



# The Reality of Entrepreneurship

## In Northwest Syria

March 2023

The report "The Reality of Entrepreneurship in Northwest Syria" monitors the distinctive businesses that started with ideas trying to find suitable solutions to the lack of income and energy sources, the closure of internal and border crossings, and the economic collapse produced by the ongoing war. The owners of these ideas were able to turn them into income-generating projects that provide job opportunities for a number of people and find solutions to the problems that the population suffers from due to the difficult conditions imposed by the ongoing war.



A report by the Information Management Unit (IMU)  
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First

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# Executive Summary

01



## First: Executive Summary

More than a dozen years of war in Syria have had a negative impact on every aspect of life in the country. A large economic gap has emerged due to the closure of thousands of companies and businesses in the private sector and the migration of capital abroad. The volume of economic activity has shrunk due to unstable political, security, economic, and social conditions. Also, the economic collapse has heavily affected youth employment in the public and private sectors. 1 Studies and researches show that entrepreneurship is urgently necessary for all economies. Entrepreneurship plays a more critical role in times of crisis because it helps create new jobs and add value to society. In addition, entrepreneurial activity increases, and self-employment becomes a necessary mechanism and strategy for survival and adaptation in places suffering from conflicts and due to the absence of the role of government institutions<sup>2</sup>. However, there is no study to determine the reality of entrepreneurship and the challenges facing entrepreneurs working to establish their own companies and businesses in northwestern Syria. Therefore, the Information Management Unit (IMU) in the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) conducted a study to survey and assess the reality of entrepreneurship in North West Syria (NWS). This study aims to assess the reality of entrepreneurship in northern Syria. It also identifies the needs of entrepreneurs in the targeted areas to support the entrepreneurial environment in the region. This study was conducted to identify the level of interest in the idea of entrepreneurship in northwestern Syria and to know the basic information related to entrepreneurship:

- Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurship Programs
- Infrastructure
- The reason for the population's preference is to work for their own benefit or a fixed wage.
- The current level of entrepreneurship in the region
- Obstacles to starting a business (starting a new project)
- The most attractive sectors for entrepreneurship (private businesses)

### 1. Section One: Methodology

The methodology used in this report was developed in collaboration with the ACU Development Programs Department and Business Insight Consultancy. The study used a quantitative and qualitative approach to address and present data on entrepreneurial projects or businesses that the owners believe to be distinctive. The study included 211 interviews with sources of information from entrepreneurs and 669 opinion polls conducted with salaried workers across several sectors. The assessment was conducted in 211 cities, towns, and camps. Seventy (70) enumerators conducted face-to-face interviews and surveys. Several local humanitarian organizations provided the enumerators with contact information for entrepreneurs supported by these organizations.

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<sup>1</sup>Arab Reform Initiative, & Brooking Doha Center. (2021). Youth Employment and Livelihood in Syria: Assessing the impact of conflict and preparing for recovery.

<sup>2</sup>Althalathini, D. (2020). Resilience of Entrepreneurs in Conflict Zones: Evidence from Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine (Doctoral dissertation, University of Plymouth).

## 2. Section Two: General Information About the Study

The study was conducted in all opposition-controlled areas in northwestern Syria within the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib. The number of employers interviewed was 211 entrepreneurs, of whom 11% were females (24 female work owners), , and the number of workers interviewed was 659, of which 19% were females (124 workers). 3% of the employers interviewed had a physical disability.

## 3. Section Three: Entrepreneurial Projects

The study showed that at the forefront of private projects that owners believe to be entrepreneurial are commercial projects, which accounted for 34% of the projects interviewed.

- 32% believe that what distinguishes their projects is that they save money, 21% offer new products or services, and 20% save time for the consumer.
- 71% of entrepreneurs want to expand their businesses and hire new people. 49% need skilled workers, and 30% need ordinary workers.
- 87% of entrepreneurs believe that their business is sustainable. 22% of the reasons for the instability of the businesses are lack of energy sources, 22% shortage of raw materials, 13% military instability.

## 4. Section Four: The Most Significant Areas of Private Businesses

Conditions of war and displacement have imposed new areas for the population to turn to for sources of income:

### 1. Remote Work Opportunities

- Websites for training and linking workers to the labor market remotely
- E-Marketing

### 2. Service Businesses

- Supporting delivery services
- Sewing and weaving businesses
- Hot Drinks kiosks
- Home food preservation products and its selling centers
- Kindergarten project
- Women's Beauty Salons

### 3. Industrial businesses

- Assembling and repairing liquid batteries
- Installation and repair of solar power systems
- Motorcycle Maintenance
- Soap and detergent industry
- Dairy industry
- Mosaic and Pottery Industries
- Maintenance of electronics

### 4. Agricultural Businesses

- Livestock and poultry breeding
- Planting nursery (producing seedlings)
- Barley Breeding Business
- Growing products not available in the area

The report includes a detailed explanation of each type of business mentioned above in terms of the most appropriate environment for the business, the target group of the business, and the success factors of each business.

## 5. Section Five: Information about Starting Private Businesses

- The **study results showed that** 22% (47 business owners) believe starting a private business is achievable. When the business owner receives vocational training before starting the business: 31% (16 business owners) think starting a private business was easy or very easy.
- The enumerators also asked workers who prefer to have salaried work about the reasons that prevent them from thinking about having their own businesses. The study showed that 52% of the reasons that prevent workers from thinking about having their own businesses are the privilege of having a fixed salary. This means a regular income they receive and avoiding risks in addition to stability.
- As for the challenges faced by entrepreneurs today: 20% of the challenges are economic instabilities, and 15% are represented in the constant change in the rate of the US dollar and the Turkish lira compared to the local currency, which has appeared in all sectors.
- Nonetheless, the study found that 68% (84 female workers) reported facing constraints related to customs and traditions in the entrepreneurial sector. And 63% (78 female workers) reported that they do not have the same training opportunities as males in the field of entrepreneurship.
- Regarding the drives and motivations behind entrepreneurial businesses, 44% (185 business owners) reported that they started their own projects because jobs are scarce, and 27% (114 business owners) to find solutions to problems experienced by the population.

## 6. Section Six: Infrastructure for Entrepreneurial Businesses

- Only 18% (38 business owners) reported the availability of product registration services for entrepreneurial businesses to protect them from counterfeits. 33% (69 business owners) said that the IT services their entrepreneurial businesses need are available.
- Nevertheless, 45% (95 business owners) reported that electronic marketing services are available. The study also found that only 25% (52 business owners) believe in the presence of media interest in entrepreneurship.
- 85% (105 business owners) said that gas is available in their areas, but 38% (68 business owners) of those who reported the availability believe that the cost of this service is high.
- 92% (194 business owners) reported water availability in their areas. 75% (159 business owners) reported that electricity is available in their areas. 95% (201 business owners) reported that telecommunications networks (Internet) are available in their regions. 91% (192 business owners) said exchange and remittance offices are available in their regions.
- 91% (191 business owners) reported no protection from interference by the controlling parties in their businesses within their regions.
- 33% (70 business owners) reported compulsory business licensing.

## 7. Section Seven: Entrepreneurial Education

22% (39 business owners) believe that less than 25% of people who started their own business succeeded, and 28% (50 business owners) believe that between 26-50% of people who started their own businesses succeeded. As for the reasons for the success of these projects, 31% (144 business owners) believe that the reason for the success of private businesses is selecting the right business idea. 29% (135 business owners) think that the reason is the availability of sufficient funding for the business. Regarding entrepreneurship education and training, only 7% (14 business owners) reported receiving government education related to entrepreneurship, and only 18% (39 business owners) reported receiving entrepreneurship training.

## 8. Section Eight: Community Awareness of Entrepreneurial Businesses

Only 10% (22 business owners) of the business owners strongly confirmed their familiarity with the concept of entrepreneurship. The enumerators asked the business owners about their views on the awareness of youth about the culture of entrepreneurship. 26% (54 business owners) strongly confirmed that young people have poor awareness of the culture of entrepreneurship. Regarding the availability of training programs for youth on entrepreneurship, 32% (68 business owners) strongly confirmed the lack of training programs for youth on entrepreneurship. The results indicate the low awareness of the community of the term entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial projects and the absence of training programs for young people on entrepreneurship.

## 9. Section Nine: Entrepreneurial Incubators

- Only 6% (13 business owners) reported hearing about entrepreneurial incubators. With regard to the entities that finance private businesses, 33% (63 business owners) reported that local organizations fund private business owners.
- Regarding the sectors funded, 23% (112 business owners) of the business owners interviewed confirmed that the agricultural sector is at the forefront of receiving support. 18% (88 business owners) reported that commercial businesses received support in their regions.

## 10. Section Ten: Recommendations

The study provides a set of recommendations on linking young people with experience in northern Syria with businesses that have opportunities for remote work, linking skilled workers with employers in Syria. It also provides recommendations on entrepreneurship training and education and strengthening the partnership between capital and professionals.

Second

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# Methodology

02

## Second: Methodology

### 1. Study Sample

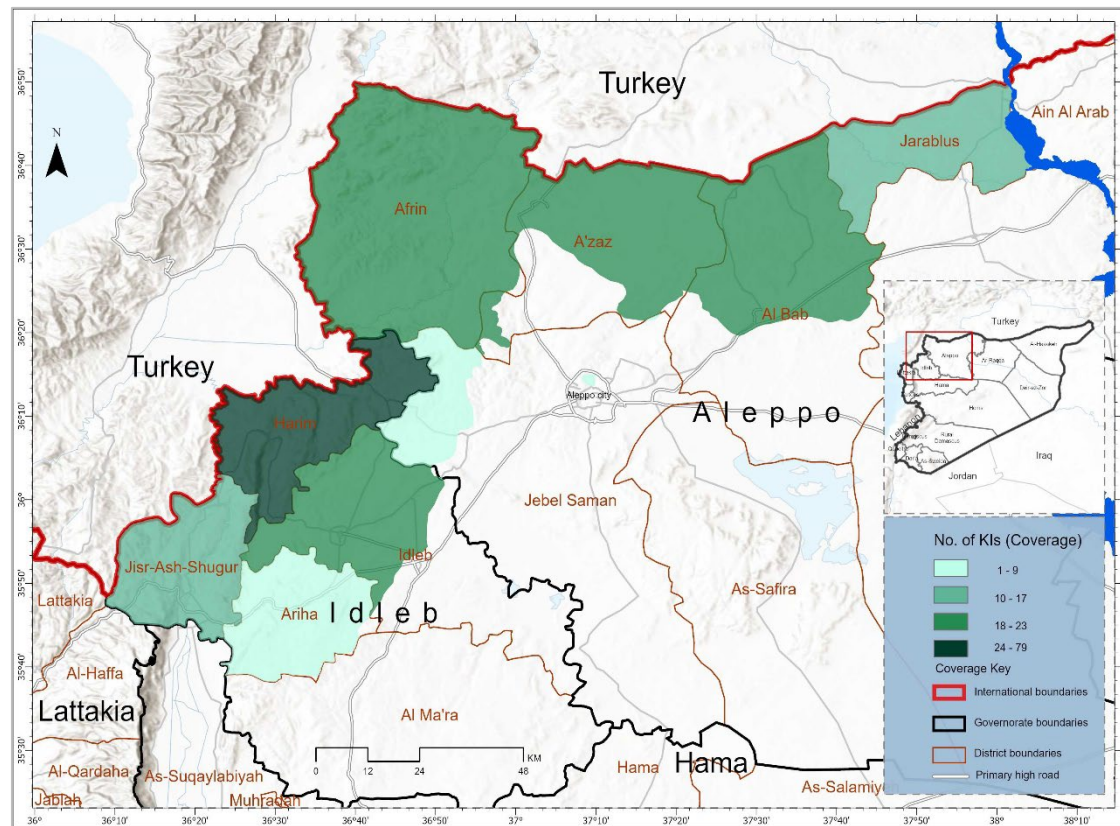
The study was conducted in all opposition-controlled areas in NW Syria within Aleppo and Idleb governorates and included 17 sub-districts in Idleb governorate and 18 sub-districts in Aleppo governorate. The number of communities surveyed was 211 cities, towns, and camps.

The number of employers interviewed was 211 entrepreneurs, of whom 11% were females, and the number of workers interviewed was 659 in different professions, and 19% were females.

Table (1) Evaluation sample information

Governorate	District	Number of communities	# Of business owners	% Of female business owners	Number of Employees	% Of female employees
Idleb	Ariha	3	3	0%	28	7%
	Jisr Al Shughour	17	17	35%	74	35%
	Harim	79	79	5%	81	19%
	Idleb city	21	21	5%	241	12%
Aleppo	Azaz	23	23	0%	21	12%
	Al-Bab	20	20	25%	29	24%
	Jabal Sam'aan	9	9	0%	30	10%
	Jarablus	17	17	24%	77	20%
	Afrin	22	22	18%	78	22%
<b>Total</b>		211	211	11%	659	19%

Map (1) The communities included in the study.



## 2. Assessment Tools

For this study, two tools were developed based on a set of indicators developed in collaboration with ACU's Department of Development Programs and Business Insight Consultancy:

- Information on the most prevalent private businesses in the study areas
- The most important sectors of private businesses imposed by the war conditions in Syria
- Mechanisms of starting private businesses, how easy it is to start, and the challenges facing businesses
- Infrastructures available for entrepreneurial businesses and their costs
- Entrepreneurial education and training and the reasons for the success of entrepreneurial businesses
- Community awareness of the concept of entrepreneurship and its basic terms
- Entrepreneurial incubators, their availability, and the most important supporters of these incubators

The study included interviews with key informants (KIs) who are entrepreneurs or people who own or manage private businesses and believe their projects are distinctive. It also included surveys with workers in different professions (fixed-paid workers).



### 3. Training of enumerators

The enumerators were trained on 20 July 2022 for two days by a staff member in the Department of Development Programs online using Skype for Business. The training sessions were recorded and shared with the researchers for reference in case they needed to recall any information presented during the training. The number of enumerators who attended the training was 70, distributed in Aleppo and Idleb.

### 4. Data Management and Analysis

The enumerators completed the questionnaires electronically using the Kobo Toolbox; the network coordinators followed up on receiving the electronic data for the study and merged the submitted data into an Excel database. The information management officers cleaned and verified the data to find outliers and missing values and corrected or completed them in conjunction with the data collection. After data cleaning, the IMU team began visualizing the data and creating tables and charts. Software and tools such as Dax, Query Editor, ArcGIS, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, and Adobe Photoshop were used to visualize the analyzed data. The first draft of the report was written in Arabic and later translated into English, noting that the report, in its two versions, was drafted taking quality assurance standards into account in preparation and content, both internally and externally.

### 5. Timeline

Figure (1) Timeline of the report completion



Work on this report started in July 2022; the questionnaires were designed and sent to Business Insight Consulting, which added suggestions on the tools. The IMU applied all suggestions on the tools, and the enumerators were trained on 20 July 2022; for two full days. Data collection began in August 2022 and ended in September 2022. The ACU team communicated with several humanitarian organizations that conducted training in the field of entrepreneurship and supported people with economic empowerment projects in Syria to provide us with distinctive and potential entrepreneurs. The ACU obtained contact information from several entrepreneurs from Bonyan Organization and Violet Organization. Then, the IMU team contacted and interviewed these entrepreneurs. The experts preparing the report also searched social media platforms and search engines for entrepreneurship projects that could be highlighted and benefit from the experience of their owners.



The data management officers began to extract the outliers and missing values and reviewed them with the enumerators to start the analysis process. Then, writing the report in Arabic started and was translated into English. After that, designing the report began, and the final version was issued in January 2023.

## 6. Difficulties and Challenges

1. The enumerators faced difficulty reaching entrepreneurs due to their poor knowledge of the terminology of entrepreneurial projects. To overcome this difficulty, the enumerators began to ask the population about the projects they considered distinctive and went to the owners of these projects to interview them. Moreover, several humanitarian organizations that supported the entrepreneurs were contacted, and the ACU obtained contact information for the entrepreneurs.
2. Some business owners refused to be interviewed because they did not want to share any information about their own projects.
3. After data collection, some interviewed entrepreneurs did not meet the criteria for entrepreneurial projects. Their projects were not distinctive, forcing experts to delete these interviews from the study to avoid any shift in results.
4. The lack of official entities with accurate information about the existing projects in NW Syria and the difficulties and challenges facing the projects led to reliance on the study results without any supporting secondary data.
5. The difficulty in finding an approved global definition of the term entrepreneurship since the term is relatively recent. Thus, there is no unified global definition of entrepreneurship. In addition, there is a lack of global standards that can be adopted to ensure the project is entrepreneurial.
6. The complexities of the Syrian context in which the study is being conducted are because of the ongoing conflict since 2011, the economic collapse, and the displacement and immigration conditions.

Third

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# General Information



OS

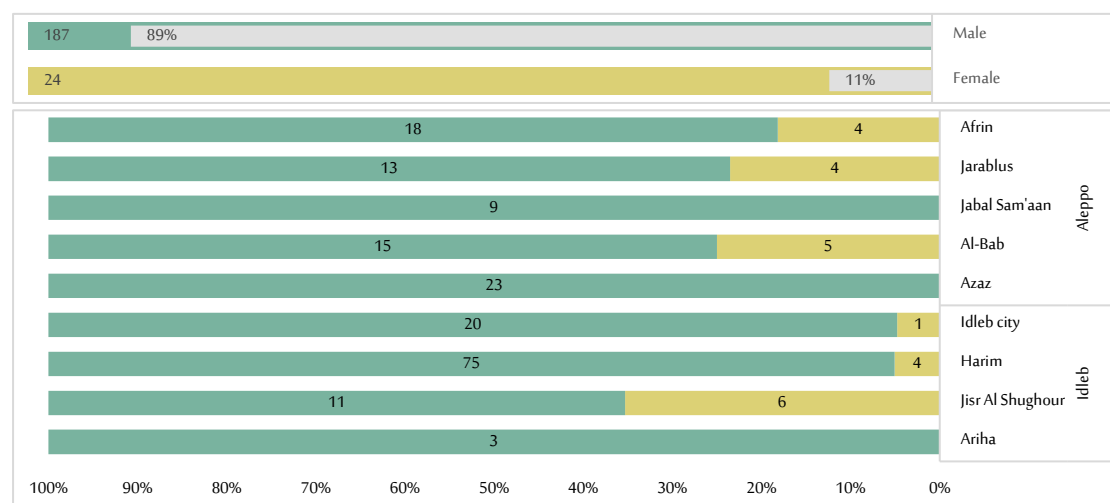
### Third: General Information

#### 1. Surveyed Communities and Gender of Respondents

The study was conducted in all opposition-controlled areas in northwestern Syria within Aleppo and Idleb governorates. It included 17 sub-districts in Idleb governorate and 18 sub-districts in Aleppo governorate.

Two hundred eleven (211) business owners were interviewed, of which 11% (24 business owners) were female business owners. These individuals were selected on the basis that the businesses they own or manage are entrepreneurial. The report adopted the definition of entrepreneurship<sup>3</sup> as "the process by which a new business capable of producing goods and services is created. Moreover, it is the process by which ideas are transformed into a reality that achieves material and moral profits for the entrepreneur. In addition, it is a creative process that creates new ideas contributing to solving a problem or finding solutions distinctively."

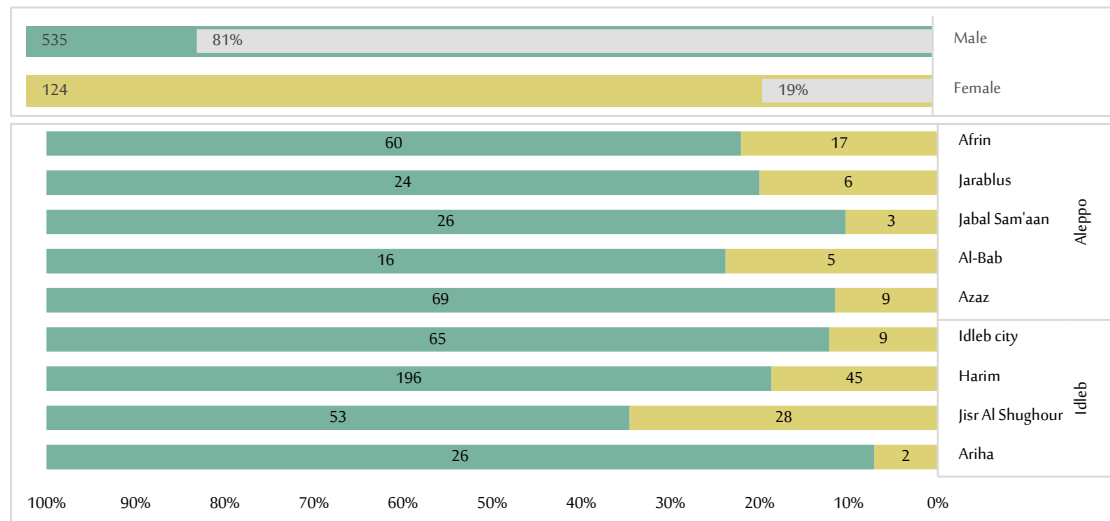
Figure (2) Number/percentage of business owners by gender - area level



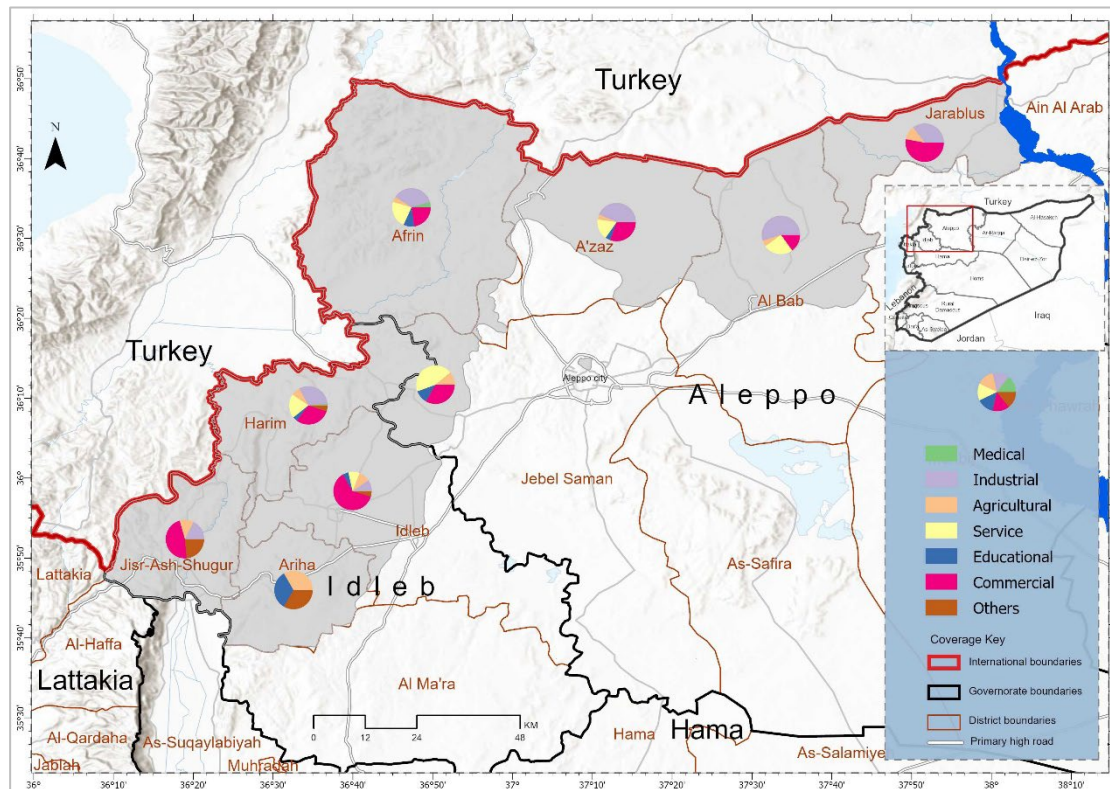
The number of workers interviewed was 659, of whom 19% (124 workers) were females. These individuals were selected according to specific criteria. They represent the largest segment of the working class in the community, taking into account different professions, educational levels, and age groups.

