

# Perceptions and facts



The effect of **economic factors** on **Social cohesion**  
In the northern Syria Amid the host community and the **IDPS**.



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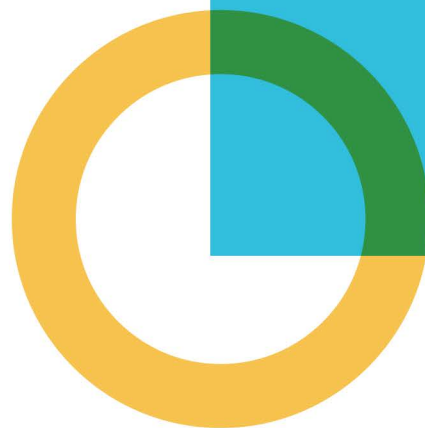
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# 01



The humanitarian crisis in Syria continues to get worse each new year, putting more burden on people, in all aspects and sectors.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria continues to get worse each new year, putting more burden on people, in all aspects and sectors. The number of Syrians in need of help and basic services in 2019 AD reached nearly 11.7 million beneficiaries in various sectors (5.9 females, 5.8 males, 5 children, 1.3 people with special needs), 5 million of whom are in dire need of these services. The number of in need people in Idlib Governorate alone reached 1.63 million. This need includes sectors, such as: health, education, food security, early recovery and livelihoods, water and sanitation, and other sectors.

The total funding, through United Nations agencies for Syria, amounted to nearly 1.4 billion dollars in 2019, in all humanitarian work sectors. 1.5% for the early recovery sector, 23.7% for the food security sector, 4.7% for the water and sanitation sector, 4.9% for the education sector, 8.6% for the health sector, and the rest is distributed among several other sectors<sup>2</sup>. As funding directed to the early recovery sector, which is the most important sector concerned with economic recovery and livelihoods, is still modest compared to other sectors.

The GDP of Syria minimized by 63 percent between 2011 and 2016, compared to the GDP of 2010<sup>3</sup>, the economic aspect became one of the most affected aspects, as a result of the destruction of the economic infrastructure, the significant increase in unemployment, the failing of Purchasing power, huge waves of displacement, the migration of capital out of the country, the deterioration of the local currency, as it decreased to approximately 51 times from 2010 (until the date of publication of the report), and other reasons.

More than half of qualified workforce (between 18 and 65 years old, males and females) cannot obtain permanent employment opportunities<sup>1</sup>. The assessments indicated that 83% of Syrians live below the poverty line, <sup>4</sup> as the new indicators indicate the deterioration of the economic situation and the local currency, under the humanitarian crisis impact, the Corona pandemic, and economic sanctions, helped in increasing this percentage. In northwestern Syria; The monthly food ration, along with basic items, costs at least 80% of the monthly income of unskilled workers, as daily income work is the livelihood source for a third of the population there, while the other third of the population earns their livelihood from private work<sup>5</sup>. According to (HNAP) Report<sup>5</sup>, Spring 2020 AD, the main obstacles facing all groups in Syrian society in accessing job opportunities are in order: lack of job and employment opportunities (66%), lack of funding (54%), and lack in the required skills (40%). The impediment of poor skills was most frequently reported by women-headed households (51%) and by vulnerable families (43%). The research also indicated that the average income in northwestern Syria is 15% lower than the average national income at the country level, and that women-headed households have an average income of 33% lower than the average national income, which makes them more vulnerable and needy.

The economic decline and the loss of livelihoods have led people to negatively adapt to this situation, and the emergence of undesirable coping mechanisms<sup>5</sup>, such as borrowing money, buying by debt, using savings, and relying on aid. In addition to the sale of productive assets, child labor under the age of 18, and others<sup>1</sup>.

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1- Summary of Humanitarian Needs in the Syrian Arab Republic, OCHA, 2019.

2- Funding Tracking Services (FTS) website, OCHA.

3- Report "War Outcome: Economic and Social Consequences of the Conflict in Syria", The World Bank, 2017.

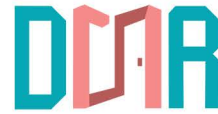
4- Quick Facts on the Syria Crisis, UNICEF, 2019.

5- Socio-Economic Brief, Humanitarian Needs Assessment Program (HNAP), 2019.

02

## About Door Organization:

Door organization is a civil society organization licensed in Turkey since mid-2018, working with the Syrian community structures in order to reach its vision of a decent society, which is capable of overcoming its challenges, by investing its resources creatively



Therefore, Door organization works within community development programs and economic empowerment, on building the community strength to effectively organize and assemble its resources through capacity building projects, self-sufficiency projects, and microfinance.

Door is motivated by its belief in community work and the importance of building strong relationships between the Syrian people parts, in addition to adopting the dialogue and advocacy principle in promoting community cohesion. Door has worked on a number of projects which seek to increase community cohesion, activate dialogue and distribute roles among the various segments of Syrian society. In addition to building the community events capacities, enhancing their self-sufficiency opportunities and enhancing their ability to launch initiatives using their local resources.

## About the Youth of Change Foundation:

Youth of Change is a voluntary community-based organization established in northern Syria in late 2015. The organization works to enhance the role of community initiatives and volunteer work, to reach their vision of an empowered and effective society capable of making a



change and contributing to decision-making. Therefore, Youth for Change worked through its community committees -spread in Idlib, western and northern countryside of Aleppo, and parts of Hama countryside-, to launch many community initiatives which serve the Syrian community and increase its strength to face the harsh conditions created by bombardment and displacement.

The Foundation consists of: 27 community development committees in addition to 7 specialized teams: the training team, the research team, the campaigns and advocacy team, the women team, the self-sufficiency projects team, the forcibly displaced team, and the media team. The Foundation has launched many campaigns, initiatives and trainings in the fields of education, community cohesion, psychological support, safety and security, and public interest services.

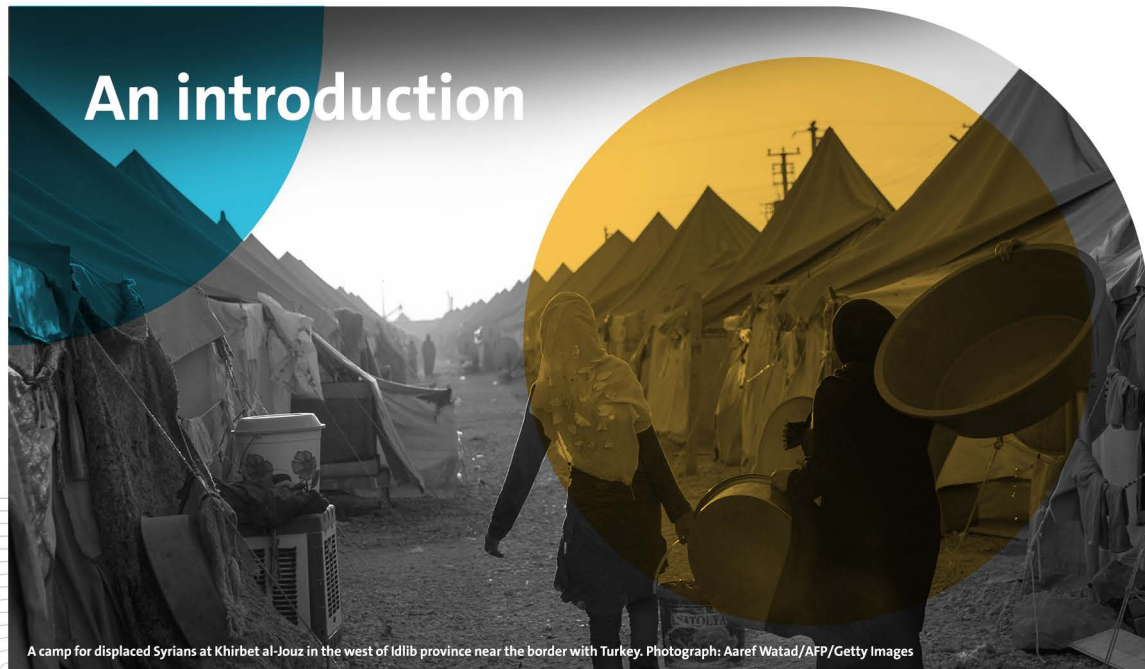


# 03



More than 3 million civilians live in the north of Syria, in Idlib region, Hama countryside and western Aleppo countryside, more than a million of them are children,

More than 3 million civilians live in the north of Syria, in Idlib region, Hama countryside and western Aleppo countryside, more than a million of them are children, and more than half of them are internally displaced from several areas in Damascus, Daraa, Homs, Hama and Latakia.



