

PERCEPTIONS AND FACTS



The effect of non-governmental organizations' intervention on community cohesion in the Syrian north Amid the **host society and the IDPS**.



Researchers

Tool development and data analysis

| Karam Halli
| Mohammad Saleh

Review and audit

| Ahmad Alibraheem
| Raji Aljondi

Administrative coordination

| Alaa AlKateeb

Translation

| Rola tomah

Directing and design

| Roni Obaid



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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.

01

An introduction

A camp for displaced Syrians at Khirbet al-Jouz in the west of Idlib province near the border with Turkey



An introduction

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 is Search

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After decades, civil society activity was limited by the repressive authorities to two main forms: the first was represented by civil charitable institutions work with limited activity and under direct supervision of government agencies, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, with strict censorship by the security authorities.

The second form was represented by a civil society managed under the direct supervision of those close to System such as the Syrian Trust for Development and its organizations, the Junior Chamber International (**JCI**), and the Syrian Enterprise and Business Centre (**SEBC**). Which is called the non-governmental organization **S'GONGO**.

Peaceful activity deteriorated during 2012, this fact has prompted civilian activists to establish bodies concerned with various civil fields and humanitarian work. The activity of these organizations began to increase significantly and rapidly combining the militarization of uprising, and the regime's inability to meet the regions' needs, especially those out of its control. Which led to shortage in services, especially health, education, hygiene and food. All of the former issues has pushed Syrian activists to fill the void.

This is where relief and development organizations, teams, and civil and voluntary initiatives began to form.

The work of the Syrian organizations mainly emerged in the opposition-controlled areas in the north (Aleppo countryside, Idlib, Rural Damascus, Daraa, and Quneitra in the south, where they witnessed a greater decline in services, but they also suffer from the continued siege, military operations and bombing of civilian areas. Most of the organizations operating in these areas have a working group, or an official registration in one of the neighboring countries, especially **Turkey**.

The role of these organizations was not limited to relief work, but went beyond it to work on advocacy and human rights issues despite the limited space of freedom and security restrictions, especially in regime areas. The long war period, has motivated these organizations to form networks and alliances that helped them in supporting processes and organizing rapid response **2**.

These organizations had the ability and flexibility to adapt to work in several areas under the pressure of the military and security factions. They also played a very important role that went beyond their traditional role in contributing to public affairs to cover the provision of services, secure job opportunities, playing an economic role, and working to empower women economically and politically and help them to participate in civil and political life. **3**.

United Nations agencies, international organizations, and donor countries began opening offices in neighboring countries, and the main efforts were coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In 2014, UN Security Council Resolution 2165 approved the provision of humanitarian aid through four border crossings that are not under the regime control, to provide the territories outside the regime's control with humanitarian needs **4**.

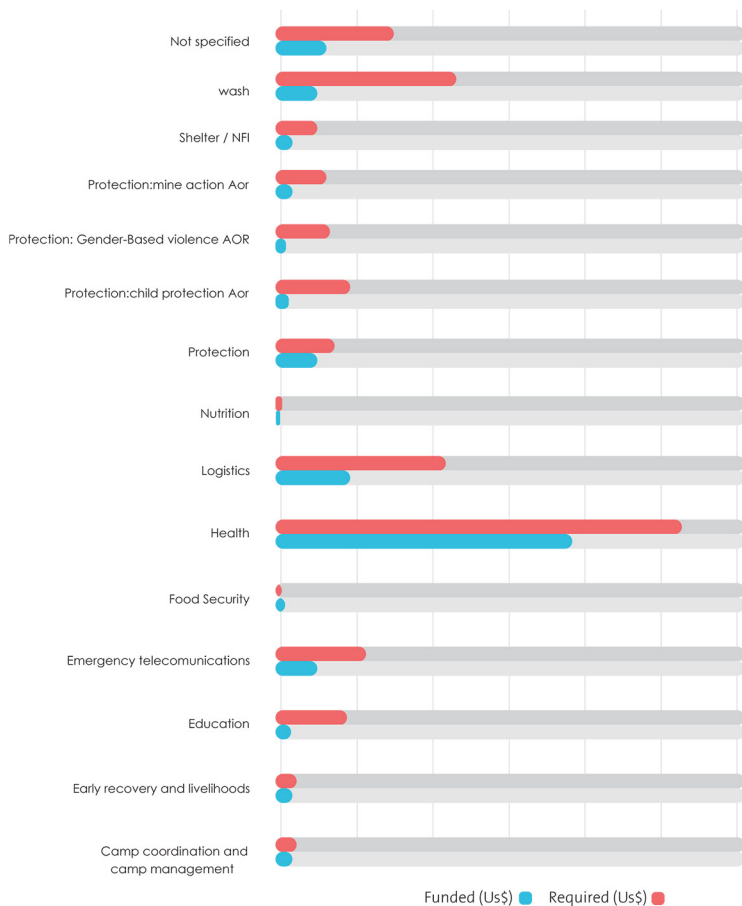
1- The Non-Governmental Organization Sector in Syria - Ma Rica Bosman) - International NGO Research and Training Center (INTRAC)

2- Syrian Civil Society Organizations Reality and Challenges - Citizens for Syria

3- Civil society institutions and their reality in Syria - Syria Center for Research and Studies.

