

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. Due to security constraints in some areas, the random sample for the labour IIs was drawn excluding the neighbourhoods of Al Mal'ab Al Baladi, Al Matar Janoubi, Al Wasati, and Matar Shamalih to ensure enumerator safety.
3. 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 Al-Hasakeh city, and a more targeted approach in the future to select female respondents, and assess their circumstances is highly recommended.
4. Owing to the social context, operational capacities, and time constraints, it was not possible for REACH field networks to identify and interview IDP- and/ or female-owned businesses as originally planned. As such, IDP- and 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.
5. 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

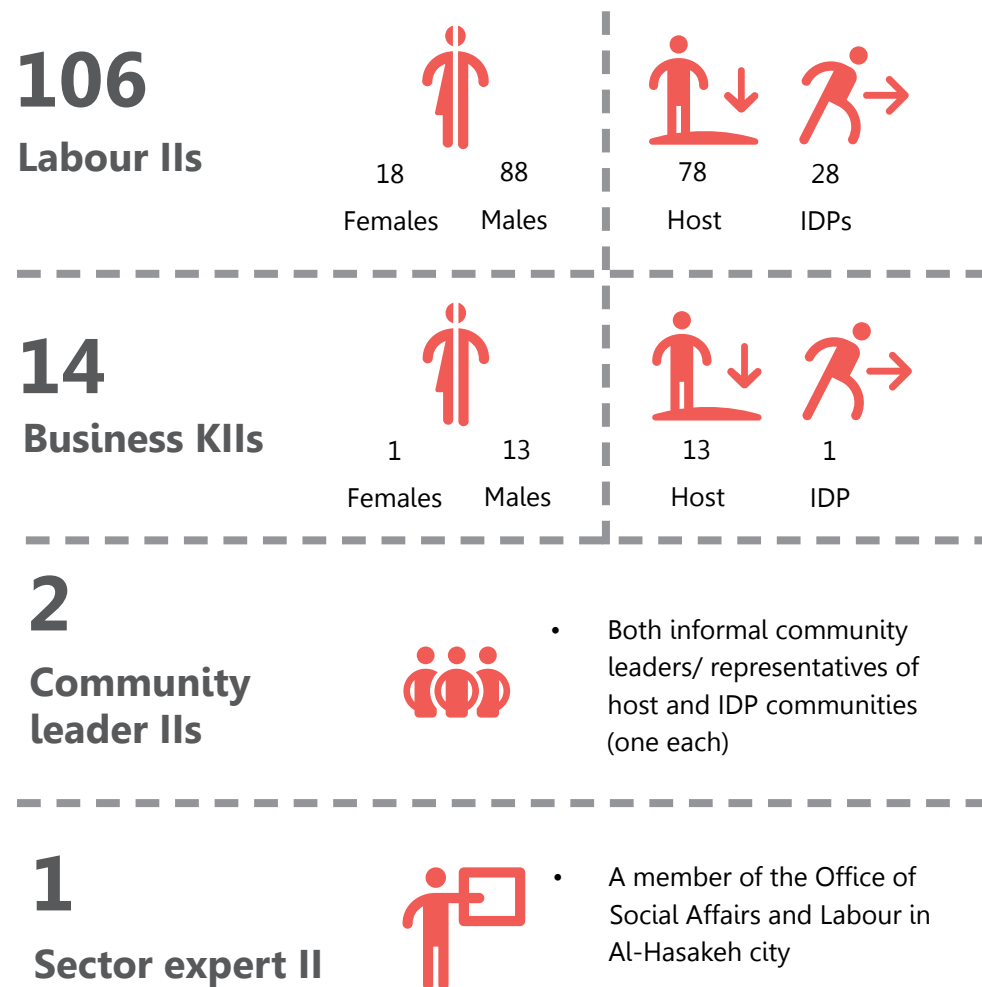
The city of Al-Hasakeh is located in the northeast governorate of Al-Hasakeh in Syria, and is close to both the Iraqi and Turkish borders. The city's population is currently estimated to be around 275, 389.¹⁴ Despite being one of the most resource rich regions in the country with its oil reserves and arable land, the complex political situation and instability in the area has severely impacted the economy, food security, and healthcare in and around the city.¹⁵ Al-Hasakeh used to be the country's largest wheat producer, constituting 75% of total national wheat production.¹⁶ However, years of severe droughts, erratic rainfall, and high prices of equipment and inputs have deteriorated the cumulative yield in recent years.¹⁷ Further, access issues, both within governorates and across international borders with Iraq and Turkey, have disrupted traditional trade routes, and posed restrictions on import and export of commercial goods, thereby hampering the local economy.

