

## 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%<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

**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.<sup>5</sup>

**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.<sup>6</sup>

**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.<sup>7</sup>

**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).<sup>8</sup>

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

**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).<sup>10, 11</sup>

**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.<sup>12, 13</sup>

## 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 Dana city, and a more targeted approach in the future to select female respondents, and assess their circumstances is highly recommended.
3. 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

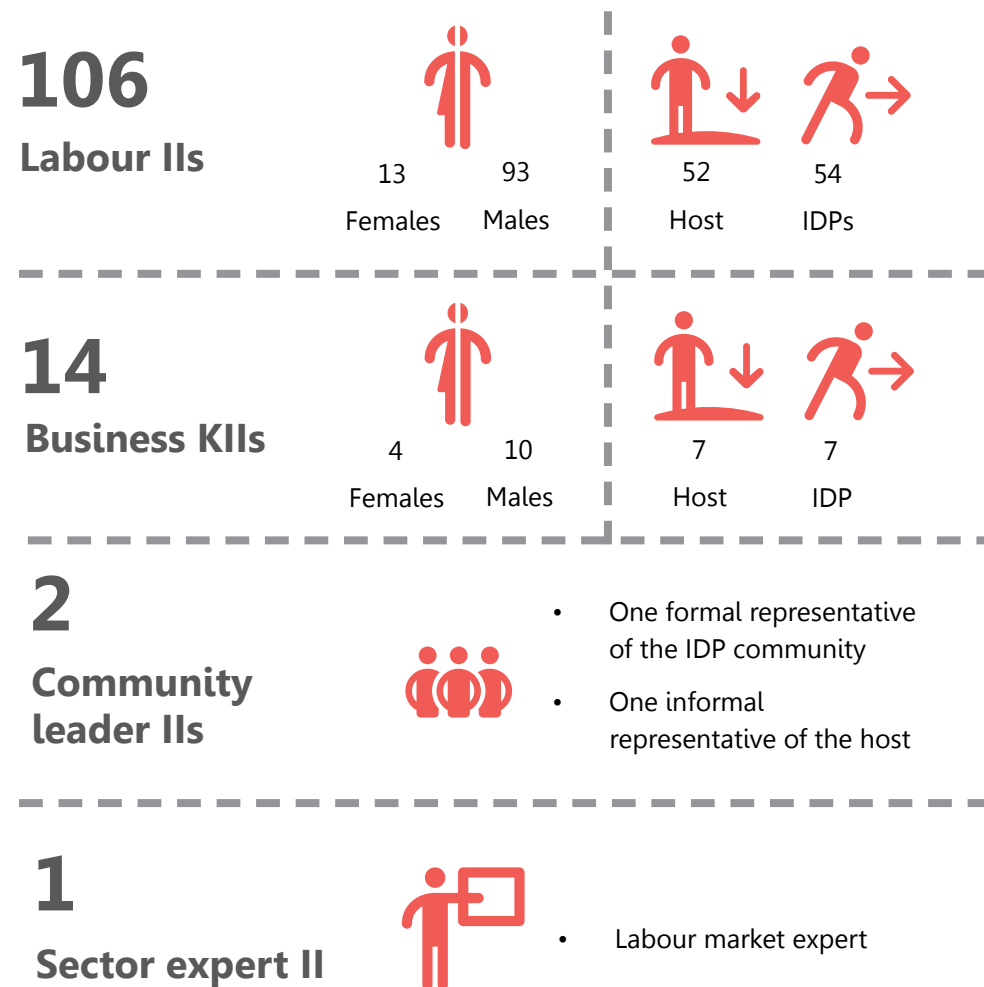
The city of Dana is located in the northwest governorate of Idleb, in Syria, bordering Turkey. The city's population is currently estimated to be around 265,500.<sup>14</sup> In recent years, there has been a very high influx of IDPs from surrounding regions into Dana.<sup>15</sup> Urgent humanitarian needs of all populations, especially IDPs, severely affected by the ongoing hostilities, inadequate shelter conditions and a deteriorating economic situation, in areas in and around the Dana city have been observed.<sup>16</sup> Overcrowding in formal and informal shelters have resulted in severe water, sanitation and hygiene issues, with Dana sub-district reported to be one of the significant hot-spots for waterborne diseases in 2021.<sup>17</sup> Food production and livelihoods has been constrained by limited access to agricultural inputs, depreciation of Turkish Lira, fuel shortages, and general lack of purchasing power,<sup>18, 19</sup> further exacerbating the situation in terms of livelihoods already overburdened with high competition for all types of employment and limited available opportunities.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The main sectors in which workers from the labour IIs reported to be mostly working in were found to be construction and manufacture of construction related material (23%), wholesale and retail trade (9%), transportation (8), followed by repair of vehicles, education, and agriculture and livestock rearing (7% each).
- Industrial manufacturing and processing of food items and beverages, and education was noted by the business KIs (9 each) as the sectors high in demand, and thus likely to be the most profitable.
- Agriculture technology was noted by the sector expert KI as an emerging sector in the city.
- While a large proportion of workers in the labour IIs reported that they relied on their personal connections like friends (56%) and social media (53%), to find work, almost all business KIs also noted that they mostly hired new staff through their own networks (13).
- Vocational skills (12) and literacy skills (3) were the skills deemed as most desirable in new staff while making hiring decisions, according to business KIs.
- A large number of business KIs (10) reported that their business income or profitability had increased compared to one year ago.
- Computer/ information and communication technology (ICT)/ digital skills (51%), business and management skills (38%), and vocational skills (36%) 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 23 and 29 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