<sup>3</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/2qmou7ab>

Figure (3) Number/percentage of workers by gender- area level



Map (2) Research sample information



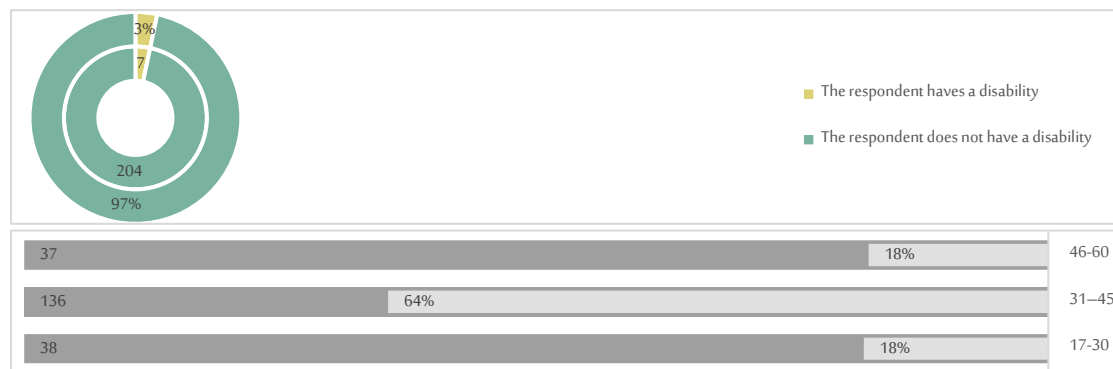
## 2. Age Groups, Respondents with Disabilities, and Marital Status

During the data collection process, enumerators were instructed to interview individuals with disabilities whenever possible, as there is no suitable work environment for people with disabilities in Syria in terms of providing work commensurate with their disability or appropriate facilities for them in the work environment. Workers with disabilities are forced to adapt to work that may require them to make a double effort compared to people without disabilities.

The study showed that 3% (7 business owners) of the interviewed business owners had a physical disability.

The results of the study found that the largest percentage of the interviewed business owners are between the ages of 31-45 years, 18% (38 business owners) between the ages of 17-30 years, 64% (136 business owners) between the ages of 31-45 years, and 18% (37 business owners) between the ages of 46-60 years. It was also found that 89% of business owners are married, and 9% are single.

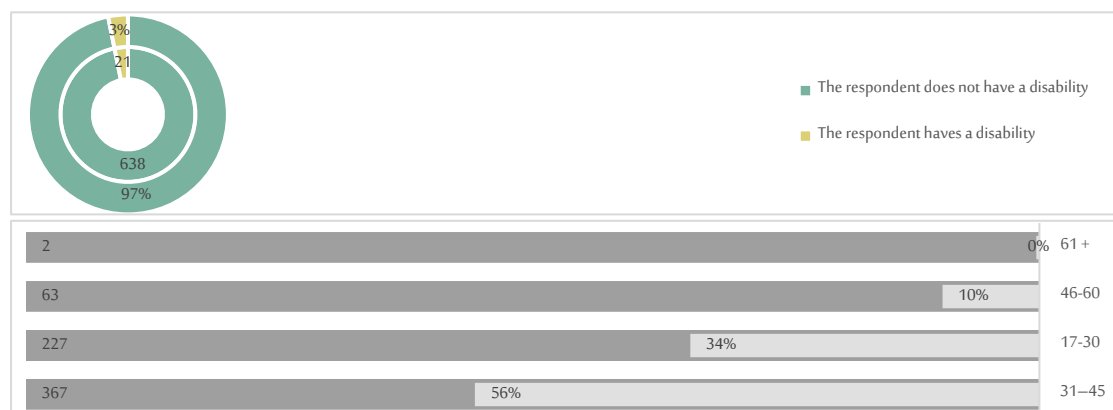
Figure (4) Number/percentage of business owners by age group



The study showed that 3% (21 workers) of the interviewed workers had a physical disability.

It was found that 34% (227 workers) of the interviewed workers were between the ages of 17-30 years, 56% (367 workers) between the ages of 31-45 years, and 10% (63 workers) between the ages of 46-60 years. Also, 81% of the workers are married, and 15% are single.

Figure (5) Number/percentage of employees by age group

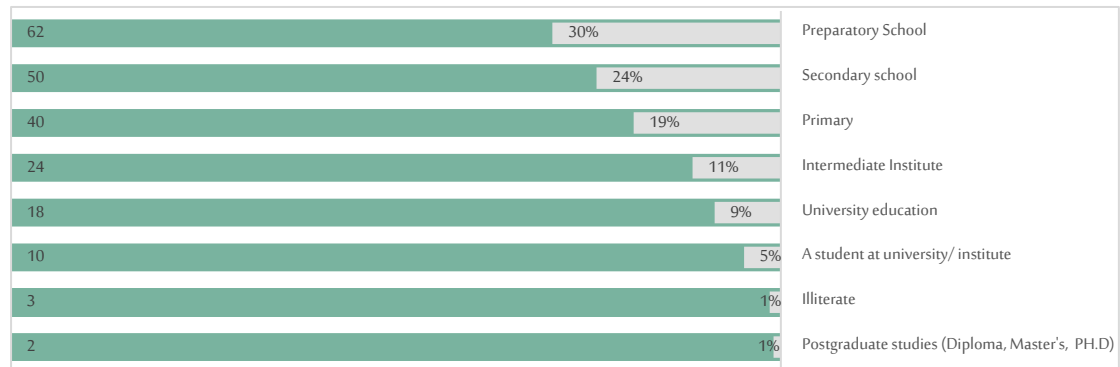


### 3. Educational Level of Respondents

The study showed that entrepreneurial businesses are unrelated to their owners' educational level. This means there is no correlation between the educational level and the capabilities of workers and business owners to start their own businesses.

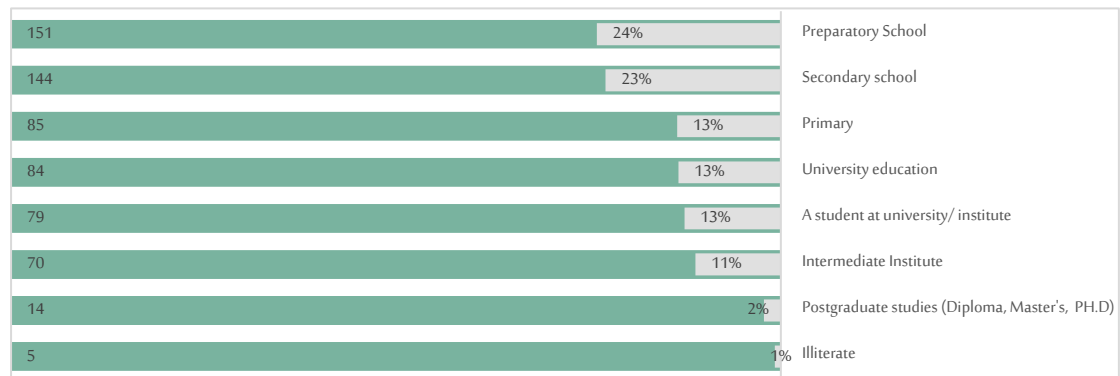
It found that 11% (24 business owners) of the interviewed business owners completed their education in intermediate institutions, 9% (18 business owners) completed their university education, and 1% (2 business owners) completed postgraduate studies (diploma, master, or doctorate).

Figure (6) Number/percentage of business owners according to their educational level



On the other hand, 13% (79 workers) of the interviewed workers are undergraduates or students of intermediate institutes (who could not complete their education or were still students during the data collection period). Also, 11% (70 workers) completed their education in intermediate institutes, 13% (84 workers) completed their university education, and 2% (14 workers) completed postgraduate studies (diploma, master, or doctorate).

Figure (7) Number/percentage of workers according to their educational level





Fourth

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# Entrepreneurial Businesses

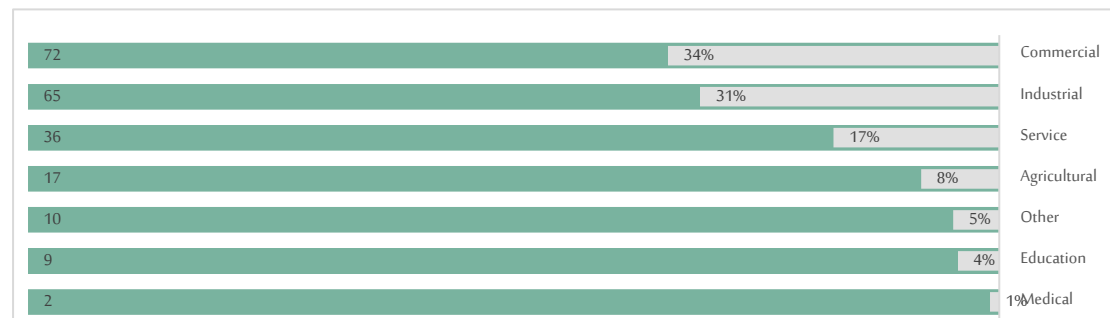
04

## Fourth: Entrepreneurial Businesses

### 1. Entrepreneurial Businesses Sectors

The study showed that at the forefront of private businesses that the owners believe are entrepreneurial are the commercial businesses which accounted for 34% (72 business owners) of the interviewed businesses. In addition to 31% (65 business owners) of industrial businesses, 17% (36 business owners) of service businesses, 8% (17 business owners) of agricultural businesses, 4% (9 business owners) of educational businesses, and 1% (2 business owners) medical businesses, their owners think they are entrepreneurial businesses.

Figure (8) Number/percentage of business owners by type of their businesses



**Commercial Businesses:** Most business owners who believe their businesses are entrepreneurial have worked in the trade of materials of all kinds (industrial, food, clothing, and other materials). Likewise, some of them were making the product locally. Nevertheless, what distinguishes their businesses is that they added e-marketing and free delivery services, and some business owners added discounts and presents for regular customers. Some also added services and items (such as drinks and food) on highways so workers and drivers could get drinks and food quickly without wasting time.

**Industrial Businesses:** Most industrial business owners who believe their projects are entrepreneurial have worked in food industries, where they produce food and supplies materials from agricultural and animal products available in the markets. They store and sell these foods in the winter (home food preservation). These businesses rely heavily on homemakers. Some businesses also sterilize water, fill it in water containers (bottled drinking water), and make it available in the market at competitive prices. Some entrepreneurs worked to extract a second type of olive oil from the remnants of olive presses (from olive pomace before converting it to heating fuel). Industries associated with solar panels and batteries have also emerged, as did manufacturing small means of transport, such as small cars (or three-wheelers).

**Service Businesses:** Most service owners who believe their businesses are entrepreneurial have worked in delivery services. Some opened maintenance and repair workshops for different household problems. Others also provided parking lots for cars and motorcycles in crowded places due to increased theft cases, and these parking lots offer vehicle cleaning services. In addition, some have worked in hairdressing and other handicrafts.

**Agricultural Businesses:** Most agricultural business owners who believe their businesses are entrepreneurial have adopted introducing new crops to the region that were unavailable, as Idleb Governorate and the northern countryside of Aleppo used to get these crops from other governorates. Due to road closure and high transport costs, some of these crops are missing in the markets of Idleb Governorate. Therefore, farmers have resorted to creating the appropriate conditions for cultivating these crops in their areas (such as mushrooms, bananas, and other crops). Likewise, other agricultural business owners resorted to adopting new techniques in irrigation, and



others resorted to hybridization of types of seeds commensurate with agricultural conditions in the region. Some agricultural businesses have worked on growing vegetables without soil based on water only (hydroponics).

Educational Businesses: Most academic business owners who believe their businesses are entrepreneurial have established distance education platforms, several private model schools that provide foreign language education, and institutes to teach handicrafts.

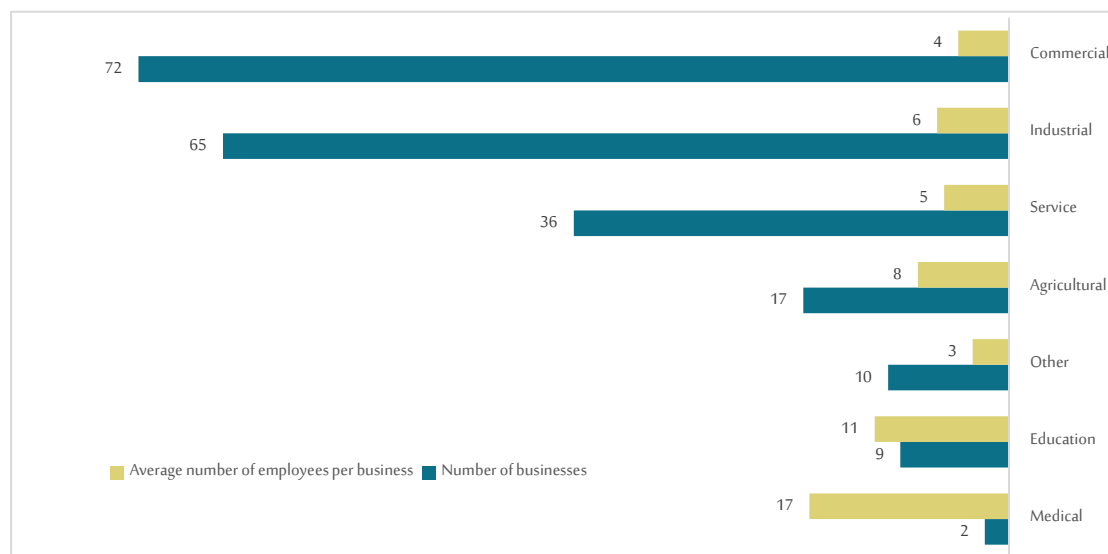
Other businesses: Some business owners who believe their businesses are entrepreneurial have worked in the digital content industry and e-marketing.

## 2. Number of Workers by Business Sectors

The study indicates that the most significant average number of workers is within medical businesses. Still, this average does not reflect the reality of medical businesses in the region, as only two businesses are included in this study. One of them is for producing human pharmaceuticals locally according to local specifications. This business provides the most significant number of job opportunities, as the number of workers is 30. The second business is a center for orthopantomogram, as this medical service is unavailable in the region, prompting the business owners to buy a simple device and employ only three workers.

The enumerators interviewed the owners of 17 agricultural businesses. The average number of workers in each agricultural business was eight workers. They also interviewed the owners of 65 industrial businesses. The average number of workers in each industrial business was six workers. In addition, they interviewed the owners of 72 commercial businesses; the average number of workers in each commercial business was four.

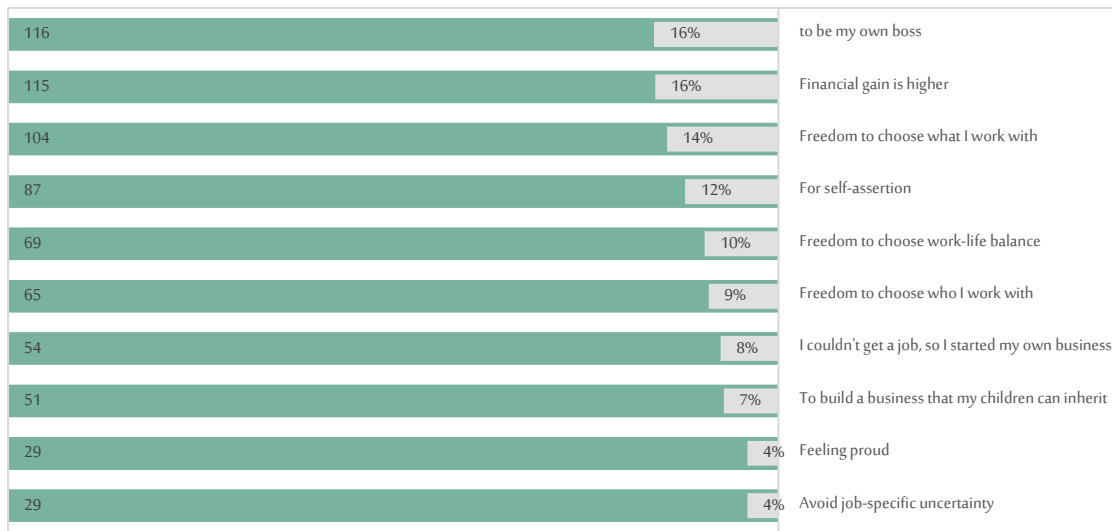
Figure (9) Number/percentage of business workers by the type of businesses



### 3. Reasons for Starting Private Businesses

The study found that 16% (116 business owners) of business owners started their businesses to be managers of themselves. In comparison, 16% (115 business owners) of them started their businesses because the profits from private projects were higher. Also, of some business owners, 14% (104 business owners) established their own businesses to be free to choose what to do. Likewise, 12% (87 business owners) started their businesses for self-assertion, and 10% (69 business owners) to balance work, social life, personal activities, and leisure time.

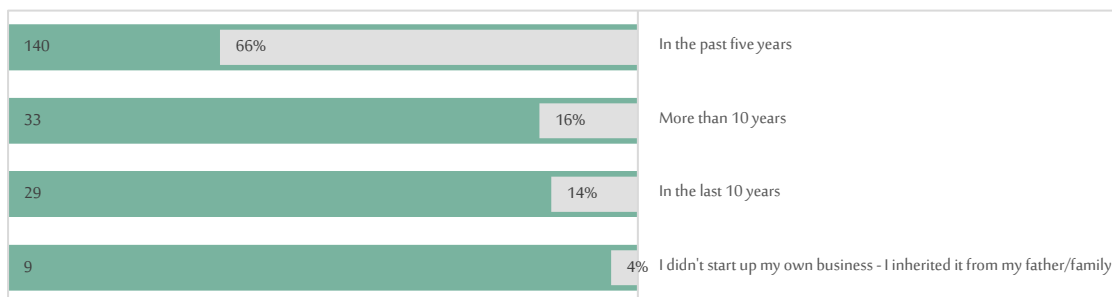
Figure (10) Number/percentage of business owners according to the reasons that prompted them to establish their businesses



The study results indicate that most private business owners started their businesses independently, while only 4% (9 business owners) of business owners inherited their projects from their families.

When business owners were asked about the period in which they set up their businesses, 66% (140 business owners) of them reported having set up their own businesses in the past five years. It is noteworthy that during the past three years, the intensity of military actions in northwestern Syria decreased compared to before 2020. This relative security stability may be a reason for the start of the recovery of the economic sector and the increase in the number of businesses. On the other hand, 16% (33 business owners) had set up their own businesses more than a decade ago, and 14% (29 business owners) had set up their own businesses in the past ten years.

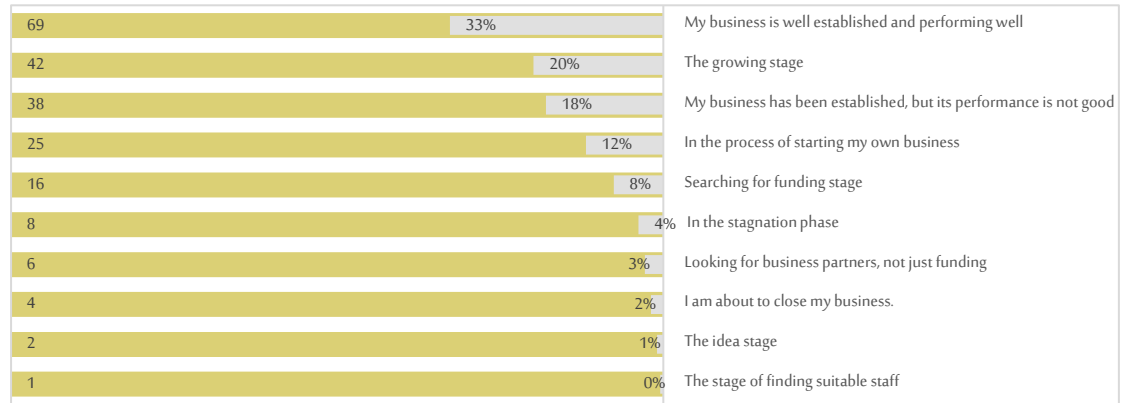
Figure (11) Number/percentage of business owners by the period of their businesses set up



#### 4. Evaluation of the Phases of Businesses

The study results indicate that most private businesses are well-established and perform well or are in the growth stage. 33% (69 business owners) believe their businesses are well-established and perform well. 20% (42 business owners) see their businesses are in growth. On the contrary, 18% (38 business owners) have established their businesses, but their performance is still not good. And 12% (25 business owners) believe they are still in the start-up stage and cannot evaluate their businesses. 8% (16 business owners) see they are in the fund search stage, and 4% (8 business owners) view their businesses as stagnating. Also, 3% (6 business owners) are searching for partners to contribute to financing.

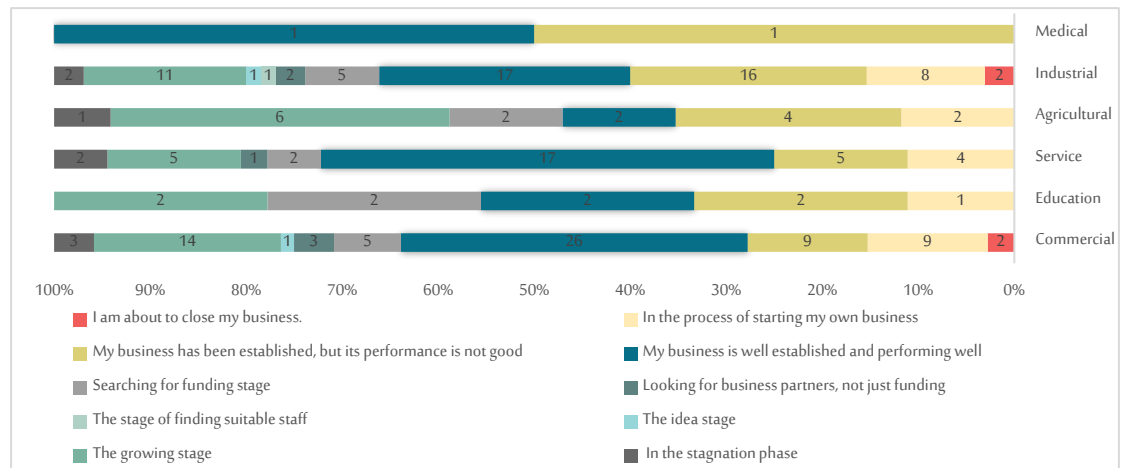
Figure (12) Number/percentage of business owners according to their evaluation of the stages of their businesses



The study results also showed that 38 businesses are in the development stage, including 14 commercial projects, 11 industrial projects, six agricultural projects, and five service projects.

It likewise shows 65 well-established and well-functioning businesses, including 26 commercial, 17 industrial, and 17 service projects.

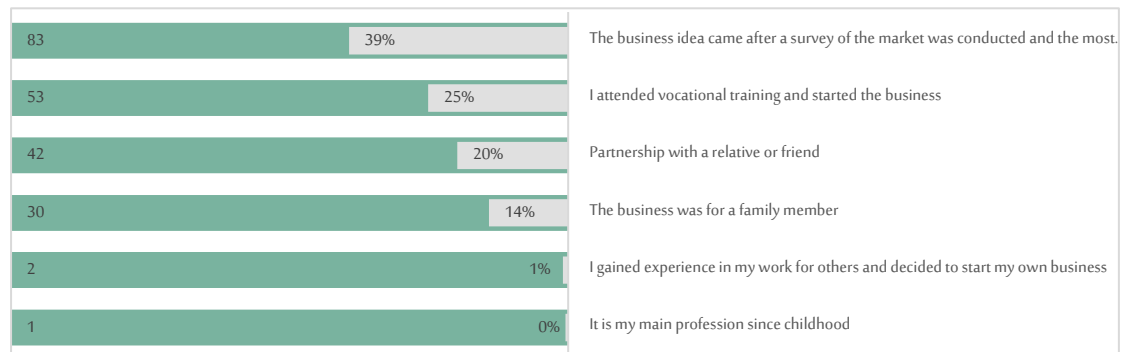
Figure (13) Number/percentage of business owners according to their evaluation of the stages of their businesses



## 5. Mechanisms for Generating the Ideas of Businesses

The study results indicate that most entrepreneurs got ideas for their projects after the market study and received specialized vocational training. It shows that 39% (83 entrepreneurs) got their business ideas after a market survey and getting information about the most profitable businesses, while 25% (53 entrepreneurs) got their business ideas after receiving vocational training. This indicates the role of organizations that train on and support livelihoods in increasing the number of productive businesses that provide sources of income. Also, 20% (42 entrepreneurs) got their business ideas through a partnership they started with a relative or friend. The business of some owners, 14% (30 entrepreneurs), was for a family member before they got it.