This sharp increase in the population led to some aspects of disagreement between the host community and the IDPS. This has prompted Door Organization and the Youth of Change Foundation to conduct this study as part of a series of studies that examine the causes of these manifestations, and how to enhance social cohesion between the two societies. Where a field researchers team in the northwest of Syria conducted a number of focused discussion sessions, individual interviews, and questionnaires, with the aim of studying economic, social and legal factors, and organizations' methods of intervention and their effect on the manifestations of disagreement between the two societies, and whether they increased or decreased.

These studies were accompanied by a number of discussion sessions and meetings that included representatives of the community development committees in northern Syria, aiming of making use of their community experiences in developing tools in the best way.

It should be noted that the process of data collection in these studies extended between August 2019 and December 2019, so it took place before the recent wave of displacement in southern Idlib regions in the city of Maarat al-Numan and its countryside, which witnessed a wave of mass displacement that exceeded 235,000 new internally displaced persons IDPS. (2)

In this research, the focus is on the impact of economic factors only, as the work was carried out through a number of focused discussion sessions, a number of questionnaires and individual interviews, with experts on studying the sources of family and community income in the northwest of Syria, in addition to studying the economic needs, and how to meet them, current projects and market entering mechanisms, the status of competition and monopolism, job opportunities and the impact of all this on conflicts, or societal cohesion between the host society and the IDPS.

This study comes within four studies carried out by Door organization and the Youth of Change Foundation as part of the project to enhance community cohesion among the "Grassroots" community structures in northern Syria.



Families from the south of Idlib province drive towards the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday. Photograph: Aaref Watad/AFP/Getty Images

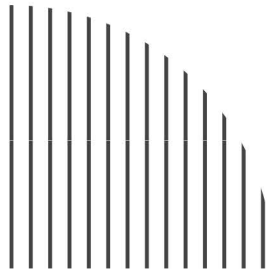
Where 20 researchers were trained on scientific research methodologies and data collection tools, facilitating focused discussion sessions, and using the "KOBO" application in data collection.

# 04



This research aims to study the most important causes that negatively or positively affect societal cohesion amid the host community and the IDPS community in northwestern Syria.

## Research objective:



This research aims to study the most important causes that negatively or positively affect societal cohesion amid the host community and the IDPS community in northwestern Syria.

Where this study focuses on measuring the impact of organizations' interference on community cohesion, starting from the following assumptions:



There is a significant impact on people's perceptions from both societies regarding the services provided by the organizations on the social cohesion / conflicts between the two parties.

There is a significant impact on the way organizations intervene in community cohesion / conflicts amid the host community and the IDPS.

Based on these hypotheses, this research aims to study the most important economic issues of concern to people on both sides, to study the sources and the amount of income, and the methods of bridging the gaps between costs and income used by society. In addition to studying the mechanisms of entering the market and working in it and in new projects, and the effect of all this on reducing or increasing the frequency of conflicts between the two communities,

This study was preceded by an opinion poll that gathered 350 participants from the host community and IDPS in more than 50 geographical areas, to identify the most important perceptions and impressions on community cohesion issues. This was followed by a number of focused discussion sessions with specialists in the field of study and community work, aiming to develop research tools.

Based on the previous stage, research tools were developed and researchers were qualified to use them. 10 new focus group sessions were conducted, in addition to 169 questionnaires, and 48 individual interviews, with specialists from merchants and business owners.

Atlas.ti software was used to analyze qualitative data, and SPSS software was used to analyze quantitative data using both descriptive and regression analysis.

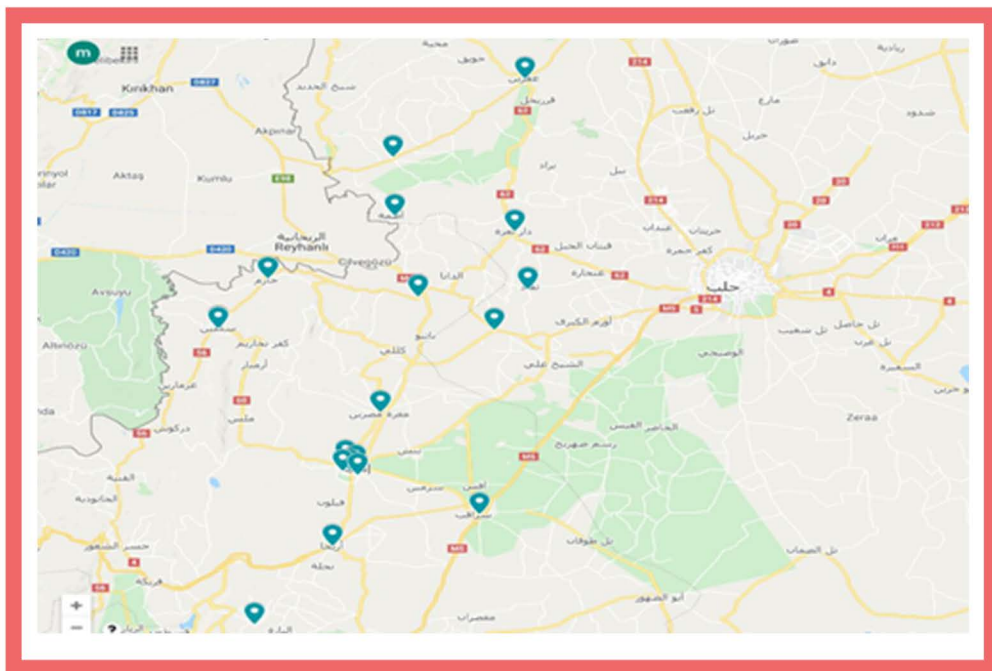
169  
questionnaires

48  
KILS

10  
FGDs

## Geographical distributio

The current study was conducted in twenty geographical locations, and the sample was randomly selected, as the researchers were provided with a list of 30 geographical areas in order to select 20 of them to achieve the appropriate distribution, and at the same time insure the safety when collection data.







In order to ensure the search quality, the locator feature was used using **KoBoCollect** program to verify and control the quality, and to ensure that the questionnaires were filled out by randomly distributed people within the same geographical area.

As for focus group discussions, 10 geographic regions have been defined so that equal representation of the study community is ensured, whether from immigrants or residents.

## The research sample

The focus groups sample contained 75 participants, who are specialists in economic issues. Among whom were 33 displaced persons and 42 hosts. The sample was also distributed on gender basis 48 males and 27 females. While the number of sessions in Idlib and its countryside was 6, compared to 4 in the countryside of Aleppo.

