SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

A PARTICIPATORY THEMATIC REPORT

ACU ASSISTANCE COORDINATION UNIT

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Acronyms

ACU	Assistance Coordination Unit
CWD	Children With Disabilities
ED	Education Directorate
EGMA	Early Grade Math Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
IDP	Internally displaced people
IMU	Information Management Unit
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
JENA	Joint Education Needs Assessment
KI	Key informants
NES	Northeastern Syria
NGO	National government organization
NWS	Northwestern Syria
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PTT	Posta ve Telgraf Teşkilatı (Postal and Telegraph Organization)
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SIG	Syrian Internal Government
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene

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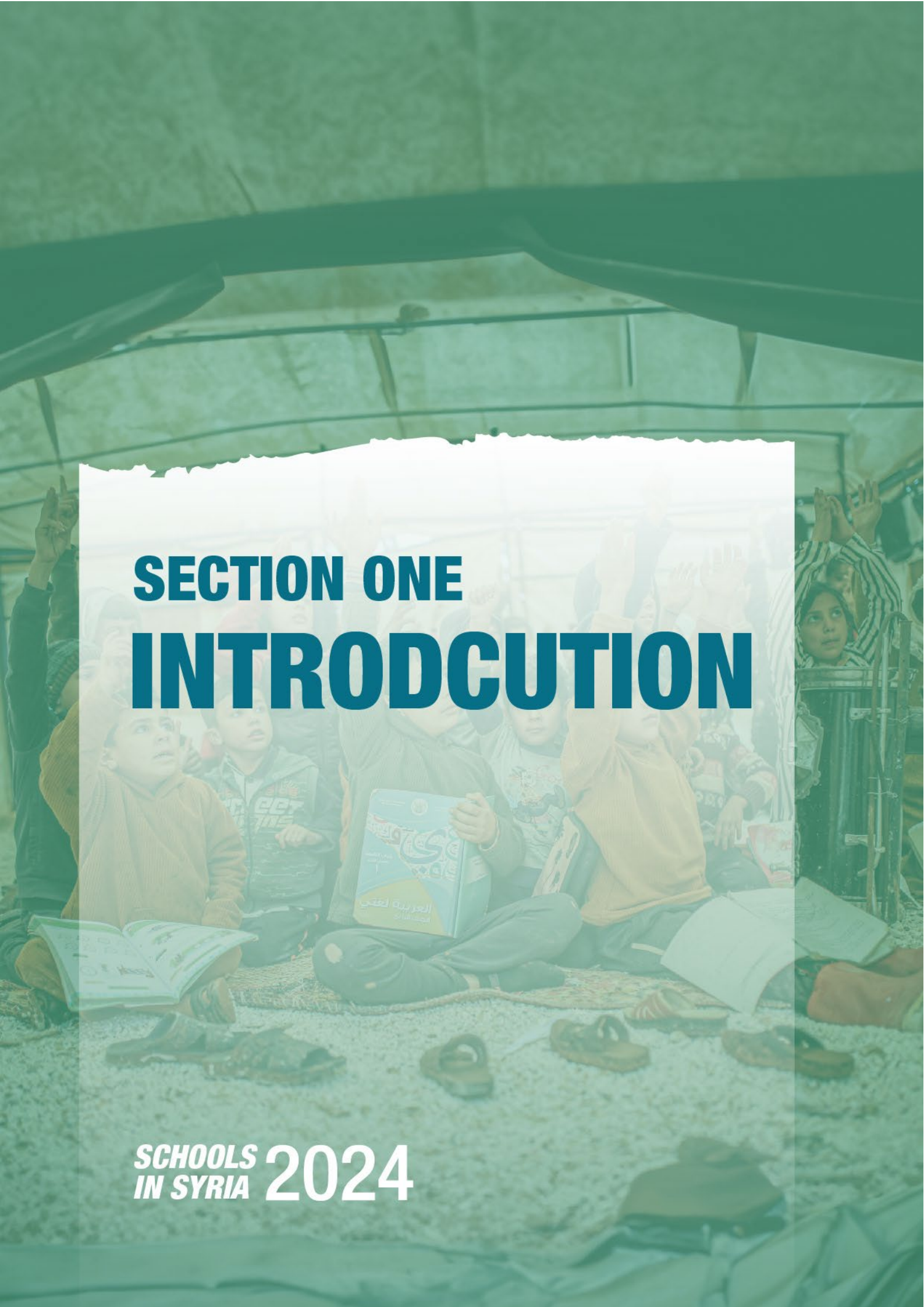


SECTION ONE
INTRODCUTION

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 1: Executive Summary

Section I: Introduction

The 9th edition of the Schools in Syria Report offers insights into the educational landscape within regions of the Syrian Arab Republic beyond the regime's control, presenting an evaluation of schools across Syria for the academic year 2023-2024. This report is produced annually by the Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU).

Section 2: Methodology

The methodology employed in this report builds upon previous editions of the study, which were published under the same title, "Schools in Northern Syria," in previous years. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze and present data collected from assessed schools. Surveys were conducted with students, parents, teachers, and principals to provide a comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape, aiming to illuminate various aspects of the situation. This edition covers data from 4,761 schools in 76 sub-districts across six governorates. A total of 24,837 electronic forms were used, including 20,076 opinion questionnaires, to assess the reality of the schools.

Section 3: General Information

This section compares the number of schools assessed in the current edition with the previous eight editions of the Schools in Syria Report. Additionally, it provides an evaluation of the security situation of schools based on criteria that are relevant to the Syrian context.

- The investigation revealed that 11% of the evaluated schools demonstrated a level of safety, while 1% were deemed unsafe. Notably, a subset of 28 schools was identified as high risk. A significant majority, constituting 81% of the schools under scrutiny, were categorized as safe, reflecting a commendable standard.
- As per survey responses, around 10% of the student body conveyed a sense of insecurity within their educational environments. Furthermore, findings indicated that 35% of educators acknowledged instances where students approached them, articulating feelings of unease while on school premises.

Section 4: Buildings of Operational Schools

This section provides an overview of the operational schools. It aims to shed light on the state of these buildings and their suitability for educational purposes.

- 2% of schools used for education were found to be partially destroyed, while 98% were not.
- Approximately 49% of the destroyed schools can be attributed to ongoing conflicts. Indeed, 19% of the schools were destroyed due to negligence and lack of maintenance. The earthquake was identified as the primary cause of the destruction of 16% of schools.
- The study revealed that 85% of the operational schools included in the assessment are classified as conventional establishments, many of which were established prior to the onset of the conflict in Syria. Meanwhile, 12% of the schools are categorized as rural institutions.
- The study revealed that only 70% of the total schools assessed met the safety and security standards outlined by the INEE Minimum Standards for Education.
- The results highlight that among the operational schools, 88% of classrooms were sufficiently equipped. Nonetheless, 6% of classrooms exhibited varying degrees of need for repairs or lacked essential school furniture. This underscores the presence of classrooms requiring enhancements or supplementary resources to meet requisite standards.

Section 5: Water and Sanitation Within Schools

This section provides information about drinking water, water for use, its sources, and the state of school toilets.

- As per the findings, 95% of operational schools have access to potable water, whereas 5% lack such provisions. Consequently, students and educational personnel are compelled to procure drinking water from home or nearby locales, with toilet facilities often devoid of water supply. Potable water was discernible in limited quantities within 60% of operational schools and entirely absent in 7% of them. Moreover, toilet water was available in restricted amounts in 68% of schools, while completely unavailable in 5% of the schools.
- The investigation revealed that 37% of the evaluated schools receive access to drinking water and general use via the public network, while another 41% rely on water trucks for their supply. Furthermore, adhering to the criteria outlined by the Sphere standards, maintenance was deemed necessary for toilets in 27% of the establishments, to varying extents. Moreover, 51% of operational schools lacked gender-segregated toilet facilities. Notably, 43% of mixed-gender operational schools failed to meet the safety standards outlined in the INEE Minimum Standards for Education. Additionally, in 57% of operational schools, both teaching and administrative staff shared the same toilet facilities as students.

Section 6: School Equipment (School Furniture)

This section provides detailed information on school furniture and educational equipment status.

- 12% of the desks in operational schools require maintenance, and 5% are severely damaged and beyond repair.
- Functional and active school laboratories were available in less than 1% of schools, functional and active school libraries were available in only 3%, and functional and active computer rooms were available in 18 schools.

Section 7: Teaching Stages and School Days

This report section outlines the educational levels and age group distribution within the assessed schools. The findings indicate that 77% of operational schools encompass all educational stages, accommodating various age groups under one roof. Additionally, around 30% of surveyed teachers noted occurrences of bullying among students, adversely affecting their well-being.

Section 8: Curriculum

This section delves into the curricula implemented across different regions within schools and examines parental attitudes toward these curricula, along with their preferences for their children's studies. It also explores teachers' perspectives on the disparities between pre-2011 curricula and those currently in use, shedding light on the subjects covered in each curriculum. Furthermore, it offers insights into the origins of textbooks within schools and the specific volumes required. Moreover, it outlines strategies and mechanisms available to teachers to tackle the challenge of inadequate classroom textbooks.

Section 9: Certificates

This section discusses how students are moved to higher levels of education and evaluates whether their knowledge levels align with their educational levels.

- The study found that 91% of students moved to higher levels of education by passing the final school examinations successfully.
- 5% of students were put to their grades by enrolling for the first time, 2% were put to their grades after sitting for placement tests, 1% by exhausting years of failure, and 1% were moved to their current grade level because they repeated the grade.

This section reviews the issues of school report cards (student report sheets) and preparatory and secondary school certificates.