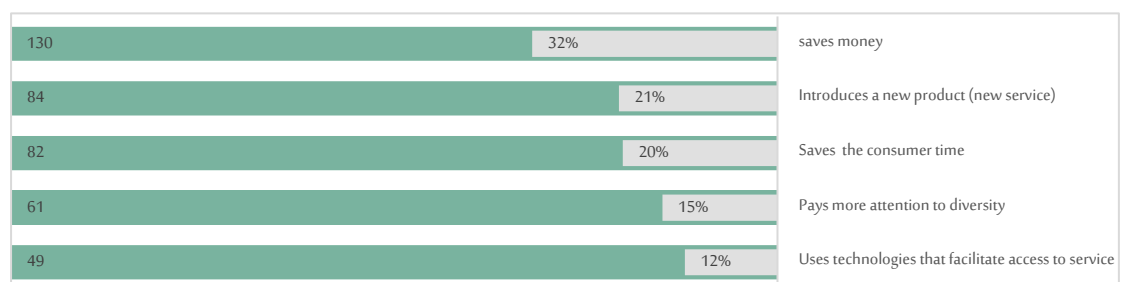
Figure (14) Number/percentage of business owners according to the mechanism of access to their project idea



## 6. Entrepreneurial Businesses Excellence Factors

32% (130 business owners) believe that what distinguishes their businesses is that they save money, while 21% (84 business owners) offer new products or services. In addition, 20% (82 business owners) think that their businesses save time for the consumer. Also, 15% (61 business owners) of business owners take into account more diversity in their businesses, and 12% (49 business owners) use technologies that facilitate access to service.

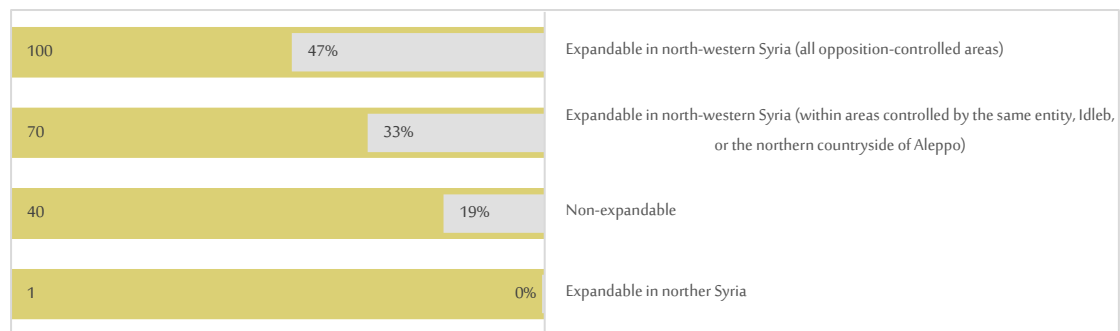
Figure (15) Number/percentage of business owners according to the factors distinguishing their projects



## 7. The Desire to Expand Businesses

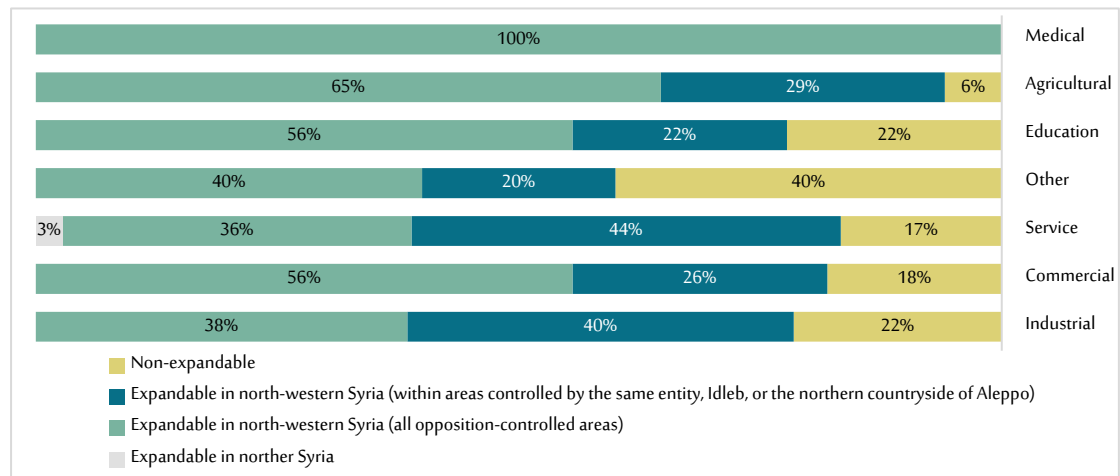
The study was conducted in only northwestern Syria and within the areas under the control of the opposition forces. When asked about the scalability of their businesses in other areas, 47% (100 entrepreneurs) of the entrepreneurs reported that their businesses are scalable in all regions of northwestern Syria, meaning the areas under the control of the opposition of the province of Idlib and the western countryside of Aleppo, in addition to the areas under the control of the Turkish-backed opposition in the northern countryside of Aleppo. Nonetheless, only 33% (70 entrepreneurs) reported that their businesses are scalable in northwestern Syria but within the areas under the control of the same entity. This means the projects are scalable in the northern countryside of Aleppo or Idlib governorate only. On the contrary, 19% (40 entrepreneurs) reported that their projects are not scalable.

Figure (16) Number/percentage of business owners by the scalability of their businesses



Regarding expanding businesses to include all regions of northwest Syria, the study results show that all medical businesses are scalable in all regions of northwestern Syria, and 65% of agricultural businesses are scalable in all regions of northwestern Syria. Also, 56% of commercial and educational businesses, 38% of industrial businesses, and 36% of service businesses are scalable.

Figure (17) Percentages of business owners according to the scalability of their businesses by sector



The study also found that 71% of business owners want to expand their businesses and hire new people. Of these, 49% need skilled workers, 30% need ordinary workers without work experience, 12% need accountants, and 8% need administrators.

Notably, this study included interviews with 659 people (who are not business owners), of whom 46% (303 people) are unemployed. Skilled workers (craftsmen) constitute the largest percentage (61%) of the unemployed (184 people). Therefore, there is a pressing need to link unemployed skilled workers with business owners wishing to expand their businesses and hire skilled workers.

Figure (18) Number/percentage of business owners according to their desire to expand their businesses.

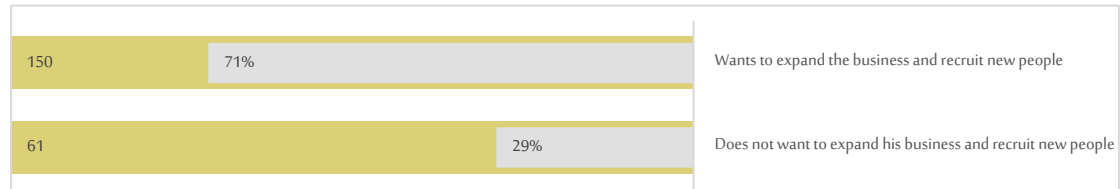
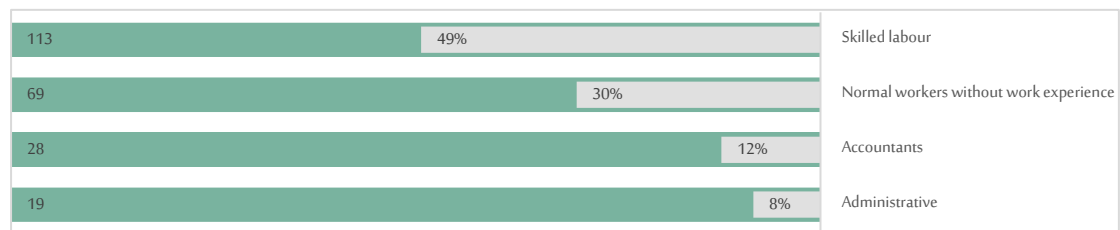


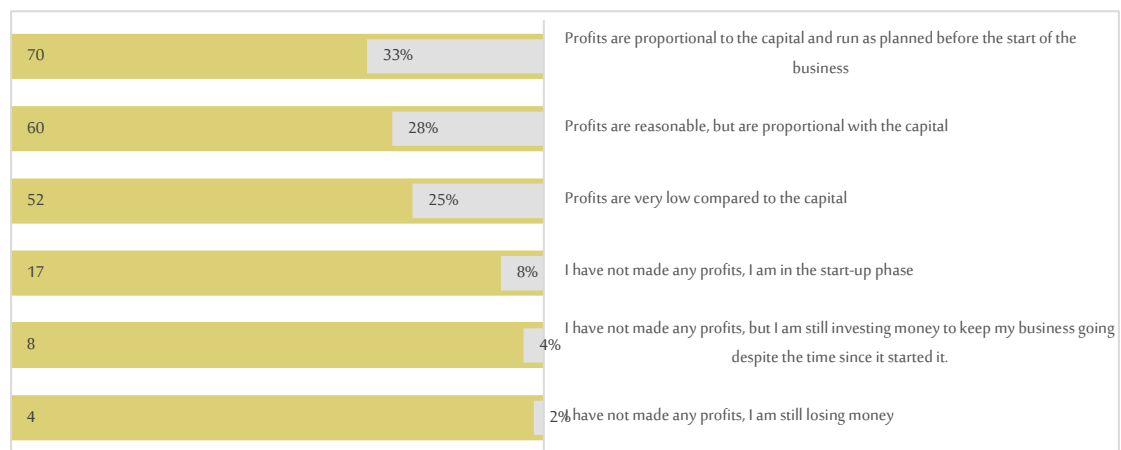
Figure (19) Number/percentage of business owners willing to expand their businesses according to the workers they need



## 8. Profit - Capital Comparison

Only 33% (70 business owners) believe that their businesses' profits are commensurate with the capital used to finance the business. In addition, they think the profits are going as planned before starting the business.

Figure (20) Number/percentage of business owners according to their profits



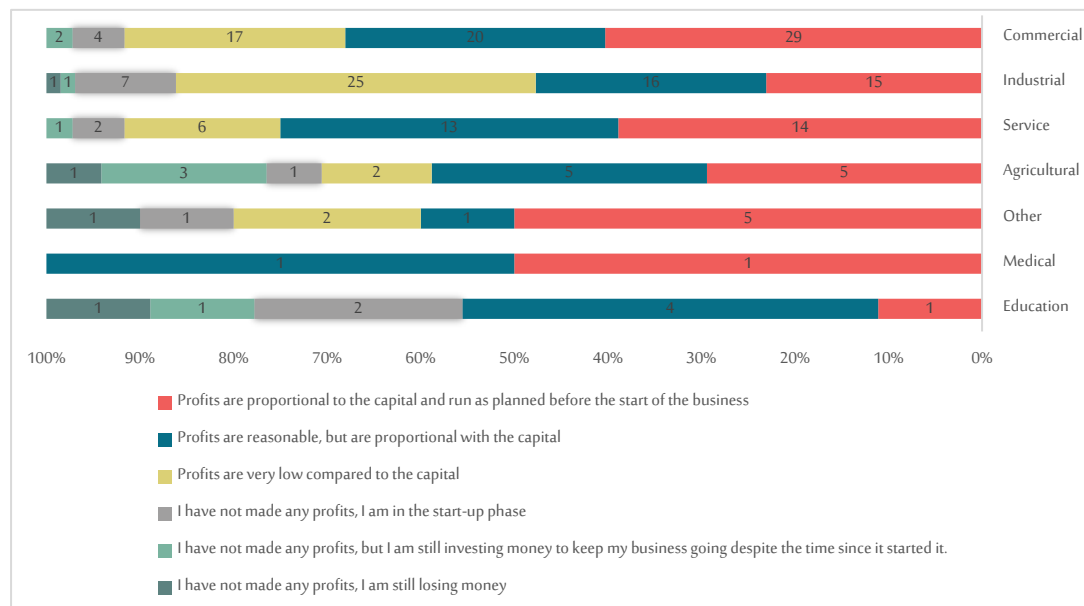
Profits in 40% (29 businesses) of the commercial businesses are commensurate with the capital and proceed as planned before the start of the business. The profits in 28% (20 businesses) of commercial businesses are reasonable but not commensurate with the capital.

Also, 39% (14 businesses) of service businesses have profits commensurate with the capital, and the businesses are proceeding as planned before starting the business, and 36% (13 businesses) have good profits but are not commensurate with the capital.

The profits in 29% (5 businesses) of agricultural businesses are commensurate with the capital, and the businesses proceed as planned before the business start. The profits in 29% (5 businesses) of agricultural businesses are good but not commensurate with the capital.

Nevertheless, 23% (15 businesses) of industrial businesses are commensurate with the capital, and the businesses are proceeding as planned before the business started, and 25% (16 businesses) have good profits but are not commensurate with the capital.

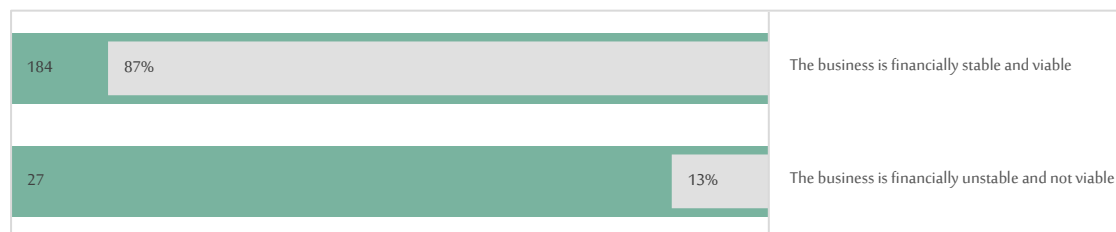
Figure (21) Number/percentage of business owners according to their profits



### 9. The Sustainability of Businesses

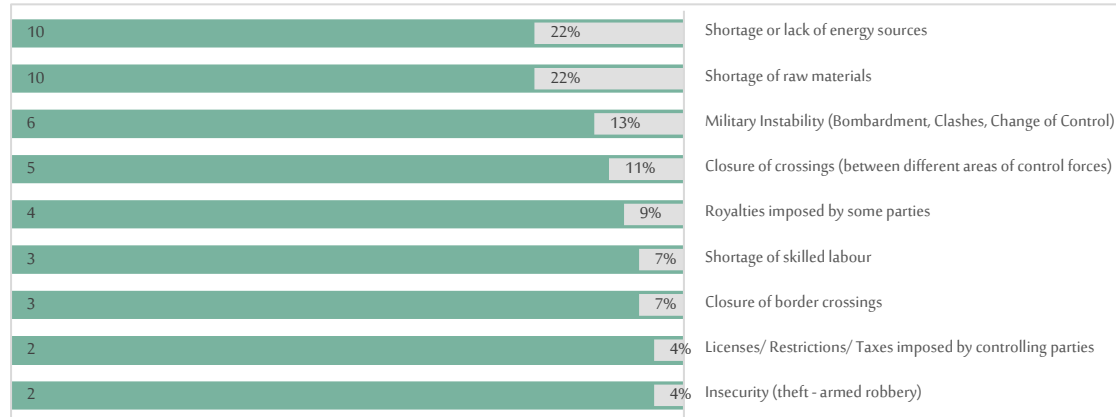
The study found that 87% of business owners consider their businesses sustainable, while only 13% consider them unsustainable.

Figure (22) Number/percentage of business owners by the sustainability of their businesses



It also found the reasons behind the unsustainability of the businesses to be a lack of energy sources (22%), shortage of raw materials (22%), military instability including shelling, clashes, and change of control (13%), closure of internal crossings between different control forces (11%), tributes imposed by some entities (9%), shortage of skilled labor (7%), closure of border crossings (7%), licenses and restrictions set by the controlling party (4%), and insecurity including theft and armed robbery (4%).

Figure (23) Number/percentage of business owners according to the main reasons for the instability of their businesses





A person in a suit and tie is shown from the chest up, holding a pen. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. At the bottom, the numbers '05' are written in a large, white, outlined font.

Fifth

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# The Most Prominent Sectors of Private Businesses

## Fifth: The Most Prominent Sectors of Private Businesses

The conditions of war, displacement, and the lack of sources of income imposed new areas to which the population turned to secure sources of income. The ongoing war, the lack of services and materials, and the difficult economic conditions inspired young people to innovate ideas for new projects that face these challenges. What distinguishes these projects is that they rely on simple capital and the raw materials available in local markets. Among the most important of these projects are the following:

### 1. Remote Work Opportunities

#### a. Websites for training and linking workers to the labor market remotely

The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the remote work market. It has become possible for the employee to carry out a large part of the work from home, and, in many cases, the employee was residing in a town far from the country where the company is located. Remote work often requires a laptop, a fast Internet connection, and permanent communication with the employee in addition to experience in one of the areas of remote work, such as design software, translation, reporting, monitoring content on social media platforms, or big data entry and cleaning. The attention of owners of large companies is driven to countries that are in crisis and have people able to work remotely. Remote work provides significant advantages to large companies, including increasing employee productivity and reducing operational expenses for work sites such as electricity and water consumption, cleaning, guarding, renting office space, parking for employees and customers, training courses, and travel and accommodation costs. This may provide the company with cheap labor compared to the person's residence close to the company's headquarters in a crowded city. Women benefit most from this system, as it allows them to combine their domestic and family duties with caring for their families without conflict between the two and pressures. The system has also benefited companies by limiting office spending, expanding office space, and reducing infrastructure costs.

The most important need to open remote work opportunities for the population in northern Syria is to design a website to link remote job seekers with companies that have job opportunities. The website compares job seekers' skills in northern Syria and those required by remote work opportunities. This helps the website administrators provide training suitable for the job opportunities offered. The website must be funded to easily appear on the search engines of anyone who searches for employees remotely and in any language.

#### b. E-Marketing

Every girl or woman can enter the world of e-commerce and e-marketing of new and second-hand clothes (marketing clothes of all kinds, cosmetics, and accessories). This type of project requires only a mobile phone or a laptop and the availability of an Internet connection permanently. Beneficiaries need to attend a course on e-marketing techniques and skills, how to take pictures of the product that attract customers' attention, and how to win customers' trust. All community members can practice these professions, including persons with disabilities, as most community members have the necessary equipment (mobile phones or laptops). E-marketing websites can also be set up to benefit the population in northern Syria.

## 2. Service Businesses

### a. Supporting Delivery Services

After the spread of the Corona pandemic (COVID-19), the delivery sector has flourished in all countries. Several successful delivery projects have emerged in NW Syria, including the application of "Hop Hop," based in the city of Sarmada in Idlib Governorate. Such projects provide job opportunities for a large number of young people. The need is focused on the availability of a motorcycle for the beneficiaries of these projects equipped with a box to protect orders from weather conditions, as some requests need to be delivered hot while others need to be cold. The project offers a solution to traffic congestion, high transportation costs, and the lack of time for customers to shop themselves. In the project's first phase, workers in this service can use social media to start the project. Still, they should attend courses that help them understand the basics of communication and forming networks of several people to work together. In the advanced stages and after entering the delivery market, workers can search for more sophisticated methods, such as developing websites, including electronic payment services. Many young people in northwestern Syria own motorcycles and mobile phones. They can be supported by a box to be installed on their motorcycles. Businesses of delivery services have succeeded in urban societies more than rural ones. Here we mean cities and towns with many residents who live in neighborhoods with dwellings close to each other, making the delivery worker not travel long distances to deliver orders.

### b. Sewing Projects

The project begins with a training course, interspersed with the delivery of simple equipment such as home sewing machines, scissors, and some simple equipment. The distinguished beneficiaries who have continued their projects for over six months are followed up. The distinguished beneficiaries attend intensive courses. After the end of the training period, the simple equipment is replaced with industrial equipment, such as an industrial sewing machine, an industrial overlock machine, and some scissors.

Some of these beneficiaries can start second-hand clothing repairs, washing them, and selling them after improving their quality (development of the second-hand clothes trade). On the other hand, other beneficiaries can start sewing and producing clothes (tailoring clothes for the family or customers). Also, some women can rely on themselves to repair clothes for family members. The beneficiaries of these businesses can be linked with organizations that distribute clothing within their humanitarian response to ensure these organizations receive clothes at cost price by adding a simple profit margin provided that the quality of the product is guaranteed. Thus, the business provides job opportunities for unemployed people and clothes for the poorest families. Women can benefit from these businesses since working on these types of businesses requires only a little physical effort, and women do not have to work outside their homes. Moreover, all family members can participate in this type of business.

### c. Weaving Businesses

The project begins with a training course that includes providing simple equipment such as knitting needles (or hooks) and some threads (wool). The distinguished beneficiaries who have completed their projects for over six months should be followed up and would be invited to intensive courses. After completing the training, the equipment is replaced with simple industrial equipment, such as weaving (knitting) machines. Beneficiaries can produce sweaters, coats, socks, hats, and tablecloths. The beneficiaries of these projects can be linked with organizations that distribute clothing as part of their humanitarian response, ensuring that these organizations obtain clothing at a cost price with the addition of a small profit margin, provided that the quality of the product is guaranteed. Thus, the project guarantees the provision of job opportunities for the unemployed and the provision of clothing for the poorest families. Women can benefit from these businesses since working on these types of businesses requires only a little physical effort, and women do not have to work outside their homes. Moreover, all family members can participate in this type of business.

#### d. Fixed or Mobile Hot Drinks kiosks

Scattered across the road, fixed and mobile hot drinks kiosks selling hot drinks (takeaway coffee) compete with coffee shops today. They provide customers with coffee on the roads without the need to stop wasting a lot of time. They spread significantly near gas stations, highways, or on the outskirts of cities. Starting this project does not need significant capital. It only requires a simple machine to prepare the different types of coffee and experience making the coffee and choosing the most appropriate place to sell the products. Such a business's owners exceed the market competition by providing a distinctive taste and a suitable price. Beneficiaries must be trained in making the various coffee types quickly, choosing the necessary machines, and choosing the right place that does not cause traffic congestion or lead to traffic accidents. They must be trained on methods of waste disposal (paper cups or the like). The sources of information reported that coffee points might lead to the spread of garbage in their surroundings.

#### e. Home food preservation products, its selling centers, and marketing mechanisms

The home food preservation business is one of the most successful small businesses women can do in their homes. Many families rely on buying preserved and ready-made food, especially families including working women, and need more time for food preservation. Such businesses empower women in all respects. The home food preservation project does not require significant capital, as most of the equipment necessary to prepare the food-preserved products are available in every house. Most women have sufficient experience in making them. It is primarily directed at women unable to complete their education, which limits their ability to obtain employment opportunities. There is no significant loss in such projects because the project owners can use the food-preserved items that are not sold at any time. The owners of such projects confirm that the biggest problems they face in selling their products are the need for centers to sell their products or charity markets held periodically to display home-preserved food products. It is better to train women on ways to market their products electronically, which may help them reach more customers.

#### f. Kindergarten Businesses

These projects achieve a wide spread in many countries. They are present in all cities and villages. It is one of the successful projects that earn a reasonable profit rate. It is one of society's most valuable and beneficial projects. A kindergarten helps in educating, developing, and raising young children. Therefore, many people desire to establish a kindergarten project. However, it is required to have all the necessary capabilities to establish such a project, including financial, practical, and administrative abilities and experience in dealing with children. Therefore, the project should target early childhood educators in particular so that their educational experiences can be used in safeguarding and dealing with children. These projects provide employment opportunities for many women. They serve women who want to enter the labor market. However, they cannot do so because there are no efficient kindergartens to care for their children. Kindergartens contribute to children's educational process through the preschool education they receive in these kindergartens. In addition, they add to refining the child's personality and preparing them appropriately for school education. As mentioned, this project should mainly target early childhood educators and help them to develop the economic feasibility of a kindergarten project and choose the right place and appropriate equipment. The kindergarten project has succeeded in urban communities more than rural communities because many children are in a small geographical area (neighborhoods with adjacent houses and apartments), making access to kindergartens easy. The number of women employed and looking for kindergartens for their children in urban communities is greater than in rural communities.

## g. Women's Beauty Salons

No woman or girl does not care about her beauty and appearance. She always wants to reflect in the best way. Of course, this will not happen unless she goes to one of the beauty salons that provide many services and provide her with everything she needs to look beautiful and take care of herself. In the women's salon, any woman can change the color of her hair, take care of her skin and get complete care of her. A beauty salon is not considered one of the expensive businesses, especially if the owner woman is trained and wants to improve herself in that field. She only needs hair dryers, some hair and skin materials, and hair styling tools. Trainees need to undergo a training course in cosmetology. The women's beauty salon project is suitable for all women. A woman can start her project at home, which helps her balance her house chores with her cosmetic work.