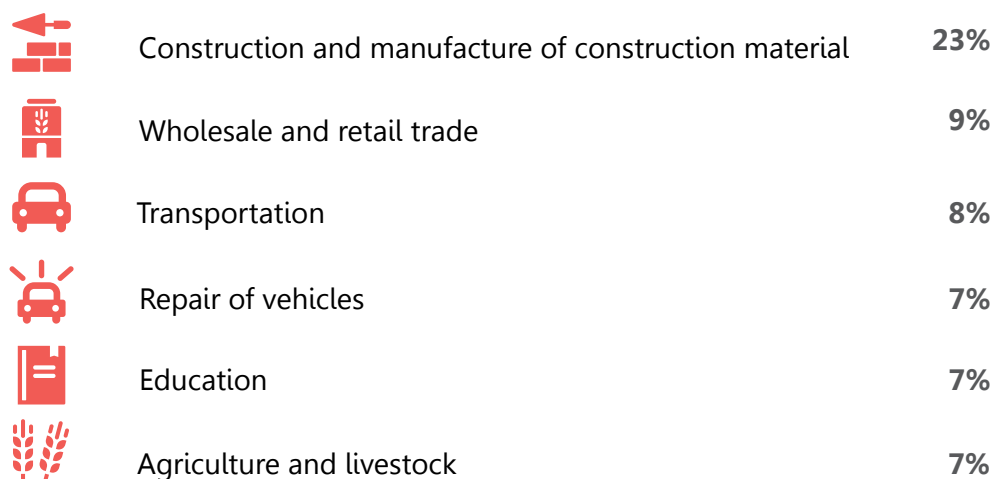
The income-generating activities that people mostly engaged in Dana city, according to the community leader KIs, included construction, wholesale/ retail of grocery items and clothes, industrial manufacturing and processing of textiles and garments, bakeries, agriculture and livestock farming, sale of fuel and other winterization items, and other vocational trades such as carpentry and woodwork, plumbing, tinsmithing and metal work, maintenance and repair of cars and vehicles, and electrical wiring services.

As per the sector expert KI and business KIs, there also existed local businesses that operated in sectors such as industrial manufacturing and processing of food products (canned tomato paste) and non-food products (detergents), money exchange and remittance services, and education.