Place	Community types		Gender	
				
The city of idlib	4	4	6	2
Aleppo Alatarib	2	4	4	2
Idlib Maarshurin	3	5	5	3
Idlib Sarmada	6	2	6	2
Idlib Atmeh	3	4	4	3
Aleppo Marata	1	5	5	1
Aleppo Termanin	4	5	3	6
Idlib Dana	4	3	4	3
Aleppo Atarib	5	4	8	1
Aleppo Termanin	1	6	3	4
	33	42	48	27

Regarding the questionnaires, data were collected from 200 persons from IDPS and host communities, male and female, as shown in the graph.

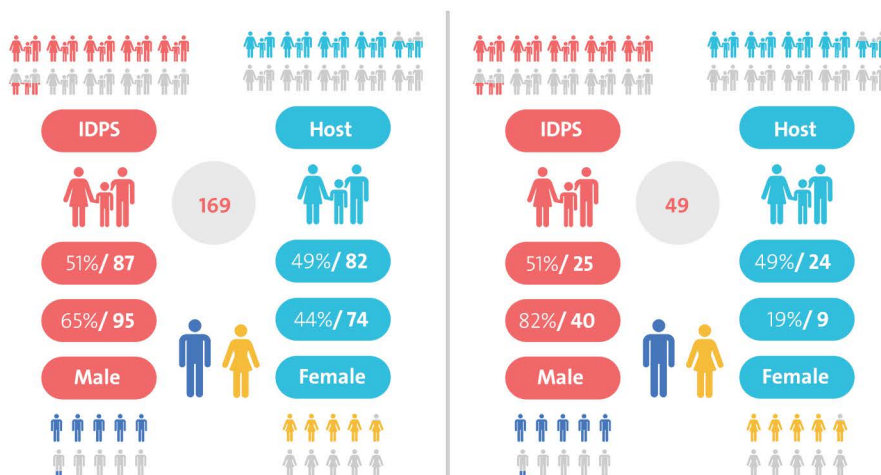


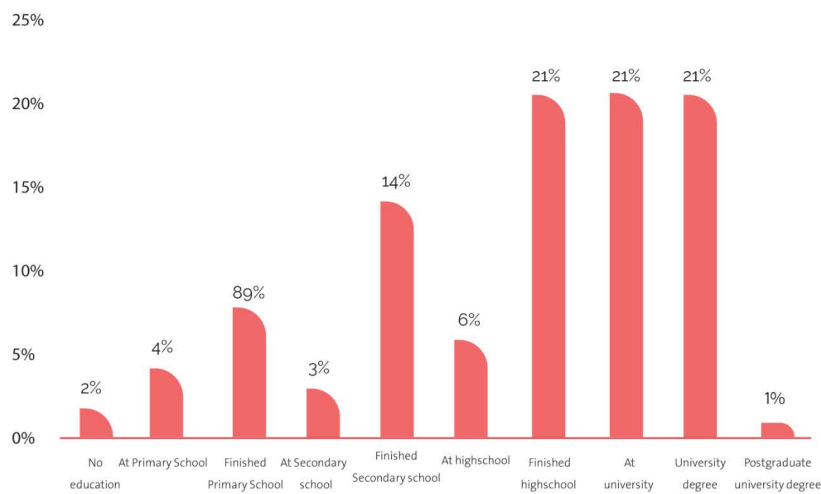
Figure (1) question-

Figure (2) Individual interviews

## Educational level

The percentage of those who finished university reached 21%, while the majority of the participants had either high school diploma, or still in university stage. And there is a percentage of 14% of those who did not have a secondary education.

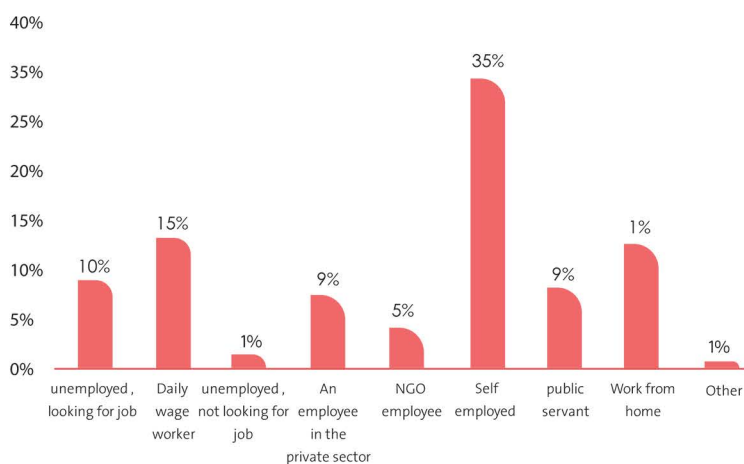
Figure 3: Educational level



## Employment status:

The largest percentage of the study sample was of those who are self employed at a rate of 35%, or those who work on a daily wage, or work from home, at a rate of 15% each, while the percentage of the unemployed was 11%.