Section 10: Students

This section provides statistics regarding the student body within operational schools, totaling 1,179,827 enrolled students. It contrasts this figure with data from prior report editions while delineating student age groups by gender. Furthermore, the section assesses the projected number of student dropouts. It underscores their challenges, including the absence of accredited certificates, inadequate financial means or resources to pursue education, and the hazards encountered during their commute to school.

Section 11: Student and School Needs

This section outlines the requirements of students and schools regarding essential school supplies and educational materials. The research revealed that school bags were absent in 96% of the evaluated schools. A prevailing issue encountered by all operational schools was the scarcity of heaters and heating fuel, with addressing this demand emerging as their top priority.

Section 12: Teachers

This segment of the report delineates details concerning teachers within operational schools. It elaborates on the educational qualifications of both regular and non-regular teaching staff. Moreover, the section furnishes insights into the average salaries extended to teachers within schools, along with specifying the entities accountable for disbursing these salaries. Additionally, it offers a comprehensive overview of the roles assumed by administrative and service staff within the school system.

- The study found 51,557 teachers in the assessed schools, 51% of whom are females.
- The study revealed that 82% of regular teachers have graduated from colleges or institutes that qualify them for the teaching profession. On the other hand, 18% of the non-regular teachers entered the teaching profession due to a shortage of qualified personnel in the field.
- The study found that 94% of the teachers received salaries during the academic year 2023-2024

Section 13: Psychological Support and Students with Disabilities

This section of the report focuses on the data related to psychosocial support services offered in schools, as well as the preparedness of schools to accommodate children with disabilities.

- The study discovered that a mere 26% of the operational schools assessed had enrolled children with disabilities, representing 1,124 students.
- Only 4% of schools are equipped to receive children with disabilities.
- The number of orphaned students in the assessed schools reached 61,849.
- 6% of the operational schools were found to have psychological counselors.

This section of the report provides information on symptoms related to students' emotions, social interactions, and self-awareness collected through surveys conducted with students. Additionally, the section includes details on the level of awareness among educational staff regarding referral pathways and mechanisms for safe referral.

Section 14: Policies and Procedures Governing the Educational Process

This section refers to the policies and protocols governing the educational framework in regions beyond regime control in Syria. Results indicate that 85% of operational schools boast a well-defined management structure. Furthermore, the section provides insights into the availability of daily attendance records for students and lesson planning notebooks for teachers. Surveys from teachers reveal that merely 62% of them have signed the code of conduct. Additionally, the section offers details regarding the presence of parent councils within schools.

Section 15: Cholera Prevention Methods and Procedures

This section centers on executing preventive measures within schools aimed at curtailing the spread of cholera. According to the study, a significant majority, comprising 85% of schools, lack a sufficient stockpile of cleaning materials and soap. Furthermore, 83% of schools have yet to organize awareness campaigns targeting students to educate them on cholera prevention measures.

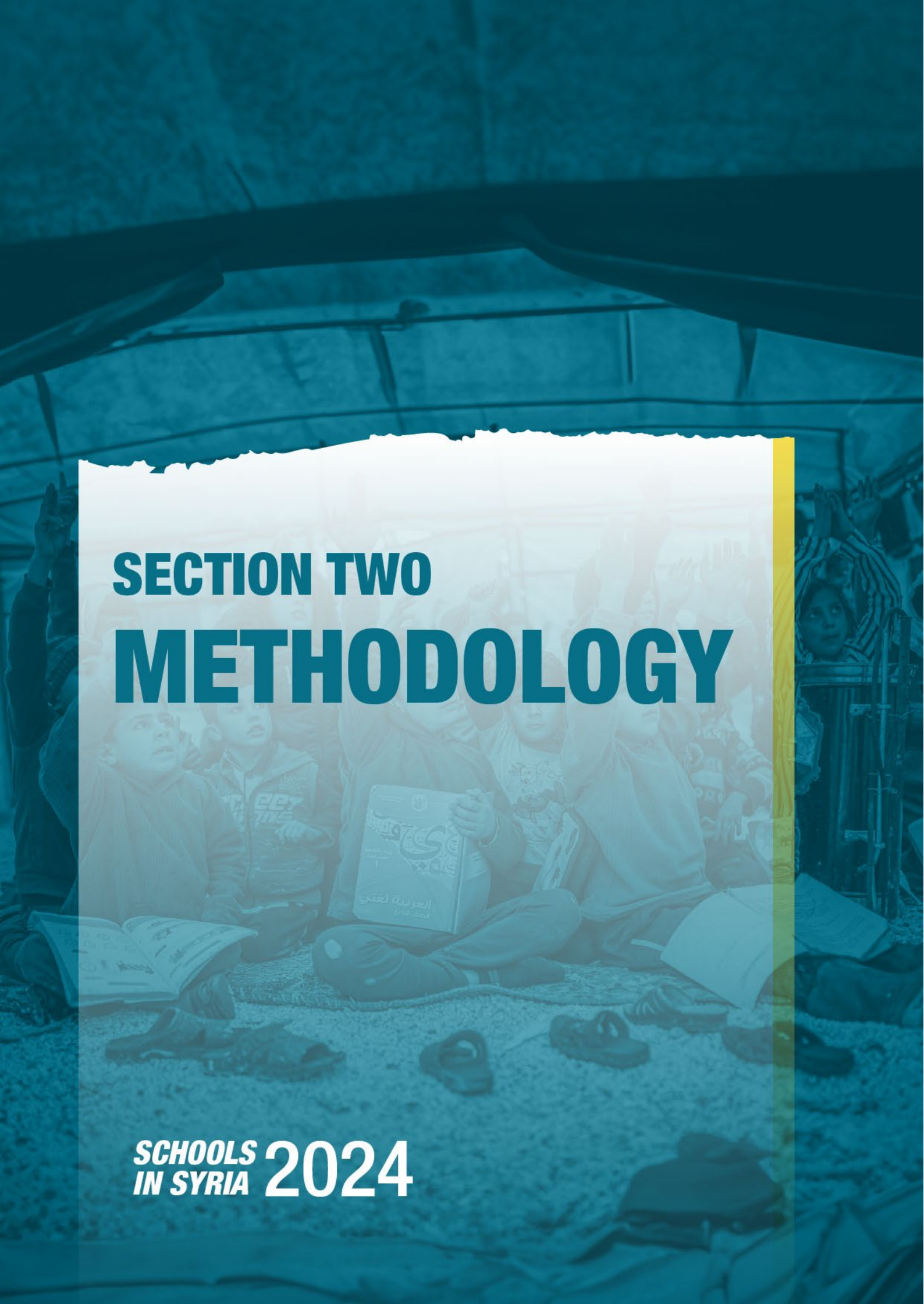
Section 16: Non-Operational Schools

This section provides data on the 9% of assessed schools categorized as non-operational. The study results reveal that the primary reasons for the suspension of these schools include the complete destruction of their buildings and the shortage of school furniture and equipment. Additionally, the military factions utilizing the school buildings were identified as contributing factors to their non-operational status.

- 41% of non-operational schools were found to be damaged to varying degrees.
- The study showed that only 9% of former students (22 schools) in non-operational schools receive education in alternative locations.

Section 17: Priorities an Recommendations

Among the identified priorities, securing heating fuel emerged as the top-ranking concern, underscoring its critical significance. Particularly in Idleb governorate, the focal priority was ensuring timely salaries for teachers. Conversely, in the governorates of Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and the eastern Aleppo countryside, the foremost priority highlighted was furnishing suitable curricula. This underscores the crucial endeavor of aligning educational content with these respective regions' distinct requirements and contextual nuances.



SECTION TWO
METHODOLOGY

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 2: Methodology

1. The Assessed Schools

The report encompasses two categories of schools based on their operational status: operational and non-operational. **Operational schools** denote institutions where students and teachers regularly engage in educational activities. The assessment of these schools considered various factors, including building conditions, access to water and sanitation facilities, availability of educational resources and furniture, types of certificates offered, and the curriculum imparted. Additionally, the assessment accounted for overall school needs, equipment, and specific requirements of students and faculty. Surveys were conducted among students, parents, teachers, and school principals to discern the most significant difficulties and challenges encountered in the educational process from diverse perspectives.

On the other hand, non-operational schools pertain to institutions with no students or teaching staff or where the school building's condition renders it unusable. This may result from factors such as severe structural damage or the utilization of the building for non-teaching purposes. In such instances, students and faculty may utilize alternative facilities. Assessments of non-operational schools typically involve evaluating the condition of the school building. However, accurately determining the exact number of students and teachers during such circumstances can be challenging. Consequently, questionnaires were administered to school-age children, their parents, and teachers who were temporarily suspended from work due to the interruption of the educational process.

The "Schools in Syria" report consists of 17 sections, 13 covering operational schools. Section 16 of the report is devoted to non-operational schools. Section 17 of the report addresses priorities and recommendations, guiding education sector partners for their future plans.

The study initially aimed to evaluate all schools situated in areas beyond the Syrian regime's control. However, certain factors hindered the data collection process. Nonetheless, the study successfully assessed most of the schools in opposition-controlled regions, particularly in Idleb and Aleppo governorates. Furthermore, it included a considerable number of schools in the eastern governorates that were not under Syrian regime control. The following are the key factors that impeded the coverage of all schools in the eastern governorates.