In September 2014, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) operations in Syria, Turkey, and Jordan were assembled into a single response, and the 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview and the 2015 Strategic Response Plan for Syria were framed.

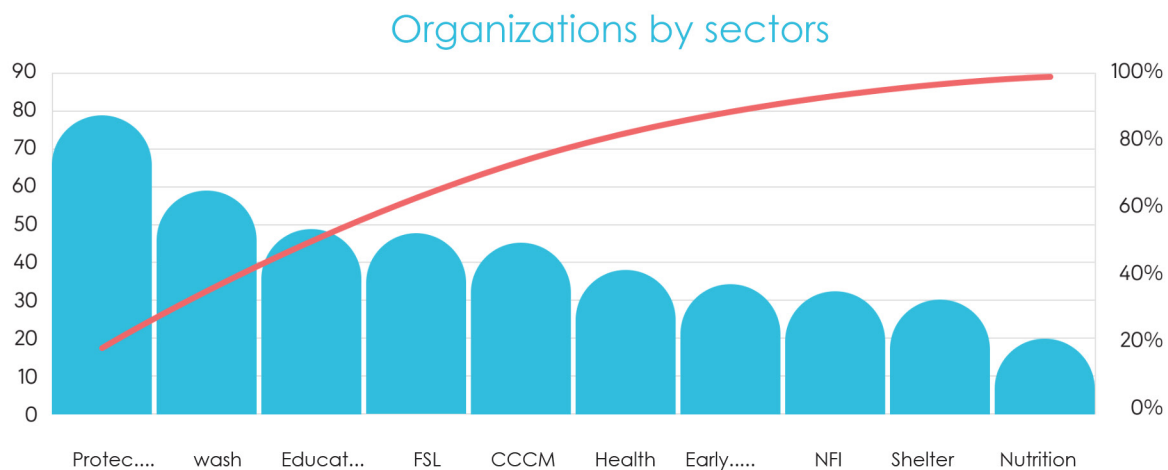
A consolidated appeal for Syria was launched in February 2015 however, since the report was issued, the aid situation has deteriorated again. More than seventy groups of aid organizations have withdrawn from the humanitarian aid campaign launched by OCHA on September 8, 2016, claiming that the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent are allowing the regime to intervene with aid 5



The Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Office has established a set of criteria for organizations to accept funding requests, such as proper planning and conducting a needs assessment process. The office also tracks financial aid provided in response to the Syrian conflict through the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which is a global database. It also records all reported international humanitarian aid, including NGOs, in real time, 6

The volume of funding for humanitarian and civil organizations until the end of 2019 amounted to approximately \$ 2 billion and 119 million, and the volume of funding for each sector was as shown in the figure below 7

The following chart shows the number of active organizations in the Office of Humanitarian Affairs in Turkey in 2020, which are operating in northern Syria 8



5 - SYRIA RESPONSE PLAN 2014 SUMMARY DECEMBER 2015

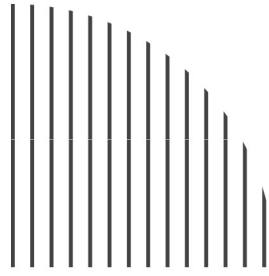
6- Norway to contribute to destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and to increase assistance to Syria and neighbouring countries-(2013)

7- Syria Humanitarian Response Plan for a year 2019 _(HRB) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) _2019

8- Syrian Arab Republic Cross-border Humanitarian Reach and Activities from Turkey

02

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:

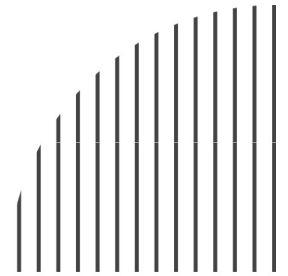
1 - There is a significant impact on people's perceptions from both societies regarding the services provided by the organizations on the social cohesion / conflicts between the two parties.

2 - 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, the aim of this research is to study the most important issues related to the way organizations intervene when providing services, whether appropriate standards followed when implementing this intervention, whether community participation is applied when providing services, and what is the impact of this participation.

03

Research Methodology



Research Methodology

This study was preceded by an opinion poll that gathered **350** participants from the host and diaspora communities 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 200 questionnaires.

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

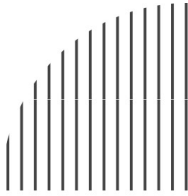
200
questionnaires

10
FGDs



04

Geographical distribution



Geographical distribution

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.