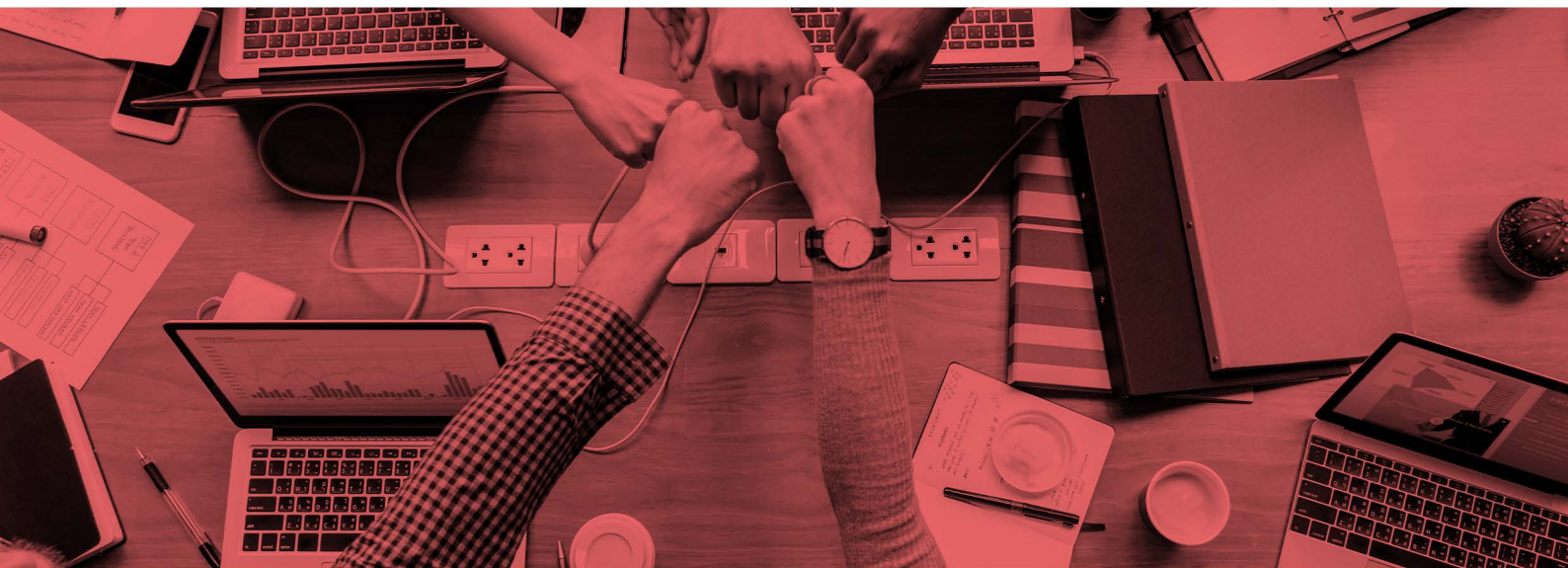
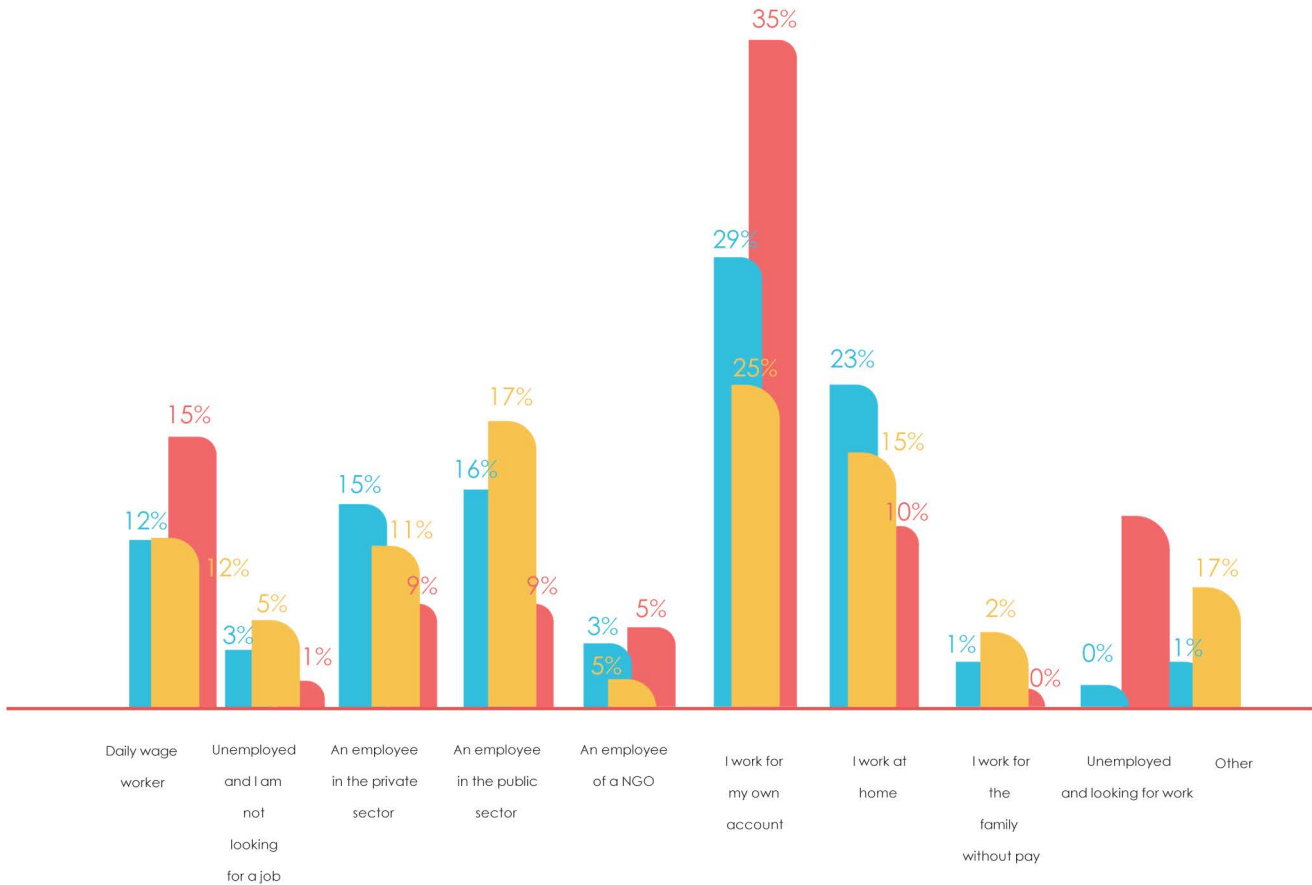
Figure 4: Educational level





# Employment status:

Figure 4: Educational level



Findings

# 06

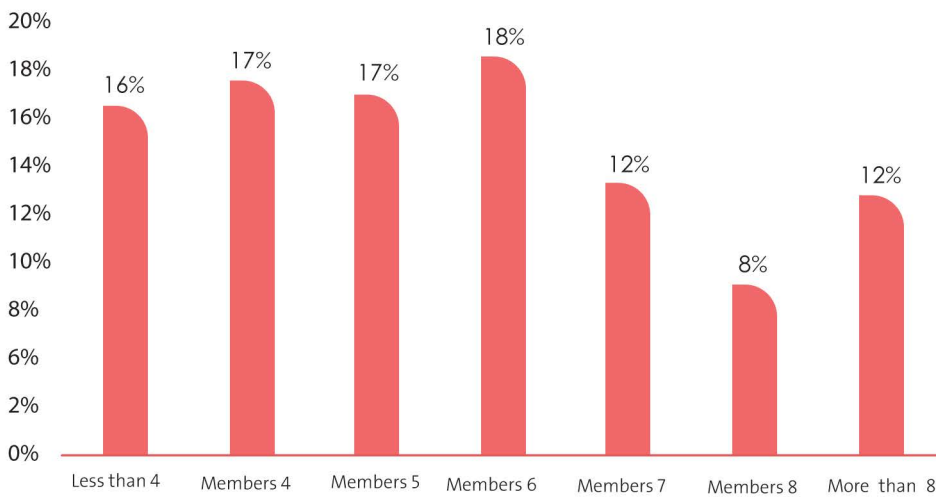


# Findings

## Number of family members:

The study indicated that a high percentage of the participants are families with members range from 4 to 7, with 64% of the study sample, while 16% have fewer than 4 members, and there are about 12% of those with even higher number, 8 members.

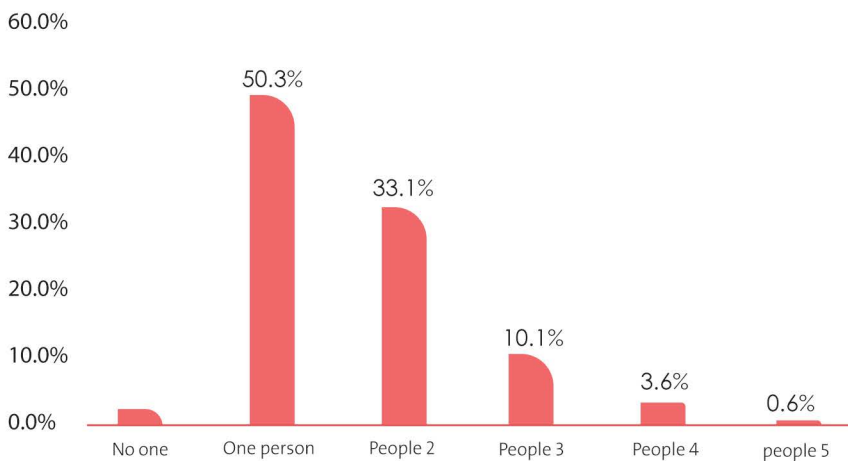
Figure 6: Number of family members:



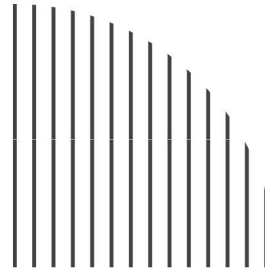
## Number of household members contributing to income

The study also showed that most families depend on income generated by one person 50%, or two people by 33%. While 2.4% are those who do not have any breadwinners.