The community leader KIs noted that a large number of people worked as daily-wage labourers in the construction and agriculture sector. This corresponded with the responses of the workers in the labour IIs as well, where a majority of workers who reported working in informal daily-wage employment (37%) also reported working in the construction or agriculture sector (61%).

All the workers who reported working in the construction, plumbing, carpentry, and transportation sector were men.<sup>20</sup> 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



**Levels of informality in work in Dana city found to be very high with 72% workers reporting engagement in some form of informal work<sup>21</sup>**

**37%** workers reported engaging in informal daily-wage work<sup>22</sup>

**35%** workers reported to be employed with verbal or no contract

**10%** 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 11 out of 14 KIs reported that they had a verbal (10) or no contract (1) with their employees, 3 business KIs also noted that they had written contracts with their employees. These businesses were reported to be in the education and healthcare sector.



**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, as per sector expert KI mostly corresponded with the information provided by the business KIs. However, 2 business KIs also reported having more than 50 employees, and three reported having 100+ employees indicating presence of medium- and large-sized businesses in the city as well.

Regarding micro-sized businesses, the sector expert KI noted that there existed many home-based businesses related to making bread, vegetable preserves or pickles, and cheese, i.e. families worked from their homes to produce and sell these items. These businesses were generally operated by female members of the household, signaling female entrepreneurship and ownership of businesses on a micro- or small-scale in the city.






## CHANNELS TO FIND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

More than half of the workers in the labour IIs reported that they relied on their relationships and personal connections like friends (56%) and relatives (53%), to find work.\*

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 (13%). Advertising jobs through social media was an increasingly popular way of announcing job opportunities in the city, according to the community leader KIs, and both employers and those seeking employment used the channel widely. The KIs further added that these groups and pages were often separate for men and women, and some groups existed specifically for women looking for jobs.

Lack of job opportunities and high competition for available jobs were noted by both community leader KIs as challenges that job seekers faced in finding employment in the city. The KIs noted that the labour market was over-saturated with a supply of workers who knew basic crafts and activities. Further, in the absence of specialized institutions that could provide trainings on modern technologies and vocational rehabilitation services, there was a gap in fulfilling the demand of community's needs for more advanced trades and underutilization of the region's natural resources.

### 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                    | 56% |
|  | Want to start own business but lack resources to do so | 38% |
|  | Do not have the necessary skills or education          | 35% |
|  | Do not have enough work experience                     | 17% |

## 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 (13)**

Work experience (11), and skills and qualifications (7) were the main 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, some business KIs also noted that they preferred hiring younger workers in their businesses (5). This was in contrast to the information provided by the sector expert KI who noted that young people have fewer opportunities in important jobs because employers preferred hiring older people with more work experience. This difference in perceptions could perhaps be explained by the type of sector in which the business KIs reported preferring hiring younger people - most of these businesses were related to intensive manual work, such as construction, industrial manufacturing, and plumbing, where traditionally, younger, and often male, workers are considered more suitable for these jobs

A little more than half of the 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 (9). Conversely, almost all business KIs (13/14) also reported some challenges when trying to hire employees.

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

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | Lack of workers with the right skills or experience                        | 8 |
|  | Workers demanding high salaries  | 7 |
|  | There are skilled workers but the demand for these skilled workers is high | 7 |

More than half of the business KIs reported that they would be willing to hire vocational training attendees (9) after course completion. While three business KIs did not know whether they would hire the training attendees, two business KIs noted that they would not do so. The reasons noted by them for not hiring vocational training attendees were: not having the space in their workshop/ business (1), no vacancies to accept more employees (1), and inability to pay salaries of employees because their business not running profitably (1).\*

\*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

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| None <sup>24</sup>               | 9%  |
| Primary education (years 1-6)    | 31% |
| Secondary education (years 7-9)  | 33% |
| High school (years 10+)          | 12% |
| Diploma                          | 5%  |
| Undergraduate - did not complete | 3%  |
| Undergraduate - completed        | 7%  |
| Postgraduate - completed         | 1%  |

No specific trends between the level of informality in employment and education levels of those workers who reported having higher education (completed undergraduate or post-graduate) were observed. 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 (35 out of 42).