05

The research sample

The research sample

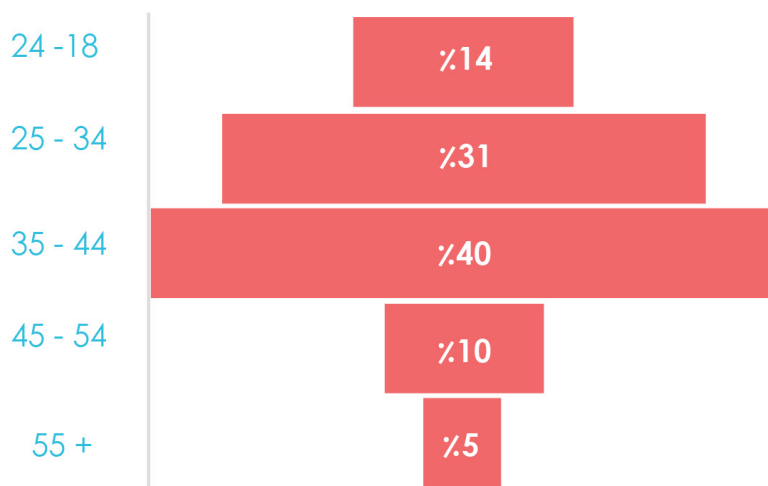
The sample size for focus groups is **78 participants** who are workers in organizations and who benefit from services provided by civil society organizations. Among them were **30 IDPS** and **48 hostesses**. The sample was also distributed on the basis of gender by 48 males and 30 females. While the number of sessions in Idlib and its countryside was 6, compared to **4 in the countryside of Aleppo**.

Gender		Community type		place
Female	Male	hosted	Immigrated	
3	4	5	2	Idlib, Maarat al-Numan
3	3	4	2	Al-Ghudfa Idlib
2	6	6	2	Idlib, Aqrabat
2	7	3	5	Idlib Atma
5	3	5	3	Aleppo Taqad
3	4	5	2	Aleppo Kafr Karmin
4	4	4	4	Idlib, Sarmada
3	4	4	3	Aleppo Apismo
3	5	5	3	Aleppo Kfar Taal
2	8	7	4	Aleppo Kfar Taal
30	48	48	30	Idlib is Marian

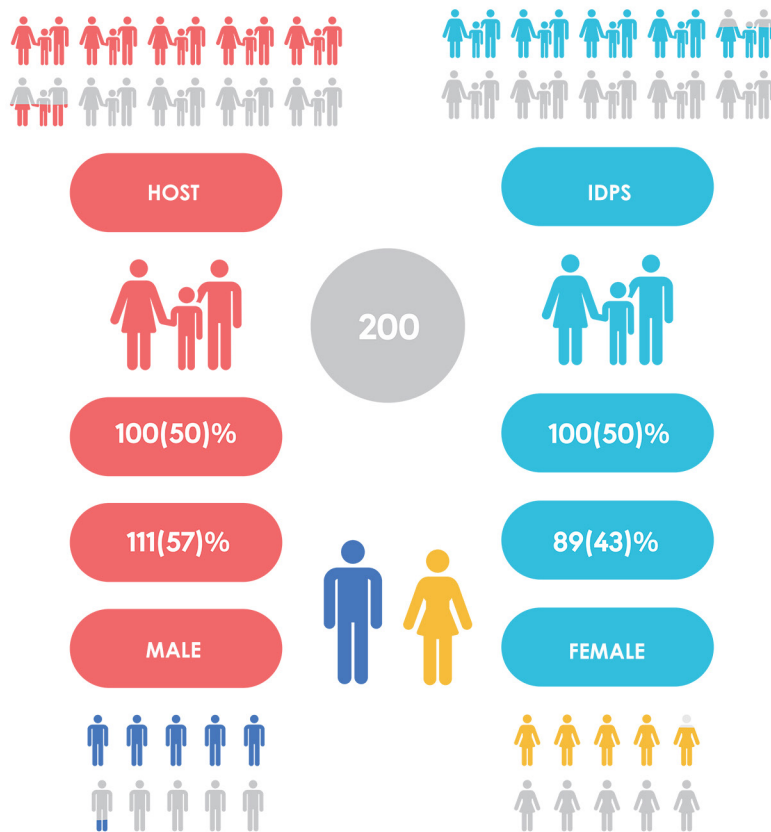
Table (1) Sample participants in FGDS sessions