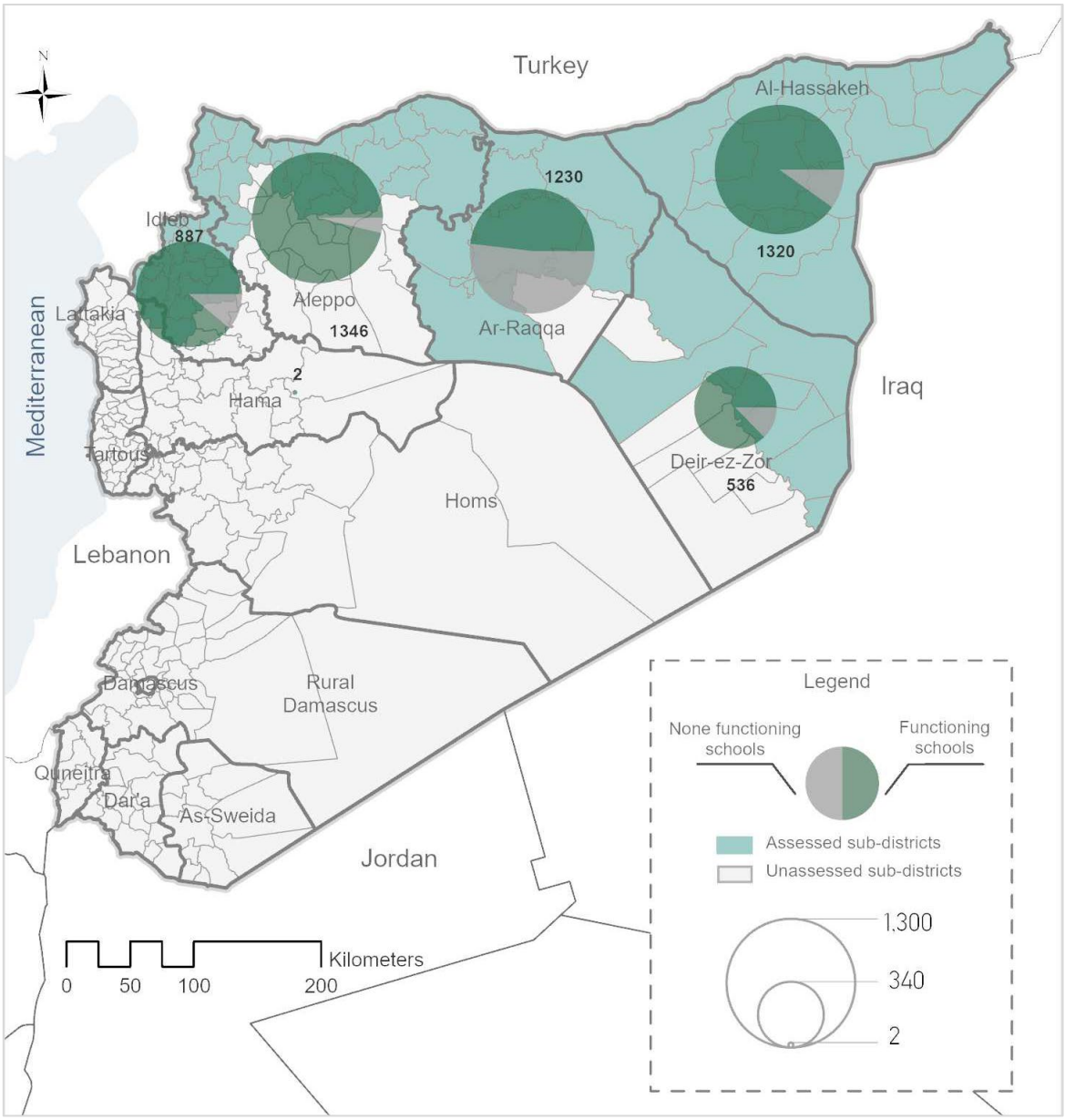
- Certain schools were inaccessible in some areas due to security risks or other reasons, including a lack of cooperation from those responsible for the educational process. This resulted in a decrease in coverage and limited access to data in certain areas under their control.
- Due to insufficient collaboration from education officials in certain areas, IMU enumerators encountered challenges accessing those regions. Consequently, they had to operate discreetly to conduct their work and gather data.

Despite these challenges, the assessment covered 4,761 schools in opposition-held areas and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The assessment was conducted in 76 sub-districts in 6 governorates in Syria, and the percentage of operational schools reached 91% (**4,336** schools) of the total schools covered in the assessment.

Table 1 Information on schools included in the assessment by governorate

Analysis level	# of areas	# of districts	# of villages	Total school number	# of Operational schools	# of non-operational schools	% of operational schools	%of non-operational schools
Idleb	5	10	303	887	788	99	89%	11%
Al-Hasakeh	4	15	860	1320	1190	130	90%	10%
Ar-Raqqa	3	8	242	670	592	78	88%	12%
Aleppo	7	24	801	1346	1296	50	96%	4%
Hama	1	1	1	2	2		100%	0%
Deir ez-Zor	3	8	94	536	468	68	87%	13%
Grand Total	**23**	**76**	**2,299**	**4,761**	**4,336**	**425**	**91%**	**9%**

Map 1 Areas covered by this study.



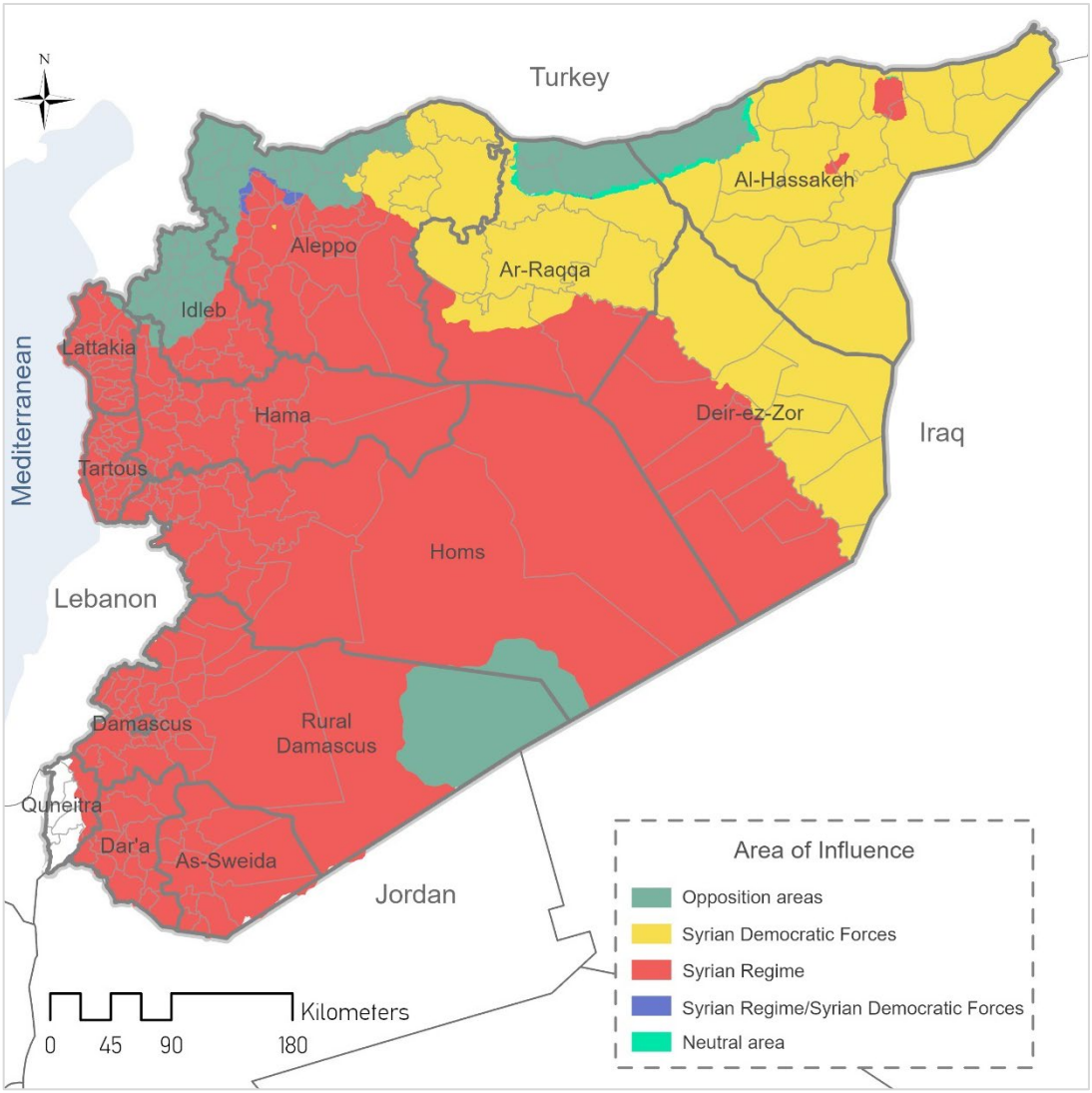
The assessed schools were divided into eight geographical regions: four in northeastern Syria and four in northwestern Syria. The division by geographical location, control, and access was adopted. These geographical areas are described as follows:

