainably contribute to supporting livelihood and economic opportunities in the city, instead of one-off training programs.

Additionally, the sector expert KI also noted that programs related to youth rehabilitation, and entrepreneurship trainings to set up small scale industries would be some of the most useful trainings that should be set up for people in the city.

Meanwhile, a majority of workers (73%) reported an interest in attending trainings programs if there was an entity that helped them learn new skills or provided trainings without the prohibitive factors.

Types of skills reported by workers which they would be most interested in learning*

 Computer/ ICT/ Digital skills	49%	 Vocational skills	27%
 Business and management skills	23%	 Financial and administrative skills	19%
 Sector specific skills	17%	 Communication skills	10%

74% respondents in the labour IIs reported being interested in starting their own business

97% respondents who reported being interested in starting their own business also reported facing barriers in doing so

 **Lack of capital (99%) and lack of equipment (16%) were the main barriers reported**

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

In order to start a small business in the same sectors as theirs, the business owners reported that people, on average, would need an estimated 31,144,444 Syrian Pound (SYP).²⁷



Unavailability of banks and financial institutions in the city was highlighted by 12 business KIs as a barrier when asked if they would be able to get a loan to expand their business



There is a need for provision of micro-loans and credit, and cash grants for new and existing small and medium-scale businesses

Most business KIs noted that there were no specific business-support programs currently available in the city that they were aware of (11). This was supported by the sector expert KI who noted the absence of business support programs in the city. Reflecting this, the sector expert KI added that small businesses could benefit from grants and financial support for establishing the industrial sector. Further, the community leader KIs noted that supporting development and establishment of small-scale industries for manufacture and processing of food and non-food items would contribute to the overall development of the area.

However, one business KI noted that there were some vocational training programs being run in the city in which businesses could enroll their employees to help them hone their skills.

In order to understand the non-financial needs of business enterprises to support them in their overall activities, business KIs who noted that they planned to expand their business in the next two years (8) were asked if they required any special trainings, new skills, and/or resources. Seven business KIs noted that they would need resources, while one business KI noted that they would need both resources and trainings.^{*28} The types of resources that the businesses would need included new equipment and machinery (6), and financial input (3).^{*} Similarly, training related to computer, and ICT was noted by one business KI as a requirement to be able to expand their business.^{*}

POTENTIAL SECTORS WITH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



Industrial manufacturing and processing of food items and beverages was noted by the business KIs (13) as the sector high in demand, and thus likely to be the most profitable



Construction and infrastructure rehabilitation sector was rapidly growing in the city due to high demand for housing needs, according to the sector expert KI

According to the sector expert KI, agricultural sector and the industrial processing of local agricultural resources and producing finished products were still underdeveloped in the city and had immense potential for growth.

While the sector expert KI noted that there had been some interest from international investors in infrastructure rehabilitation and establishment of electricity networks, communications and fuel sector in the city, local authorities should also remove restrictions on the export of local products, and reduce taxes for producers and investors to further encourage and attract them to conduct their activities and investments in the city.

KEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

According to the sector expert KI there were three main agencies related to the local authorities that businesses engaged with and those that supported economic activities in the city: (i) Chamber of Industry and Commerce, (ii) Border crossing management, and (iii) the Regulatory authorities.

The responsibilities of these agencies included giving licenses to businesses, area management (general management and oversight of economic activities in the city), regulating work in the local market (including wages, hours, and workers' rights), checking price gauging, and preventing monopoly in the local markets.

^{*}Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.






DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENDERS AND POPULATION GROUPS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Inherent gender-biases pertaining to socially constructed ideas of sectors which are traditionally considered suitable for men and women were observed in the responses across all types of interviews and corresponding responses.²⁹

79% respondents in the labour II reported a difference between the types of work that men and women engage in




88% respondents who reported a difference between men and women also reported that that women work in some specific sectors only³⁰

Top five sectors of work in which workers reported that women mostly worked in^{*31}

	Beauty salon and parlours	91%
	Sewing/ tailoring/ embroidery/ knitting	80%
	Education	74%
	Healthcare	65%
	Agriculture and livestock rearing	31%

The community leader KIs noted that there were more job opportunities which were suitable for men available in the city than there were for women. However, the KIs also added that job opportunities in the administrative sector with local authorities were equal for both men and women. The KIs also noted that women also engaged in jobs related to social and humanitarian work because they needed to work mostly with vulnerable women and children under their scope of responsibilities.