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

Figure 1

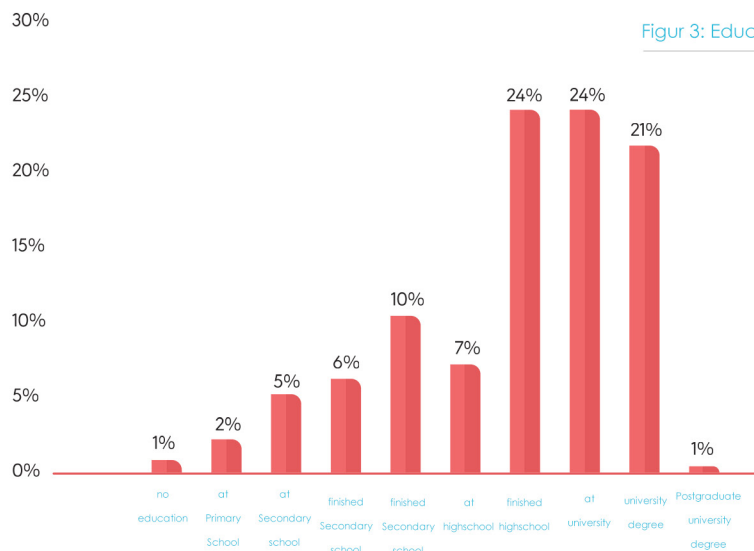


Figur 2: Age categories



Educational level

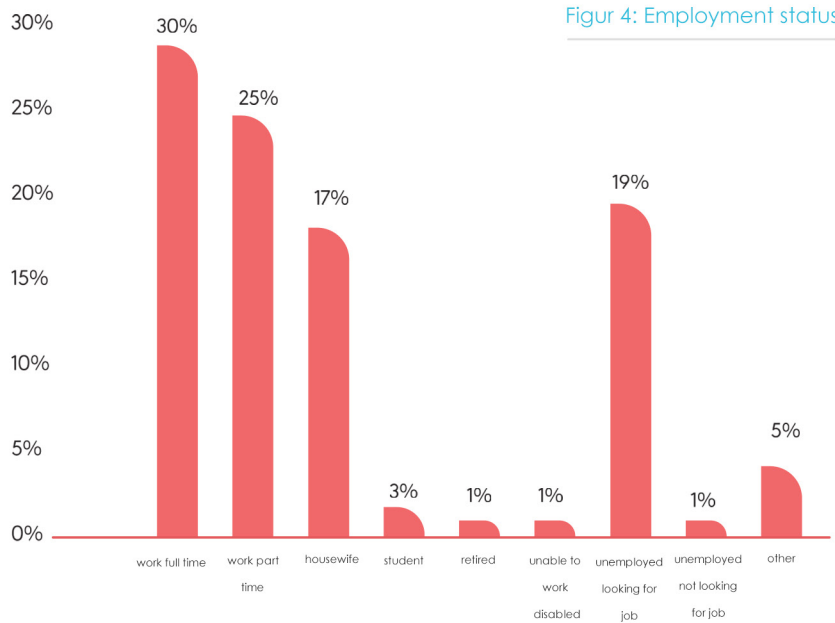
The percentage of those who finished university education reached **21%**, while the majority of the participants were either high school diploma holders or still at university education stage. On the other hand the percentage of community members who completed primary school or less, or hold higher education degrees was **9%**.



Figur 3: Educational level

Employment Status

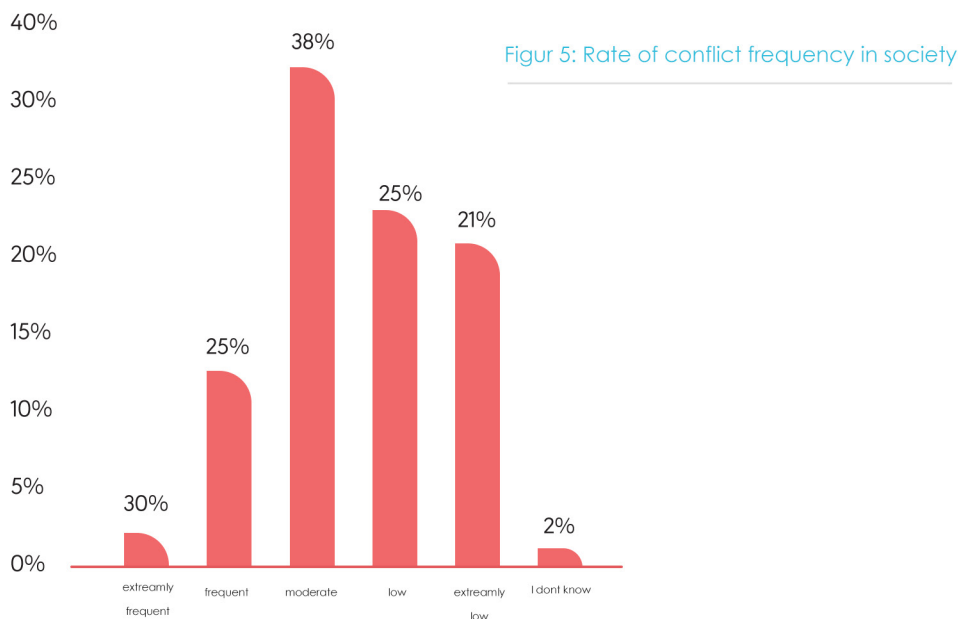
The largest percentage of the study sample was **55%** of full-time or part-time workers, while there were **36%** of the unemployed or housewife participants.



Results

Rate of Conflict Frequency in Society

When the participants were asked about the frequency of conflicts, the answers tended to be at a low or moderate level of repetition rate, as the majority of the answers were **63%** divided between medium or low repetitions, while **21%** indicated a extremely low level of frequency of conflicts, and **14%** said that conflicts are very frequent.