1. **Al-Hasakeh Governorate:** This governorate is under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). It includes all the cities and towns of the al-Hasakeh Governorate, except for the Ras al-Ain sub-district, which is under the control of the opposition forces. There are 15 sub-districts in this geographical area. These are Al-Areesheh, Al-Hawl, Bir Al-Helou Al-Wardiya, Tal Tamer, Tal Hamis, Jawadiyah, Darbasiyah, Shadada, Amuda, Qahtaniyah, Markada, Al-Qamishli city, Al-Malikiyah city and Al-Yarubiyah, and Al-Hasakeh city.
2. **Deir ez-Zor Governorate:** This governorate is under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). It includes all the Deir ez-Zor Governorate's cities and towns located east of the Euphrates River, as the regime forces control the cities and towns to the west of the river; therefore, they were not covered in the report. The number of sub-districts included in this geographical area is 6: Bosira, Thiban, Souse, Hajin, Kisra, and Soor.
3. **Ar-Raqqa Governorate:** This governorate is under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). It includes all the cities and towns of the north of Ar-Raqqa Governorate, except for Tel Abyad and Solouk sub-districts and parts of Ain-Issa sub-district, which are under the control of the opposition forces. The regime forces control the southern districts of Ar-Raqqa Governorate; therefore, they were not covered in the report. The number of districts included in this geographical area is 4, and they are Ar-Raqqa city, Ath-Thawra, al-Mansoura, and al-Karame.
4. **Eastern Countryside of Aleppo:** This geographical area is under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The number of sub-districts included in this area is 5, and they are Manbij city, Ain Al-Arab city, Abu Qalqal, Shiyukh Tahtani, and Sarin.
5. **Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad:** This geographical area is under the control of the Turkey-backed opposition forces. The number of sub-districts included in this area is 4: Ras al-Ain city, Tel Abyad city, Solouk, and parts of Ain Issa sub-district. Coordination with the Turkish authorities is required to work in this geographical area.
6. **Idleb Governorate:** This geographical area includes cities and towns outside the control of the regime from Idleb Governorate, the western countryside of Aleppo, and several towns from the northern countryside of Hama. The number of sub-districts covered by this area is 20 subdistricts, namely, the subdistricts of Teftnaz, Ehsem, Armanaz, Janudiyeh, Badama, Harim city, Maaret Tamsrin, Bennish, Sarmin, Al Dana, Darkosh, Salqin, Jisr-Ash-Shugur city, Qourqeena, Kafr Takharim, Mhambal, Idleb city, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Ariha, in addition to the sub-districts of Atareb, and Daret Azza in western Aleppo countryside, and Al-Ziyara subdistrict in western Hama countryside.
7. **Northern Countryside of Aleppo:** This geographical area is under the control of the Turkey-backed opposition forces. The number of sub-districts included in this area is 9: Akhtarin, Al-Ra'i, Tadef, Suran, Ghandoura, Mari', Al-Bab city, Azaz city, and Jarabulus city. Coordination with the Turkish authorities is required to work in this geographical area.
8. **Afrin:** This geographical area is under the control of the Turkey-backed opposition forces. The number of sub-districts included in this area is 7: Bulbul, Jindires, Rajo, Sharran, Sheikh Al-Hadid, Afrin city, and Maabatli. Coordination with the Turkish authorities is required to work in this geographical area.

Table 2 Information on the schools covered by the report according to the adopted division of areas

Analysis level	# of areas	# of districts	# of villages	Total school number	# of Operational schools	# of non-operational schools	% of operational schools	%of non-operational schools
Idleb	7	23	327	1,013	907	106	90%	10%
Al-Hasakeh	4	14	783	1,157	1,044	113	90%	10%
Ar-Raqqa	2	5	104	361	306	55	85%	15%
Deir ez-Zor	3	8	94	536	468	68	87%	13%
Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abiad	2	4	216	472	432	40	92%	8%
Eastern Countryside of Aleppo	2	5	357	477	452	25	95%	5%
Northern	3	10	212	474	464	10	98%	2%
Afrin	1	7	212	271	263	8	97%	3%
Grand Total	**23**	**76**	**2,299**	**4,761**	**4,336**	**425**	**91%**	**9%**

Map 2 The distribution of control forces during the data collection period.



2. Access

In northwestern Syria, IMU researchers have operated within regions controlled by opposition forces for numerous years, facilitating the collection of necessary data. Following signing memorandums of understanding with the free directorates of education responsible for overseeing the educational process, researchers gained access to the required information. However, authorities controlling Idleb Governorate declined researchers access to schools, impeding direct data collection. Consequently, researchers resorted to gathering data through interviews with educational and administrative staff outside school premises.

In northeastern Syria, the enumerators relied on their network to access schools and collect data covertly. Opinion Questionnaires were always conducted outside of schools.

3. Assessment Tools

The questionnaires utilized in this edition of the report draw upon the cumulative insights garnered from the previous eight editions of the "Schools in Syria" report. Notably, the IMU conducts workshops subsequent to each report's preparation, soliciting feedback and recommendations from stakeholders engaged in the education sector. Additionally, the team welcomes comments and suggestions via email. By integrating all received feedback from the questionnaires, the IMU endeavors to provide comprehensive information essential to partners within the education sector. The refinement of the final version of the tools occurred in two distinct phases:

Phase 1: The IMU crafted an initial draft of the questionnaires, encompassing a broad spectrum of topics relevant to the status and requirements of schools in northern Syria. Drawing from the questionnaire format of the 8th Edition of "Schools in Syria" (2022/2023), released the previous year, the Information Management Unit meticulously incorporated lessons gleaned from its preceding eight iterations in the design process.

This edition integrates four distinct opinion questionnaires tailored for students, parents, teachers, and school principals. The objective is to bolster the precision of monitoring the educational milieu and comprehensively capture the viewpoints of each societal segment regarding the education sector. Drawing upon established resources, certain questions utilized in studies related to the educational process have been adapted. These include queries from the educational section of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) questionnaires and surveys employed in the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) project. The IMU implemented this project under the supervision of the Manahel Program and Chemonics several years ago.

Phase 2: The assessment tools used in this study were applied and tested by assessing two schools in each of the six governorates covered. The IMU's enumerators were also tasked with filling out the surveys electronically in order to test the results. The IMU's information management officers received the data sample from the enumerators, imposed some restrictions that control the information, and conducted a comprehensive review of the tools used.

- **School Questionnaire**: Due to constraints prohibiting enumerators from conducting on-site visits to schools this year in some areas, completing the school questionnaire necessitated interviews with alternative sources of information outside of school premises. These alternative sources included administrative personnel, education offices in local councils, and other pertinent entities engaged in the education sector or related response endeavors. The information gathered encompassed a wide array of facets, including the prevailing controlling forces, security challenges, school-specific particulars, concerns related to teachers, issues pertinent to students (including those affecting

students with disabilities and orphans), as well as the availability of essential school supplies such as textbooks, school bags, and meals. Moreover, the assessment aimed to ascertain the primary priorities and needs of the schools under evaluation.

- **Students Survey:** This survey was crafted to directly elicit information from students on various aspects, encompassing safety conditions within school premises, details regarding caregivers at home, access to meals either before or during school hours, commitment levels to attending school, and whether they had experienced symptoms related to psychological, physical, social interaction, or self-awareness during the month leading up to data collection. IMU enumerators conducted the survey, selecting groups of one to three students from each school, where applicable. The surveyed students, randomly chosen across different age groups, totaled 6,261 and hailed from six governorates. Gender distribution among the surveyed students was approximately 43% female and 57% male. Moreover, roughly 82% of the surveyed children were from the host community, while 18% were internally displaced persons (IDPs). Additionally, 2% of the total surveyed children were identified as having disabilities.
- **Parents Survey:** The parents' survey was conducted by IMU enumerators through interviews with a randomized sample of parents with school-age children. Enumerators were tasked with surveying individuals from diverse social and economic backgrounds across various geographical locations. In total, 6,383 surveys were carried out among individuals with school-age children, including both enrolled and dropout cases, spanning six governorates. Of the parents surveyed, 39% were mothers, and 61% were fathers. Furthermore, 78% of respondents belonged to the host community, with 22% identified as internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- The survey of parents delved into details regarding their children's commitment to school attendance, reasons for non-attendance (if any), equality in treatment between IDPs and host communities, as well as preferences and opinions on adopted curricula. A comparative analysis was conducted between the current and pre-2011 education systems. Additionally, parents were asked to report if any of their children exhibited symptoms related to psychological well-being, physical health, interpersonal interactions, or self-awareness in the month leading up to the data collection.
- **Teachers Survey:** The IMU enumerators administered a survey involving one to three teachers currently employed in the schools included in the assessment. In total, 3,878 teachers across six governorates participated in the survey. The surveyed teachers comprised 44% females and 56% males. The questionnaire encompassed various aspects, including training courses related to emergencies, occurrences of older students bullying younger ones, perceptions of safety within schools, the impact of war on students, strategies for addressing diverse student groups (including internally displaced persons, host community members, and students with disabilities), addressing shortages of school supplies and services, discussions on salaries and incentives, evaluations of curricula, and efforts to address student-related issues.
- **Principal Survey**: Questionnaire interviews were conducted with 3,554 principals or vice principals in the assessed schools. Of the principals/vice principals surveyed, 25% were female, while 75% were male. The questionnaire delved into whether the principals had engaged in training courses related to emergency school management, teacher performance evaluation, monitoring daily attendance of teachers and students, addressing student dropouts, conducting meetings with parents, and managing school-related challenges.

4. Training of Enumerators and Data Collection

The IMU conducted comprehensive training for its network of 105 enumerators, spanning 12 hours over two days. Utilizing platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, enumerators were equipped with the necessary skills to collect data and complete questionnaires efficiently. These training sessions were recorded and made accessible to enumerators for future reference, enabling them to revisit the material as needed. Moreover, a two-day pilot phase for the questionnaires was incorporated into the training, allowing enumerators to gather firsthand observations through fieldwork. Subsequent adjustments to the questionnaires were made based on these observations. Furthermore, researchers were assigned to each sub-district to collect data, with the allocation determined by the population size of each area included in the study.

The network coordinators stationed at the Turkey office provided daily oversight for the data collection process. Enumerators were encouraged to consult with them whenever they encountered challenges or issues during their fieldwork. Each enumerator received an individualized work plan tailored to their assigned data collection area. In instances where schools were temporarily closed, enumerators were instructed to propose alternative data collection plans to ensure maximum coverage of schools on a daily basis, if feasible. Surveys were often conducted during suspension periods. In cases where two schools operated within the same building, data collection was streamlined by conducting a single interview with both schools' key informants, aiming to save time and minimize the need for multiple visits. In exceptional cases where enumerators gained access to schools, they conducted on-site visits accompanied by a school administration team. These visits allowed enumerators to observe the school environment, review records, and gain insight into its circumstances. Enumerators captured documentary photos to document their findings from the visited schools whenever possible.