### Factors affecting employability

Top five reasons reported by workers as to why they were more successful in finding employment in comparison to others<sup>\*23</sup>

|  |   |                                       |     |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|-----|
|  | 1 | I have sufficient work experience     | 57% |
|  | 2 | I have the necessary skills           | 52% |
|  | 3 | I am willing to work for lower wages  | 47% |
|  | 4 | I have connections at workplace       | 24% |
|  | 5 | Employers hire me due to my young age | 17% |

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

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF SKILLS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Top three skills that workers reported having\*

|  |                                    |   |  |
|--|------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Literacy skills (50%)              | Vocational skills (12)                  |  |
|  | Skills specific to my sector (45%) | Literacy skills (3)                     |  |
|  | Vocational skills (27%)            | Financial and administrative skills (2) |  |

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

**A little more 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**

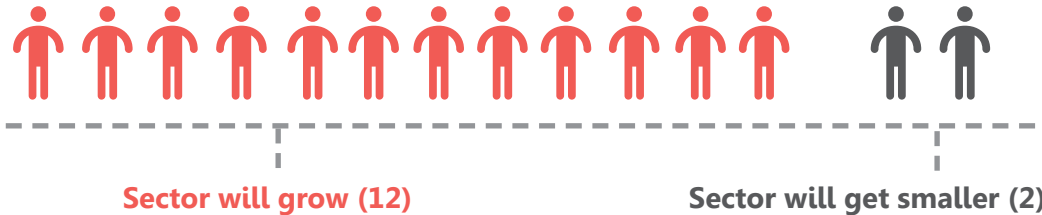
Most common skills and experiences that the workforce possessed, according to the community leader KIs, were those that related to livestock rearing, construction and renovation work, and maintenance and repair of vehicles and electrical appliances.

More specialized skills related to the development of agricultural methods (hydroponics), food manufacturing, red and white meat production and processing, improvement of the yield of olive-grown lands, etc. were also present among some proportion of the workforce, according to the community leader KIs.

On the other hand, a majority of workers also reported that there were some skills that they lacked or needed to have which could increase their chances of finding employment (83%). Out of those workers who acknowledged this lack of skills, 48% workers reported that they needed to acquire computer/ digital skills, followed by vocational, and business and management skills (35% each), and financial and administrative skills (32%).

## 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



While a majority of business KIs noted that they anticipated a growth in their sector of business in the next two years (12), two business KIs whose business activities were related to construction and manufacture of construction material, and tailoring and sewing noted that their sectors would see a contraction in the next two years.

While, there were no other KIs who reported operating their business in the tailoring and sewing sector to corroborate the perception of the KI who noted that their sector would get smaller in the next two years, one other KI, in the construction business noted that their sector would grow, thereby contradicting the perceptions of their counterpart who noted the opposite. In fact, the sector expert KI noted that the construction sector was growing as there was demand for infrastructure rehabilitation and increased housing needs.