Reported reasons why differences in work between men and women exist^{*32}

	It is unsafe for women to work in certain areas and sectors	72%
	Women are expected to take care of family obligations and responsibilities	49%
	Women are expected to work from home	39%

The community leader KIs noted that long working hours at work and balancing work with family obligations and household chores was a challenge for women in working. Further, lack of experience and job opportunities suitable for women were also additional challenges that women faced in finding work.

Similarly, the sector expert KI noted that while the challenges in running their business were faced by all populations groups, women business owners faced additional challenges as a result of societal expectations and norms, and resulting lack of acceptance for active participation of women in economic activities.

While both community leader KIs noted that there were no restrictions or differences in place for the types of work that IDPs or host workers could do and neither was there any discrimination between them, they highlighted that employers preferred hiring people from their own communities. However, they noted that this practice was more common in place due to employers feeling trust for their acquaintances, rather than any discriminatory intentions related to people outside their communities. One community leader KI further added that discrimination in hiring could take place in favour of own relatives and friends (nepotism) even within same communities.

Youth in the city also faced difficulties in finding employment, according to the community leader KIs, because employers preferred hiring people with experience. It was also noted that employers deemed youth as comparatively unreliable and unless they knew them through some connection, employers did not trust them with work.

Lack of experience was also noted by the community leader KIs as a reason why some employers did not hire fresh graduates. Additionally, they noted that people with disabilities and special needs faced more challenges in finding employment since employers were often hesitant to hire them because of the perception that people with special needs can not perform all types of work and may require special assistance.

*Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.

ENDNOTES

1. World Bank (2021). [Data: Syrian Arab Republic](#).
2. Cash Working Group and REACH Syria (2021). [Syria Market Monitoring Exercises: Northeast and Northwest Syria](#).
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14. Humanitarian Needs Assessment programme (HNAP) (2021). [Population Baseline Assessment 2021](#).
15. Chatham House (March 2016). [Salvaging Syria's Economy](#).
16. UNICEF (July 2019). [Eight water facilities come under attack in Idlib, northwest of Syria, affecting water supply for nearly 250,000 people](#).
17. Arab News (November 2021). [Syria Reservoir Dries up for the first time](#).
18. REACH (2021). [Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria \(HSOS\)](#).
19. Female respondents in the labour IIs constituted 9% of the total respondents interviewed. As such, it is possible that due to their under-representation and due to random selection, female workers working in some sectors were not captured through the labour IIs. As such, disaggregations and findings on the basis of gender and population groups should be considered indicative only as the findings from the labour IIs are representative at the city-level but not by gender or population groups.
20. Out of 106 total respondents, 34% reported working in daily-wage work considered to be informal and 20% reported engaging in informal employment with a verbal or no contract. 33% reported having own business while 13% reported having a formal written contract with their employers. The level of informality was assessed by combining the number of respondents engaging in employment with verbal or no contract and those reporting engagement in daily-wage work.
21. Ibid.
22. Out of 106 total respondents, 1% reported not having any education but still having the ability to read and write (literacy skills), while 1% reported not having basic literacy skills. These two categories have been combined to present the total proportion of respondents who did not attain any schooling or formal education.
23. Out of those 11 business KIs who noted that they do not plan to hire new employees in the next one year.
24. Out of those 100 workers who were employed and/ or had been able to find employment in the 7-14 days before the interview was conducted (78%).
25. Out of 14, 12 business KIs noted that the level of competition in their business sector was higher at the time of the interview in comparison to one year ago. Only two business KIs noted that the competition in their sector was same (health and education).
26. UN OCHA (February 2022). [Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic](#).
27. Only 9 out of 14 business KIs responded to this question. 3 preferred not to answer and 2 selected "Do not know" as a response.
28. One KI out of the eight business KIs who had noted that they had expansion plans for their business in the next two years noted that they did not need any resources or trainings to expand.
29. Female respondents in the labour IIs constituted 9% of the total respondents interviewed. Due to this uneven gender split among the respondents in the labour IIs, it is possible that perceptions of female workers are missing through the labour IIs. As such, disaggregations and findings on the basis of gender and population groups should be considered indicative only as the findings from the labour IIs are representative at the whole city-level but not by gender or population groups.
30. Out of those respondents who reported that there were differences between men and women in the type of work they did (79%), 88% reported that this difference existed as women worked only in some specific sectors. This was followed by 24% respondents who noted that women worked only in own family-run businesses, 12% reported that women worked in only those jobs that had been suggested to them by their friends and relatives, and 6% reported that women in the area did not work at all. Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.
31. Out of those respondents who reported differences between men and women in the type of work they did (79%) and that the difference that existed was that women work only in specific sectors (88%).
32. Out of those respondents who reported that there were differences between men and women in the type of work they did (79%).