5. Data Management and Analysis and Drafting the Report

The enumerators employed the ONA software to complete the questionnaires electronically. Subsequently, network coordinators oversaw the data reception and merged the collected information into an Excel database. Information management officers meticulously cleaned and verified data to identify outliers and missing values. They collaborated with the data collection team to rectify or update any incorrect or incomplete data, ensuring its accuracy and reliability. Following data cleaning, the IMU team commenced data visualization, utilizing software and tools such as Dax, Query Editor, ArcGIS, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, and Adobe Photoshop to create tables and charts. The initial draft of the report was written in English and subsequently translated into Arabic. It's worth noting that the report, in both languages, adheres to quality assurance standards in terms of preparation and content, both internally and externally.

6. Timetable for Drafting the Report

Preparations for the 9th edition of the "Schools in Syria" report commenced in December 2023, with data collection scheduled for the first semester of the 2023-2024 school year. The questionnaires underwent meticulous development, incorporating all suggested amendments provided by partners in the education sector. To address potential server pressure resulting from the extensive number of questionnaires collected (a total of 24,837 questionnaires were sent for drafting), data management and analysis officers programmed the questionnaires electronically using the ONA software, ensuring efficient data processing and analysis. Researchers underwent comprehensive training spanning two days, each consisting of six hours of online sessions conducted via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. This 12-hour training concluded on January 1, 2024. Subsequently, a two-day pilot phase commenced, during which enumerators submitted experimental data from all questionnaires and opinion surveys. Data management officers rigorously tested and verified the

received values. The data collection period extended from January 1, 2024, to February 12, 2024. Data and analysis officials initiated the identification and extraction of outliers and missing values, which were reviewed with the enumerators. Concurrently, maps for the report were generated as part of the analysis process. Following the data collection phase, the report drafting commenced in English and was later translated into Arabic. Subsequently, the Media Department undertook the design phase, culminating in releasing the final version in May 2024.

7. Difficulties and Challenges

The enumerators encountered various challenges during the data collection process for the current edition of the Syria Schools Report. The following are the main difficulties encountered by IMU enumerators in the field:

- Limited access to remote villages: Enumerators encountered difficulties in reaching certain villages, compounded by the extreme remoteness of their locations.
- High Transportation Costs: The high cost of transportation posed a significant challenge for enumerators, particularly when traveling to remote areas or covering long distances between survey sites.
- Schools in conflict areas: Operating in such environments presented safety concerns for the enumerators and required additional security measures or logistical arrangements to ensure their safety while collecting data.
- Security concerns and photo capture: Enumerators faced challenges capturing photos of schools or relevant infrastructure in some areas due to prevailing security threats.
- The data collection process was delayed due to insufficient cooperation from the education authorities in certain areas.

SECTION THREE
GENERAL INFORMATION

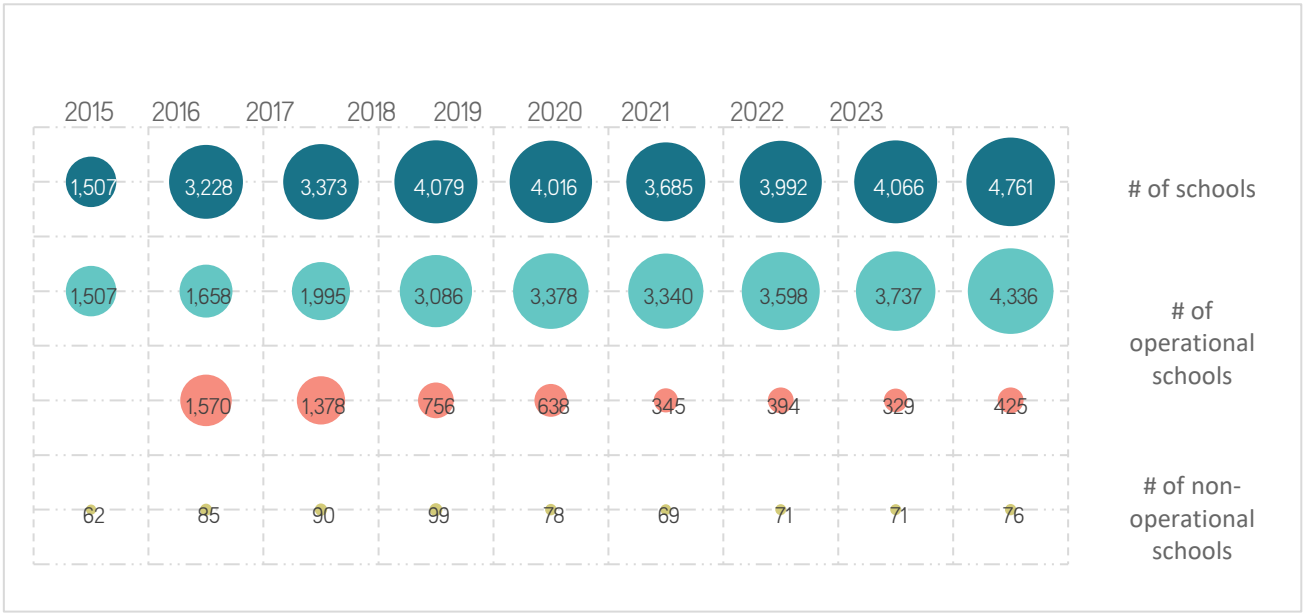
Section 3: General Information

1. Comparing the Numbers of Schools Covered in the Latest Five Editions of the Report

In the fourth edition[1] of the report, published in 2018, there was a notable increase in the number of schools covered compared to previous editions. The report encompassed a total of 4,079 schools, including 3,086 operational schools and 756 non-operational schools. These schools were located in 99 sub-districts across 10 governorates. In the fifth edition [2]of the report, released in 2019, the coverage included 4,016 schools, consisting of 3,378 operational schools and 638 non-operational schools. This edition encompassed 78 sub-districts within six governorates. In the subsequent sixth edition,[3] published in 2020, the number of schools covered was reduced to 3,685. This comprised 3,340 operational schools and 345 non-operational schools. The decrease in coverage was attributed to the regime gaining control over 125 cities and towns in Idleb governorate, as well as the corresponding countryside of Aleppo and Hama governorates. Consequently, these areas were excluded from the report, focusing on schools outside the regime's control. In the seventh edition[4] The report, published in 2021, covered 3,992 schools, 3,598 operational schools, and 394 non-operational schools. This edition encompassed schools located in 71 sub-districts across six governorates.

In the eighth edition[5] The report released in 2022 covered 4,066 schools, comprising 3,737 operational schools and 329 non-operational schools. This study edition covered schools in 71 sub-districts across six governorates in northern Syria. In the current ninth edition of the report, the coverage includes 4,761 schools, comprising 4,336 operational schools and 425 non-operational schools. This study edition covered schools in 76 sub-districts across six governorates in northern Syria.

Figure 1 The change in the coverage of schools during all editions of the report

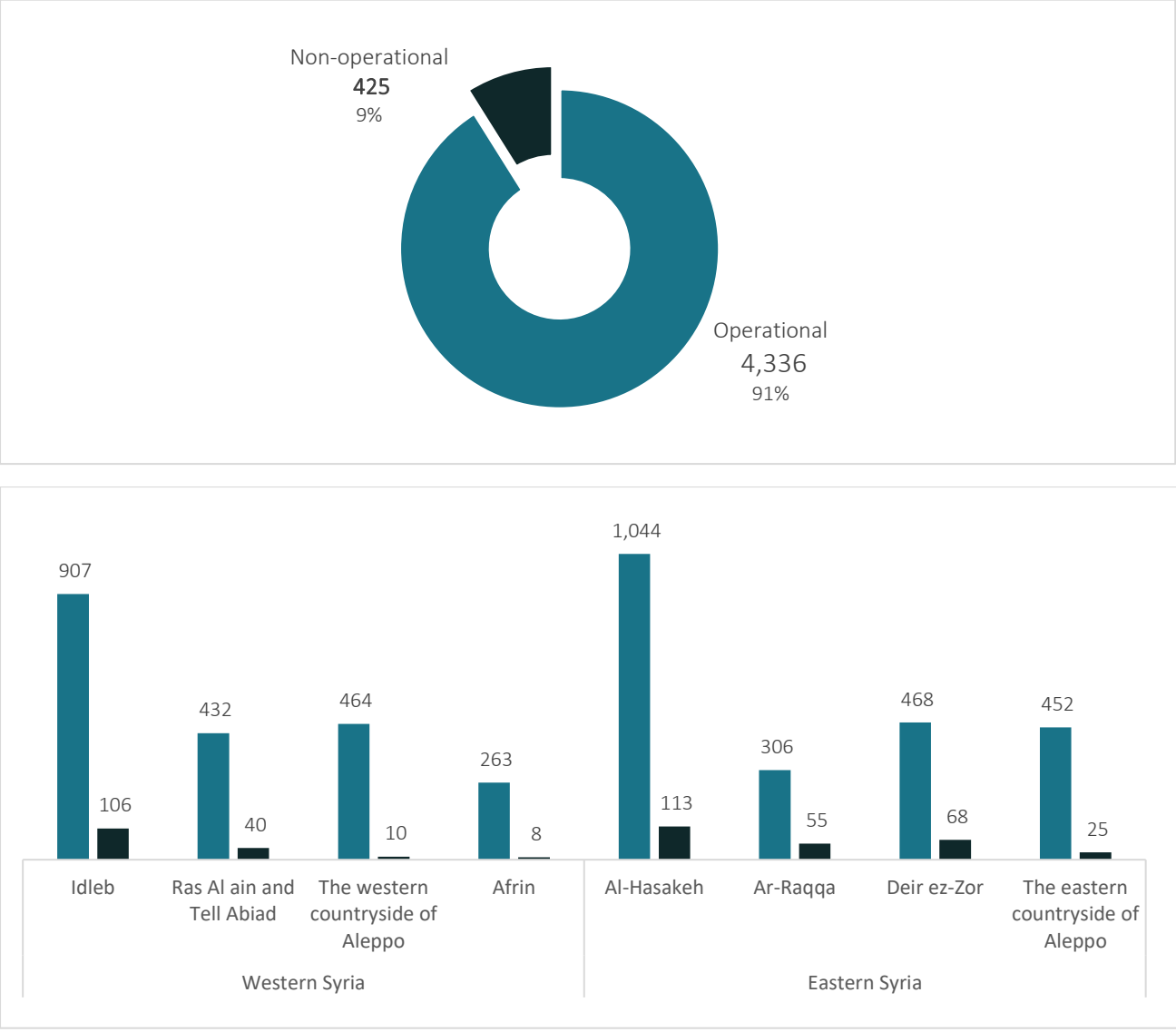


[1] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-2018/
[2] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria/
[3] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-syria-06-thematic-2021/
[4] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-07-thematic-2022/
[5] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-08-thematic-2023-en-2/