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<sup>26</sup>



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)



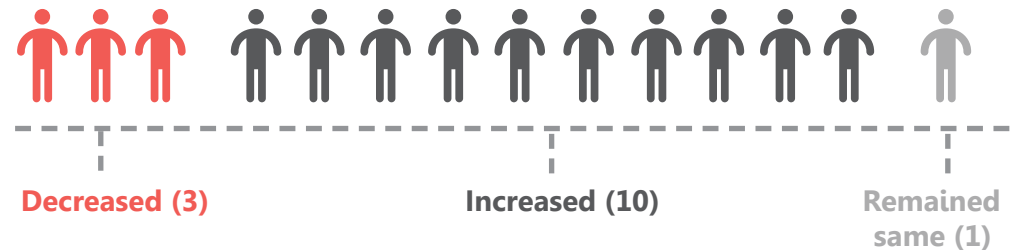
Why businesses do not plan to hire new employees in the next one year\*

- Insufficient profit to hire extra staff (2)
- Did not have any vacancies (1)

When the business owners were asked whether they had plans to expand their existing business in the next two years, most of the KIs noted that they planned to expand their business (12). Only two KIs noted that they did not plan to do so citing lack of demand for their sectors, fluctuations in the exchange rates, the lack of stability in the markets, and poor purchasing power of the consumers.

### Level of market competition had increased across all business sectors<sup>25</sup>

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



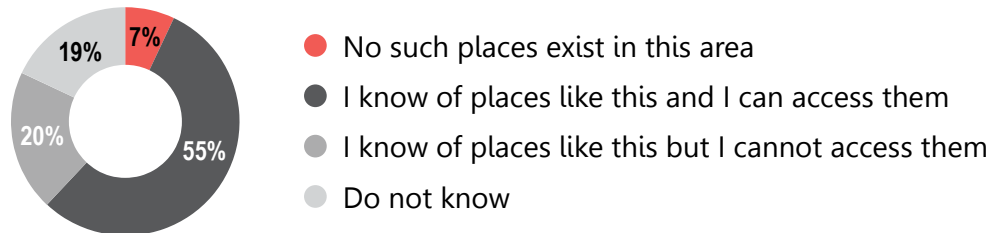
Business KIs who noted that their income/ profitability had increased compared to one year ago from the time of interview (10), noted that this was because their sector of business was growing in demand (8), they were able to buy necessary equipment/ machinery (8), they had been able to expand the coverage of their services (7), they had been able to buy necessary equipment/ machinery (5), they had been able to hire skilled workers (4), and they had been able to procure supplies/ raw materials for their trade (3).<sup>\*</sup> Business KIs who noted that their income/ profitability had decreased compared to one year ago from the time of interview (3), noted that this was due to high competition from other similar businesses in the city (3), COVID-19 and its related impact on overall trade in the city (3), and inability to source supplies and raw material for trade due to access restrictions and border closures (2).<sup>\*</sup>

These issues were noted by the sector expert KI as well as the community leader KIs. The sector expert KI noted that in the absence of export activities, small and local producers depended solely on the local markets for sale of their products creating high competition among local businesses. In addition, the local markets were also saturated with cheap goods from foreign sources creating additional competition for local manufacturers. The community leader KIs further noted that supply chain routes for trade were highly affected due to the instability of the border crossings between Idlib governorate and Government of Syria controlled areas.

\*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 workers from the labour IIs, 20% 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 (80%). This was followed by 60% of respondents who reported that they could not attend these trainings because they had to take care of family obligations.\*

Further, the community leader KIs noted that the training centers were often far from the communities, as a result transportation expenses were prohibitive for some people. Additionally, available trainings programs often had limited availability, i.e. they were not conducted regularly and had limited number of participants. As such, those seeking to participate in these programs had to wait for extended durations for the training programs to be started again to be able to attend them.