KEY FINDINGS

- The sectors in which workers from the labour IIs reported to be mostly working in were quite diverse and mainly found to be bakeries (9%), repair of cars and vehicles (9%), restaurants and hospitality services (8%), wholesale and retail trade (7%), and beauty salon and parlours (7%).
- Restaurants and hospitality services was noted by the business KIs (12) as the sector high in demand, and thus likely to be the most profitable.
- Alternate source of energy, specifically solar power was noted by the sector expert KI as an emerging sector in the city. Additionally, business KIs reported that financial technology (8) was a fast emerging sector in Al-Hasakeh city.
- The vast majority of workers in the labour IIs reported that they relied on their relationships and personal connections like friends (86%) and relatives (75%), to find work. Similarly, business owners KIs also noted that they mostly hired new staff through their own networks (13).
- Vocational skills (13), communication skills (9), and literacy skills (3) were the skills deemed as most desirable in new staff while making hiring decisions, according to business KIs.
- More than half of the business KIs (8) reported that their business income or profitability had decreased compared to one year ago. This was followed by six business KIs who reported that their incomes had increased.
- Vocational (60%) and computer/ information and communication technology/ digital skills (44%) 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 Al-Hasakeh city between 23 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:



KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

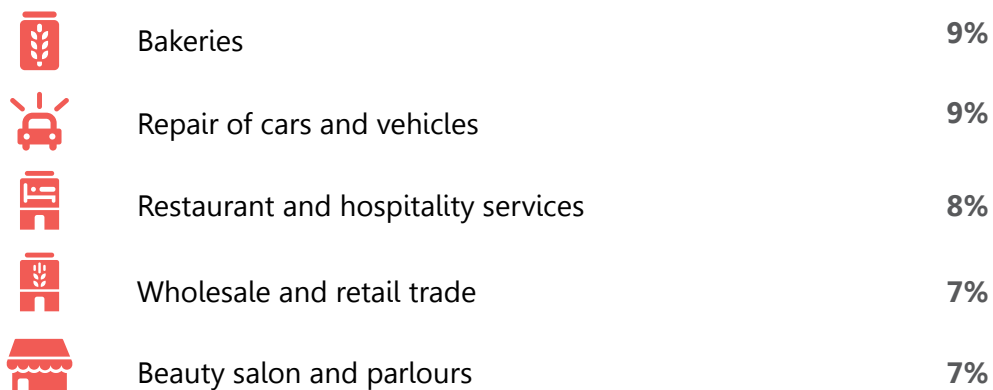
The income-generating activities that people mostly engaged in Al-Hasakeh city, according to the community leader KIs, included construction, agriculture, poultry farming and livestock rearing, industrial manufacturing and processing of food and non-food items, restaurant and hospitality services, education, and money exchange and remittance services.

As per the sector expert KI and business KIs, there also existed local businesses that operated in sectors such as wholesale and retail of grocery items and clothes, healthcare, bakeries, tailoring and sewing, beauty parlours and grooming, and other vocational trades like carpentry and plumbing. However, the sector expert KI noted that there was an over-saturation in the construction sector in terms of supply of labour, and this supply surpassed the demand since work opportunities were limited in the construction sector.

The sector KI also noted that farmers often tended to have ownership of their agricultural land (family-owned) and livestock. However, lack of modern farming techniques and equipment, and shortage of resources were causing lower agro-based production in the region.

This was reflected in the HSOS (November 2021) as well, where high operational cost (e.g. high prices of inputs, shipment, harvesting, fuel, irrigation, labour, and ploughing services) was reported by 61% of community KIs as one of the main barriers to accessing livelihoods related to agriculture for households in Al-Hasakeh sub-district.¹⁸ This was followed by 56% of community KIs reporting that lack of access to fodder for livestock, and lack of resources to sustain livestock (excluding fodder) were the main barriers to accessing livelihoods related to agriculture for households in Al-Hasakeh sub-district.¹⁹

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



All respondents from the labour IIs who reported working in bakeries, restaurants, and beauty salon and parlours were males.²⁰ Globally, women tend to participate in these sectors as often as, or even more often than, their male counterparts.²¹ As such, the finding underscores that the participation of female workers may vary across different locations and deviate from the traditional norms depending on the unique situation and circumstances of the people and the local labour market even within same regions.