2. Numbers of Schools by Districts

Of the 4,761 schools examined in the report, 91% (4,336) were operational, while the remaining 9% (425) were non-operational. The report proceeds to explore the reasons behind the suspension of educational activities in these non-operational schools, which will be discussed in a dedicated section.

Figure 2 Number/Percentage of operational and non-operational schools



Al-Hasakeh governorate recorded the highest count of non-operational schools in northeast Syria, totaling 113. Deir ez-Zor governorate trailed behind with 68 non-operational schools.

Moving to northwestern Syria, Idleb governorate stood out with the highest number of non-operational schools, totaling 106. Following Idleb, Ras Al Ain and Tell Abiad each reported 40 non-operational schools.

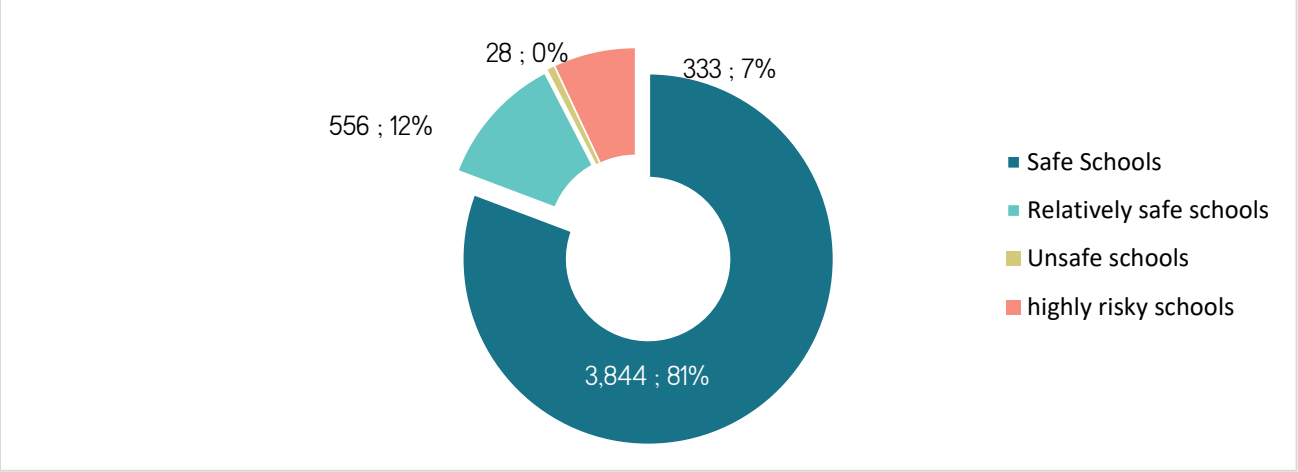
3. The Security Situation of Assessed Schools (Shelling and Clashes)

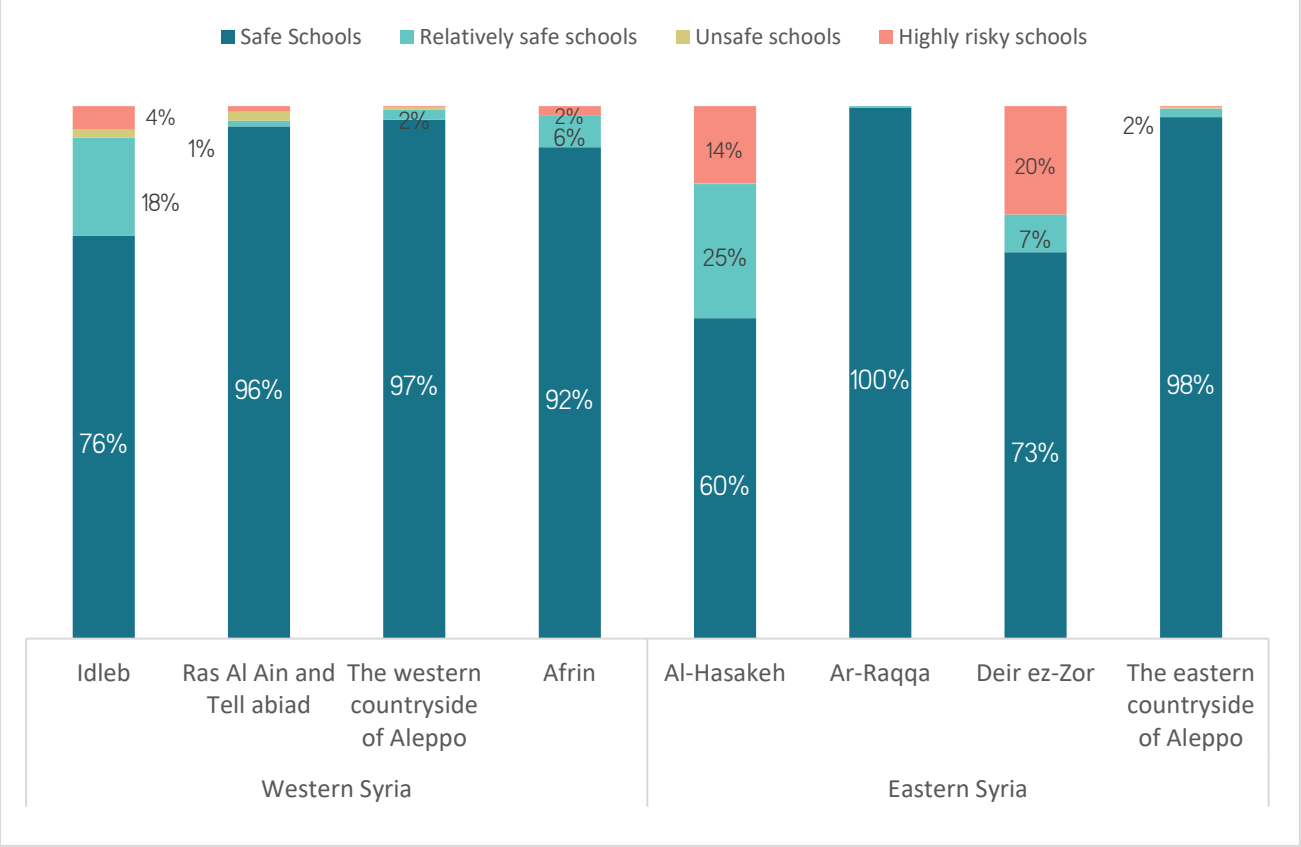
Schools in Syria are at risk of being targeted by both air and ground attacks, particularly those situated near conflict lines or within cities and towns experiencing military operations. The INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies go beyond safety and security standards within schools. While they address safety and security aspects, such as the availability of a school fence and proximity to communities, they also encompass broader aspects of education in emergencies. The IMU team in Syria developed a set of standards specific to the Syrian context to assess the safety of schools. These standards aim to determine the level of safety and security within schools, taking into consideration the unique challenges and risks faced in the Syrian context. Schools in Syria are classified into four levels based on the security situation: safe, relatively safe, unsafe, and highly risky. Below are definitions of all levels:

- In the study, schools were classified as "**safe**" when they were located in areas not exposed to shelling and away from the frontlines, ensuring students' lives were not endangered. It should not be documented in the school's history that it had been directly targeted by bombing.
- A school was categorized as **"relatively safe"** if it is situated in a sub-district that experiences sporadic shelling, with no more than one instance per month, and is located at a considerable distance from the frontlines. It should not be recorded in the school's history that it was exposed to any direct bombing. If a sub-district has experienced previous bombings, the safety level of schools in that area would be downgraded. This implies that students may face a higher risk of being exposed to bombings on the journey to school.
- Schools were categorized as **"unsafe"** if there was a documented history of direct targeting or bombing incidents specifically aimed at the school. Such incidents pose a significant risk to the safety of schoolchildren, making access to education a difficult endeavor. The intensity of bombing in the sub-district where a school is located varied, ranging from no shelling to intermittent shelling and clashes. If a school had been bombed at least once in the past, it increased the likelihood of being targeted again. In some cases, previously targeted areas were kept in records to be targeted again in the future.
- Schools are categorized as **"highly risky"** if direct bombings have previously targeted them or if they are located in sub-districts that experience constant bombings and clashes.