Figure 7: Number of household members contributing to income



# Findings :



## Frequency of conflicts

The answers of the participants showed that the frequency of conflicts tends to be moderate, where most of the answers were 73%, ranging between conflicts sometimes happened by 37%, or rarely occurred by 36%. The results of the participants in individual interviews were almost similar, with an increase of 45% who believed that conflicts happened sometimes.

Figure 8:

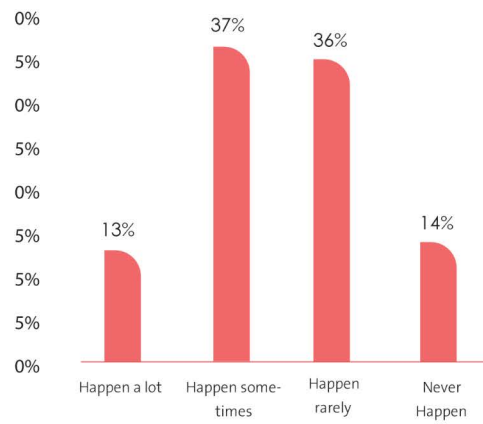
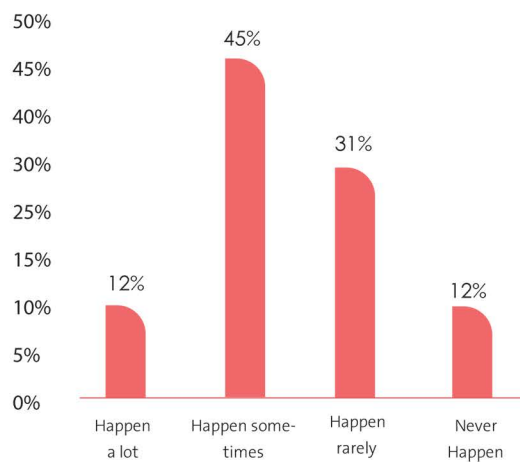


Figure 9:



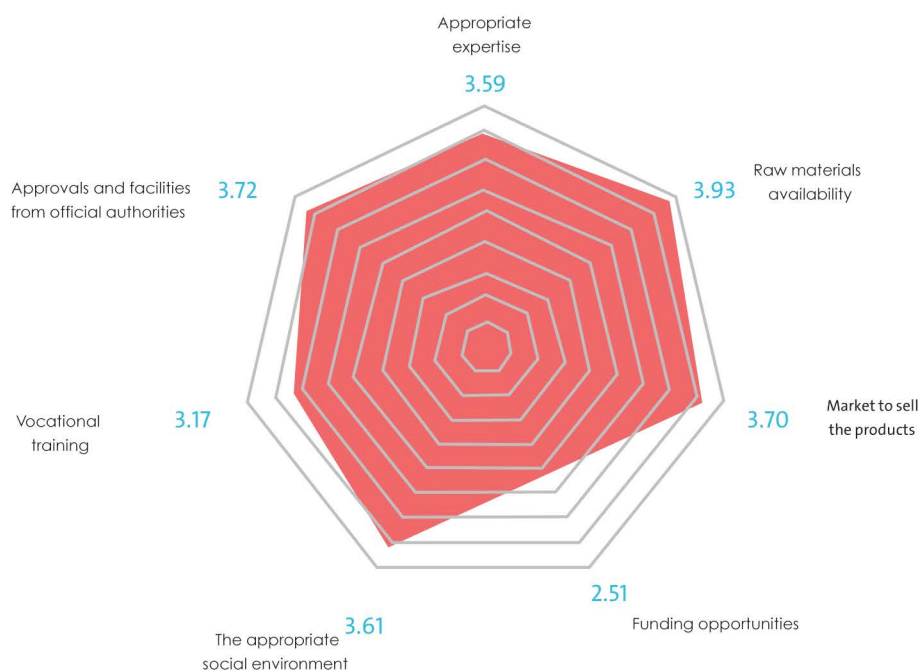


## Findings :

### Facilities available to help entering the market:

When asking participants about the availability of the following matters, most of the things were available to some extent, or well available, as most of the answers were close to the number 4, which indicates that it is available to some extent, with the exception of funding opportunities, where its value was 2.51, which is Less than 3, and closer to 2, which is somewhat unavailable.

Figure 10:



### The results of regression analysis were as follows:

There was a negative impact of the availability of funding opportunities to set up projects for everyone, leading to a high rate of conflict recurrence, which can be explained by the focused discussion sessions, in which the participants indicated that the largest percentage of project owners are IDPS, despite the fact that these projects has a positive effect in creating job opportunities, but there is a feeling that there is no equality in providing these opportunities, as it is mainly directed for supporting other IDPS.

There was a negative impact of The closure of societies to one another, which leads to an increase in the conflicts frequency.

As for responses analysis result in Kils interviews, most of whom were merchants and entrepreneurs, a positive effect appeared, for the appropriate social environment for the projects establishment. That is, the appropriate social environment leads to a lower possibility of conflicts.

## New projects' challenges and facilities:

Regarding the responses of the participants, in focused discussion sessions, about facilities offered to new projects for entering the market, most of the answers indicated that there are no facilities, or that entering the market does not require any facilities. In the absence of state authority, any person can take a decision to create a facility, and there will be no obstacles.

The participants pointed out that in the absence of the state authority, the most influential factor in facilitating starting new projects is the availability of capital. Some participants also added that in some areas, approvals are needed, but they are available and there are no obstacles. As for projects funded by organizations in the form of grants and loans, the organization requests a study and provides assistance when completing these studies.



The analysis result of the question : What are the facilities within focus group sessions?

As for the challenges facing projects in general, the security challenge is considered the biggest, as the feeling of instability always limits the desire of capital owners for investment. The availability of raw materials, and finding product's market and taxes, are also challenging factors for enterprises. An additional matter which poses a challenge is the high rents.

Among the general challenges is the monopoly of basic materials, mainly fuels, and basic materials controlled by merchants or military factions.



The analysis result of the question : What are the challenges within focus group sessions?

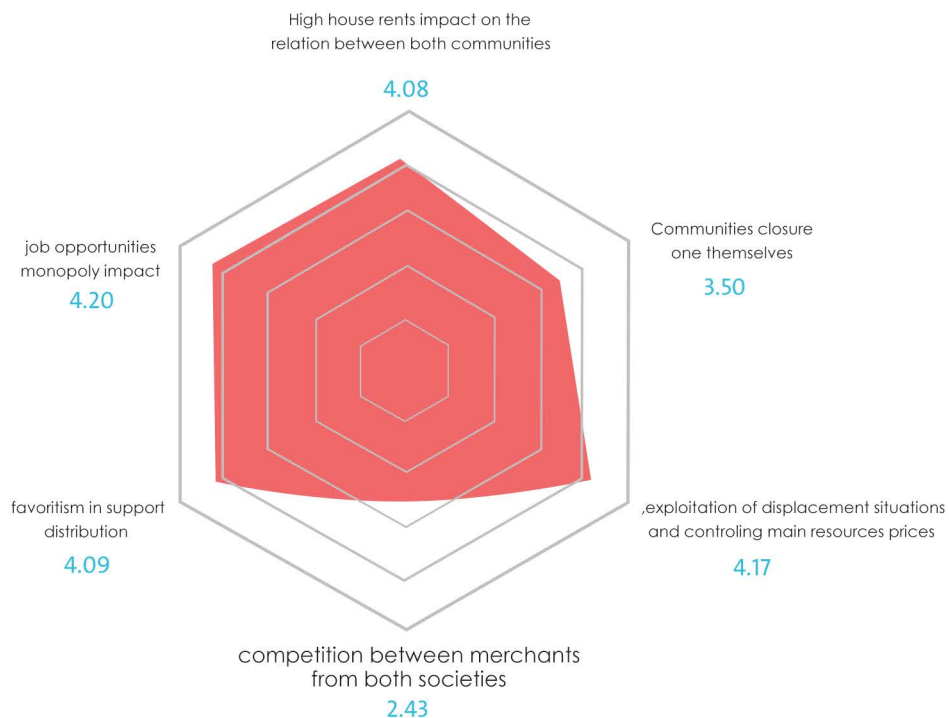
## Findings :

### Factors that limit economic transactions

The most influential factors (challenges) were job opportunities monopoly, as well as the exploitation of displacement situations, the increase in house rents, as well as favoritism in support distribution. Likewise, the effect of competition among merchants was the least influential, as it was more likely to be a positive effect, and perhaps is due to the effect of competition on the consumer being positive, but negative between merchants as it led to an increase in quality and a decrease in prices, according to the discussion sessions.