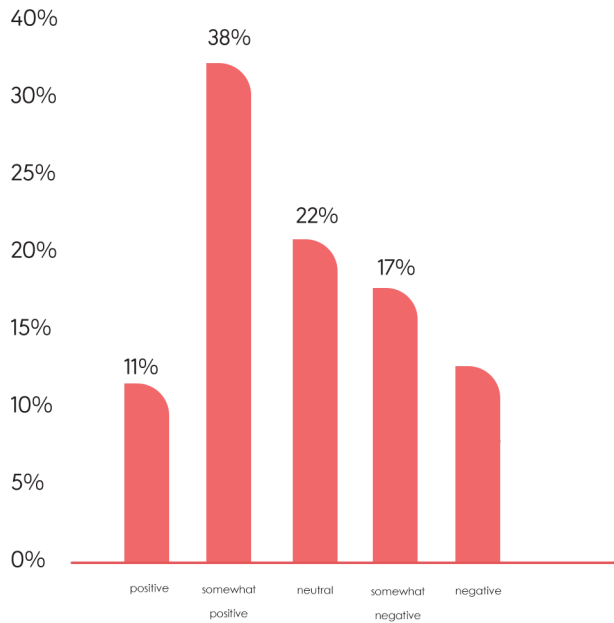


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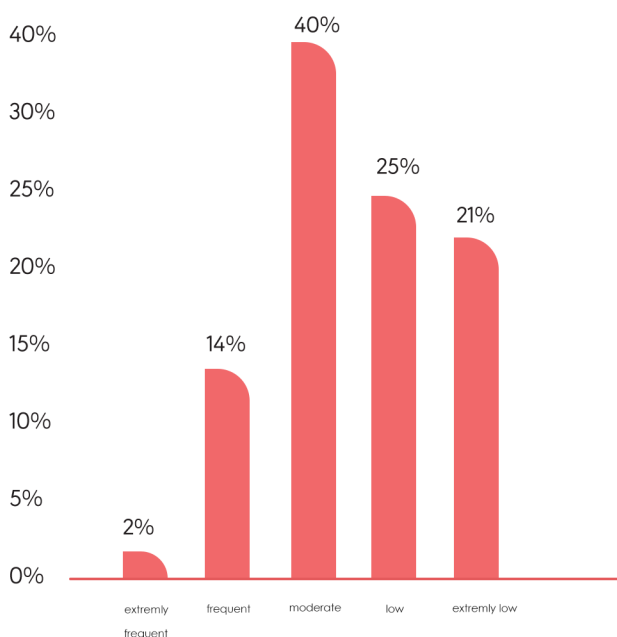
Figur 6: ERate of Conflict Frequency in Society



The impact of organizations' intervention on community cohesion

Participants also believe that organizations have a positive role in attaining societal cohesion between the host and the IDPS community, as the majority of answers, 49%, say that the role of organizations is somewhat or completely positive. While 30% find that the role of organizations is either completely negative or . There were 22% .

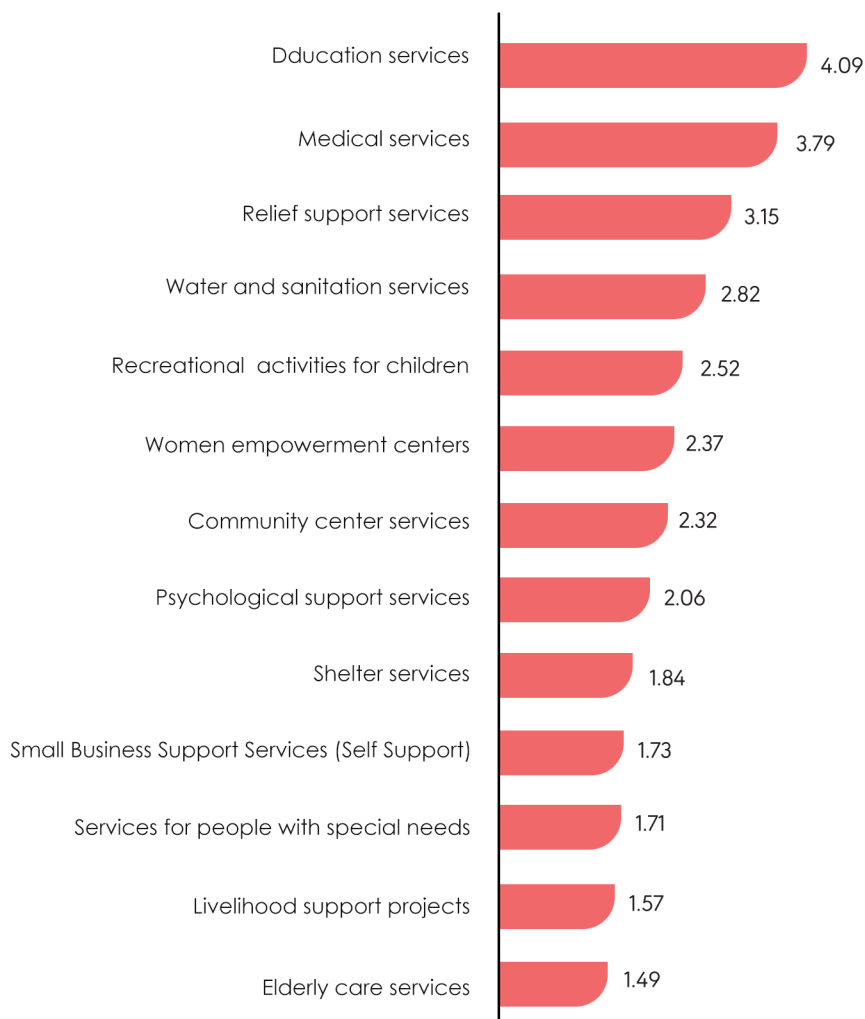
Figur 7: The impact of organizations' intervention on community cohesion