Based on the specified criteria, the assessment determined that 81% (3,844 schools) of the evaluated schools were classified as 'safe,' meaning students were not exposed to war-related dangers. Additionally, 12% (556 schools) were considered 'relatively safe.' In contrast, 28 schools were deemed 'unsafe,' and 7% (333 schools) were identified as 'highly risky,' with students at significant risk of bombings.

Figure 3 Numbers/ Percentage of the assessed schools by the security situation (shelling and clashes)





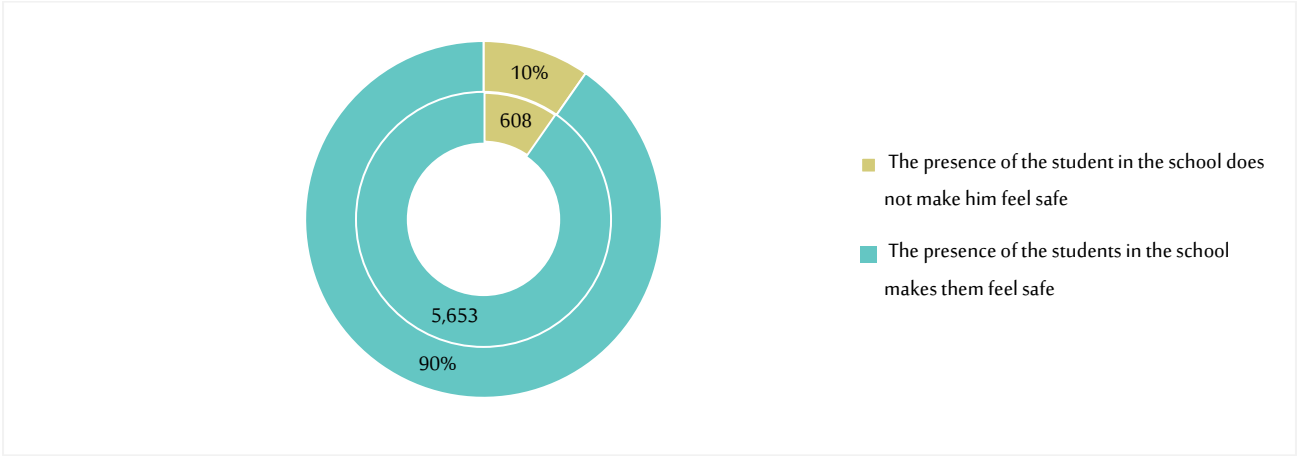
In Idleb governorate, the study revealed that 4% (45 schools) of the schools were classified as highly risky, with the lives of students endangered due to daily shelling of cities and towns, including direct targeting of schools. Additionally, 1% (15 schools) were deemed unsafe, 16% (187 schools) were considered relatively safe, and 73% (766 schools) were classified as safe within Idleb governorate. In Afrin sub-district, the study revealed that less than 2% (5 schools) were classified as highly dangerous, posing a risk to the lives of students due to shelling and bombings in the region. Additionally, 6% (16 schools) were categorized as relatively safe, while the majority, 92% (250 schools), were considered safe.

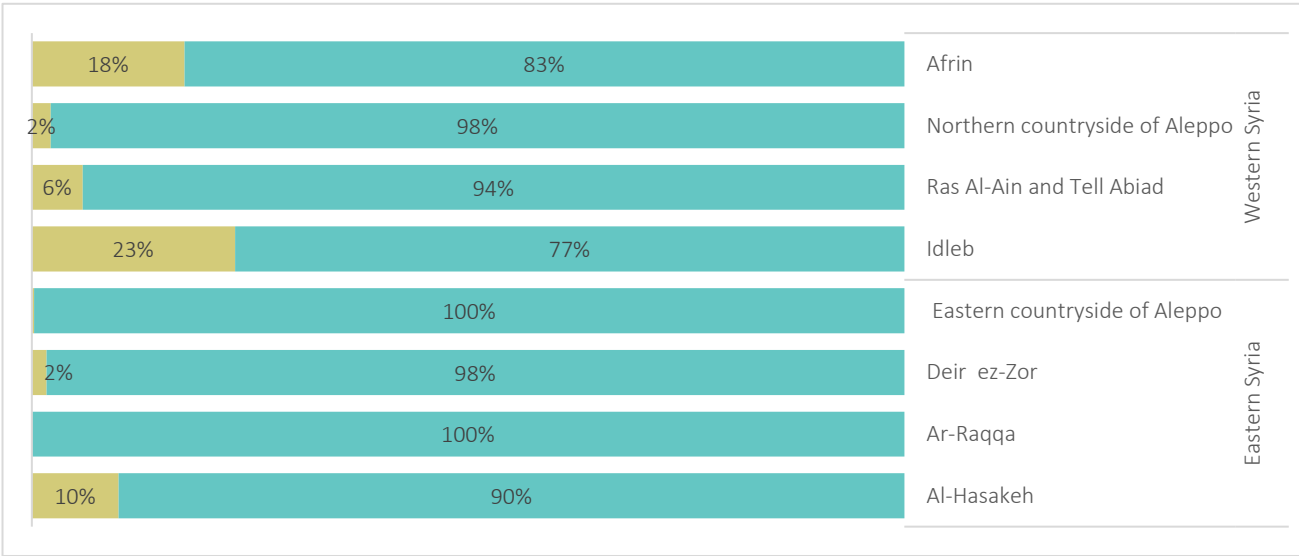
In Al-Hasakeh governorate, the study revealed that 24% (292 schools) were classified as relatively safe, indicating moderate student safety. Additionally, two schools were categorized as unsafe, posing risks to students, and one was deemed highly risky. However, the majority, 60% (696 schools), were considered safe within Al-Hasakeh governorate.

4. Student Survey: Feeling Safe While at School

During surveys conducted by IMU enumerators, students were asked to express their feelings regarding safety at school.10% (608[6] students) reported feeling unsafe at school.