Figure 11:



### The results of the regression analysis were as follows:

There is a negative impact, of increased competition between merchants, which leads to an increase in conflicts frequency

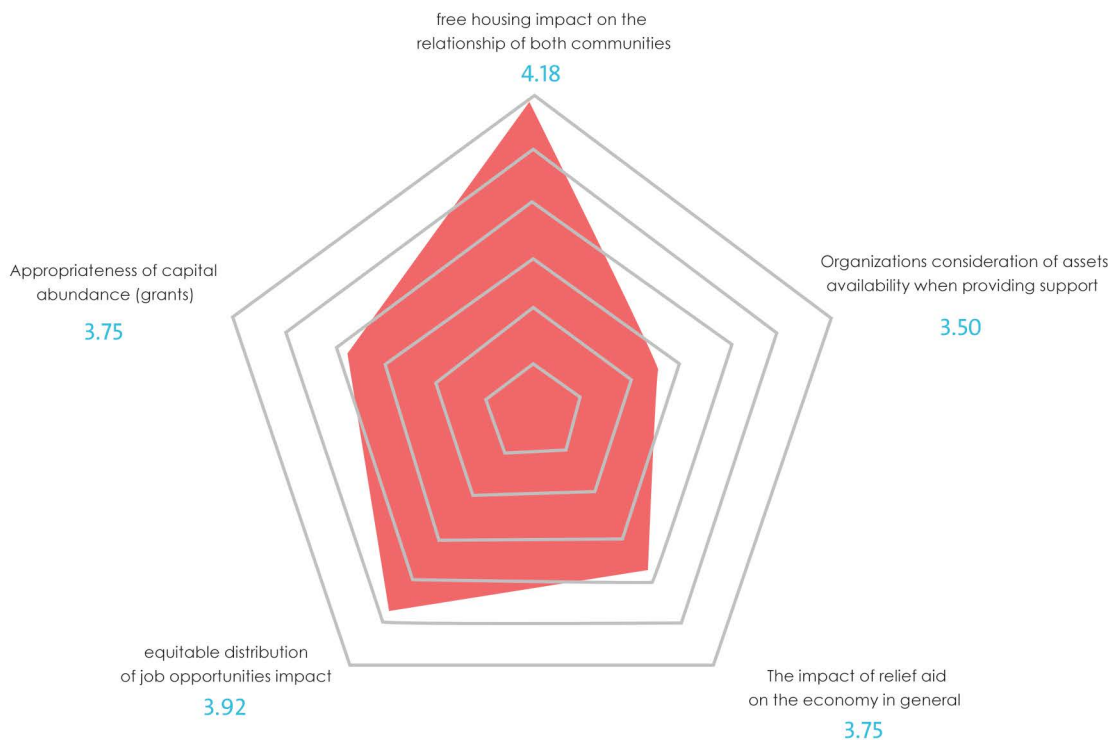


## Findings :

### Factors that increase economic transactions:

The effect of the availability of free housing was one of the most positive factors affecting the mitigation of conflicts recurrence. All the other factors were pointing to a somewhat positive. Most of the answers were close to the number 4, which indicates the positive effect to some extent.

Figure 12:



### He results of the regression analysis were as follows:

There is a positive impact of better equitable when providing job opportunities, leading to a decrease in conflicts frequency.

# Findings :

## Income and expense

The participants responses indicated that the largest percentage (68% /) obtained an average income in the six months preceding the study with a value ranging between 100,000 and 500,000 Syrian Pounds. That is, equivalent to \$ 100 to \$ 500 during 6 months, at an exchange rate of \$ 1 = 1000 Syrian Pounds.

As the average income of all participants reached 6021 154 Syrian pounds, during 6 months, which is equivalent to \$ 6000, while the expenses amounted to 71,07692 Syrian pounds, equivalent to 7100 \$. However, the average income of 75% of the participants does not exceed 305,000 Syrian Pounds in 6 months, which is equivalent to \$ 305 in the six months.

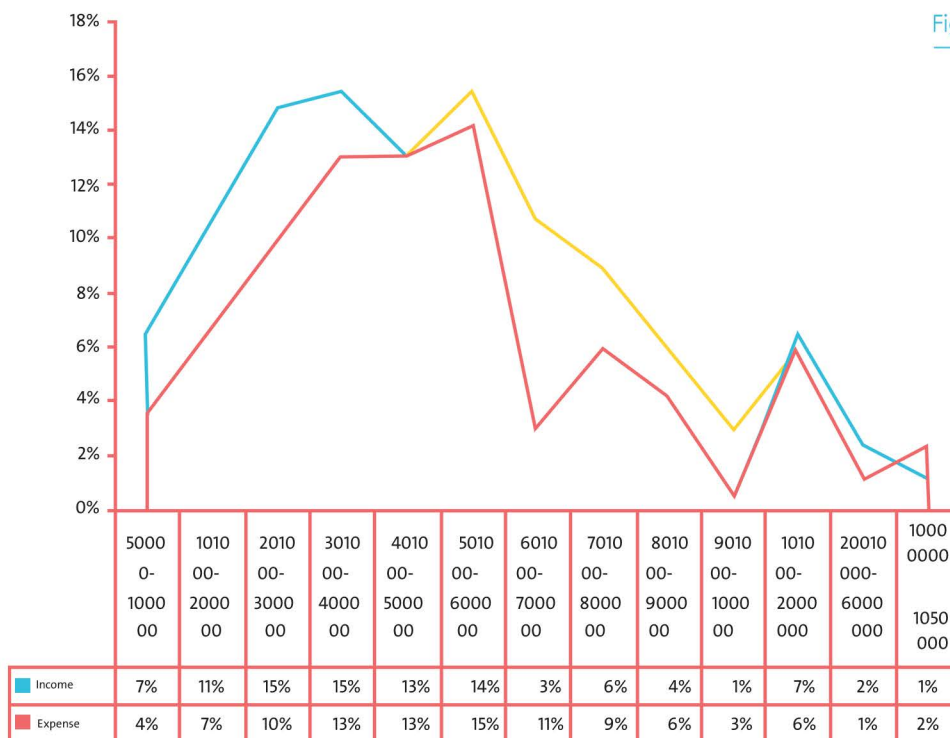


Figure 13:

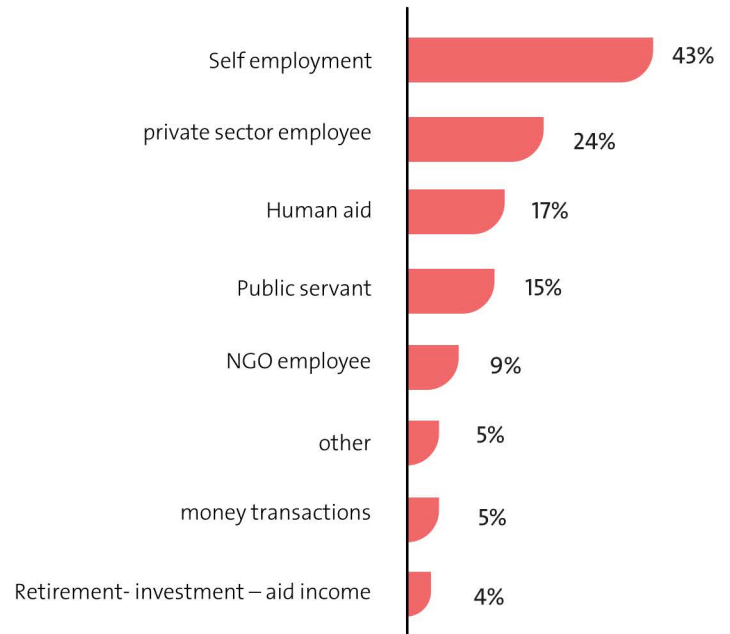
As we can see from the graph, the amount of income, expressed in green, is concentrated around the low values, while the expenditure, expressed in bright red, is concentrated in the middle. This indicates an expense greater than income.

## Findings :

### Sources of income:

According to the study, statistics show that the largest source of income, 43%, is from self-employment, and then comes the second source of income, which is employment in the private sector at 24%. And then is humanitarian aid at a rate of 17%. Then comes the income from organizations at 9% and money transactions at 5%.

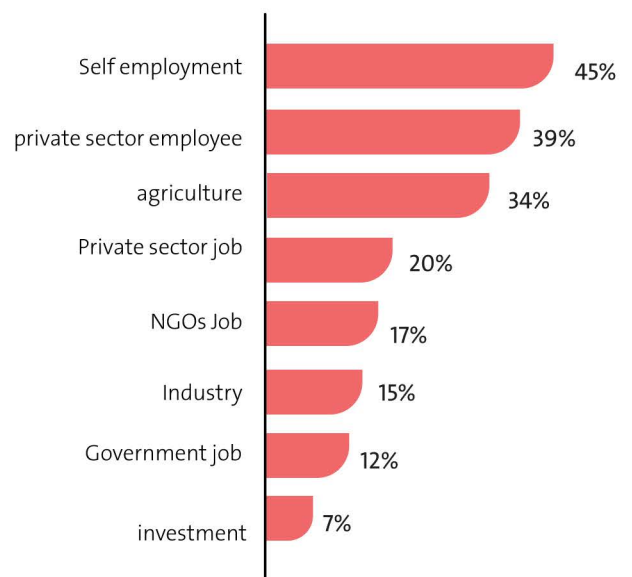
Figure 14:



As shown in the figure, the most repeated participants in the focus sessions was organizations as the main source of income for the community. This may indicate the great impression that organizations leave on the participants, despite the fact that the organizations 'contribution to family income directly did not exceed 5% to 20% in most of the answers about the source of individual or family income.

We also note that only 17% refer to organizations as a source of household income. Whereas self-employment, agriculture and commerce were of greater importance as sources of income. As self-employment was chosen as the first source by 42% of the study participants, while trade received 37% and agriculture 34%.

Figure 15:



The result of the question analysis of community income sources



We fight high prices with dispensation

Whereas the first method, which appeared more often in the focus groups, was reducing expenses, rationing or dispensing, then borrowing or debt was the second method. The ways in which the participants could rationale through were: reducing food quantity and quality, as well as reduce the seasonal clothing, in addition to reducing or not participating in social events. Some even stated that they do not send their children to school, either because of the high costs, or because of the need for their child to help at work.



Result of the gap-filling method question analysis

## Means of bridging the gap between income and expense

The study showed that the first source of bridging the gap, in case the expenses exceeds the income, is borrowing, and then the second method is rationing or reducing expenditures, by dispensing with some needs, and then the means of resorting to additional work.

Figure 16:

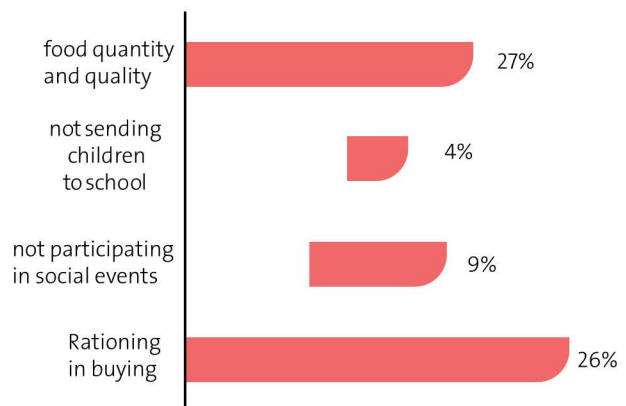
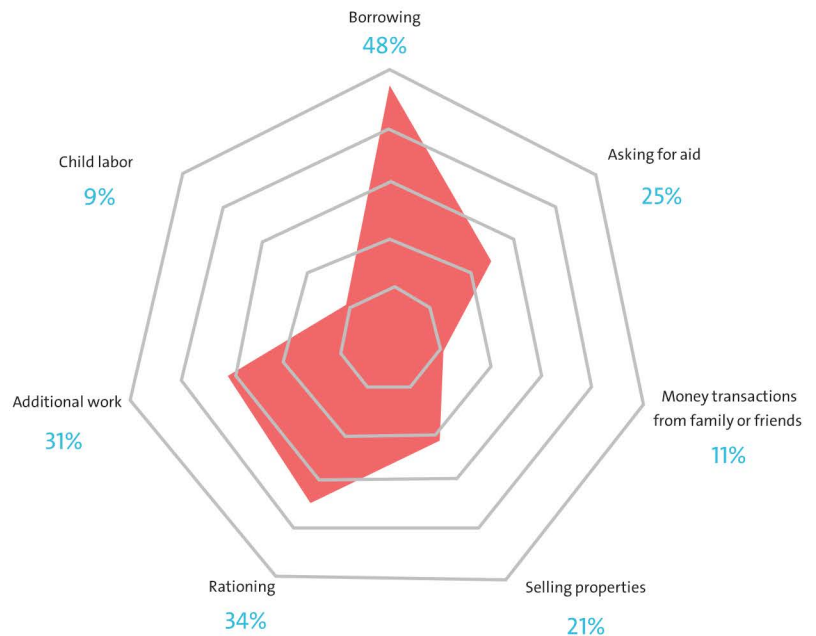
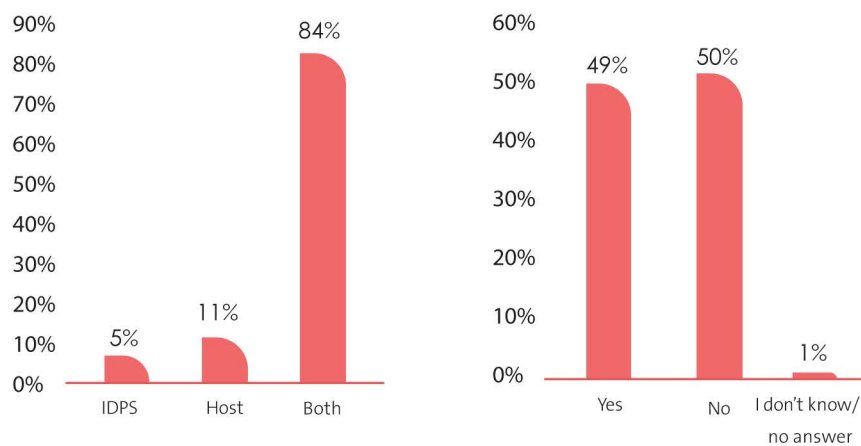