## 3. Industrial Businesses

### a. Assembling and Repairing Liquid Batteries

After the war in Syria and the lack of electricity through the public grid, liquid batteries are no longer limited to cars. People began to use batteries at home for lighting, charging, and electricity generation by solar panels. Today no house or tent in Syria does not contain several liquid batteries, which makes the manufacture and recycling of liquid batteries on small projects that may provide jobs for young people or be profitable. The project begins by training young people to collect batteries and recycle the damaged ones, then supporting young people with the necessary equipment, which is lead oxide, Solid lead, plastic battery boxes, insulators, and industrial numbers to work as an electricity source (electricity, diesel generator), piston, air compressor, oxygen cylinders, gas cylinder, electric chargers, piston molds, and heads for casting and a drill. The product is fully marketed locally, and the competition is through the quality of the battery, its long charge, and its competitive price with imported batteries, which is achieved by constantly developing the quality of the product. These projects are considered to be for males as they are to be dangerous for females. Beneficiaries should be trained to protect themselves from the dangers of exposure to chemicals and the use of industrial equipment. Assembling and repairing liquid batteries businesses have been successful in large cities and towns with large markets, as these markets attract more customers.

### b. Installation and Repair of Solar Power Systems

Residents in northwestern Syria continue searching for alternative ways to generate electricity in light of the continuous rise in electricity prices and being unavailable throughout the day. The use of the solar energy system in Syria has spread as a solution to compensate for power outages most of the day. The spread of solar panels has become common in northwestern Syria to provide warm water or to generate electricity for lighting and charging electronic devices. Many people in northwestern Syria believe that providing training on installing and maintaining solar panels may be one of the projects attracting many young people. Trainees need support with simple industrial toolkits to help install and maintain the panels. These projects are considered to be for males as they are considered dangerous for females. Beneficiaries should be trained to protect themselves from the dangers of using industrial equipment. The project can be useful to teach young people to perform simple maintenance of household electricity networks or even extend household electricity. Businesses for installing and repairing solar power systems have succeeded in large cities and towns with large markets where these markets attract more customers.

### c. Motorcycle Maintenance

Most people in northern Syria use motorcycles to move between cities, towns, and camps, preferring them over other transportation means for many reasons, most notably the high cost of private, public transport (taxi or bus), shortening the long time they may spend in the garage, the lack of public transport at all times (in some cities and towns public transportation is available only several hours a day), and the inability of many to buy a private car due to its high price and large fuel and maintenance expenses compared to the motorcycle. Every household has one or several motorcycles, which led to the profession of motorcycle maintenance flourishing. Many young people confirmed that the profession of motorcycle maintenance might be a good source of income. The cost of equipping a motorcycle maintenance shop ranges between 300- 700 USD, depending on the equipment quality. The project idea begins by providing training courses for young people on motorcycle maintenance so that each young person can perform simple bicycle maintenance, and participants can develop their skills later. Motorcycle maintenance businesses have been successful in all societies. All cities and towns have many motorcycles, which have become the primary means of transportation.

### d. Soap and Detergent Industry

Cleaning agents are one of the most consumed materials, and their types vary from dry and liquid soaps to shampoos, cleaning liquids, and washing detergents. Projects to produce detergents are inexpensive businesses. They only need some containers for melting and processing raw materials, a gas stove, filling containers, and protective equipment for soap industry workers. The person needs to attend a course of at least two months of training in producing cleaning materials. People who started making soap and cleaning materials at home confirmed that they faced obstacles, such as buying raw materials in small quantities (they cannot buy raw materials in wholesale quantities), forcing them to pay high amounts compared to purchasing materials in bulk.

Moreover, buying a small amount of material also may put them at risk of buying adulterated raw materials, which leads to damage to the product. Work should be done to link these business owners with suppliers who provide them with raw materials with high quality and competitive prices. In terms of marketing the products, the beneficiaries of these projects can be linked with organizations that distribute hygiene kits on a monthly basis as part of their humanitarian response to ensure that these organizations receive cleaning materials at cost price with a simple profit margin provided that the quality of the product is guaranteed. The business ensures job opportunities for unemployed people and provides hygiene kits for the poorest families. Women can benefit from these businesses since working on these types of businesses would only require a little physical effort, and women do not have to work outside their homes. Thus, all family members can participate in this type of business. Customers of homemade cleaning products have confirmed their desire to know the components and concentrations of these materials before buying them. That is why there is a need to train the owners of these projects on the method of packaging the product and add information about the product and the materials used in production. This may gain consumer trust in these products and enhance marketing processes.

### e. Dairy Industry:

Women can be supported with this type of business that does not require large spaces (large workshops), as even IDP women at the camps can make dairy products. The most crucial challenge for entrepreneurs is to store their products in the absence of refrigeration and electricity. Thus, the owners of these projects need to provide refrigerators powered by solar power panels. The owners of these businesses can also be linked to the owners of livestock breeding businesses to obtain milk at competitive prices. They should also be trained in the methods of packaging and marketing their products. Key informants confirmed that part of the dairy products is sold in Turkey, such as traditional ghee and cheese, but they are transported to Turkey in small quantities.



## f. Mosaic and Pottery Industries

The residents of Idleb Governorate, especially Kafr Nabl and Armanaz sub-districts, have great experience in this industry. Moreover, the raw materials for these industries are available locally. However, they need support with local and global marketing. Before the war in Syria, about 75% of Kafr Nabl production was exported to Lebanese companies, which in turn were exported to European countries and the USA. A quarter of the production was being promoted in the local market, in addition to the Gulf countries and some Arab countries, including Jordan. Even mosaic production companies opened bank accounts and sold mosaic paintings through websites to the consumer directly. The paintings were used in various places, including swimming pools, houses, churches, and mosques. However, with the deterioration of the security situation, demand decreased significantly, leading to many shops and companies closing. One of the industry's most significant difficulties was the high shipping cost, road blocking, and taxation, which caused the industry to decline domestically. These business workers need support marketing their products to keep their profession from extinction. The people of Armanaz sub-district are also distinguished by their expertise in manufacturing glass and pottery. The city is characterized by the availability of yellow and red soil and sandy soil used to manufacture pottery. In addition to the economic value of the mosaic and pottery industry, these industries represent a national value that contributes to preserving the national heritage and handicrafts for which Syria has long been famous.

## g. Electronics Maintenance (Mobile phones, Laptops, TV)

The idea of starting an electronics maintenance business has two advantages. First, it is a growing consumer market. Today, all houses have electronic devices, an added value that enhances the business's success. Second, profit opportunities are guaranteed and easy to obtain as long as you follow the methodologies and foundations known in this business. The maintenance of electronic devices is appealing to many young people who have become experienced in the software side of these devices and want to expand and maintain electronic equipment (Hardware). Entering this field requires the trainees to attend courses in the area of maintenance of electronic devices and provide them with simple equipment to perform basic maintenance. The business owner can start his project at home without needing a dedicated shop to carry out maintenance work. Businesses of electronics maintenance have been successful in large cities and towns with large markets, which attract more customers.

## 10. Agricultural Businesses:

### a. Livestock Breeding

The business starts by supporting each family with a number of heads of livestock. Support continues through the follow-up of livestock vaccination against infectious diseases and providing fodder at affordable prices during the seasons when pastures are unavailable. The continuation of the vaccination and fodder support ensures the continuation of the business so that the beneficiaries can rely on it to provide livestock supplies. The beneficiaries of this business should be linked with the beneficiaries of dairy industry businesses so that this linkage ensures the permanent marketing of their milk production and the other party's access to milk at competitive prices. Women and older adults can benefit from these businesses since working on them would require little physical effort, and women do not have to work outside their homes. Therefore, all family members can participate in this type of business. Rural communities have been thriving in livestock businesses because of their considerable experience in the area of breeding livestock. However, urban cities and towns contain large numbers of IDPs who came from a rural environment, most of whom have experience in the livestock breeding field. They can be supported with a few heads of livestock to start new businesses that can provide them with sources of income.

## b. Poultry Farming

The business starts by supporting the family with a number of local chickens (egg-laying hens). This project at least provides the family with the eggs and meat they need. Poultry should be regularly vaccinated, as the spread of diseases may lead to the loss of large numbers of chickens. The project targets people with experience in poultry farming. If the beneficiaries do not have experience, they should be trained on the basics of this profession, such as maintaining the cleanliness of poultry feeding pens and containers and the symptoms that poultry breeders may notice and require immediate reference to veterinarians. It is better to link beneficiaries with veterinarians to provide advice. Women and older adults can benefit from these businesses since working on them would require little physical effort, and women do not have to work outside their homes. Moreover, all family members can participate in this type of business.

## c. Planting Nursery (Producing Seedlings)

It is a valuable business in Idleb governorate since it provides agricultural products to other farmers. It is one of the strategic projects because it preserves the different types of trees and provides them to farmers at reasonable prices. Women can be supported with this project of their experience in seedling production. The project requires space for planting and training on seedlings production. Women can benefit from these businesses since working on these types of businesses would require little physical effort, and women do not have to work outside their homes.

Moreover, all family members can participate in this type of business. This project can include all types of seedlings, including ornamental plants. Projects supporting plant nurseries have been successful for rural communities because of their considerable agricultural experience and possession of large agricultural areas suitable for such projects.

## d. Barley Breeding Project

In light of the high prices of fodder for livestock and the scarcity of pastures in some months of the year, the need to grow barley appears as a basic input in manufacturing fodder locally, or it may be used directly as fodder for livestock. The idea of breeding barley without soil is based on producing green fodder at home using water and light and providing suitable conditions for barley breeding. This business can be linked to livestock support businesses so that livestock breeders can provide fodder for livestock in the absence of natural pastures.

## e. Growing products not available in the area (fruits or vegetables)

In light of the decline in banana cultivation on the Syrian coast, as well as the difficulty of importing bananas from regime-controlled areas or Lebanon, the need arises in local markets to grow bananas locally (introducing its cultivation to the region) in addition to a number of fruits on top of which are strawberries.

The agricultural environment in Idleb governorate is suitable for growing bananas, and the local soil is fertile and ideal for this cultivation. Banana cultivation is a project that makes a profit for its owners and does not need large agricultural areas. There have also been several attempts to grow strawberries in small greenhouses using hanging pots (planters), which helps to grow large quantities of strawberries in small areas.



Sixth

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# Information About Starting Private Businesses

0065

## Sixth: Information About Starting Private Businesses

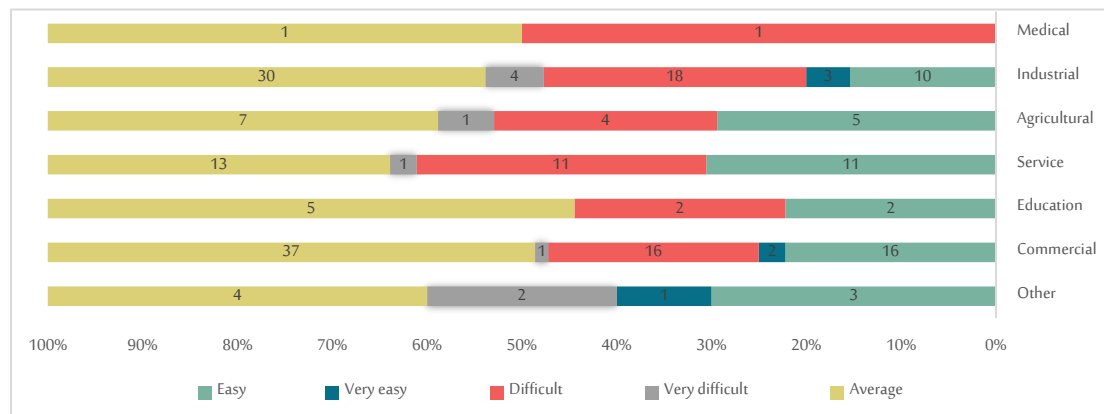
### 1. The Difficulty of Starting a Private Business

The enumerators asked private business owners about their opinions on how easy it is to start a private business. 22% (47 business owners) believe starting a private business is easy, including 16 people who own commercial businesses, 11 who own service businesses, and ten who own industrial businesses.

46% (97 business owners) believe that starting a private business is of average difficulty, including 37 people who own commercial businesses, 30 who own industrial businesses, and 13 who own service businesses.

29% (61 business owners) believe that starting a private business is difficult or very difficult, including 22 people who own industrial businesses, 17 who own commercial businesses, and 12 who own service businesses.

Figure (24) Number/percentage of business owners according to their views on the difficulty of starting private businesses

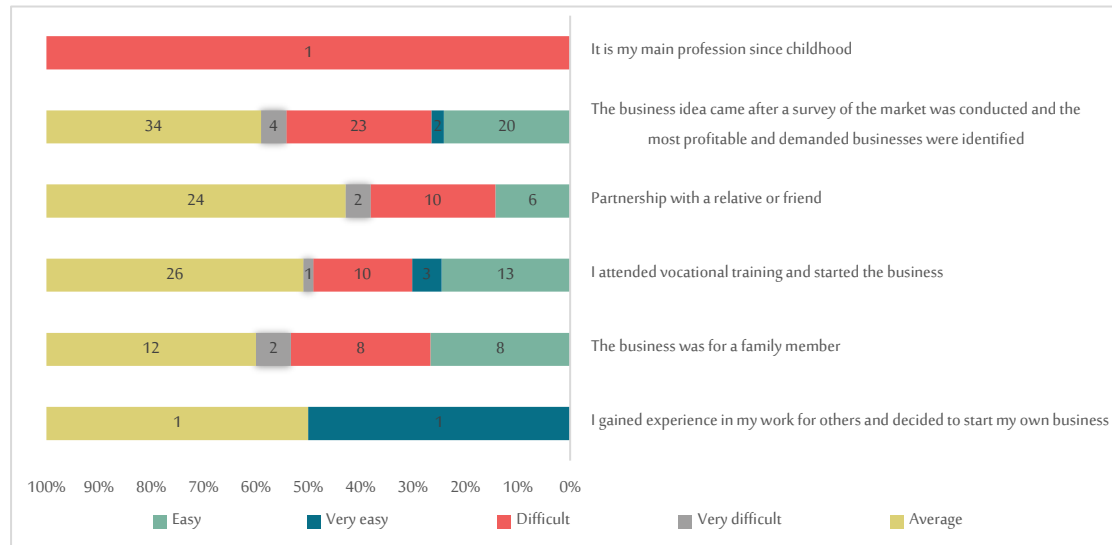


After crosschecking how business owners get the idea of the businesses with their views on how easy it is to start private businesses, it was found that:

When the business owner received vocational training before starting the business: 31% (16 business owners) saw that starting a private business was easy or very easy, 49% (26 business owners) believed it was of average difficulty, and only 21% (11 business owners) saw it was difficult or very difficult.

When the business owners conducted a market survey to find out the most profitable and demanding businesses before starting the project: 26% (22 business owners) saw that starting private businesses is easy or very easy. Also, 41% (34 business owners) saw that starting a private business is of average difficulty. Only 33% (27 business owners) saw starting a private project as difficult or very difficult.

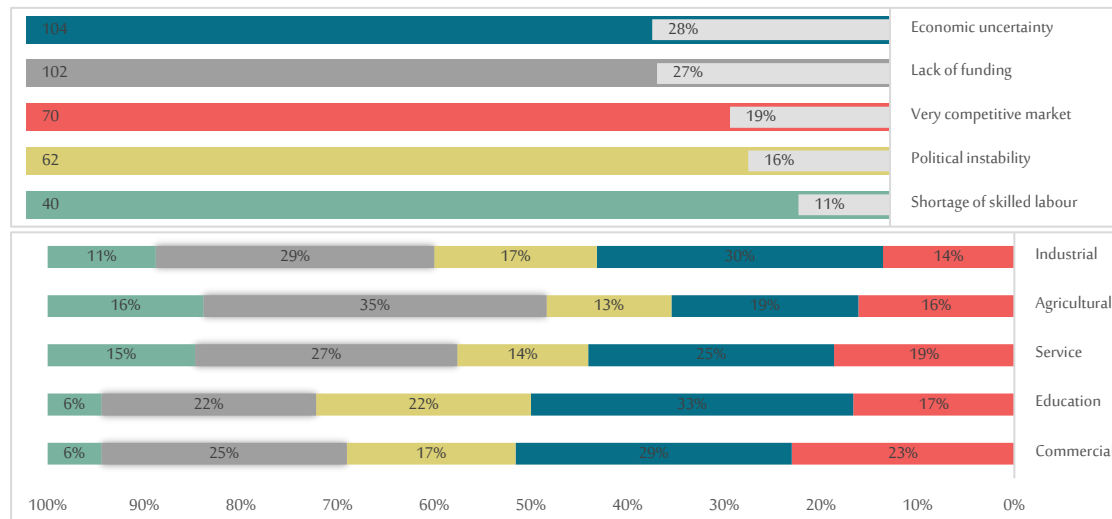
Figure (25) Number/percentage of business owners according to the relationship between finding the idea of the business and the difficulty of starting it



When the enumerators asked the private business owners for their opinions on how easy it is to start a business, 75% (158 business owners) believed that starting a business is of average difficulty, difficult, or very difficult. So the enumerators asked them about the reasons why starting new projects is not easy:

28% of the total reasons why starting a private business is not easy are economic instability, 27% the lack of adequate funding, 19% the highly competitive market, which is primarily manifested in the commercial field, 16% the political instability, and 11% shortage of skilled labor.

Figure (26) Number/percentage of business owners according to the reasons behind the difficulty of starting a private business by sector



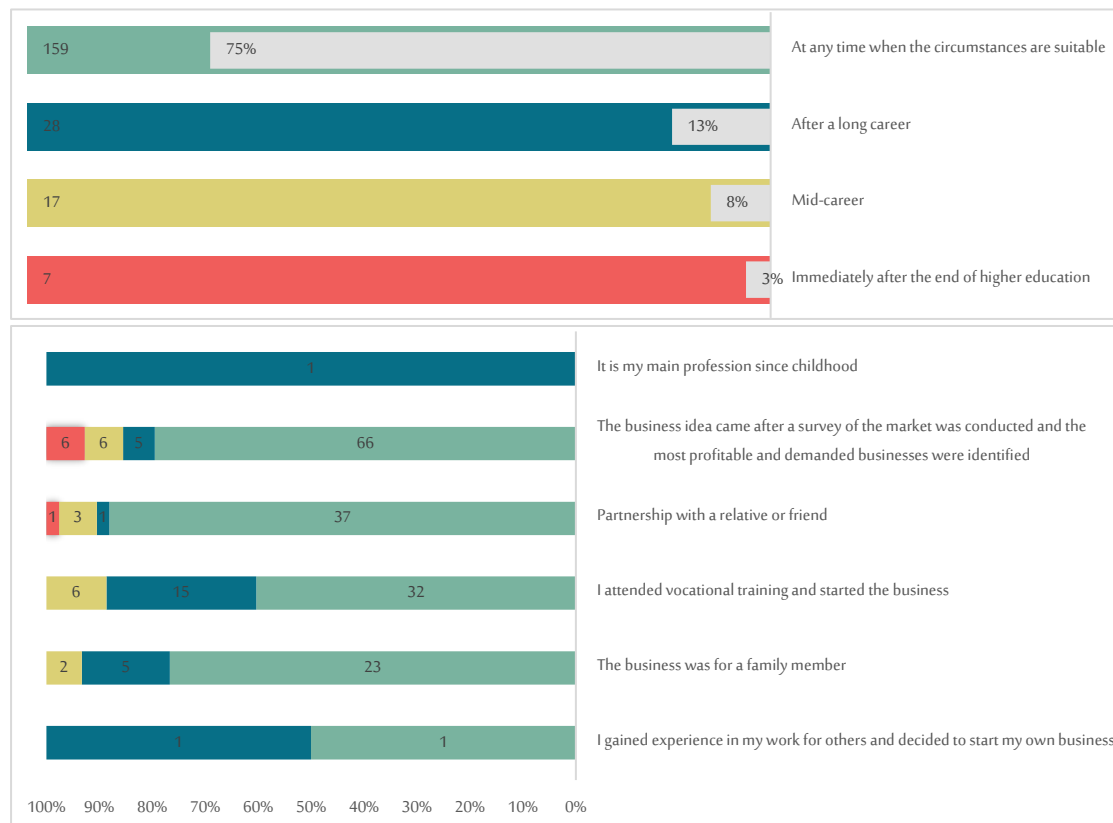
## 2. The Convenient Time for Starting a Private Business

The enumerators asked the interviewed business owners about the convenience of starting a business. 75% (159 business owners) reported that a private business could be started whenever the conditions were suitable. Of these, 66 started their businesses through a partnership with a relative or friend, 66 started their businesses after a market survey to find the most profitable businesses, and 32 received vocational training before starting their own businesses.

13% (28 business owners) reported that private businesses could be started after a long career, including 15 people who received vocational training before starting their private businesses.

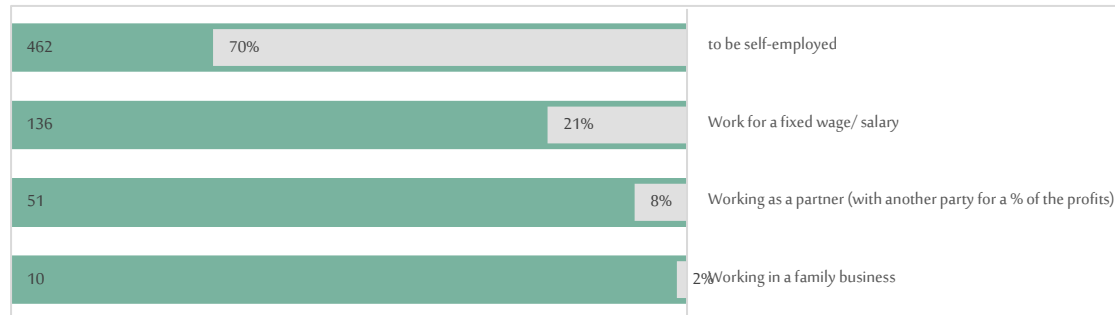
8% (17 business owners) reported that private businesses could be started mid-career, and 3% (7 business owners) said that private businesses could be started after completing higher education.

Figure (27) Number/percentage of business owners according to the convenient time to start the project and its linkage to how they came up with the business idea.



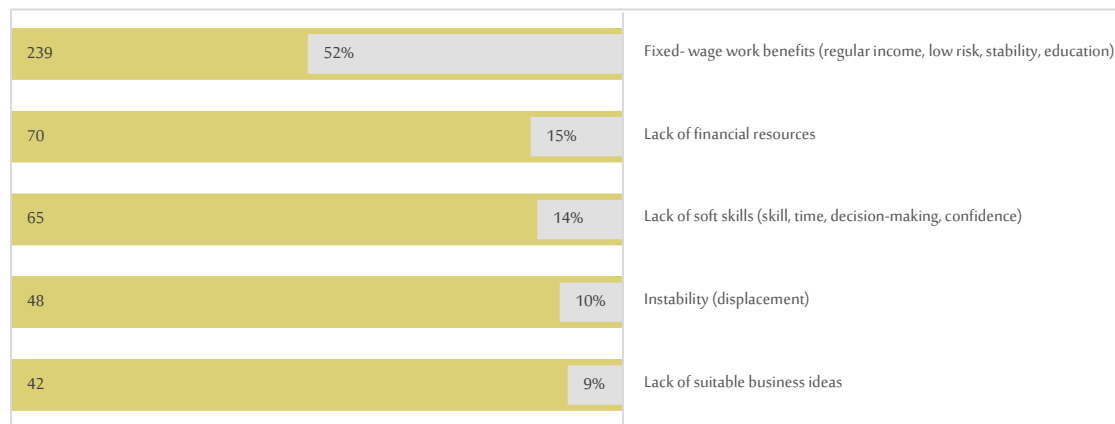
The enumerators asked fixed-pay workers (employees for other people) what type of work they preferred. 70% (462 workers) prefer to work for their own businesses. 21% (136 workers) prefer to work for a fixed salary as an employee of another party, and 8% (51 workers) prefer to work as partners for a percentage of profits.

Figure (28) Number/Percentage of workers according to their proffered type of work



The enumerators asked workers who prefer to work for a fixed salary why they can't think of independence in their own businesses. 52% of the reasons are the benefits of working for a fixed salary, such as regular income, low risk, and stability. And 15% of the reasons are their lack of financial resources. 14% of the reasons preventing workers from thinking about having independent businesses are lack of technical resources, including skill, time management, ability to make sound decisions, and professional confidence. And 10% of the reasons are the instability caused by displacement. And 9% of the reasons that prevent workers from thinking about having independent businesses is the lack of suitable project ideas.

Figure (29) Number/Percentage of reasons that make workers prefer to work for a fixed wage



### 3. The Most Attractive Sectors for Entrepreneurship

The enumerators asked the business owners they interviewed which sectors they found most attractive for entrepreneurship.