Levels of informality in work in Al-Hasakeh city found to be very high with 87% workers reporting engagement in some form of informal work²²

63% workers reported to be employed with verbal or no contract²³

24% workers reported engaging in informal daily-wage work

13% workers reported having a written contract with their employer

While the informality in contracts was in line with the information provided by business KIs, where all KIs reported that they had verbal contract with their employees (14 out of 14), the sector expert KI also noted that formal businesses in the city were present as well. However, according to the community leader KIs, formal jobs existed only in the public sector affiliated with the local authorities.



Most businesses in the city were 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 most of the business KIs (12), where the number of workers employed by them varied between approximately 10 to 40 employees. However, two businesses also reported having less than ten employees, indicating presence of micro-sized businesses in the city as well. In fact, the sector expert KI also noted that most businesses in the agriculture sector were operated by household members on their family-owned land, and thus could be considered as micro-businesses.

CHANNELS TO FIND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES






The vast majority of workers in the labour IIs reported that they relied on their relationships and personal connections like friends (86%) and relatives (75%), to find work.* Workers also noted that they found work through their friends or relatives who worked in the company where the vacancy was present (32% and 16% respectively).*

No worker reported finding work through job advertisements in local newspapers, radio or TV, however, some respondents reported that they found work through advertisements on social media like WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages (11%). The jobs advertised on social media were mostly related to NGOs and humanitarian work, according to the community leader KIs.

Additionally, the community leader KIs noted that those seeking employment could also go to the Social Affairs and Labour Office (Employment Office) of the local authorities where they could register themselves, submit their resumes, and wait for a job opening. However, using the Employment Office as an avenue to find job opportunities was not mentioned by any workers in the labour IIs, perhaps indicating either a lack of awareness of this medium as a resource for job searches or it not being an effective or preferred channel for job seekers to look for employment opportunities.

Lack of job opportunities in general, and for people with high academic qualifications was noted by both community leader KIs as a challenge that job seekers faced in finding employment in the city. One KI also mentioned that drought and resulting deterioration of the agriculture sector along with lack of support for development in it was a contributing factor in lesser number of job opportunities being available for the workforce, and hence adding to their challenges in finding employment.

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

	Not enough job opportunities	65%
	High competition for available jobs	34%
	Want to start own business but lack resources to do so	22%
	Do not have enough connections	14%
	Do not have enough work experience	11%

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

RECRUITMENT PRACTICES OF BUSINESSES






Most business KIs reported that they hired new staff through their own friends, relatives, or through friends of workers who were already employed with them (13)

Punctuality (11), work experience (8), and relevant skills and qualifications (7) 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.* Despite work experience and skills being ranked highly by the business KIs, the community leader KIs noted that having connections was an important factor that helped some people to find employment more easily than others. The community leader KIs further noted that having enough resources to start own business gave people an opportunity to engage in self-employment, which was preferred by the general population. Established networks and resources are assets that host communities have easier access to in comparison to IDPs. This underscores how IDPs are often at a disadvantage in terms of accessing livelihoods opportunities due to their circumstances.

A majority of business KIs noted that it was difficult for them to find workers in the city who possessed the technical skills required by their company/ business (12). One business KI also added that emigration of workers who had technical skills and work experience to places with more opportunities further contributed to the shortage of skilled workers in the city.

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

	Workers demanding high salaries	14
	There are skilled workers but the demand for these skilled workers is high	10
	Lack of workers with the right technical skills or experience	7

While, most of the business KIs reported that they would be willing to hire vocational training attendees (10) after course completion, 4 KIs reported that they would not hire the trainees.

Two of these business KIs reported that they would not be willing to hire the trainees because they perceived that any training courses would not practically imbibe a standard of professionalism and expertise among attendees. Whereas, the other two KIs noted that they do not anticipate any vacancies in their businesses to hire more people.