Services availability

When the participants were asked about the availability of services, the result was that most of the services were not available to some extent, while education services were the most available, and then medical services. Whereas, elderly care services and livelihood project services were the least available. The answer 1 indicated that services were never available, and 5 indicated extremely available.

Figur 8: Services available in the community



The results of the regression analysis were as follows:

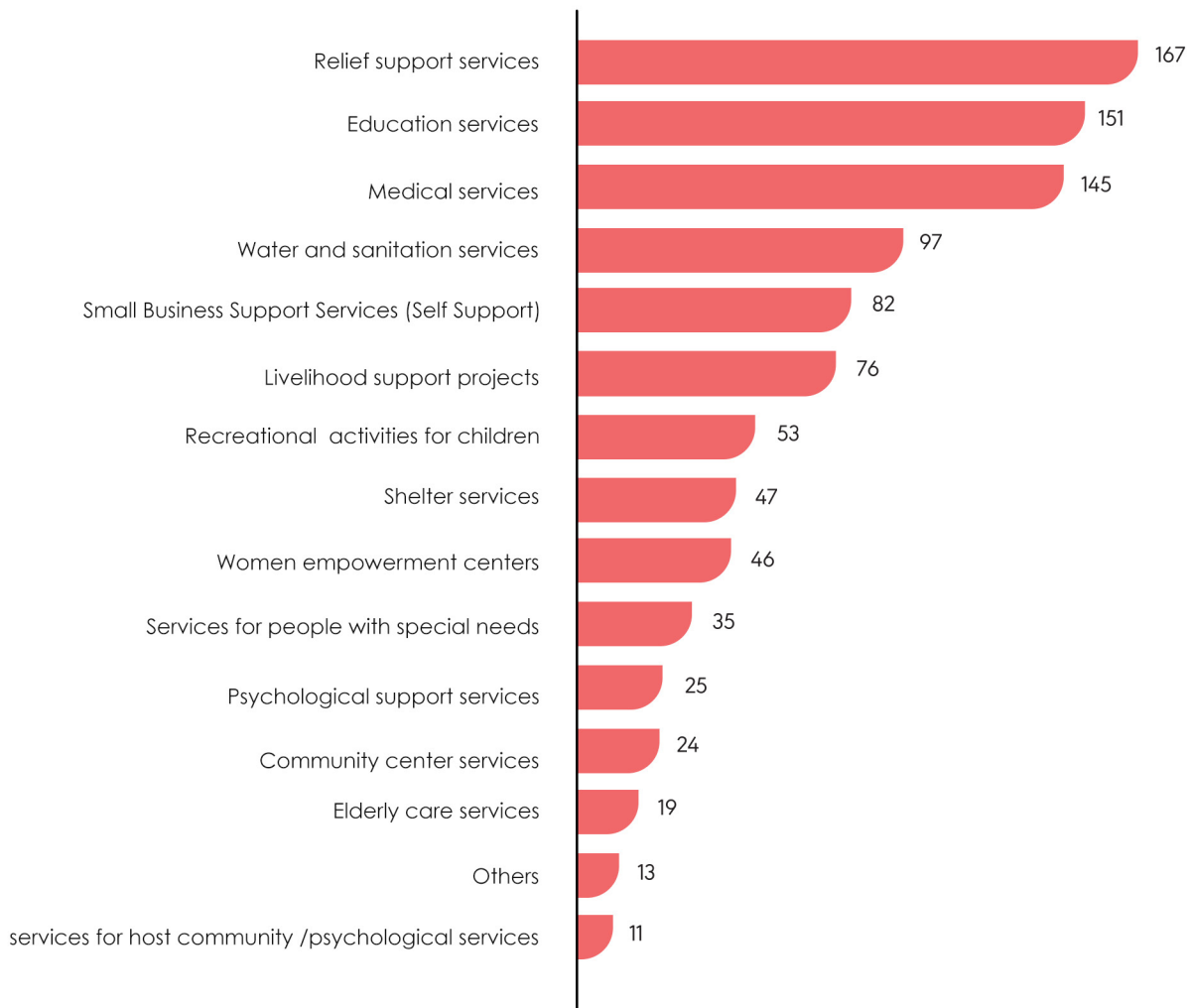
- 1) There is a positive impact of both community center services and livelihood projects on community cohesion.
- 2) The effect of education services was positive and led to a decrease in the conflicts frequency, while the effect of medical services was negative and leads to an increase in the conflicts frequency.
- 3) The effect of providing children's recreational activities was negative, as these activities increase the frequency of conflicts between the two societies.