15% (155 business owners) of business owners reported that the commercial and contracting sector is the most attractive for entrepreneurship. This sector is concentrated in the areas of Azaz, Jisr al-Shughour, Jarablus, and Harim.

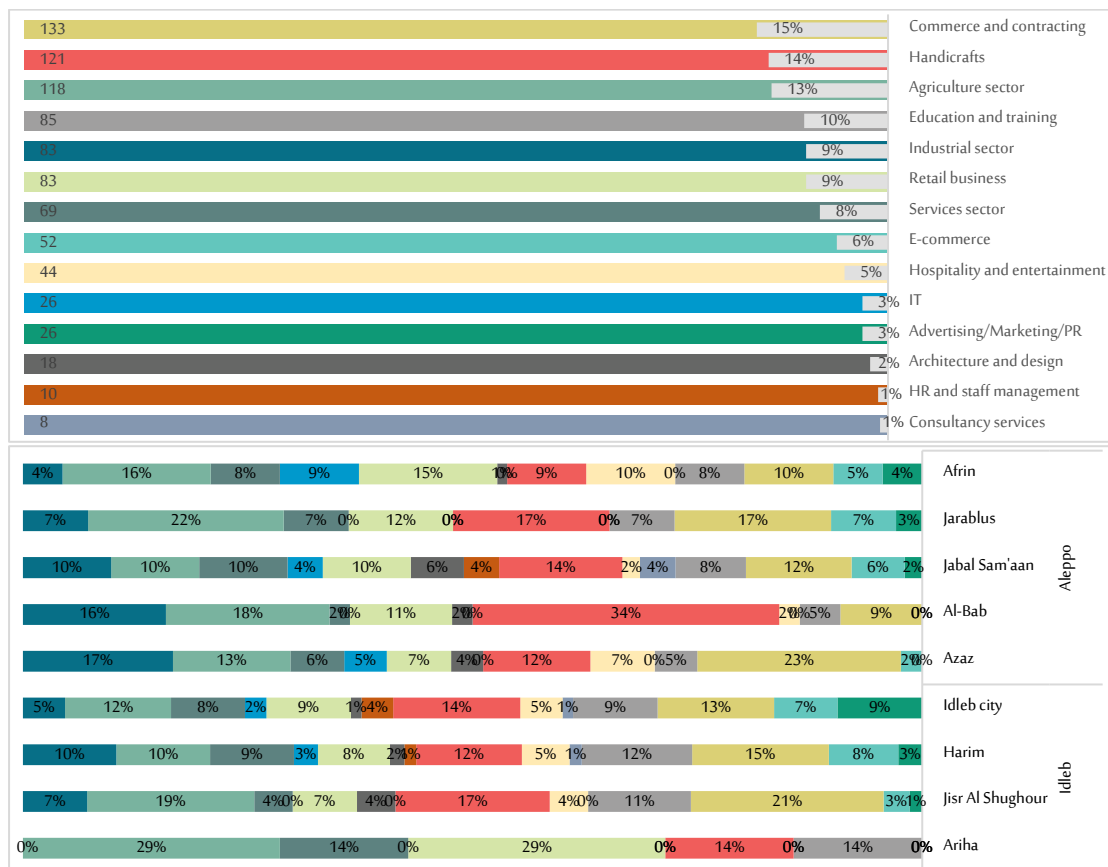
14% (121 business owners) reported that the handicraft sector is the most attractive for entrepreneurship. This sector is concentrated in the areas of Al-Bab, Jisr Al-Shughour, Jarablus, Idlib Center, Jabal Samaan, and Ariha.

13% (118 business owners) reported that agriculture is the most attractive for entrepreneurship. This sector is concentrated in the areas of Ariha, Jarablus, Jisr al-Shughour, Al-Bab, and Afrin.

9% (83 business owners) said the industrial sector is the most attractive for entrepreneurship. This sector is concentrated in Azaz, Al-Bab, Jabal Samaan, and Harim districts.

9% (83 business owners) reported that retail is the most attractive for entrepreneurship. This sector is concentrated in Ariha, Afrin, Jarablus, and Al-Bab districts.

Figure (30) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views of the most attractive sectors for entrepreneurship -by district



#### 4. Challenges Faced by Business Owners

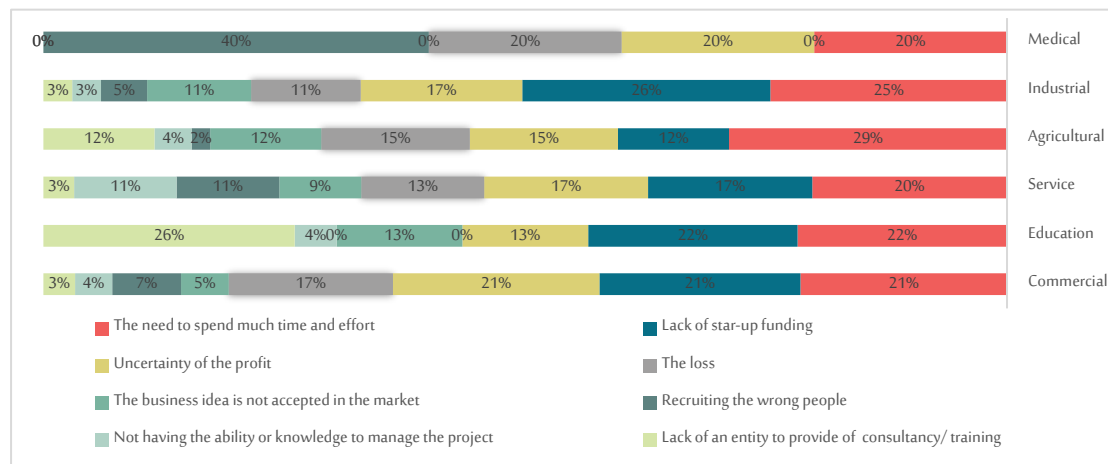
The researchers asked the business owners they interviewed about the challenges they faced when starting their businesses:

23% of the challenges are the need to spend much time and effort that was reported in all sectors.

21% of the challenges are the lack of funding to start private businesses concentrated in the industrial, educational, commercial, and service sectors.

18% of the challenges are profit uncertainty, reported in all sectors.

Figure (31) Percentages of challenges faced by business owners when starting their businesses by sector



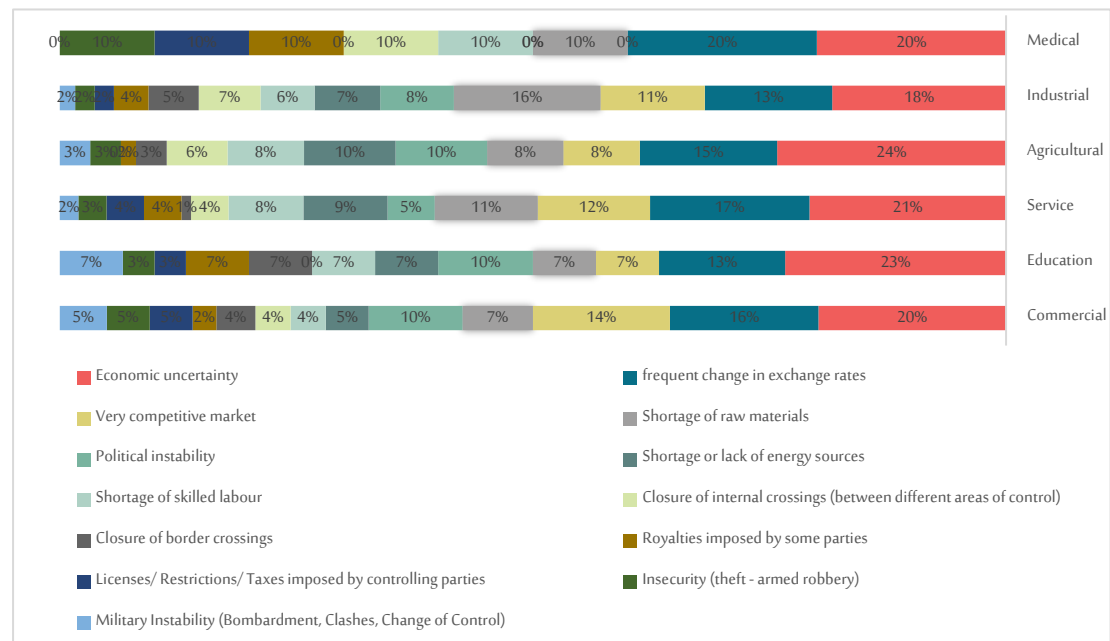
The enumerators asked the business owners they interviewed about the challenges their businesses are currently facing.

20% of the challenges is the economic instability and 15% frequent change in the exchange rates of the US dollar and the Turkish lira compared to the local currency, which was reported across all sectors.

12% of the challenges are due to the competitive market, reported significantly in the commercial, service, and industrial sectors.

11% of the challenges are represented in the shortage of raw materials, which was reported significantly in the industrial, agricultural, and service sectors.

Figure (32) Percentages of challenges business owners currently face by sector



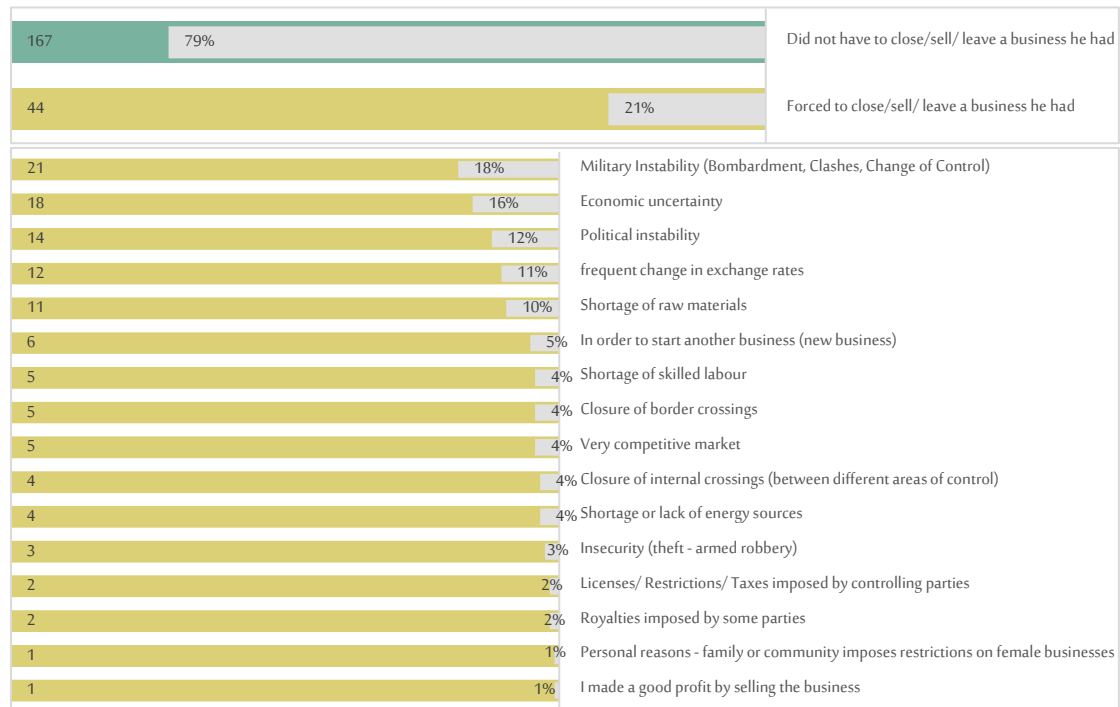
## 5. Challenges That Force Business Owners to Abandon Their Businesses

The researchers asked the business owners they interviewed if they had to close down businesses or if they had to sell or leave them. 21% (44 business owners) reported having to close or sell their own businesses.

Of these, 18% (21 business owners) stated that the military instability in the areas where the businesses are located (change of control, shelling, or proximity to the sites of clashes) was one of the reasons that forced them to close their businesses. 16% (18 business owners) abandoned their businesses due to economic instability. Likewise, 12% (14 business owners) abandoned their businesses due to political instability. And 11% (12 business owners) abandoned their businesses due to the constant change in the local currency exchange rates. Also, 10% (11 business owners) abandoned their businesses due to insufficient raw materials. On the other hand, 5% (6 business owners) abandoned their businesses to start new ones. And 4% (5 business owners) abandoned their businesses due to a lack of skilled labor. In addition, 4% (5 business owners) abandoned their businesses due to the closure of border crossings.



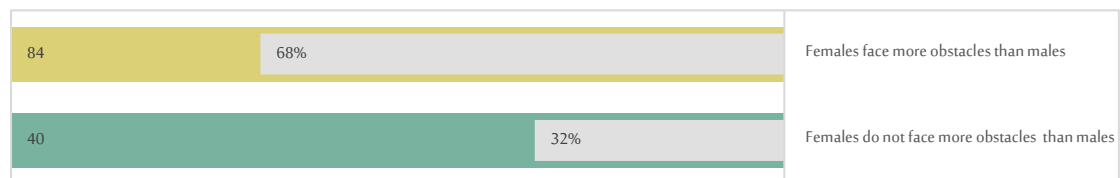
Figure (33) Percentages of challenges that force business owners to close their businesses



## 6. Constraints Faced by Women in the Field of Entrepreneurship

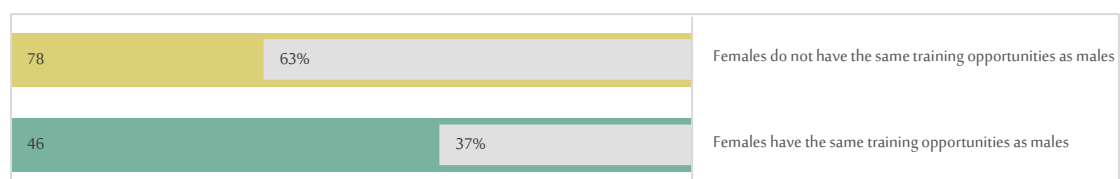
The enumerators asked the working women interviewed whether females faced restrictions associated with customs and traditions that limited their participation in entrepreneurial projects. 68% (84 working women) reported having this type of restriction.

Figure (34): Number/ percentages of female workers according to their suffering from the restrictions imposed by customs on female entrepreneurs



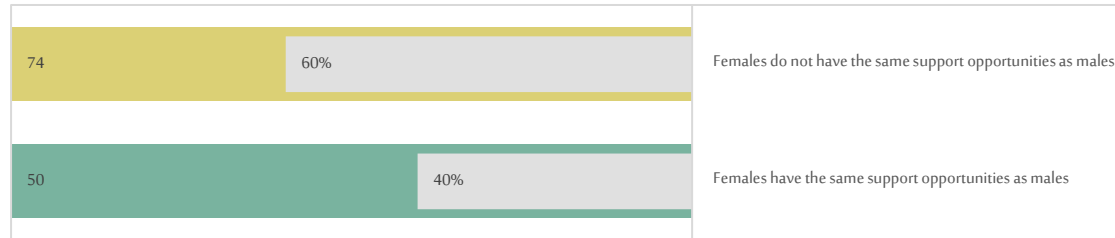
The enumerators asked working women interviewed whether females have the same training opportunities as males in entrepreneurship. 63% (78 working women) reported that they do not have the same training opportunities as males in the field of entrepreneurship.

Figure (35): Number/ Percentages of working women according to their suffering from the restrictions imposed by customs on female entrepreneurs



The enumerators asked working women whether females receive the same support as males in entrepreneurship. The study showed that 60% (74 working women) of working women reported they did not receive the same entrepreneurial support as males.

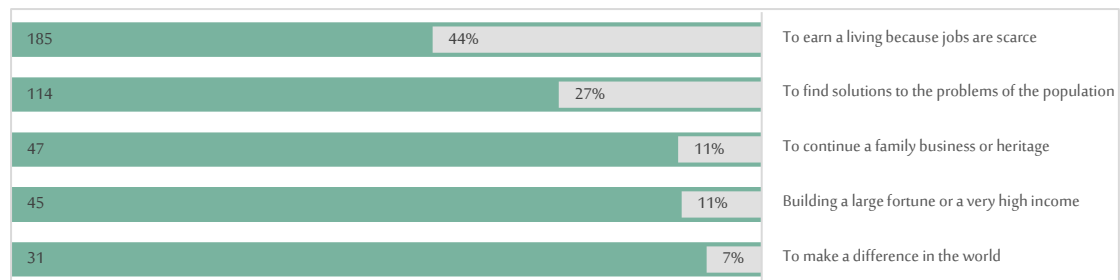
Figure (36): Number/ Percentages of working women according to their suffering from the restrictions imposed by customs on female entrepreneurs



## 7. Drives and Motives of Entrepreneurship

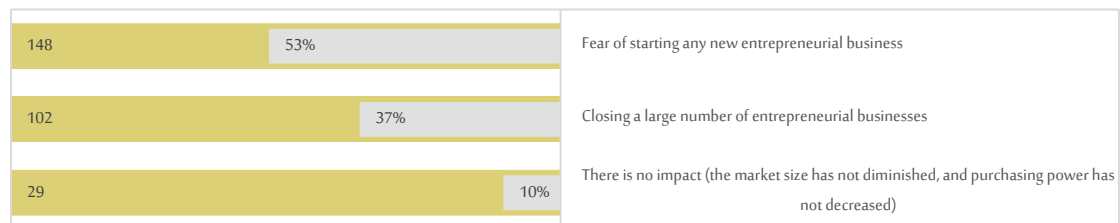
At the forefront of the reasons that motivate entrepreneurs to start their entrepreneurial activity was to make a living because jobs are scarce, with 44% (185 business owners) of business owners reporting that they started their own businesses because jobs are scarce. On the other hand, 27% (114 business owners) started their entrepreneurial businesses to find solutions to problems experienced by the population. Likewise, 11% (47 business owners) started their entrepreneurial businesses to continue a family business or legacy. And 11% (45 business owners) started their entrepreneurial businesses to build significant wealth or high income. However, 7% (31 business owners) started their entrepreneurial businesses to make a difference in the world.

Figure (37) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views on the drives and motives of entrepreneurship



53% (148 business owners) believe that the decline in the market size and citizens' purchasing power was the reason for fear of starting any new entrepreneurial business. In contrast, 37% (102 entrepreneurs) believe that the decline in market size and purchasing power was the reason for the closure of a number of entrepreneurial businesses.

Figure (38) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views on the impact of the decline in market size and purchasing power on businesses

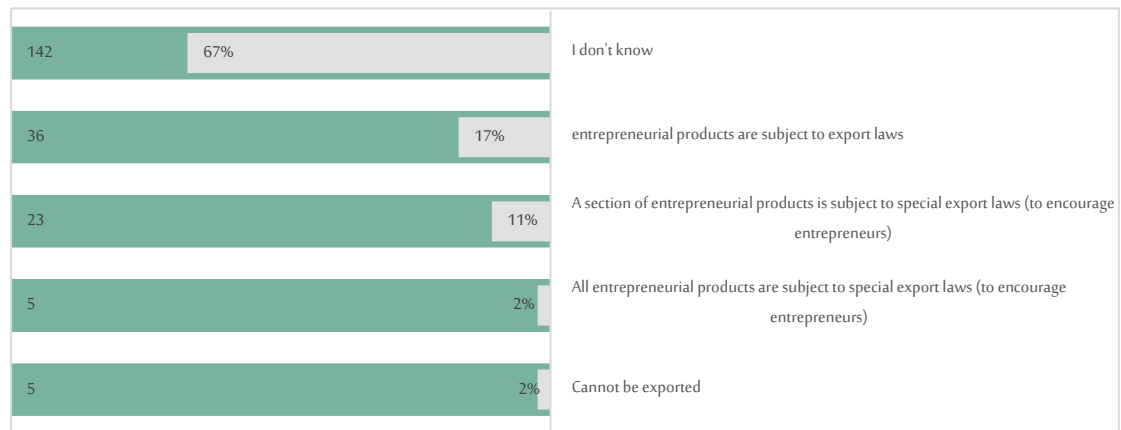


## 8. Marketing the Products of the Entrepreneurial Projects in the Neighboring Countries:

It was found through the views that 67% (142 business owners) of entrepreneurs do not know whether the products of their businesses or any other entrepreneurial businesses can be marketed in neighboring countries. This indicates the urgent need to investigate whether decision-makers have drafted any laws that make it easier for entrepreneurs to export their products. It also suggests the need to educate entrepreneurs about these laws if available or advocate for drafting them if they are not.

Nevertheless, 17% (36 business owners) believe that entrepreneurial products are subject to export laws and treated like other products. 11% (23 business owners) believe that only a portion of entrepreneurial products is subject to special export laws to encourage entrepreneurs.

Figure (39) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views on the impact of the decline in market size and purchasing power on businesses.



Seventh

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# Infrastructure for Entrepreneurial Businesses

# 07

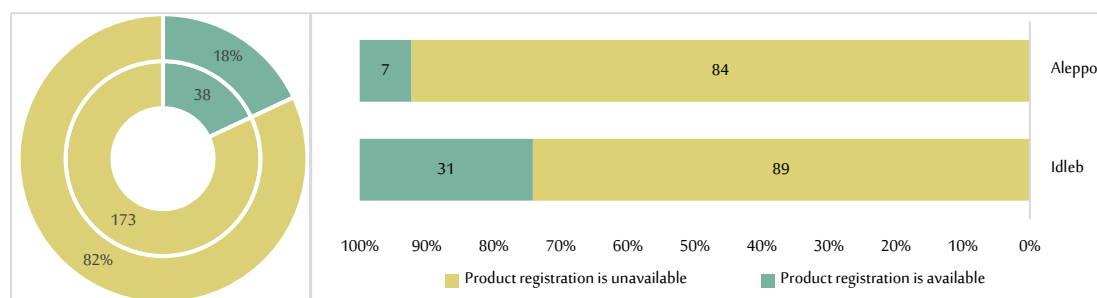
## Seventh: Infrastructure for Entrepreneurial Businesses

### 1. Registering Entrepreneurship Products to Protect Them

18% (38 business owners) reported that registering entrepreneurial products to protect them from counterfeits is available, while 82% (173 business owners) reported that this service is unavailable. It is noted that the number of business owners who reported the availability of product registration services in Idleb governorate is greater than in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

Concerning product registration costs, 21% (8 business owners) of business owners who reported the availability of product registration services to protect it believe that the cost of this service is high. In comparison, 79% (30 business owners) believe companies can afford this cost.

Figure (40) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their opinions on the availability of product registration service

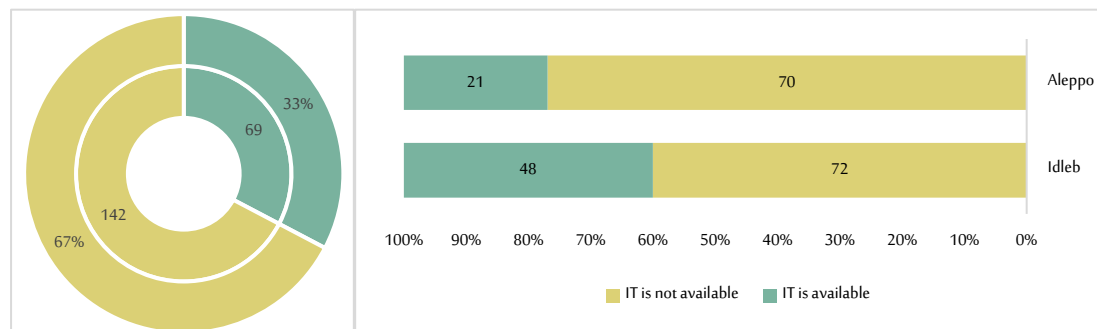


### 2. Entrepreneurship and Information Technology

33% (69 business owners) reported that the IT services the entrepreneurial businesses need are available, while 67% (142 business owners) reported that these services are not. It is noted that the number of business owners who reported the availability of information technology services in Idleb governorate is greater than in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

As for the costs of the IT service, 13% (9 business owners) who reported the availability of the IT service believe that the cost of this service is high. In comparison, 87% (60 business owners) believe companies can afford this cost.