FEATURES OF THE LOCAL LABOUR FORCE

Education levels

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

None ²⁵	21%
Primary education (years 1-6)	20%
Secondary education (years 7-9)	32%
High school (years 10+)	16%
Diploma	4%
Undergraduate - did not complete	2%
Undergraduate - completed	4%
Post-graduate - completed	1%

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, almost all respondents reported working in informal jobs (42 out of 44).

Factors affecting employability

Top five reasons reported by workers as to why they were more successful in finding employment in comparison to others*²⁴

	1	I have sufficient work experience	68%
	2	I have the necessary skills	50%
	3	I am willing to work for lower wages	23%
	4	Employers hire me due to my young age	16%
	5	I have connections at workplace	14%

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

SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF SKILLS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

When asked which skillsets were most important when hiring new staff, 13 out of 14 business KIs noted that vocational skills were most important, whilst 9 noted that communication skills were a priority.*

Top three skills that workers reported having*



Literacy skills (84%)



Vocational skills (51%)



Skills specific to my sector (22%)

Top three skills that employers look for when hiring new employees, according to business KIs*

Vocational skills (13)



Communication skills (9)



Literacy skills (3)



Less than one-fourth of the workers reported having sector specific skills highlighting an under-supply of workers with appropriate technical skills

In contrast to the business KIs who noted that there was a lack of workers with technical skills, the community leader KIs noted that there were highly qualified people in the city with specialized skills in agricultural process management, and craftsmanship in industrial manufacturing and processing of food and non-food items, and maintenance of mechanical and electrical equipment. However, the community leader KIs underscored that there was a mismatch of skills in the local labour market, i.e. the skills possessed by the people were incompatible with the job opportunities available and those in demand in the city. Perhaps in recognition of this gap, 71% of workers reported that there were some skills that they lacked and/or need which could increase their chances of finding employment. Out of those workers who acknowledged that there were skills which they lacked or needed to have, 49% of respondents reported that they lacked computer and digital skills, followed by 44% of respondents who reported that they needed to hone their vocational skills.*

BUSINESS CONDITIONS AND INSIGHTS INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Number of business KIs reporting on the growth potential of their sectors in the next two years



Four business KIs whose business activities were related to carpentry and woodwork, agriculture, construction and manufacture of construction material, and bakery noted that their sectors would see a contraction in the next two years, whereas, another KI with a business in the tailoring and sewing sector noted that it would remain same. While, there were no other KIs who reported operating their business in the carpentry and woodwork, and agriculture sector to corroborate the perception of KIs who noted that their sector would get smaller in the next two years, two KIs, one in bakery and other in construction business noted that their sector would grow, thereby contradicting the perceptions of their counterparts. The sector expert KI, however, clarified that the construction sector was over-saturated, with a large number of the workforce already engaging in daily-wage work in it, and other sectors, instead, needed to be supported for their development.

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



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



Why businesses did not hire new employees in the past one year*

- Did not have any vacancies (3)
- Insufficient profit to hire extra staff (3)

Why businesses do not plan to hire new employees in the next one year*

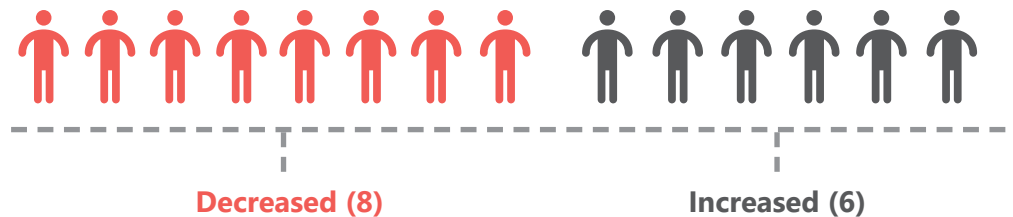
- Did not have any vacancies (4)
- Insufficient profit to hire extra staff (4)

When the business owners were asked whether they had plans to expand their existing business in the next two years, almost all KIs noted that they planned to expand their business (13). Only one KI noted that they did not plan to do so citing inability to source raw material, lack of financial support, and high salary demand by workers as the main reasons for not expanding in the near future.

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 (12), lack of adequate initial capital (9), and lack of skilled workers (9) were the main reasons.* This was followed by limited access to finance (7), and lack of marketing of products and services (6).