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

 **Women headed households and youth have more difficulties in accessing trainings, according to the sector expert KI**

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

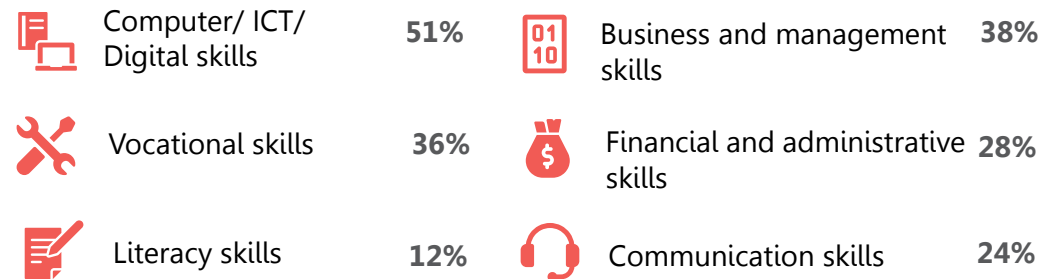
-  NGOs and local humanitarian organizations (89%)
-  Private trainings institutes (41%)
-  Local authorities (7%)
-  Business enterprises (4%)

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

According to the community leader KIs, trainings were available on vocations and trades such as repair and maintenance of phones, electronic devices, and electrical appliances and equipments, sewing and stitching, and hairdressing and grooming, in addition to professional trainings related to use of computer and Internet, installation and maintenance of solar panels, design and printing for advertising, and foreign languages. The sector expert KI further suggested that trainings on use of modern techniques in agriculture and livestock breeding are required in the city because the technologies in use were very old.


A major proportion of workers reported an interest in attending training programs if there was a humanitarian organization that helped them learn new skills or provided training (88%).

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



**87%** 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 (98%) and lack of access to financial services (21%) 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 54,153,900 Syrian Pound (SYP).<sup>27</sup>



**Unavailability of banks and financial institutions in the city was highlighted by 13 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**

Business KIs either noted that there were no specific business-support programs currently available in the city that they were aware of (11) or they did not know of any business support programs (3). This was supported by the sector expert KI who noted that there were no business support programs for the development of local businesses. The sector expert KI noted that the programs that existed were focused on providing employment to people on a daily-wage basis only. The sector expert KI further added that these employment programs did not provide any development of skills or experiences nor had any long-term impact on the economy.

However, the sector expert also noted that there were investments in the basic services sector and infrastructure rehabilitation, such as the public electricity network, telecommunications and internet companies, and fuel providers, which would be beneficial for both businesses and general populations.

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 (12) were asked if they required any special trainings, new skills, and/or resources. Eight business KIs noted that they would need resources, while the other four KIs noted that they did not require any resources or trainings. The types of resources that the businesses would need included new equipment and machinery (5), financial input (5), and raw materials like seeds, cloth material, livestock, and lumber.\*

## POTENTIAL SECTORS WITH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



**Industrial manufacturing and processing of food items and beverages, and education were noted by the business KIs (9 each) as the sectors high in demand, and thus likely to be the most profitable\***



**Agriculture technology was noted by the sector expert KI as an emerging sector in the city**

According to the sector expert KI, there should be support for development in the agriculture and livestock sector. According to the KI, the agriculture sector was significantly underdeveloped, and training and access to modern technologies and knowledge of new techniques to utilize all aspects of farms produce were needed. The KI further mentioned that these techniques could help fill in for the lack of fuel and fertilizers which are often difficult to procure due to both lack of availability and high prices.

The sector expert KI noted that attention should also be given to establish small production factories that developed livestock and food products through processing of raw agricultural products, thereby utilizing local resources.

Additionally, information and financial technology were highlighted by seven business KIs as an emerging sector. All seven business KIs noted that this sector was emerging now as a result of high demand in the area.

## KEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

According to the sector expert KI, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Industrial cities committees, and the Regulatory department affiliated with the local authorities were the agencies that worked closely with businesses and were responsible for giving the necessary licenses to businesses for import, conducting censorship of prices and markets, facilitating travel and transit of international merchants and industrialists into the region.

On the other hand, the community leader KIs noted an absence of controlling unions and/or official institutions capable of controlling and determining workers' wages, leading to high competition in the market and unregulated/ low wages for all workers.