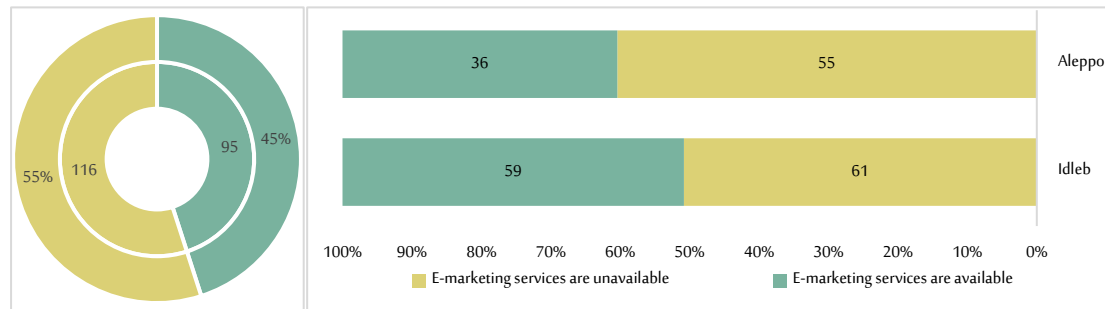
Figure (41) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views on the availability of IT services



45% (95 business owners) of business owners reported that E-marketing services are available, while 55% (116 business owners) reported they are not. It is noted that the number of entrepreneurs who reported the availability of Internet marketing services in Idleb governorate is greater than in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

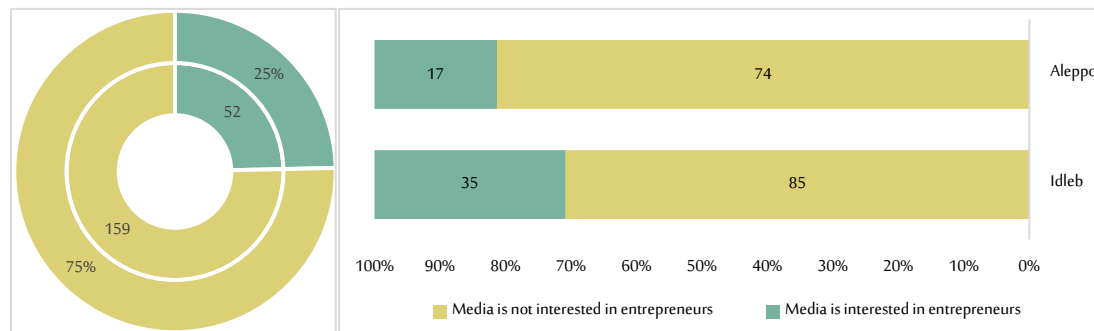
As for the costs of the E-marketing service, 14% (28 business owners) of business owners who reported the availability of the E-marketing service believe that the cost of this service is high. In contrast, 86% (173 E-marketing) believe companies can afford this cost.

Figure (42) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views on the availability of E-marketing services



25% (52 business owners) of business owners reported that there is media interest in entrepreneurship, while 75% (159 business owners) reported there is not. It is noted that the number of entrepreneurs who reported the availability of interest in entrepreneurship in Idleb governorate is greater than in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

Figure (43) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views on the availability of media interest in entrepreneurs

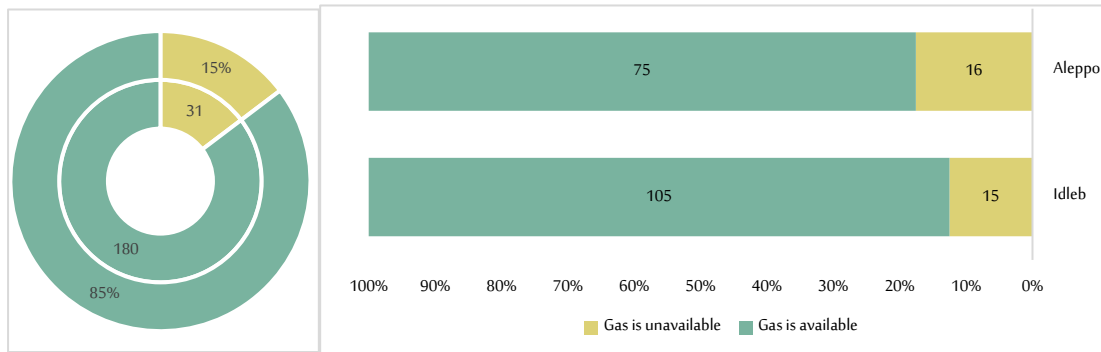


### 3. Entrepreneurship and Energy Sources

85% (105 business owners) of the business owners reported that gas is available in their areas, while 15% (31 business owners) reported it is not.

Regarding gas costs, 38% (68 business owners) of the business owners who reported gas availability believe its cost is high. In comparison, 62% (112 business owners) believe companies can afford this cost.

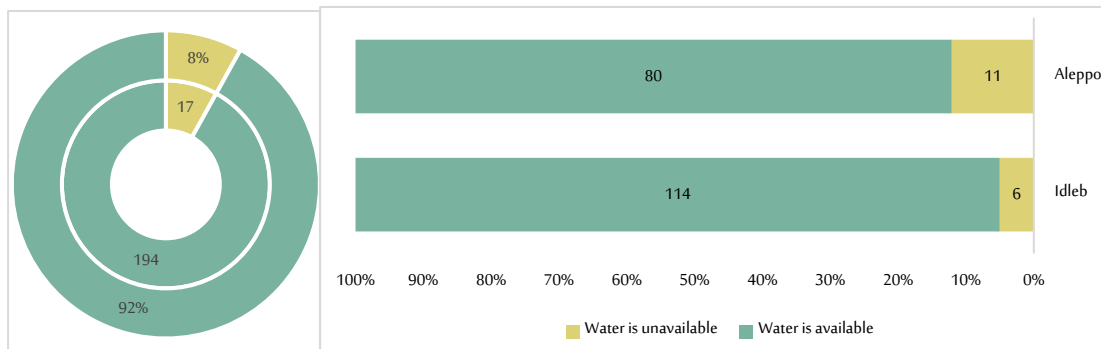
Figure (44) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their opinions on the availability of gas



92% (194 business owners) of business owners reported that water is available in their areas, while 8% (17 business owners) reported that it is not.

With regard to the costs of water, 15% (29 business owners) of the business owners who reported the availability of water believe that its cost is high. In comparison, 85% (165 business owners) believe companies can afford this cost.

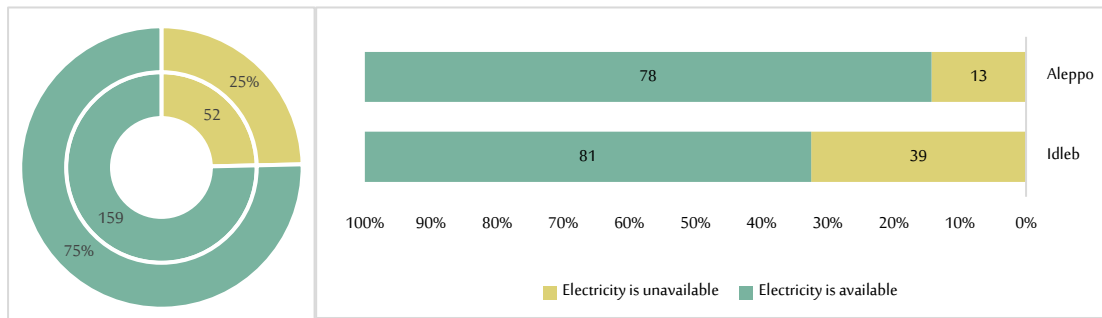
Figure (45) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their views on availability of water



75% (159 business owners) of the business owners reported that electricity is available in their areas, while 25% (52 business owners) reported that it is not. It is noted that the number of business owners who reported the availability of electricity in their areas within the northern countryside of Aleppo is greater than in Idleb province.

With regard to the costs of electricity, 44% (70 business owners) of the business owners who reported the availability of electricity believe that its cost is high. In comparison, 56% (89 business owners) believe companies can afford this cost.

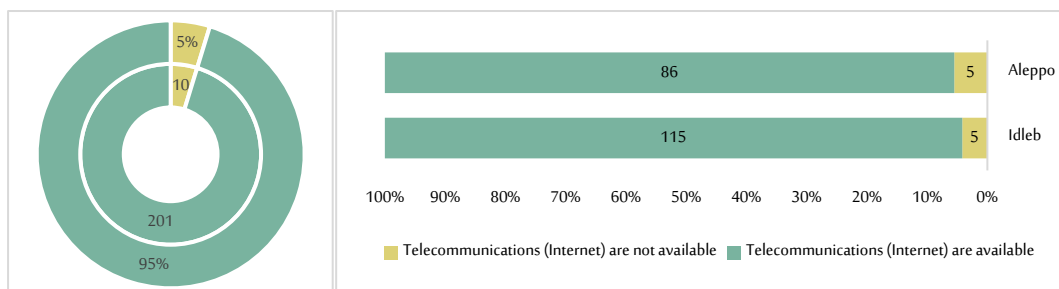
Figure (46) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their opinions on the availability of electricity



95% (201 business owners) of the business owners reported that telecommunications networks (Internet) are available in their regions, while 5% (10 business owners) reported that they are not.

With regard to the costs of the telecommunications service (Internet), 14% (28 business owners) of the business owners who reported the availability of the telecommunications service believe that the cost of this service is high, while 86% (173 business owners) believe that companies can afford this cost.

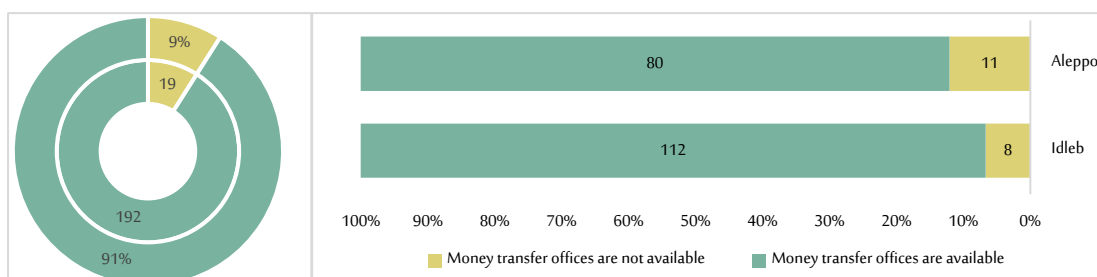
Figure (47) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their opinions on the availability of telecommunication services



#### 4. Entrepreneurship and Financial Services

91% (192 business owners) reported that exchange and remittance offices are available in their regions, while 9% (19 business owners) reported that they are not.

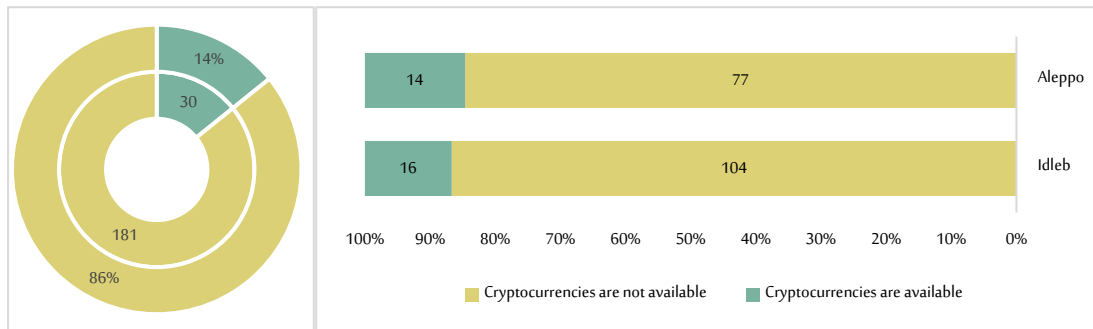
Figure (48) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their opinions on the availability of money transfer offices





14% (30 business owners) of business owners reported that cryptocurrency is available in their regions, while 86% (181 business owners) said that it is not.

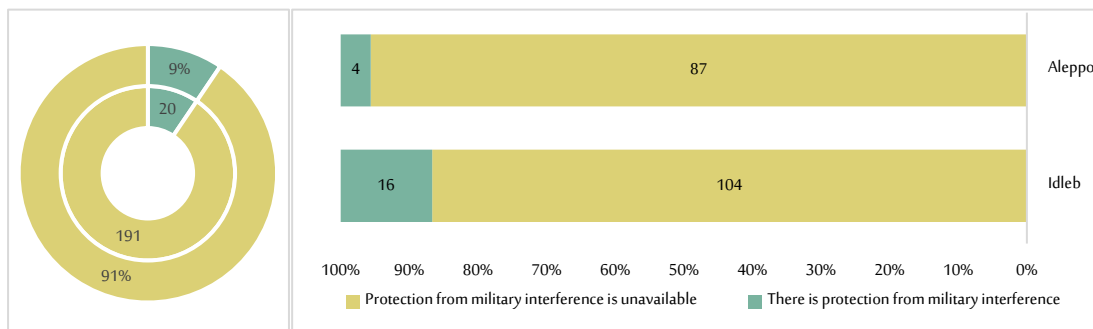
Figure (49) Number/Percentage of business owners according to their opinions on the availability of cryptocurrency



## 5. Entrepreneurship and the Interference of the Controlling Parties

91% (191 business owners) of business owners reported that there is no protection from interference by the controlling parties in their businesses within their areas. In comparison, only 9% (20 business owners) reported protection from interference by the controlling parties in their businesses.

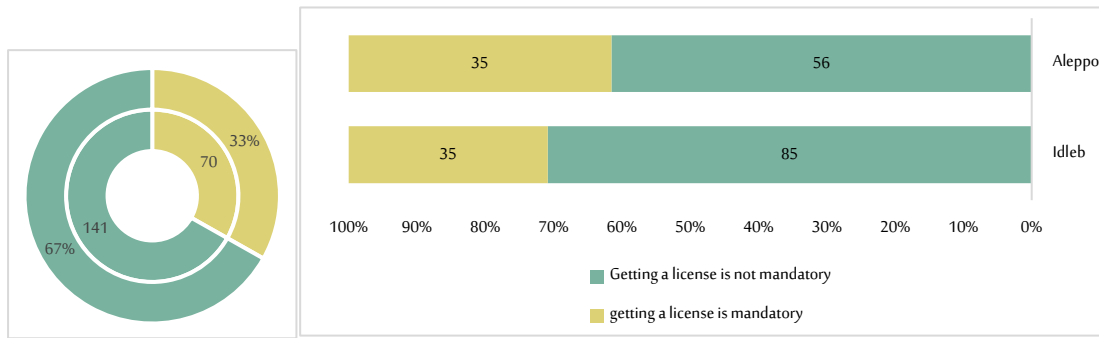
Figure (50) Number/percentage of business owners according to their opinions of the controlling parties' interference in their work



33% (70 business owners) reported licensing for their businesses is mandatory, while 87% (141 business owners) reported that licensing is not mandatory.

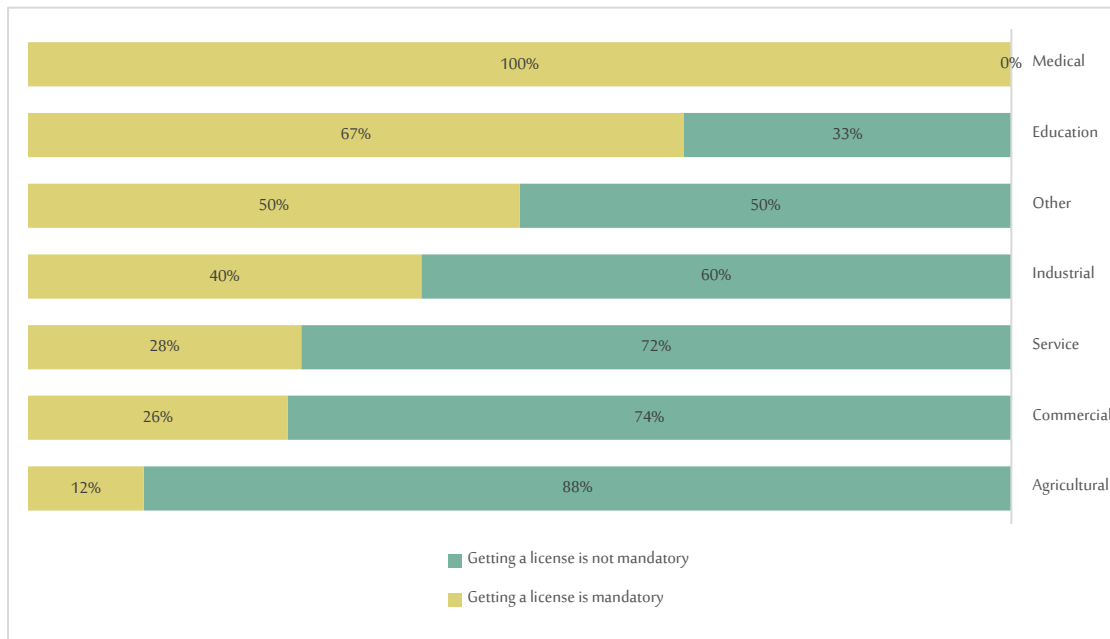
Regarding the costs of legal licenses for businesses, 11% (8 business owners) who reported mandatory legal licenses for their businesses believe the cost is high. In comparison, 89% (62 business owners) believe their businesses can bear this cost.

Figure (51) Number/percentage of business owners according to their views of mandatory licensing for their projects



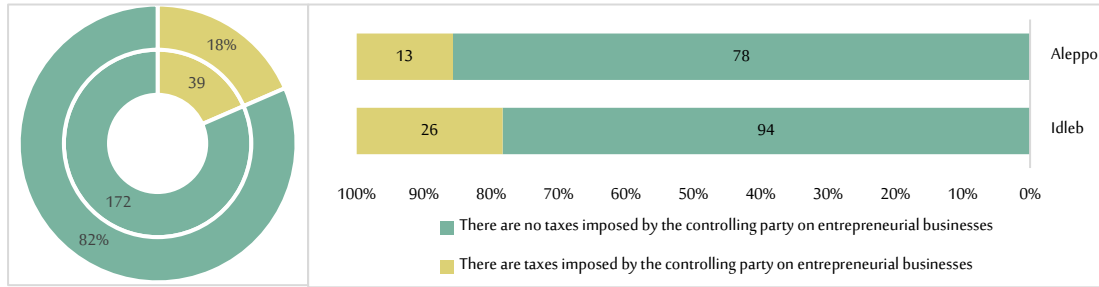
The results show that all medical businesses require mandatory licensing. In addition, 67% of educational businesses, 40% of industrial businesses, 28% of service businesses, 26% of commercial businesses, and only 12% of agricultural businesses require mandatory licensing. In contrast, the bulk of agricultural businesses does not require that.

Figure (52) Number/percentage of business owners according to their opinions on mandatory licensing of their businesses by sector



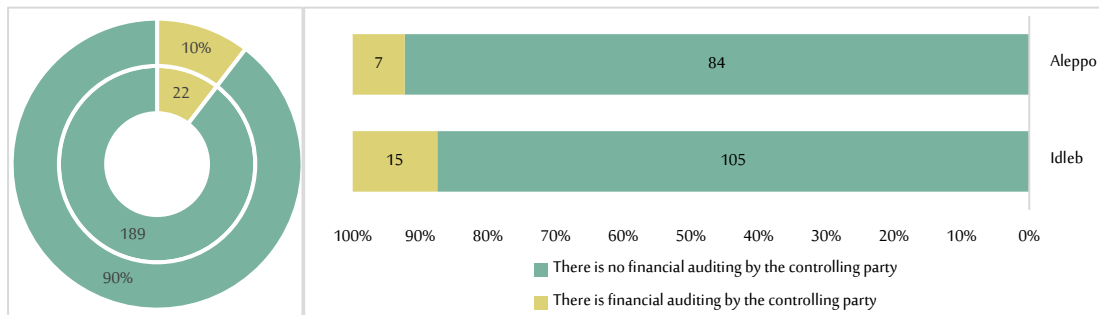
18% (39 business owners) reported taxes imposed by the authorities controlling entrepreneurial businesses. On the other hand, 82% (172 business owners) reported no taxes on entrepreneurial businesses. Regarding the period in which taxes are collected, 23% (9 business owners) reported that taxes are collected on a monthly basis, while 77% (30 business owners) reported that taxes are collected annually.

Figure (53) Number/percentage of business owners according to their views on the imposed taxes on their projects by the controlling entities



Also, 10% (22 business owners) reported a financial inspection by the authorities controlling their projects, while 90% (189 business owners) reported the absence of a financial inspection.

Figure (54) Number/percentage of business owners according to their report of financial inspection by the authorities controlling their projects



Eighth

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# Entrepreneurial Education

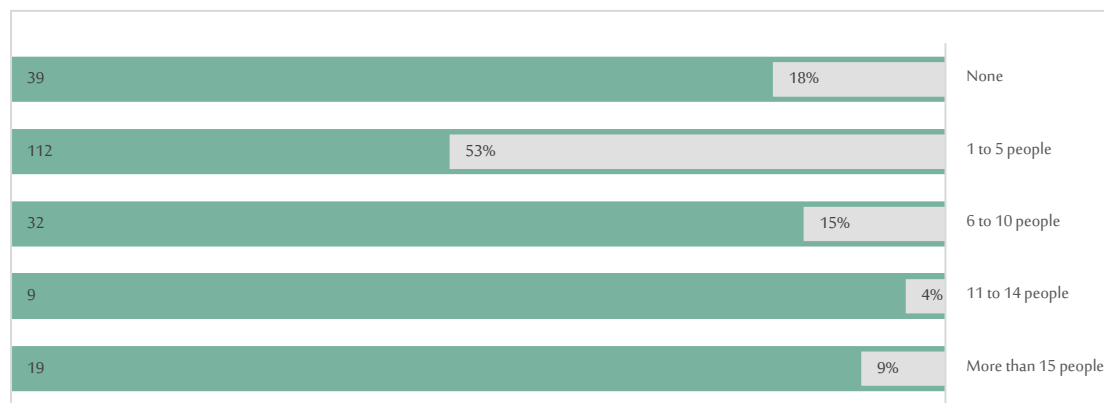


## Eighth: Entrepreneurial Education

### 1. Starting Private Businesses & Their Sustainability

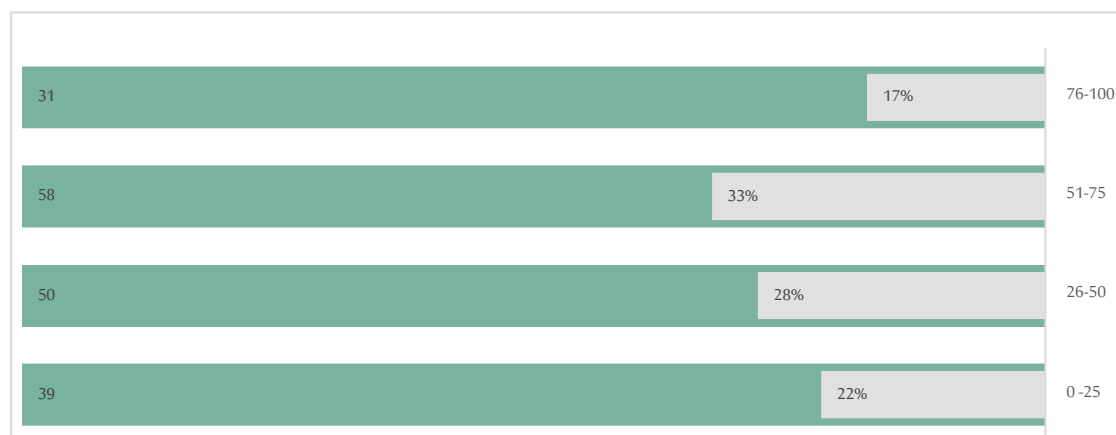
The enumerators asked the business owners the number of people in their surroundings who had started their own businesses within the past three years. 18% (39 business owners) said they did not know anyone who started a private business during this period. On the other hand, 53% (112 business owners) reported that they knew 1 to 5 people who started their own businesses. Also, 15% (32 business owners) knew 6 to 10 people who started their own businesses. Likewise, 4% (9 business owners) said they knew 11 to 14 people who started their own businesses. 9% (19 business owners) reported that they knew more than 15 people who started their own businesses.