Figure 17:

## Main commodities:

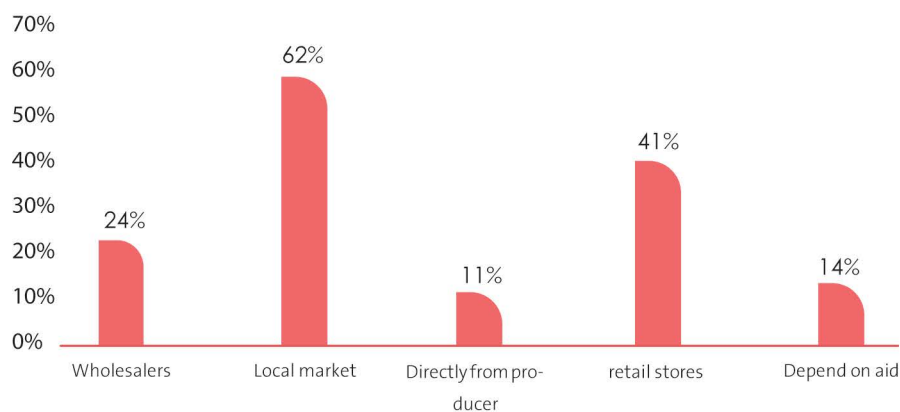
When asking participants to what extent they were able to meet the basic needs, the answers were close by 49% yes, and 50% were unable to meet their needs. When asked if they were buying from a host or IDPS merchant, The largest answer was "both" and the results were similar when asking the same question to the focus sessions participants, where the majority of participants indicated that they don't consider any difference between the IDPS and the host, and that they prefer to buy from the seller with the best price, then comes the preference for quality and finally was the preference of good treatment and good reputation. While some preferred to buy from the IDPS, motivated by supporting them.

Figure18: Figure19:



The participants also explained that they prefer to buy from the bazaar, or the local market in the first place, as the answers of 62% of them indicated that, while 41% prefer buying from retail stores as a second option, and 24% prefer to buy from a Wholesalers. While 14% depend only on aid. The participants focus groups answer was that they either prefer any place to be the closest and easiest to reach, or that they prefer to buy from the bazaar.

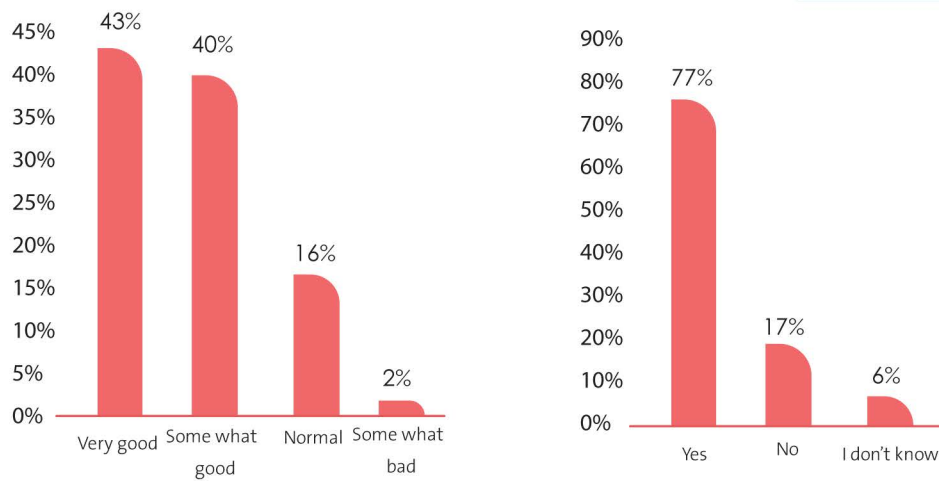
Figure20:



## New projects:

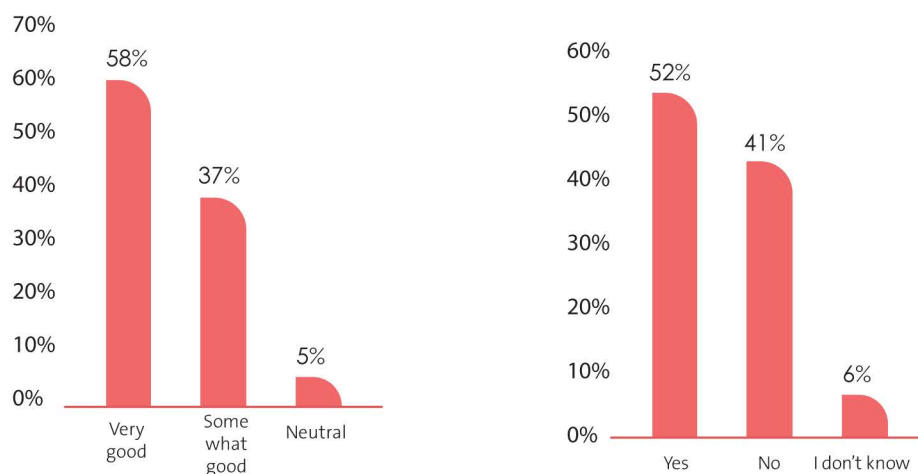
When the hosts were asked about the existence of economic projects created by the IDPS, 77% answered yes. This is identical to the opinion of the focus groups participants, they also indicated that most of these projects are restaurants. As for the relationship, most of the answers were positive, indicating a level to be somewhat good or very good. However, some of the discussion sessions participants pointed to some of the projects negative effects, such as "hatred" as a result of inequality in the provision of job opportunities for the two communities, or because of the IDPS better access to financing opportunities.

Figure22: Figure21:



The hosts also indicated that the IDPS have brought new professions and industries to the host community, and this has had a positive impact, in a very good or somewhat good way, on the local economy.

Figure24Figure23:





## Recommendations:

- 1- The results indicated that most of the facilities available to help entering the labor market were available to some extent, such as raw materials, appropriate expertise, approvals and facilities from official authorities, vocational training, the appropriate social environment, and a market for products, or unavailable to some extent, such as funding opportunities. Therefore, it is recommended to design interventions, taking into account providing these facilities.
- 2- Despite the lack of funding opportunities, the increase in funding has led to a negative impact on community cohesion, due to the beneficiaries' feeling of inequity in funding distribution. Therefore, it is recommended to focus on the principle of equity in similar interventions, with the aim of enhancing community cohesion.
- 3- The results indicated the positive impact of providing job opportunities on societal cohesion, if they are distributed equitably, by focusing on the principle of fairness in similar interventions, with the aim of enhancing community cohesion.
- 4- Organizations which carry out economic interventions must take into account creating an appropriate social environment, and encouraging participation among the different groups of society, and their openness to each other.
- 5- Private work and self-employment are considered the most important sources of family income in northern Syria. Therefore, it is recommended to enhance the support for self-employment, and working for the private sector, in future interventions of organizations.
- 6- As a result of gaps between family income and expenses, several negative coping mechanisms were used, such as rationing, which in turn led, for example, to malnutrition among family members, not sending children to schools, and weak community participation. Therefore it is recommended to design conditional aid to recover from negative coping strategies.



# Report



Within the project of enhancing community cohesion

At the societal structures in northern Syria

Partnership between

Door Organization and Youth of Change Foundation

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Syria  
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