Level of market competition had either increased (8) or remained same (2), according to the business KIs²⁶

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



Business KIs who noted that their income/ profitability had decreased compared to one year ago from the time of interview (8), noted that this was due to inability to source supplies and raw material for trade due to access restrictions and border closures (5), COVID-19 and its related impact on overall trade in the city (5), high competition from other similar businesses in the city (4), and sector not being in demand anymore (3).*

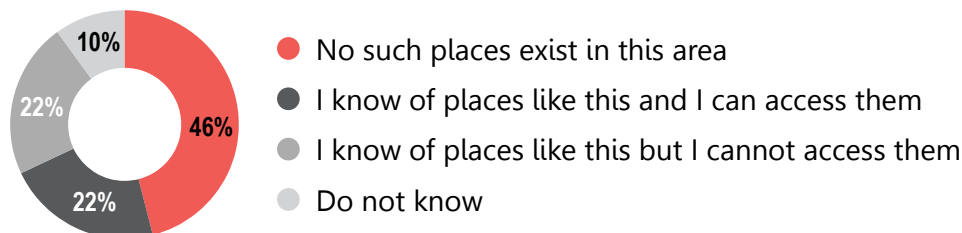
Additionally, the sector expert KI highlighted that lack of skilled and experienced labour, and difficulty in arrangement of finances due to absence of formal channels to obtain loans were noted as challenges by the KI that businesses faced in their operations.

On the other hand, of the six business KIs who noted that their income/ profitability had increased compared to one year ago, all six KIs noted that it was because they had been able to expand the coverage of their services. Further, business KIs also noted that the increase in income was because the sector of their business was growing in demand, and that they had been able to hire skilled workers (5 each).*

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

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 the labour IIs, 22% of all workers noted that they were unable to access them. Out of those workers who reported that they were unable to access the training opportunities, 78% reported that they could not attend these trainings because they had to take care of family obligations. This was closely followed by 70% of respondents who reported that places that provided such training were too far. Financial barrier due to trainings being too expensive was also cited by 30% of respondents as one of the main reason why they were unable to access the training opportunities.*

Reflecting this, 76% workers reported that they would be interested in attending trainings programs if there was an entity that helped them learn new skills or provided trainings without the prohibitive factors.



Training opportunities were available to everyone, according to the sector expert KI

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

- NGOs and local humanitarian organizations (70%)
- Private trainings institutes (57%)
- Local authorities (2%)
- Business enterprises

The sector expert KI noted that vocational trainings related to carpentry, electrical and wire works, plumbing, repair of mobile phones, sewing, and hairdressing were available in the city through programs run by some local NGOs. These training programs were often set up for men and women participants separately and according to the trades considered more suitable for each gender.

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

On the contrary, community leader KIs noted that no training opportunities existed in the city for people who wanted to learn new skills. In the absence of training opportunities, the community leader KIs suggested that in addition to establishing permanent training programs in the area, after-training mentorship should also be provided to the participants to help them secure jobs.

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

Computer/ Information and Communications Technology/ Digital skills	55%	Vocational skills	49%
Business and management skills	31%	Financial and administrative skills	30%
Communication skills	19%	Sector specific skills	18%

80% respondents in the labour IIs reported being interested in starting their own business

100% respondents who reported being interested in starting their own business also reported facing barriers in doing so



Lack of capital (100%), lack of access to financial services (33%), and lack of resources (22%) were the main barriers reported

Workers also reported lacking necessary equipment (15%) to start a business in which they were interested. Depending on the type of business, tools and equipments like drills, sewing machine and lathe, machinery like generator, refrigerator, oven and tractor, and raw material like metal, fabric, seeds and fertilizers were noted as specific items needed in order to open own business and perform related activities.

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 87,357,142 Syrian Pound (SYP).



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, as per sector expert KI

All but one business KIs noted that there were no specific business-support programs currently available in the city that they were aware of. However, the sector expert KI noted that there was a small presence of local Syrian associations that provided support to small businesses by providing small loans. But the terms and feasibility of taking loans from them were not clear and would need further investigation.