Figure (55) Number/percentage of business owners according to the number of people in their surroundings who started private businesses



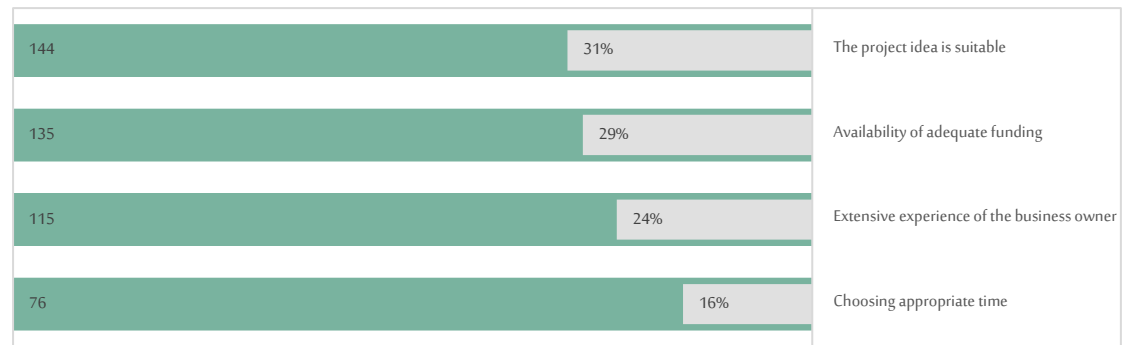
Nonetheless, 22% (39 business owners) believe that less than 25% of people who started their own businesses succeeded. And 28% (50 business owners) believe that 26-50% of people who started their businesses succeeded. In addition, 33% (58 business owners) believe that 51-75% of people who started their own businesses succeeded. Also, 17% (31 business owners) believe that more than 76% of people who started their own businesses succeeded.

Figure (56) Number/percentage of business owners according to the percentage of people in their surroundings who started their own businesses and succeeded



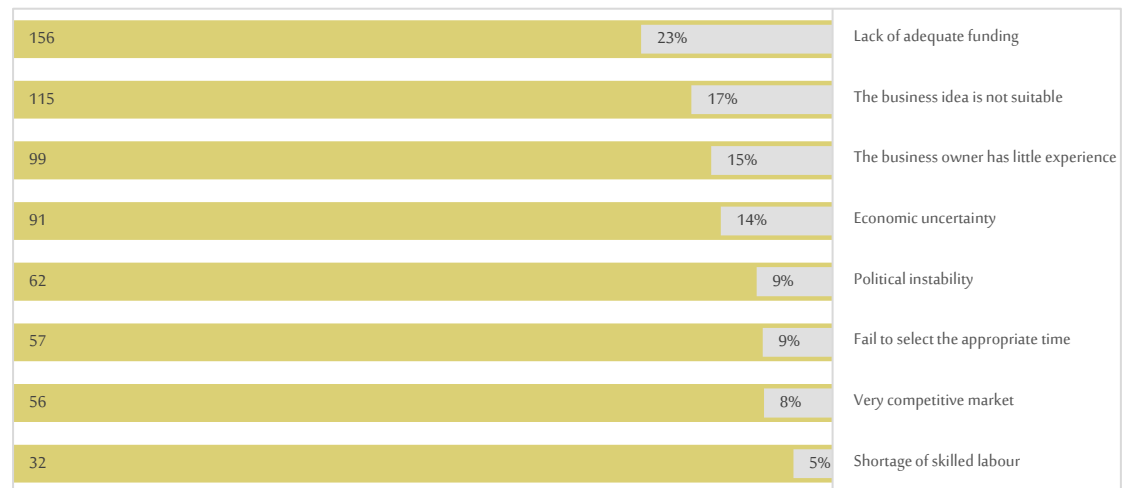
The enumerators asked the business owners who knew people in their surroundings who had started private businesses within the past three years and were successful about the reasons for success from their point of view. 31% (144 business owners) believe that the reason for the success of private businesses is the right business idea. On the other hand, 29% (135 business owners) believe that the reason is the availability of sufficient funding for the business. 24% (115 business owners) believe that the reason is the high experience of the business owners. On the contrary, 16% (79 business owners) believe that choosing the right time for the business is the reason.

Figure (57) Number/percentage of business owners according to the reasons for the success of people who started private businesses



The enumerators asked the business owners who knew people in their surroundings who had started private businesses within the past three years and were unsuccessful about the reasons for failure from their point of view. 23% (156 business owners) believe that the reason behind the failure of private businesses is the lack of sufficient funding. And 17% (115 business owners) believe that the reason is that the business idea is inappropriate. Likewise, 15% (99 business owners) believe that the reason is that the business owner has little experience. Also, 14% (91 business owners) believe economic instability is the reason. In contrast, 9% (62 business owners) believe the reason is political instability.

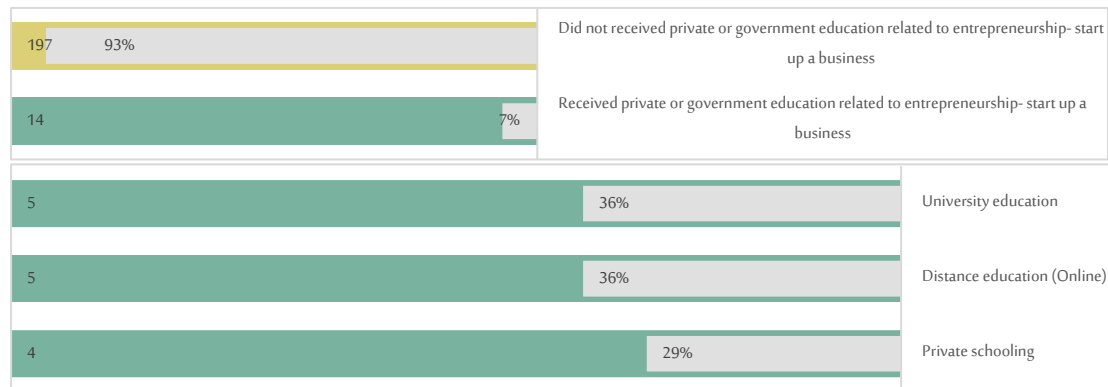
Figure (58) Number/percentage of business owners according to the reasons for the failure of people who started private businesses



## 2. Entrepreneurial Education and Training

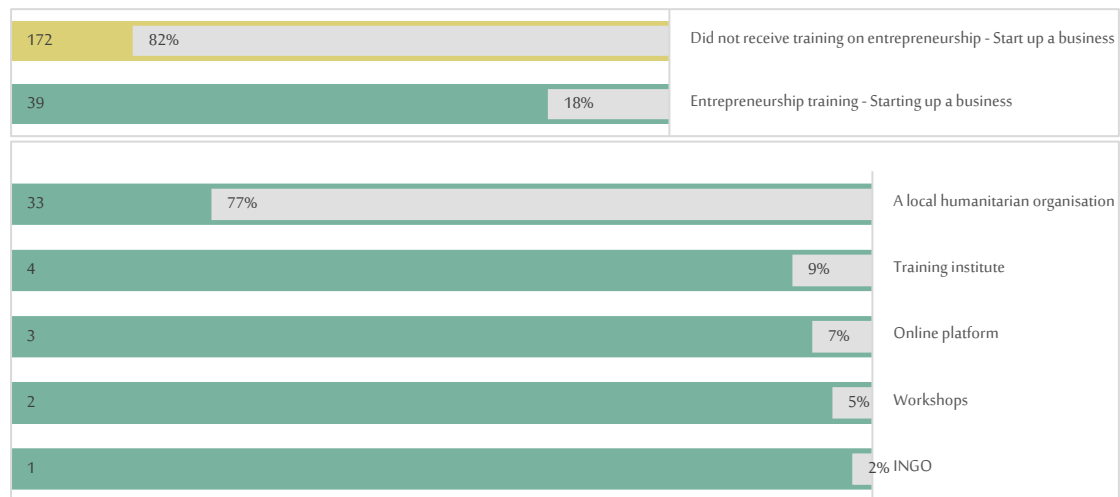
The enumerators asked business owners whether they had received a government education related to entrepreneurship or setting up a private business. Only 7% (14 business owners) reported receiving a government education related to entrepreneurship, including five people who received an entrepreneurial education during their university studies. In addition, five people received entrepreneurial education through distance learning. Also, four people received entrepreneurial education in private schools.

Figure (59) Number/percentage of business owners who received a government education related to entrepreneurship



The enumerators asked the business owners whether they had received training related to entrepreneurship or starting their own businesses. Only 18% (39 business owners) reported receiving entrepreneurship-related training. Of these, 33 received entrepreneurial training at a local humanitarian organization. In addition, four people received entrepreneurial training through a training institute. And three people received entrepreneurial training through an electronic platform. Three people received entrepreneurial training through workshops. Likewise, only one person received entrepreneurial training in an international humanitarian organization.

Figure (60) Number/percentage of business owners who received a non-government education related to entrepreneurship





Ninth

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# Community Awareness of Entrepreneurial Businesses

09

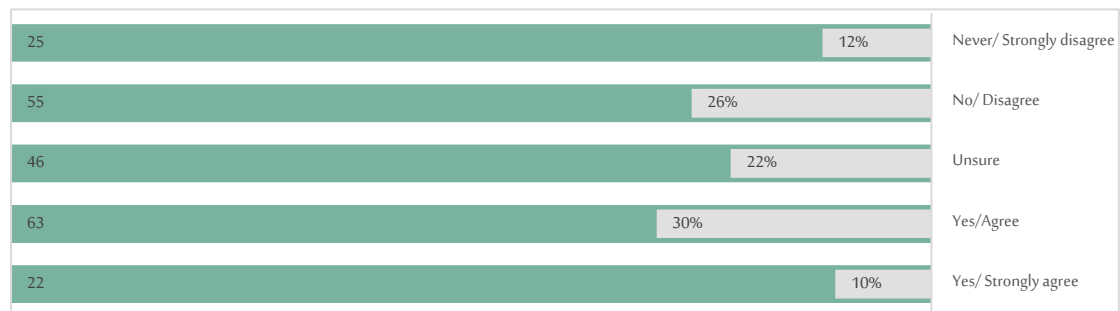


## Ninth: Community Awareness of Entrepreneurial Businesses

### 1. Knowledge of the Concept of Entrepreneurship

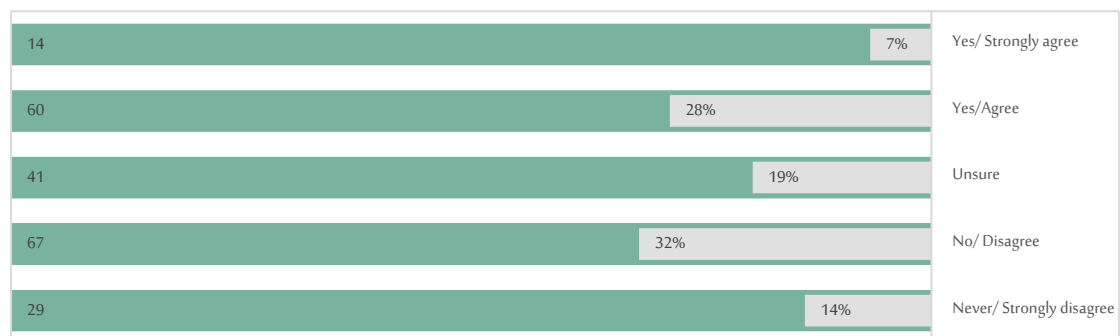
Enumerators asked entrepreneurs how familiar they were with the concept of entrepreneurship and innovation. Only 10% (22 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 30% (63 business owners) confirmed that they are familiar with the concept of entrepreneurship. 22% (46 business owners) were unsure whether they had heard of entrepreneurship. While 26% (55 business owners) confirmed and 12% (25 business owners) strongly confirmed that they do not know the concept of entrepreneurship.

Figure (61) Number/percentage of business owners according to their knowledge of the concept of entrepreneurship



Enumerators asked the business owners about their knowledge of various terms associated with entrepreneurship and innovation, such as entrepreneurial ideas, entrepreneurial opportunities, business models, design thinking, start-ups, venture capital, crowdfunding, social entrepreneurship, social innovation, and the entrepreneurial university. 7% (14 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 28% (60 business owners) confirmed familiarity with these terms. 19% (41 business owners) were sure whether they had heard of these terms. However, 32% (67 business owners) confirmed, and 29% (29 business owners) strongly confirmed that they did not know these terms.

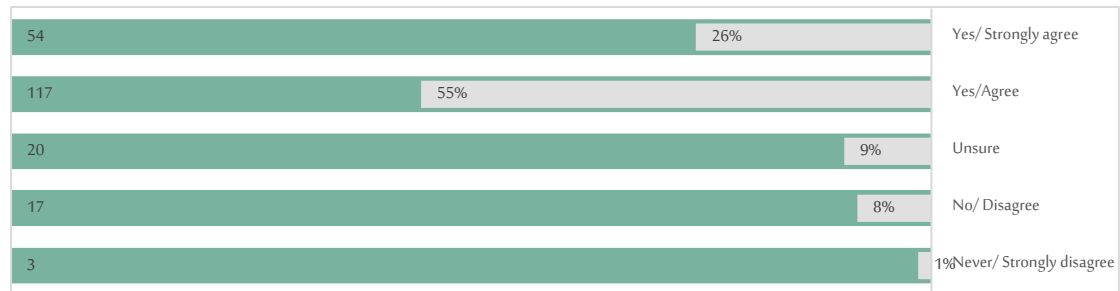
Figure (62) Number/percentage of business owners according to their knowledge of entrepreneurship terms



## 2. Youth Awareness of Entrepreneurship Culture

Enumerators asked the business owners for their views on youth awareness of the entrepreneurial culture. 26% (54 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 55% (117 business owners) confirmed that young people have little awareness of the culture of entrepreneurship. On the other hand, 9% (20 business owners) were unsure about the youth's awareness of entrepreneurship culture. Also, 8% (17 business owners) confirmed, and 3% (3 business owners) strongly confirmed that they disagree that young people have little awareness of entrepreneurial culture.

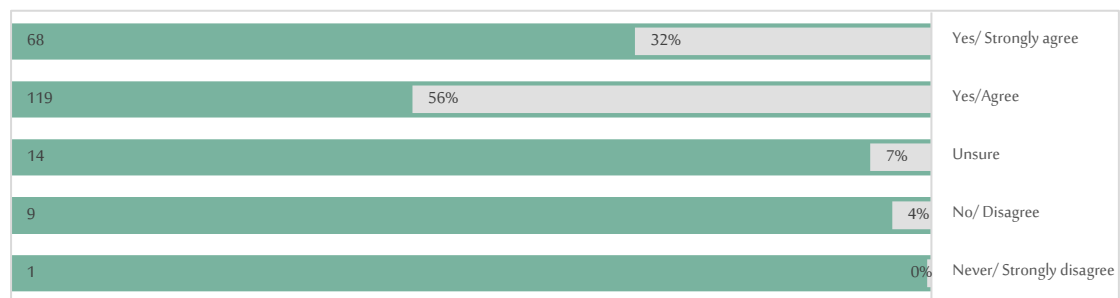
Figure (63) Number/percentage of business owners according to their opinion that the awareness of young people is little in the entrepreneurial culture



## 3. Availability of Entrepreneurship Training Programs for the Youth

The enumerators asked the business owners for their views on the availability of training programs for young people on entrepreneurship. 32% (68 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 56% (119 business owners) confirmed the lack of training programs for youth on entrepreneurship. 7% (14 business owners) were unsure. In contrast, only 4% (9 business owners) confirmed that they disagree with the scarcity of the training programs for young people on entrepreneurship.

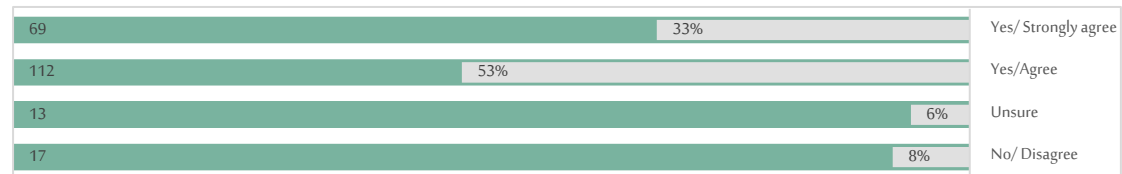
Figure (64) Number/percentage of business owners according to their views on the scarcity of training programs for youth on entrepreneurship



#### 4. Low Community Awareness Of Entrepreneurship Importance

The enumerators asked the business owners about their views on the low community awareness of entrepreneurship importance. 33% (69 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 53% (112 business owners) confirmed the lack of community awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship. On the other hand, 6% (13 business owners) were unsure. Only 8% (17 business owners) said they disagreed with the lack of community awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship.

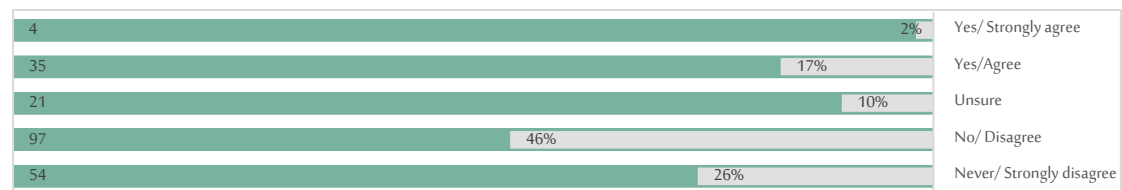
Figure (65) Number/percentage of business owners according to their views on the low community awareness of the entrepreneurship importance



#### 5. Participation in Entrepreneurship Awareness Workshops and Programs

The enumerators asked the business owners about their participation in awareness workshops and programs on entrepreneurship and innovation. 26% (54 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 46% (97 business owners) confirmed they did not participate. In addition, 10% (21 business owners) were unsure. Only 17% (35 business owners) confirmed participating in awareness workshops and programs on entrepreneurship and innovation.

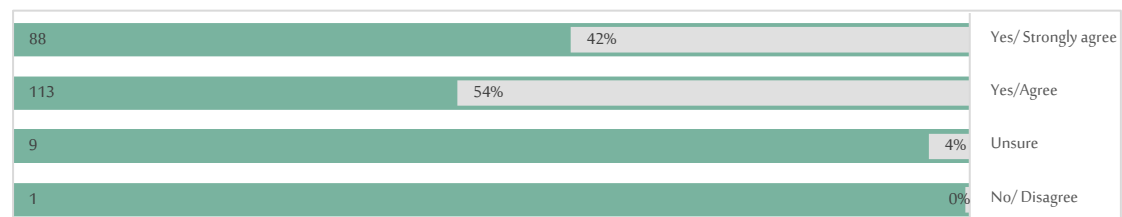
Figure (66) Number/percentage of business owners according to their participation in entrepreneurship awareness workshops and programs



#### 6. The Desire for Self-Development in the Field of Entrepreneurship

The enumerators asked the business owners how much they wanted to develop themselves in the field of entrepreneurship. 42% (88 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 54% (113 business owners) confirmed their desire to develop themselves in the field of entrepreneurship. On the other hand, 4% (9 business owners) were unsure. Only one business owner confirmed that he did not want to develop himself in the field of entrepreneurship.

Figure (67) Number/percentage of business owners according to their desire to develop themselves in the field of entrepreneurship



Tenth

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# Entrepreneurial Incubators

10

## Tenth: Entrepreneurial Incubators

### 1. Knowledge of the Concept of Entrepreneurial Incubators

Enumerators asked entrepreneurs how familiar they were with the term entrepreneurial incubators. Only 6% (13 business owners) reported that they had heard of the term entrepreneurial incubators, while 94% (198 business owners) confirmed that they had never heard of it. When the respondents were asked about the entrepreneurial incubators they heard about, the answers included Orange Organization, Takaful Al Sham Humanitarian Organization, Islamic Relief Organization, Jusoor, Bonyan Humanitarian Organization, Tastakel and Saudi Badir Program for Technology Incubators.

Note that the entities mentioned above are humanitarian organizations that provide their support through the projects they implement in northwestern Syria (except for the Saudi <sup>4</sup>Badir Program website). These organizations are not business incubators that target their services to entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial projects, indicating a lack of awareness of the term business incubators.

Figure (68) Number/percentage of business owners according to their knowledge of the concept of entrepreneurial incubators



Business incubators are basically organizations that increase the survival rates of innovative, creative start-ups and support entrepreneurship. They are also considered the mainstays of economic development programs. Incubators used to focus mainly on the IT sector but currently work with companies from various fields and trends.

The report adopted the definition of business incubators as institutions that help start-ups establish and launch through various services such as consultations, building expertise, technical support, providing workspaces, public relations, funding, and others. Business incubators may belong to governmental or private institutions, for-profit or non-profit. The idea behind business incubators is to offer a range of business development services, meeting the needs of new businesses. Therefore, the package of services provided by the incubator is designed to enhance the success and growth rate of new businesses. Thus, it will contribute to maximizing their impact on economic development. In general, incubators carry out various activities to provide consultation, advice, services, and financial, administrative, and technical help to small businesses and industries. This help is provided in the early stages of starting the business, during its implementation, or through the stages of growth that different businesses go through.

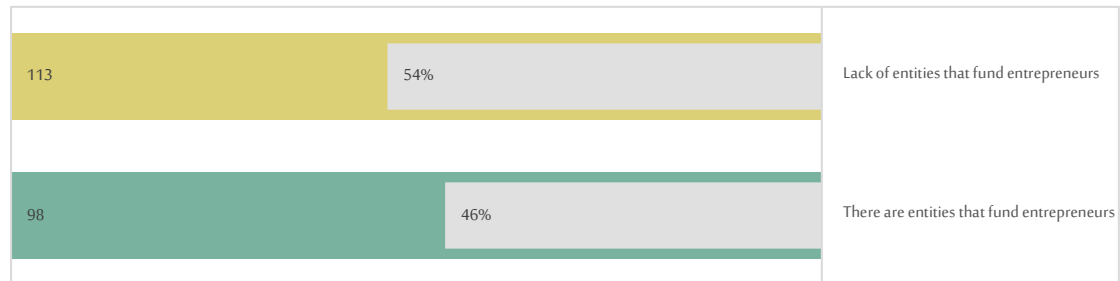
A new concept has recently emerged in the field of business incubators, which is the virtual incubator. Virtual incubators provide most of those services through the Internet without needing physical presence. This will reduce costs and allow more entrepreneurs to join worldwide.

<sup>4</sup> <https://biac.com.sa/?lang=en>

## 2. Private Project Funders

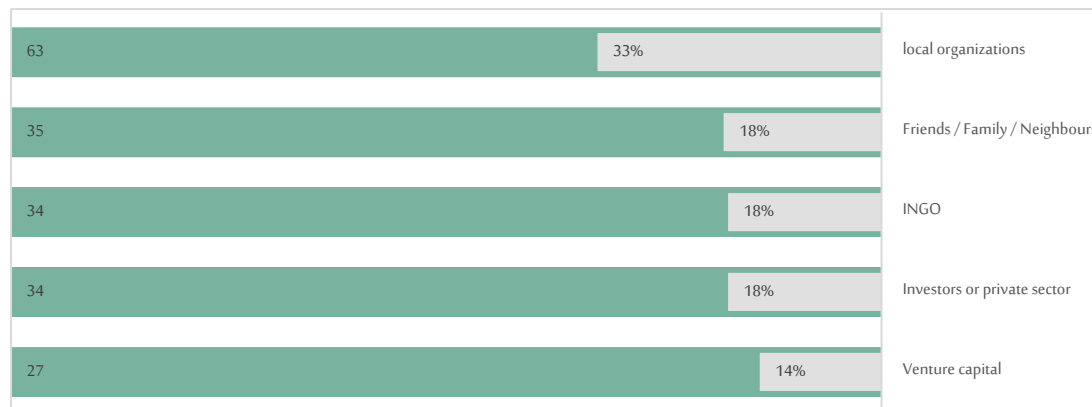
46% (98 business owners) confirmed that there are entities that finance private business owners, while 54% (113 business owners) reported that no entity funds private businesses.

Figure (69) Number/percentage of business owners according to their views on the presence of entities that finance business owners



The enumerators asked the business owners who reported the presence of private business funders about the types of these entities. 33% (63 business owners) reported that local organizations finance private business owners. This finding shows that the lack of investment has prompted people with ideas and entrepreneurs to turn to humanitarian organizations to get support for their projects. 18% (35 business owners) reported that friends, family, and neighbors are the ones financing private business owners. On the other hand, 18% (34 business owners) reported that international organizations finance private business owners. Likewise, 18% (34 business owners) reported that investors or the private sector are financing private business owners. And 14% (27 business owners) reported that venture capital funds private businesses.