Results

Priority of services

The relief support service topped with 84% of the five most important services, as the community expressed its need for it, with 167 participants who chose it as one of the five most important services. Then comes education and health services, then water and sanitation, and fifth, small enterprises support services.

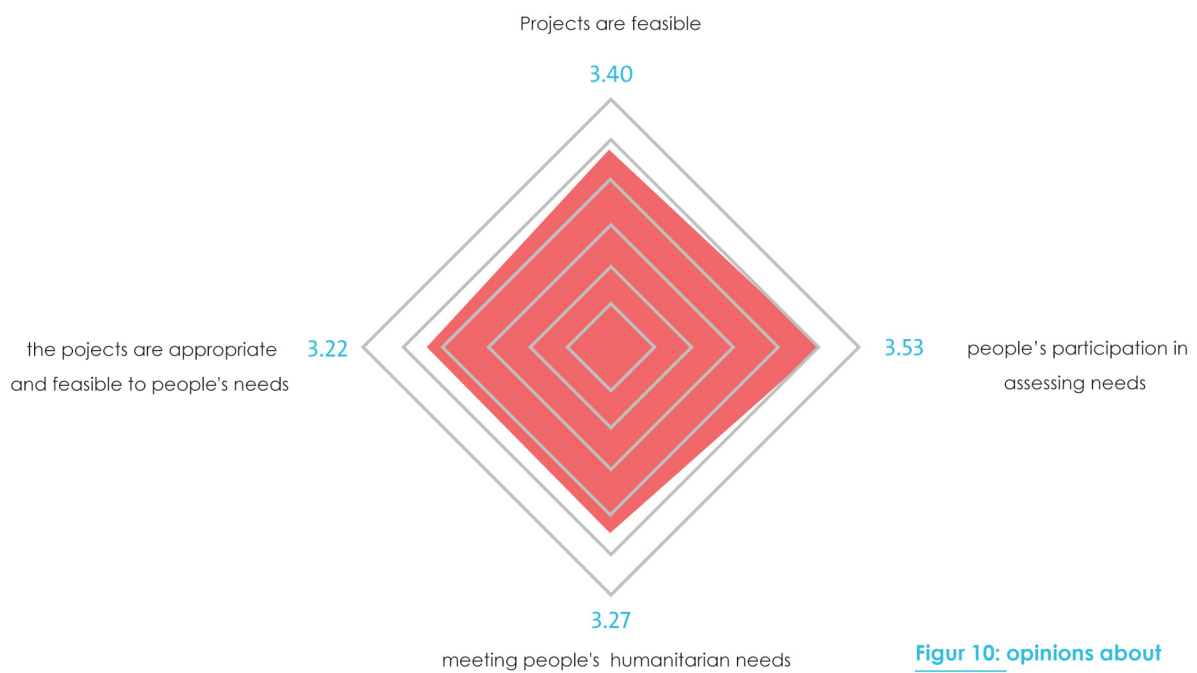
Figur 9: The five most important services for respondents



Results

Organizations response

The participants' responses about points related to the organizations response were generally at good levels, in terms of people's participation in assessing needs, as well as meeting humanitarian needs, and that the projects are to some extent appropriate and feasible.



Figur 10: opinions about organizations response

The results of the regression analysis were as follows:

- 1) There is a positive impact of both the feasibility of projects and the community members participation in scanning the needs, on community cohesion.
- 2) There is a positive effect of meeting the projects' needs in reducing the frequency of conflict
- 3) There is a positive impact of projects meeting the people's needs in reducing the frequency of conflicts between the two societies, resulting from wrong intervention by organizations.

Results

Principles of civil society organizations Justice

When the participants were asked about the extent of organizations' commitment to work principles. The participants stated that organizations do respect customs and traditions. They also provide assistance in a manner that preserves the dignity and takes into account the privacy of the beneficiaries. The organizations work is also characterized by non-bias. However, the indicators point to some discontent regarding the fairness in implementing projects by the organizations.

الشكل 11: مدى التزام المنظمات في مبادئ العمل الانساني



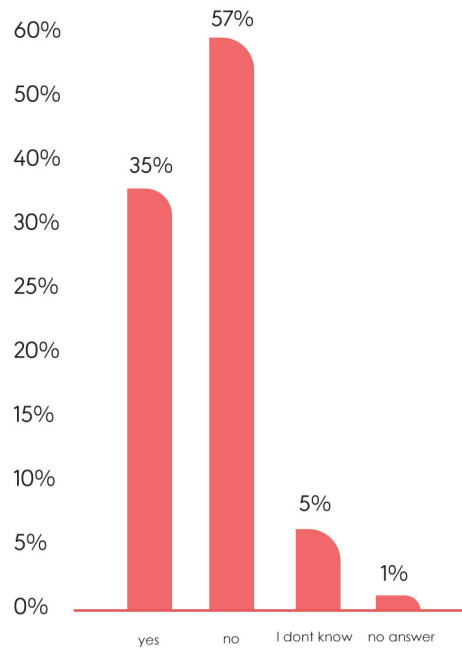
The results of the regression analysis indicated that there is a strong impact of justice in the projects implementation on community cohesion, and that the effect of this correlation is direct. Likewise, the organizations' adherence to standards of humanity, impartiality, non-aligned and independence also have a moral and direct effect on the social cohesion among the two parties.