On the other hand, 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 (13) were asked if they required any special trainings, new skills, and/or resources. Three business KIs noted that they would only need resources, while six business KIs noted that they would need both resources and trainings.*²⁷ The types of resources that the businesses would need included financial input (9), new equipment and machinery (8), and access to electricity and water (2).* Similarly, trainings related to finance and book-keeping (5), and marketing and advertising (4) were noted by business KIs as a requirement to be able to expand their businesses.*

Additionally, the sector expert KI highlighted the availability of resources, labour force, and agro-based raw materials such as vegetables, dairy, wheat, and cotton, all of which could be utilized to set up large-scale factories for processing of food items, and manufacture of garments and textiles which could strengthen local production and trade, provide employment to the local labour force, and boost the overall local economy.

POTENTIAL SECTORS WITH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



Restaurants and hospitality sector was noted by the business KIs (12) as the sector high in demand, and thus likely to be the most profitable



Alternate source of energy, specifically solar power was noted by the sector expert KI as an emerging sector

The sector expert KI highlighted the need for support and focus on setting up of solar plants as an alternative source of energy as electricity was a major requirement in the city, and its installation and maintenance activities may additionally generate jobs for the wider population. The KI further noted that the agriculture sector and the private sector for large-scale industries and factories for production of food, clothes and building materials had a good potential for growth.

There was also an interest from private and regional investors in expanding the telecommunications and remittances sectors. According to the sector expert KI, investment in these fields were available and active. This was reflected in the business KIs as well, where business owners noted that financial technology (8) and restaurants and food services (4), in addition to information technology (2) were fast emerging sectors in the city. The business KIs further noted that these sectors were recently emerging as a result of promotion of these sectors by the local authorities (8), high demand and need in the area (8), and flow of private investments especially in these sectors.

KEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

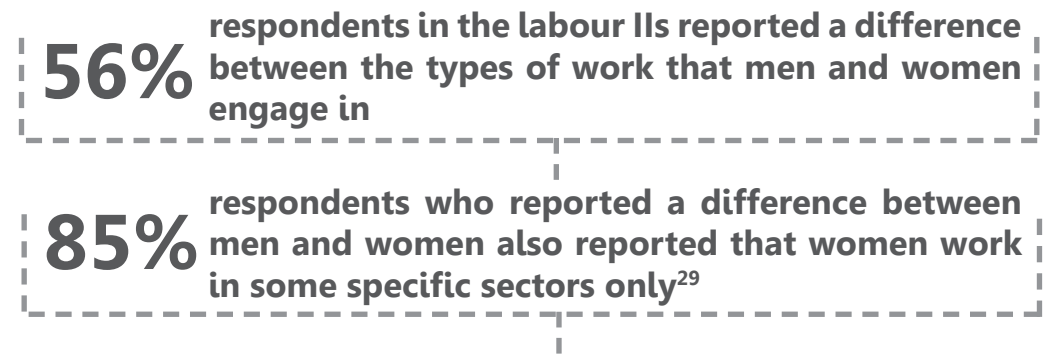
According to the sector expert KI, departments most active within the local authorities/self-administration that provided support to businesses and engaged in the development of economic activities in the city were: (i) Department for Commerce - Provided licenses to private companies and traders, and (ii) Department of Customs - Regulated import and export activities, and determined customs fee for traders.

The sector expert KI also noted that public companies related to the self-administration provided support to sectors like agriculture and bakeries by providing items like fodder, fuel, seeds, flour, and oil, at subsidized prices to farmers and bakeries.






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

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENDERS AND POPULATION GROUPS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Gender-based differences in the local labour market were generally noted across all types of interviews and corresponding responses.²⁸ These differences were based on the nature of available jobs and on the socially constructed ideas of sectors which are traditionally considered suitable for men and women.



Top five sectors of work in which workers reported that women mostly worked in^{*30}




	Sewing/ tailoring/ embroidery/ knitting	98%
	Beauty salon and parlours	82%
	Handicrafts	50%
	Education	46%
	Restaurants and hospitality services	30%

Even though, all workers in the labour IIs who reported working in beauty salon and restaurants were found to be males, these sectors were highly ranked as the sectors in which women mostly worked in. This contradiction could perhaps be explained due to the low number of women respondents in the labour IIs (See Limitations) and random selection of individuals, whereby women working in these sectors specifically may not have been captured in the interviews.

Lack of job opportunities considered suitable for women (those not requiring physical strength) and those that matched their skills, and lack of awareness of available vacancies were the main challenges for women to work and find appropriate work, according to the community leader KIs.