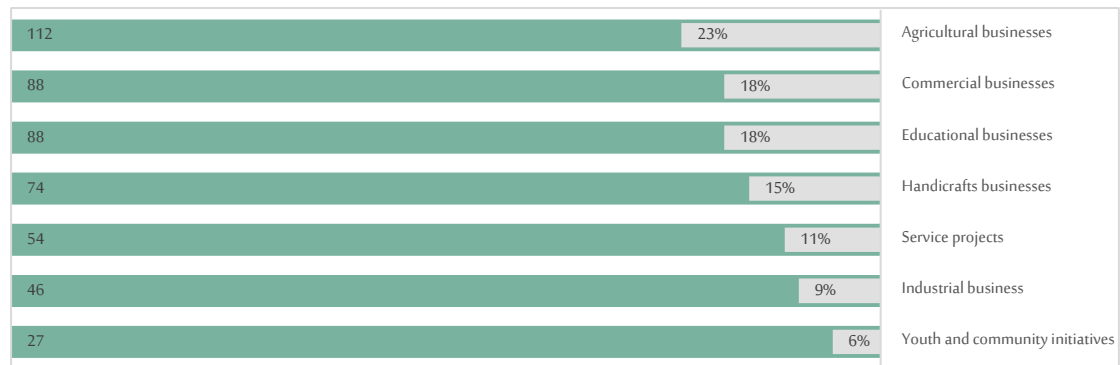
Figure (70) Number/percentage of business owners according to their views on entities that finance business owners



### 3. Funded Private Businesses

23% (112 business owners) interviewed by the enumerators confirmed that the agricultural business sector is at the forefront of the sectors that receive support. Also, 18% (88 business owners) reported that commercial businesses receive support in their regions. On the other hand, 18% (88 business owners) said that educational businesses receive support in their regions. 15% (74 business owners) reported that handicraft businesses receive support in their areas. Also, 11% (54 business owners) reported that service projects receive support in their regions. Likewise, 9% (46 business owners) reported that industrial businesses receive support in their areas. However, only 6% (27 business owners) reported that youth and community initiatives receive support in their regions.

Figure (71) Number/percentage of business owners according to their opinions on the types of businesses that are funded



Eleventh

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# The Most Important Results





## Eleventh: The Most Important Results

- The number of workers interviewed was 659, of which 19% were females (124 workers). These individuals were selected according to specific criteria. They represent the largest segment of the working class in the community, taking into account different professions, educational levels, and age groups. The study showed that 3% (7 business owners with disabilities) of the interviewed business owners had a physical disability. The study showed that 3% (21 workers with disabilities) of the interviewed workers with disabilities had a physical disability.
- The study showed that entrepreneurial projects are not linked to employers' educational level, which means there is no correlation between the degree and the ability of workers and employers to start their own projects. 11% (24 interviewed business owners) completed their education in intermediate institutions, 9% (18 business owners) completed their university education, and 1% (2 business owners) completed postgraduate studies (diploma, master, or doctorate).
- The study showed that at the forefront of private businesses that the owners believe are entrepreneurial are the commercial businesses which accounted for 34% (72 business owners) of the interviewed businesses. In addition to 31% (65 business owners) of industrial businesses, 17% (36 business owners) of service businesses, 8% (17 business owners) of agricultural businesses, 4% (9 business owners) of educational businesses, and 1% (2 business owners) medical businesses, their owners think they are entrepreneurial businesses.
- As for why entrepreneurs started their businesses, 16% began their businesses to be their own managers, 16% because the profits from private businesses are higher, 14% for the freedom to choose what to do, and 12% for self-assertion. Regarding evaluating business phases, 33% believe their businesses are well-established and perform well. 20% see their businesses are in growth. 18% have established their businesses, but their performance is still not good. And 12% believe they are still in the start-up stage and cannot evaluate their businesses. 8% see they are in the fund search stage.
- Regarding the excellence factors of entrepreneurial businesses, 32% of business owners believe that what distinguishes their businesses is that they save money, while 21% offer new products or services. In addition, 20% think that their businesses save time for the consumer. Also, 15% take into account more diversity in their businesses, and 12% use technologies that facilitate access to services.
- Regarding the desire to expand their businesses and the required workforce, 71% of business owners want to **expand** their businesses and hire new people, of which 49% need skilled workers, 30% need ordinary workers without any work experience, 12% need accountants, and 8% need administrators.
- Regarding the sustainability of their businesses, 87% of business owners consider them sustainable, while only 13% consider them unsustainable.
- 22% of the reasons for the instability of the businesses are lack of energy sources, 22% shortage of raw materials, 13% military instability (shelling, clashes, and change of control), 11% closure of internal crossings (between different control forces), 9% tributes imposed by some entities, 7% shortage of skilled labor, 7% closure of border crossings, 4% licenses and restrictions set by the controlling party, and 4% insecurity (theft and armed robbery).
- The conditions of war, displacement, and the lack of sources of income imposed new areas to which the population turned to secure sources of income. The ongoing war, the lack of services and materials, and the difficult economic conditions inspired young people to innovate ideas for new projects that face these challenges. What distinguishes these projects is that they rely on simple capital and the raw materials available in local markets. Among the most important of these projects are the following:
  1. **Remote Work Opportunities**
    - Websites for training and connecting workers to the remote labor market: Remote work often requires a laptop, a fast Internet connection, and permanent communication with the employee in addition to experience in one of the remote work areas.
    - E-marketing: Every girl or woman can enter the world of e-commerce. This type of business requires only a mobile phone or a laptop and the availability of an Internet connection permanently.
  2. **Service Businesses**
    - Supporting Delivery Services: The need is focused on the availability of a motorcycle for the beneficiaries of these projects equipped with a box to protect orders from weather conditions. Businesses of delivery services have succeeded in urban societies more than rural ones.

- Sewing and Weaving Businesses: Some business owners can start repairing second-hand clothing, washing, and selling them after improving their quality (developing the second-hand clothes trade). On the other hand, other business owners can start sewing and producing clothes (tailoring clothes for the family or customers). Also, some women can rely on themselves to repair clothes for family members.
- Fixed and Mobile Hot Drinks kiosks: Scattered across the road, fixed and mobile hot drinks kiosks selling hot drinks (takeaway coffee) compete with coffee shops today. They provide customers with coffee on the roads without the need to stop wasting a lot of time.
- Home food preservation products, its selling centers, and marketing mechanisms: The home food preservation business is one of the most successful small businesses women can do in their homes. Many families rely on buying preserved and ready-made food, especially those families including women who are workers or employees and need more time for food preservation. Such businesses empower women in all respects.
- Kindergarten Businesses: Kindergarten is one of society's most valuable and beneficial projects. These projects serve women who want to enter the labor market. However, they cannot do so because there are no efficient kindergartens to care for their children. **Kindergartens contribute to children's educational process through the preschool education they receive in these kindergartens. In addition, they add to refining the child's personality and preparing him appropriately for school education. The kindergarten business has succeeded in urban communities more than in rural communities.**
- Women's beauty salons: No woman or girl does not care about her beauty and appearance. Thus, they will always need to visit beauty salons. A beauty salon is not considered one of the expensive businesses, especially if the owner woman is trained and wants to improve herself. She only needs hair dryers, some hair and skin materials, and hair styling tools.

### 3. Industrial businesses

- Reassembling and repairing liquid batteries: The use of liquid batteries in Syria is no longer limited to cars, but people started using batteries at home as means of lighting, recharging electronic devices, and electricity generation based on solar panels. Today every house or tent in Syria contains several liquid batteries. Assembling and repairing liquid batteries businesses have been successful in large cities and towns with large markets, as these markets attract more customers.
- Installation and repair of solar energy systems: The spread of solar panels has become common in northwestern Syria to provide warm water or to generate electricity. Many people in northwest Syria believe that providing training on installing and maintaining solar panels may be one project that may attract many young people. Nevertheless, trainees would need support with some simple industrial equipment. Businesses for installing and repairing solar power systems have succeeded in large cities and towns with large markets where these markets attract more customers.
- Motorcycle Maintenance: Every house in Syria has a motorcycle, which has led to the revival of the profession of motorcycle maintenance. Nevertheless, many young people have confirmed that the profession of motorcycle maintenance may be a good source of income. Motorcycle maintenance businesses have been successful in all societies. All cities and towns have many motorcycles, which have become the primary means of transportation.
- Soap and detergent industry: Cleaning materials are one of the most consumed materials, and their production is considered an inexpensive business. Such a business's requirements are limited to including some pots for melting and processing raw materials, a gas stove, packaging materials, and protective equipment for workers in soap production.
- Dairy industry: Women can be supported to start such projects. They need no large spaces. Even displaced women within camps can make milk and dairy products such as yogurt and cheese.
- Mosaic and pottery industries: The residents of Idleb Governorate, especially Kafr Nabl and Armanaz sub-districts, have great experience in this industry area as the raw materials for these industries are available locally. However, they need support with local and global marketing. In

addition to the economic value of the mosaic and pottery industry, these industries represent a national value that contributes to preserving the national heritage and handicrafts for which Syria has long been famous.

- **Maintenance of electronics (mobile phones, laptops, and TVs):** The maintenance of the electronic devices profession attracts many young people who have experience in the software of electronic devices and want to penetrate the field of electronic equipment and its maintenance (Hardware). Businesses of electronics maintenance have been successful in large cities and towns with large markets, which attract more customers.

#### 4. Agricultural Businesses

- **Livestock and Poultry Breeding:** This project preserves livestock and poultry from the risk of extinction and provides for the need of families of meat, dairy, and eggs. Women and the elderly can work on such projects because they do not require much muscular effort and do not force them to work outside their homes. Rural communities have been thriving in livestock businesses because of their considerable experience in the area of breeding livestock. However, urban cities and towns contain large numbers of IDPs who came from a rural environment, most of whom have experience in the livestock breeding field. They can be supported with a few heads of livestock to start new businesses that can provide them with sources of income.
  - **Planting Nursery (Producing Seedlings): It is a valuable business in Idlib governorate since it provides agricultural products to other farmers.** Projects supporting plant nurseries have been successful for rural communities because of their considerable agricultural experience and possession of large agricultural areas suitable for such projects.
  - **Barley Breeding Project:** In light of the high prices of fodder for livestock and the scarcity of pastures in some months of the year, the need to grow barley appears as a basic input in manufacturing fodder locally, or it may be used directly as fodder for livestock.
  - **Growing products not available in the area (fruits or vegetables):** In light of the decline in banana cultivation on the Syrian coast, as well as the difficulty of importing bananas from regime-controlled areas or Lebanon, the need arises in local markets to grow bananas locally (introducing its cultivation to the region) in addition to a number of fruits on top of which are strawberries.
- **The results showed that 22% (47 business owners) believe starting a private business is easy, including 16 people who own commercial businesses, 11 who own service businesses, and ten who own industrial businesses.**
  - **When the business owner received vocational training before starting the business: 31% (16 business owners) saw that starting a private business was easy or very easy, 49% (26 business owners) believed it was of average difficulty, and only 21% (11 business owners) saw it was difficult or very difficult.**
  - **About the convenient time to start any business: 75% (159 business owners) reported that a private business could be started whenever the conditions were suitable.**
  - **The enumerators asked workers who prefer to work for a fixed salary why they can't think of independence in their own businesses. 52% of the reasons are the benefits of working for a fixed salary, such as regular income, low risk, and stability. And 15% of the reasons are their lack of financial resources. 14% of the reasons preventing workers from thinking about having independent businesses are lack of technical resources, including skill, time management, ability to make sound decisions, and professional confidence. And the most attractive sectors for entrepreneurs include trade, construction work, handicrafts, agriculture, training, education, industry, retail, and services.**
  - **As for the challenges faced by entrepreneurs today: 20% of the challenges are economic instabilities, and 15% are represented in the constant change in the rate of the US dollar and the Turkish lira compared to the local currency, which has appeared in all sectors. 12% of the challenges are due to the highly competitive market, including local and exported products, reported significantly in the commercial, service, and industrial sectors. 11% of the challenges are represented in the shortage of raw materials, which was reported significantly in the industrial, agricultural, and service sectors.**

- Nonetheless, the study found that 68% (84 female workers) reported facing constraints related to customs and traditions in the entrepreneurial sector. And 63% (78 female workers) reported that they do not have the same training opportunities as males in the field of entrepreneurship. Also, 60% (74 female workers) said they do not receive the same entrepreneurial support as males.
- Regarding the drives and motivations behind entrepreneurial businesses, 44% (185 business owners) reported that they started their own projects because jobs are scarce, and 27% (114 business owners) to find solutions to problems experienced by the population.
- About the selling of products in neighboring countries: It was found that 67% (142 business owners) do not know if the products of their businesses or any other entrepreneurial projects can be sold in neighboring countries. This indicates the urgent need to research whether the decision-makers have developed laws that facilitate the exportation of products for business owners. If such laws are present, they should sensitize entrepreneurs about these laws. If not, they should instead advocate for the development of such laws.
- Only 18% (38 business owners) reported the availability of product registration services for entrepreneurial businesses to protect them from counterfeits. Concerning the costs of registering a product, 21% (8 business owners) who reported the availability of the product registration service to protect it consider that the cost of this service is high.
- In addition, 33% (69 business owners) reported that the IT services the entrepreneurial businesses need are available. And about the costs of such services, 13% (9 business owners) who reported the availability of the IT service believe that the cost of this service is high.
- Nevertheless, 45% (95 business owners) reported that electronic marketing services are available. However, 14% (28 business owners) find the cost of these services high. The study also found that only 25% (52 business owners) believe in the presence of media interest in entrepreneurship.
- 85% (105 business owners) said that gas is available in their areas, but 38% (68 business owners) of those who reported the availability believe that the cost of this service is high.
- 92% (194 business owners) reported water availability in their areas. 75% (159 business owners) of the business owners reported that electricity is available in their areas. Concerning the costs of electricity service, 44% (70 business owners) of the business owners who reported the availability of electricity believe that its cost is high. 95% (201 business owners) reported that telecommunications networks (Internet) are available in their regions. 91% (192 business owners) said exchange and remittance offices are available in their regions.
- 91% (191 business owners) reported no protection from the controlling parties' interference in their regions.
- 33% (70 business owners) reported licensing for their businesses is mandatory. 18% (39 business owners) reported taxes imposed by the authorities controlling entrepreneurial businesses. 10% (22 business owners) reported a financial inspection by the authorities controlling their projects.
- 22% (39 business owners) believe that less than 25% of people who started their own businesses succeeded. And 28% (50 business owners) believe that 26-50% of people who started their businesses succeeded. In addition, 33% (58 business owners) believe that 51-75% of people who started their own businesses succeeded. Also, 17% (31 business owners) believe that more than 76% of people who started their own businesses succeeded.
- As for the reasons for the success of these projects, 31% (144 business owners) believe that the reason for the success of private businesses is the right business idea. On the other hand, 29% (135 business owners) believe that the reason is the availability of sufficient funding for the business. 24% (115 business owners) believe that the reason is the high experience of the business owners. On the contrary, 16% (79 business owners) believe that choosing the right time for the business is the reason.
- Regarding entrepreneurship education and training, only 7% (14 business owners) reported receiving government education related to entrepreneurship, and only 18% (39 business owners) reported receiving entrepreneurship training.
- Only 10% (22 business owners) strongly confirmed that they were familiar with the concept of entrepreneurship, while 30% (63 business owners) confirmed that they were familiar with it.
- The enumerators asked business owners about their views on the awareness of youth about the culture of entrepreneurship. 26% (54 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 55% (117 business owners) confirmed that young people have poor awareness of the culture of entrepreneurship.
- Regarding the availability of training programs for youth on entrepreneurship, 32% (68 business owners) strongly confirmed, and 56% (119 business owners) confirmed the lack of training programs for youth on entrepreneurship. The results indicate the low awareness of the community of the term entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial projects and the absence of training programs for young people on entrepreneurship.

- Only 6% (13 business owners) reported that they had heard of the term entrepreneurial incubators, and 46% (98 business owners) confirmed that there are entities that finance private business owners.
- About the entities that finance private projects, 33% (63 business owners) reported that local organizations finance private business owners. This finding shows that the lack of investment has prompted people with ideas and entrepreneurs to turn to humanitarian organizations to get support for their projects. 18% (35 business owners) reported that friends, family, and neighbors are the ones financing private business owners. On the other hand, 18% (34 business owners) reported that international organizations finance private business owners. Likewise, 18% (34 business owners) reported that investors or the private sector are financing private business owners. And 14% (27 business owners) reported that venture capital funds private businesses.
- Regarding the funded sectors, 23% (112 business owners) interviewed by the enumerators confirmed that the agricultural business sector is at the forefront of the sectors that receive support. Also, 18% (88 business owners) reported that commercial businesses receive support in their regions. On the other hand, 18% (88 business owners) said that educational businesses receive support in their regions. 15% (74 business owners) reported that handicraft businesses receive support in their areas. Also, 11% (54 business owners) reported that service projects receive support in their regions. Likewise, 9% (46 business owners) reported that industrial businesses receive support in their areas. However, only 6% (27 business owners) reported that youth and community initiatives receive support in their regions.

Twelveth

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# Recommendations



## Twelveth: Recommendations

- Despite the difficulties faced by Syrians, the report's findings indicate that there is a trend toward entrepreneurial ideas to adapt to the challenges faced by society. **Therefore, we must work to enhance the confidence of investors and decision-makers in entrepreneurship in Syria to encourage them to support entrepreneurs and individuals with creative ideas in their endeavors to establish their own businesses that contribute to economic and social gains.**
- According to <sup>5</sup>the ACU's "Economic Reality" report, only 59% of males aged 20-45 in northern Syria had access to employment. Only 32% of the same age group of females had access to employment opportunities. **The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to remote work. These days, it has become possible for an employee to do a large portion of work from home. In many cases, the employee resides in a town far from the company's region. Remote work often requires the employee to have a laptop, high-speed Internet, and constant connection, in addition, to experience in one of the areas of remote work, such as design programs, translation, reporting, monitoring content on social media, or entering and cleaning big data. Big business owners are looking to crisis-stricken countries with people who can work remotely. Here, it's necessary to secure a website to link remote job seekers with companies having job opportunities. The website must be sponsored to appear easily on electronic search engines for anyone looking for remote employees in any language. The website should add remote job opportunities to be easily accessible to qualified people in northern Syria.**
- The study results show that business owners (71%) want to expand their businesses and hire new people. Of these, 49% need skilled workers, 30% need ordinary workers without work experience, 12% need accountants, and 8% need administrators. **Here is the need to provide a website to link job seekers with companies that have job opportunities. The website shall compare job seekers' skills in northern Syria and the skills required by job opportunities. This helps the website creators provide training commensurate with the job opportunities offered. The website must be sponsored to easily appear on search engines for anyone searching for employees and in any language.**
- The study shows that at the forefront of private businesses that the owners believe to be entrepreneurial are commercial businesses, which constitute 34% (72 businesses) of the businesses their owners were interviewed in the study. Also, in 40% (29 commercial businesses), profits are commensurate with the capital, and the businesses are growing as planned before the start of the business. That is why there is a need to expand commercial businesses to use electronic marketing. Therefore, every girl or lady can enter the world of e-marketing. Likewise, e-marketing is suitable for people with disabilities and requires only experience in e-marketing and the availability of mobile phones or laptops.
- The study found that the business owners after receiving vocational training before starting their businesses: 31% (16 business owners) feel that starting their own business is easy or very easy. However, 49% (26 business owners) said that starting a private business is of average difficulty. **This underscores the importance of providing vocational training for young people, which may help them open new businesses in Syria. It is known that many young people were unable to complete their education due to the ongoing war and difficult economic conditions. Still, they also gained many skills from the market in the meantime. For those young people who started to learn about business and are planning to build a business in their teenage years and youth, encouraging them to become entrepreneurs is one of the best ways to succeed in the future.**

<sup>5</sup> [https://acu-sy.org/imu\\_reports/economic-reality-northern-syria-thematic-2021/](https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/economic-reality-northern-syria-thematic-2021/)



- When the business owners conducted a market survey to find out the most profitable and demanding businesses before starting their business, 26% (22 business owners) saw that starting their own business was easy or very easy. However, 41% (34 business owners) said that starting a private business is of average difficulty. **This asserts the importance of training young people on the mechanisms of conducting a market survey, preparing the economic feasibility of any business, and studying the potential risks and coping mechanisms.**
- Concerning the funders of private businesses, the study found that only 18% (34 business owners) reported that investors or the private sector are financing private businesses. And 14% (27 business owners) said that venture capital funds private businesses. **Therefore, there is a need to strengthen the partnership between capitalists and professionals. In addition, foundations should be laid for these partnerships. Likewise, the culture of endowment projects and endowment investment funds or zakat funds should be enhanced.**
- The enumerators asked business owners whether they had received a government education related to entrepreneurship or setting up a private business. Only 7% (14 business owners) reported receiving a government education related to entrepreneurship. There are several vocational schools in Syria, but their demand is still low, as students cannot pursue their university studies after the secondary level. These schools provide only several seats for outstanding students in vocational education. **Therefore, entrepreneurship education requires a serious educational strategy, such as supporting vocational training and linking it with universities and institutes that enable graduates of vocational education to complete their higher education. It should also include training in project management and establishment within all educational branches in light of the scarcity of job opportunities.**
- In today's labor market, older people face many challenges: health challenges, including injuries during heavy work, such as fractures or herniated disks, from which older people may not heal, or other work injuries. Thus, the injury may lead to the cessation of his primary source of livelihood, and there is no social insurance to cover the treatment expenses. Also, the elderly may lose their work due to illness or injury. Older people face challenges associated with their weak body structure, compared to any other class of young workers, which may cause psychological distresses for older people. They also face challenges related to the competitive labor market. Business owners often want to hire young workers, creating barriers for older people or forcing them to work in unfair conditions, with lower salaries, more challenging jobs, or longer working hours. Likewise, older people struggle to keep up with new technologies. They may face challenges in learning new techniques or skills (accounting skills, marketing or communication mechanisms) or languages. **Therefore, a set of projects dedicated to the old people class should be studied, as most of them are deprived of social insurance pensions, which are their last source of income.**
- The report shows that 26% (54 business owners) strongly confirmed that young people have little awareness of the culture of entrepreneurship. Also, 55% (117 business owners) confirmed that young people have little awareness of the culture of entrepreneurship. **Therefore, the report strongly recommends the importance of spreading the culture of entrepreneurship among young people and university students, which would motivate young people to innovate in the field of entrepreneurship.**
- The term business incubator is still out of focus in the Syrian context. However, the global, regional, and international interest in providing these incubators to support entrepreneurs and creative ideas is noted. Entrepreneurial projects, such as small projects, are pillars of the economy in most world countries. Most of the world's countries tend to sponsor entrepreneurs and people with creative ideas through various programs and institutions because of their importance in countries' economic growth. Therefore, in light of the difficult economic conditions facing young people and business owners, it is essential to find entities that support entrepreneurs and incubate their entrepreneurial ideas. They should help them start implementing these ideas and provide them with the capabilities and skills to make their projects well-established in the



markets. **Therefore, it is proposed to establish a virtual business incubator to provide its services to young people and entrepreneurs in northern Syria. Also, the prospective business incubator provides a range of services, including:**

1. It offers training programs, grants, and competitions in the entrepreneurial education field aimed at building young people's technical and personal capacities.
  2. It should ensure wider sharing of information between international and local organizations and economic and entrepreneurship actors on best practices that have been learned. This would benefit all actors in supporting entrepreneurial projects in northern Syria.
  3. The proposed incubator should be a link between investors and financing institutions abroad and the diaspora and between creative entrepreneurial project owners and entrepreneurs in northern Syria. So that they can help increase the provision of all types of support for emerging projects.
- According to the study's results, 75% (159 business owners) reported that no media attention is drawn to entrepreneurship. The study also encountered difficulties collecting information on entrepreneurial businesses using Internet search engines in northern Syria, which indicates poor media coverage of such businesses. **Therefore, the study suggests that the media should shed light on entrepreneurial businesses in northern Syria as part of the moral support for the owners of these businesses. It should also increase the community's awareness of the culture of entrepreneurship.**
  - Concerning the legal infrastructure of entrepreneurial businesses, the controlling parties should grant facilities encouraging investors to invest and open new businesses in northwestern Syria. They should facilitate the registration of projects and protect businesses and companies from the interference of the security forces. They should provide facilitations in taxes and financial restrictions.
  - Women's participation in economic activity in the northwestern regions of Syria is increasing with the temporary or permanent absence of the head of the household (missing or dead) due to the ongoing conflict or the severe need for women to work as a result of difficult economic conditions. However, there is a significant gender gap in the rate of entrepreneurial activity, training, and available entrepreneurial support. 63% (78 female workers) reported that they do not have the same training opportunities as the males in the field of entrepreneurship. Also, 60% (74 female workers) said they do not receive the same entrepreneurial support as males. **Actors must take women's empowerment in the labor market seriously and offer more specialized programs for entrepreneurial women that can help women to participate more in economic growth. That will contribute to improving women's entrepreneurial experiences and capacities.**

# The Reality of Entrepreneurship In Northwest Syria

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A report by the Information Management Unit (IMU)  
at Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU)