The results of the regression analysis were as follows:

- 1) There is a positive impact for each of the fair implementation of projects, adherence to the humanitarian work principles, and taking into account the suitable time for implementing projects, on increasing community cohesion.
- 2) There is a positive impact of implementing projects justly, leading to a reduction in conflicts frequency. While implementing projects within the available materials has a negative impact, increasing the frequency of conflict recurrence
- 3) There is a positive impact for organizations providing their services in a manner that preserves dignity, on reducing the frequency of conflicts between the two societies as a result of wrong intervention by the organizations.

Transparency

When asking the participants about the extent to which organizations apply the principle of transparency while implementing their projects, most of the answers indicated that the organizations did not apply this principle, as the percentage of those who answered (no) was 57% of the participants, and the percentage of those who answered (yes) was 35% of the total. Participants in this study.



Figur 12:
organizations apply the principle of transparency

Figur 13

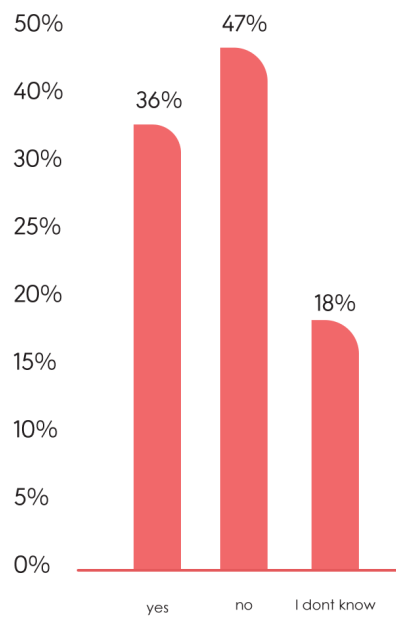


Results

Participatory

47% of the respondents believe that humanitarian organizations do not follow the participation principle, and that they do not conduct regular meetings with stakeholders and people's representatives.

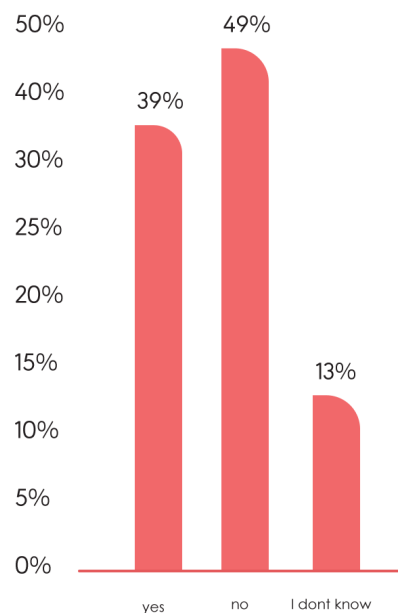
While 36% believe otherwise and trust that organizations follow the transparency principle while performing their work.



Figur 14

Impact

The majority of respondents' answers indicated their belief that organizations do not evaluate the impact of the projects they implement on society and on community cohesion. 49% of the participants answered "No", while 39% of the participants answered "Yes."



Figur 15



Recommendations

1. Continue to provide relief and **basic services support** such as education, health, water and sanitation, in addition to small projects support, which are still among the most important priorities from the society point of view.

2. Focusing on **supporting small projects**, for its being one of the five priorities and being less available than children's recreational activities, which results indicated its availability.

3. The results recommend continuing to **support education services, community centers, and livelihoods projects** due to their positive impact on community cohesion.

4. The results showed -through regression analysis- that some interventions had a negative impact on **community cohesion** (conflict rates) such as: health services and children's recreational activities.

Therefore, it is recommended that **researches and studies** should be devoted to further clarify the impact and its causes.

5. There is a positive impact for the way of response and the principles of work followed by the organizations on **community cohesion**, such as: presenting feasible projects, **community** participation in needs' scanning process, relevance of projects, meeting the society needs, applying the principle of justice, adhering to the humanitarian work principles, timing of intervention, And applying the intervention in a way that preserves dignity. Therefore, it is recommended that organizations continue to work on the mentioned methods and principles.

6. The organizations' implementation of their projects according to the available resources' had a negative impact on **community cohesion**. Therefore, it is recommended to devote research and studies to further clarify the impact and its causes.

7. Although more than a third of the responses indicate that the organizations **adhere to the principles of transparency**, impact, and participation, the majority of the answers indicate that the organizations do not adhere to these principles. It is therefore recommended that organizations increase their obedience to these standards while applying and implementing their interventions.



REPORT



Within the project of enhancing community cohesion

At the societal structures in northern Syria

Partnership between

Door Organization and Youth of Change Foundation

Syria
2019