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

Reported reasons why differences in work between men and women exist^{*33}

	It is unsafe for women to work in certain areas and sectors	85%
	Women are expected to take care of family obligations and responsibilities	24%
	Women are expected to work from home	17%

Women can face additional barriers in employment such as lack of social support, exacerbated financial vulnerability, and less well-paid employment opportunities.³² This was reflected in the information provided by the community leader KIs, where it was noted that women often lacked resources and capital to start their own businesses and thus, very few female-owned businesses existed in the city. Additionally, women were also given lower wages than their male counterparts, according to the community leader KIs.

The challenges and issues in operating business were same for everyone, according to the sector expert KI, but differences between workers from the host community and IDPs were observed. Almost all the IDP respondents who were interviewed in the labour IIs reported that they worked in some form of informal employment (20 out of 21). However, the sectors in which the IDP respondents reported working in were similar to responses of the workers from the host community who also reported engaging in informal employment.

IDPs often worked in unskilled or semi-skilled daily-wage jobs and were willing to work for lower wages in comparison to workers from the host community

The community leader KIs noted that there were no differences in how people from different population groups found work. However, they noted that since people from the host community often had more resources and capital, they set-up their own businesses and often filled the role of employers rather than workers. This was reflected in the HSOS (January 2022) as well, where 59% of the community KIs interviewed reported that unavailability to access financial resources (no grants, no loans) was one of the main barriers for IDP households to accessing livelihoods.³¹ The community leader KIs also highlighted that IDPs faced additional challenges in finding employment due to discrimination against them by employers in hiring as a result of lack of trust.

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](#).
3. Syrian Arab Republic United Nations Country Team (August 2020). [Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19](#).
4. International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2015). [Start and Improve Your Business: Manual](#).
5. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2022). [Institute for Statistics: Glossary](#).
6. ILO (2021). [Social Finance](#).
7. World Bank (July 2016). [Sector Taxonomy and Definitions](#).
8. ILO. [Glossary of Statistical Terms](#).
9. UNESCO (2005). [Understanding and Defining Literacy](#).
10. UNESCO (November 2014). [Education Policy Brief: Skills for holistic human development](#).
11. European Union Commission (2011). [Transferability of Skills across Economic Sectors](#).
12. ILO (1986). [Vocational Training: Glossary of Selected Terms](#).
13. Inter-Agency Group (June 2020). [Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\)](#).
14. Humanitarian Needs Assessment programme (HNAP) (2021). [Population Baseline Assessment 2021](#).
15. REACH (August 2016). [Hasakeh Governorate Multi-Sector Needs Assessment](#).
16. ACAPS (February 2014). [Al-Hasakeh Governorate profile](#).
17. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (May 2021). [GIEWS Country Brief: The Syrian Arab Republic](#).
18. REACH (November 2021). [HSOS: Northeast Syria](#).
19. Ibid.
20. Female respondents in the labour IIs constituted 17% 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 whole city-level but not by gender or population groups.
21. Orange (November 2016). [Increasing Women's Access to the Labour Market in Syria](#).
22. Out of 106 total respondents, 63% reported engaging in informal employment with a verbal or no contract, 24% reported working in daily-wage work considered to be informal, 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 to engage in daily-wage work.
23. Ibid.
24. Out of those 96 workers who were employed and/ or had been able to find employment in the 7-14 days before the interview was conducted (91%).
25. Out of 106 total respondents, 15% reported not having any education but still having the ability to read and write (literacy skills), while 7% 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.
26. Out of 14, 8 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. Further, two business KIs noted that the competition was same, while four KIs noted that there was no competition at all.
27. 4 KIs out of the 13 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.
28. Female respondents in the labour IIs constituted 17% 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.
29. Out of those respondents who reported that there were differences between men and women in the type of work they did (56%), 85% 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, and 9% reported that women worked in only those jobs that had been suggested to them by their friends and relatives. Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.
30. Out of those respondents who reported that there were differences between men and women in the type of work they did (56%) and that the difference that existed was that women worked only in specific sectors (85%).
31. REACH (January 2022). [HSOS: Northeast Syria](#).
32. ILO (2021). [World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021](#).
33. Out of those respondents who reported that there were differences between men and women in the type of work they did (56%).