\*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.<sup>28</sup>

**71%** respondents in the labour IIs reported a difference between the types of work that men and women engage in




**57%** respondents who reported a difference between men and women also reported that that women work in some specific sectors only<sup>29</sup>

### Top five sectors of work in which workers reported that women mostly worked in<sup>\*30</sup>

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
|    | Beauty salon and parlours               | 88% |
|    | Sewing/ tailoring/ embroidery/ knitting | 88% |
|   | Education                               | 56% |
|  | Agriculture and livestock rearing       | 54% |
|  | Healthcare                              | 49% |

The community leader KIs noted that there was a lack of job opportunities considered suitable for women in the city while more job opportunities existed for men since they could engage in any type of work. Traditionally, according to the community KIs, the sectors considered inappropriate for women included those which were labour intensive and/or required workers to travel long distances such as construction and public transportation.

### Reported reasons why differences in work between men and women exist<sup>\*31</sup>

|   |  |     |
|---|--|-----|
|  | It is unsafe for women to work in certain areas and sectors                | 56% |
|  | Women are expected to take care of family obligations and responsibilities | 49% |
|  | Women are expected to work from home                                       | 44% |

The community leader KIs noted that women often lacked some basic skills, such as use of computer and fluency in English, as a result of the Syrian conflict. It was noted that there was a decrease in the number of women completing undergraduate- or postgraduate-level studies compared to before the Syrian conflict. Now, most families did not allow female members of the households to seek higher education due to security and economic reasons and as a result most women had only completed primary or secondary level education.

Moreover, the sector expert KI noted that while the challenges in starting or running businesses were faced by all populations groups, women faced additional challenges since the prolonged war and bad economy had affected women's work experience disproportionately.

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 IDPs, as a result of their displacement, often lacked financial capabilities which prevented them from opening their own businesses. Whereas, people from the host communities had comparatively more resources and were often the 'employers' as a result of being business owners.

In fact, the community leader KIs noted that a number of professions which were run by IDPs in their original communities were disappearing as they are unable to engage in them because of their limited means and resources after being displaced. The community leader KIs further added that the IDPs could not re-start their businesses due to lack of capital, and hence engaged in whichever employment opportunities were available to them to earn a living.

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

## ENDNOTES

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9. UNESCO (2005). [Understanding and Defining Literacy](#).
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15. Ibid.
16. UN OCHA (February 2022). [Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic](#).
17. UN OCHA (March 2021). [Syrian Arab Republic: Situation Report No. 26](#).
18. REACH (2021). [Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria \(HSOS\)](#).
19. UN OCHA (September 2021). [Syrian Arab Republic: Situation Report No. 31](#).
20. Female respondents in the labour IIs constituted 12% 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.
21. Out of 106 total respondents, 37% reported working in daily-wage work considered to be informal and 35% reported engaging in informal employment with a verbal or no contract. 19% reported having own business while 10% 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.
22. Ibid.
23. 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%).
24. Out of 106 total respondents, 3% reported not having any education but still having the ability to read and write (literacy skills), while 6% 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.
25. Out of 14, 13 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 one business KI noted that there was no competition in their sector (Laundry services).
26. Out of the 14 business KIs, 10 KIs noted that they had plans to hire new employees in the next one year, 2 KIs noted that they were not planning to hire any employees, 1 KI noted that they did not know, while the other 1 KI preferred not to respond to the question.
27. Based on 13 out of 14 responses from the business KIs. One KI preferred not to answer the question.
28. Female respondents in the labour IIs constituted 12% 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 (71%), 57% reported that this difference existed as women worked only in some specific sectors. This was followed by 31% respondents who reported that women worked in only those jobs that had been suggested to them by their friends and relatives, 24% reported that women worked only in own family-run businesses, and 13% reported that women in the area did not work at all. Multiple options could be selected, so findings may exceed 100%.
30. Out of those respondents who reported differences between men and women in the type of work they did (71%) and that the difference that existed was that women work only in specific sectors (57%).
31. Out of those respondents who reported that there were differences between men and women in the type of work they did (71%).