Figure 4 Number/Percentage of students surveyed by their feeling safe in schools



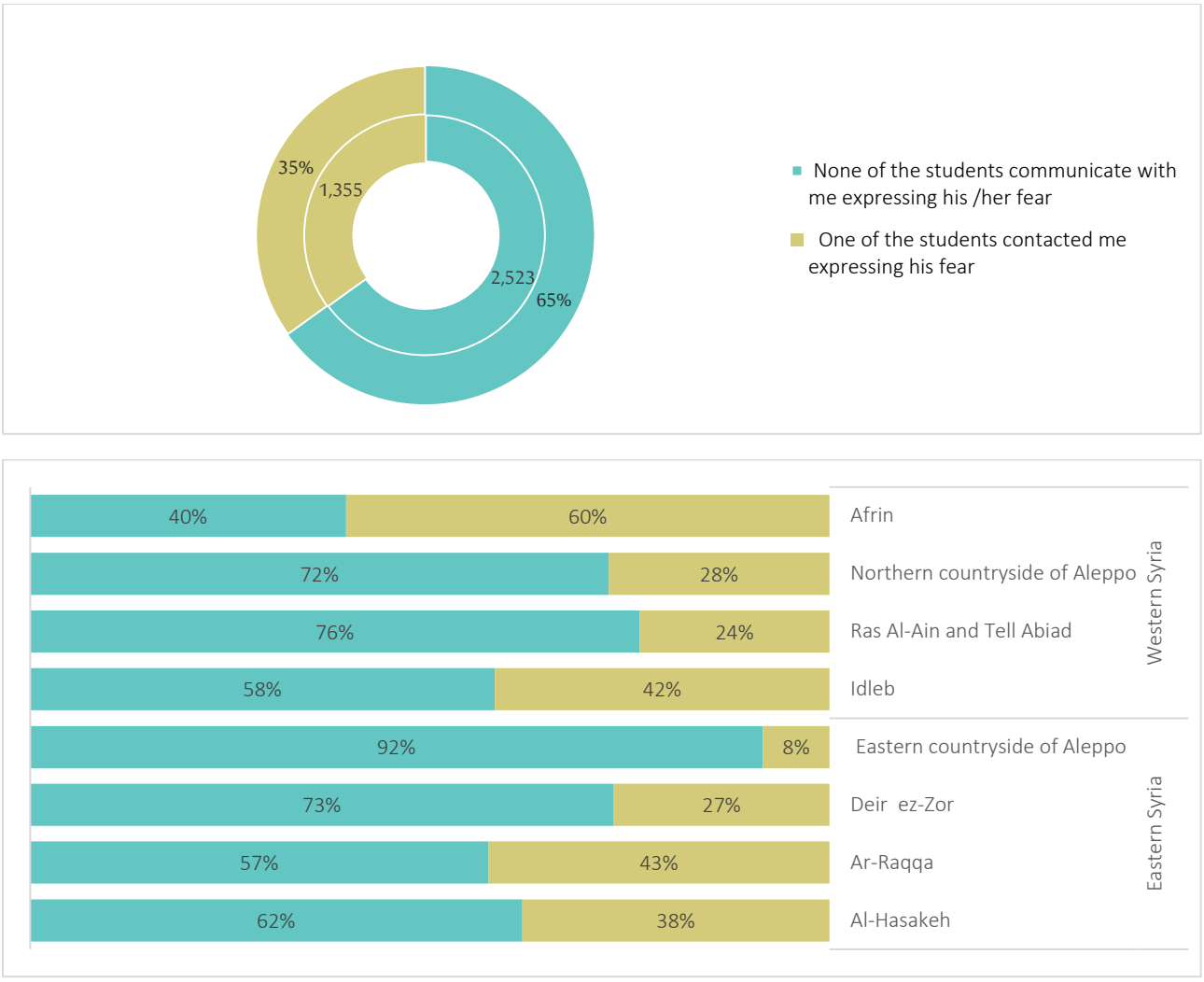


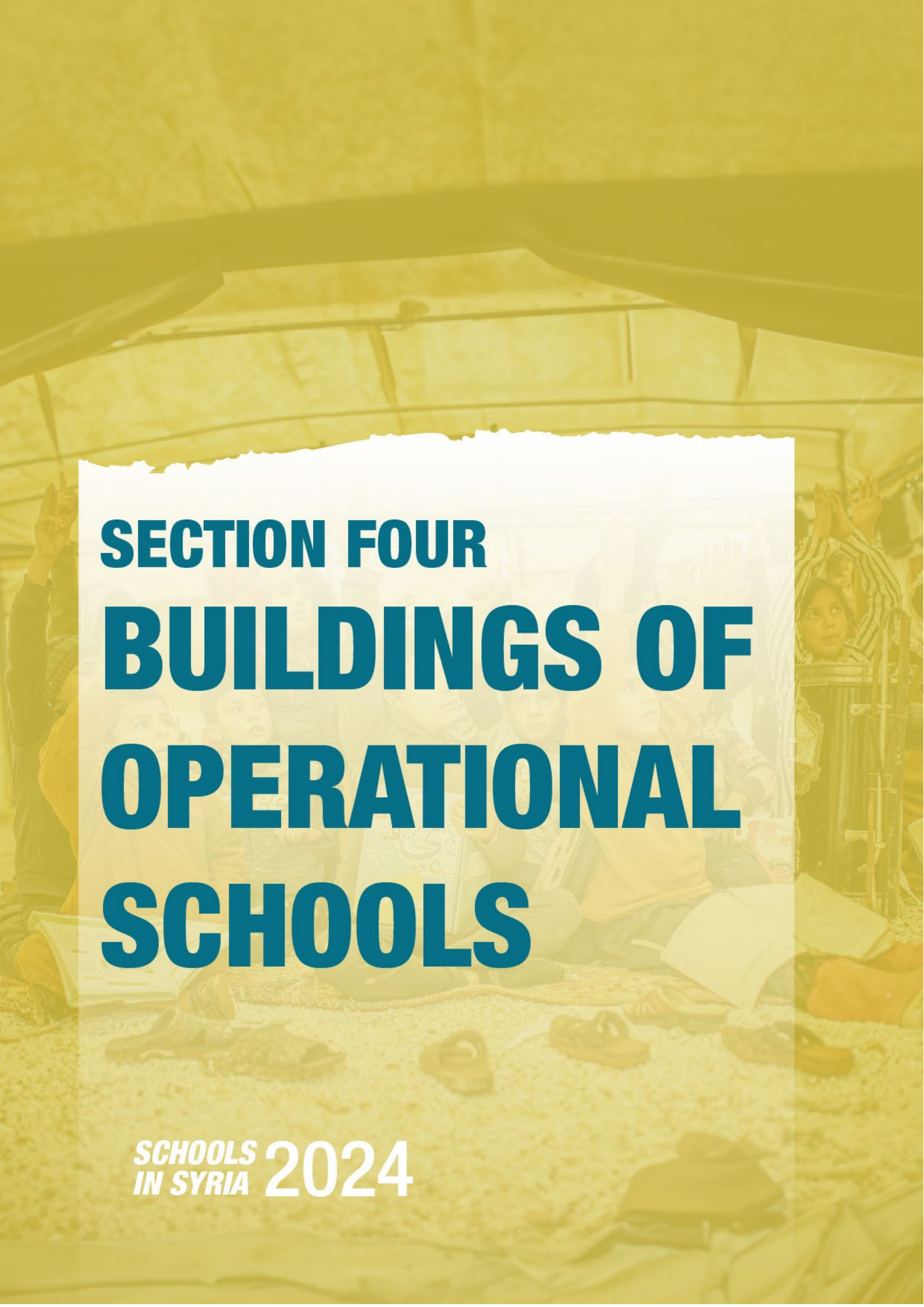
[6] IMU enumerators conducted a survey with 6,261 children aged 6-18 years in and out of school in 6 governorates. Females constituted 43% of the children, males 57% of the children, and 2% of the children surveyed had a disability.

5. Teacher Survey: Students' Feelings of Insecurity at School

During the interviews conducted with teachers, enumerators inquired whether students conveyed a sense of insecurity while on school premises. Of the respondents, 35% (1,355 teachers) indicated that students felt unsafe within the school environment, whereas 65% (2,523 teachers) stated that students did not express such sentiments. The fact that students confided their feelings of insecurity to their teachers underscores a notable level of fear and anxiety among the student body.

Figure 5 Number/Percentage of teachers surveyed by students feeling safe in schools.





SECTION FOUR

BUILDINGS OF OPERATIONAL SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 4: Buildings of Operational Schools

1. Distribution of Operational Schools

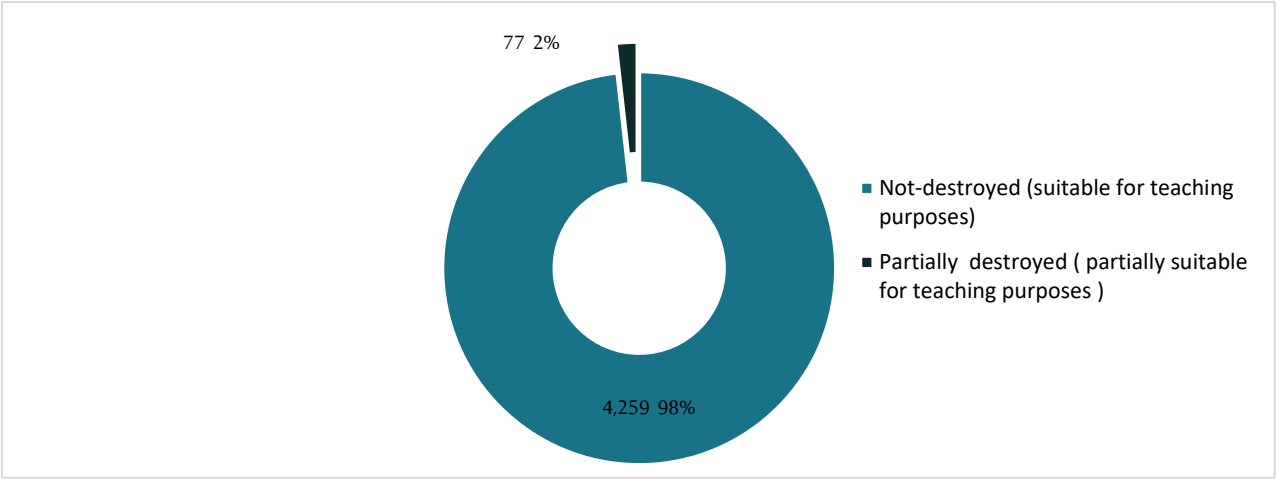
Most assessed schools were operational, totaling 4,336, representing 91% of all evaluated schools. This figure encompasses 2,066 schools in northwest Syria and 2,270 schools in northeast Syria.

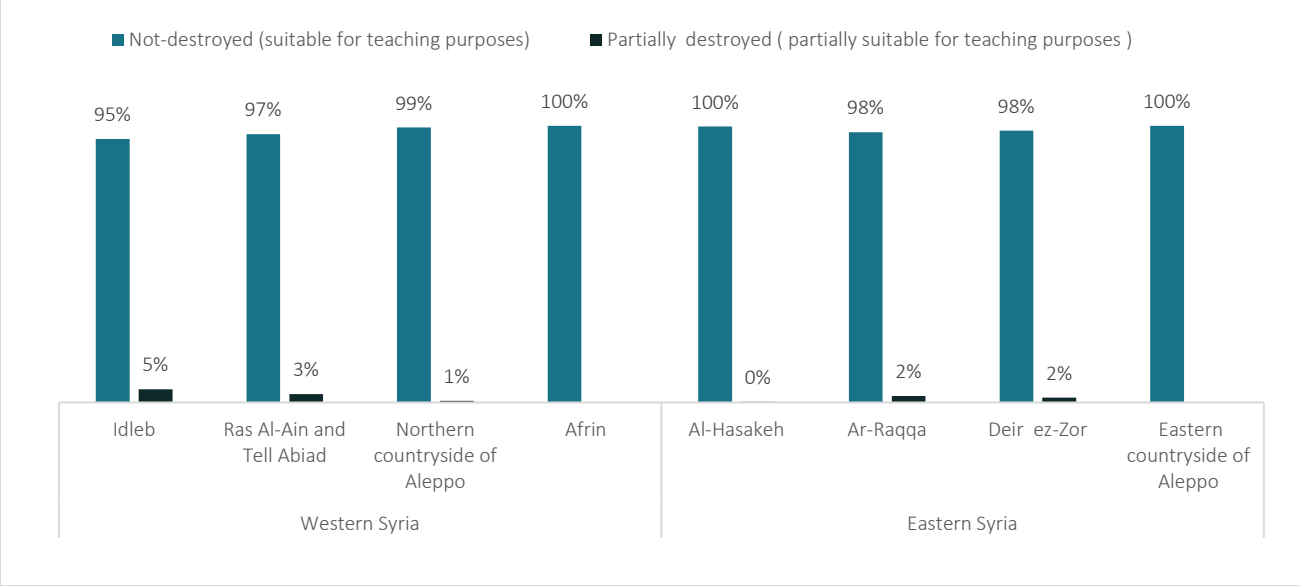
Figure 5 Number/Percentage of operational schools according to distribution

2. Condition of Operational School Buildings

There are a large number of schools that were bombed or destroyed as a result of their use for non-educational purposes or neglect after the outbreak of the war in Syria, and due to a large number of IDPs in northern Syria, students and teaching staff are forced to use some partially destroyed schools. The study found that 2% (77 schools) of the schools used for education were partially destroyed, while 98% (4,259 schools) were not.

Figure 6 Number/Percentage of operating schools by construction status



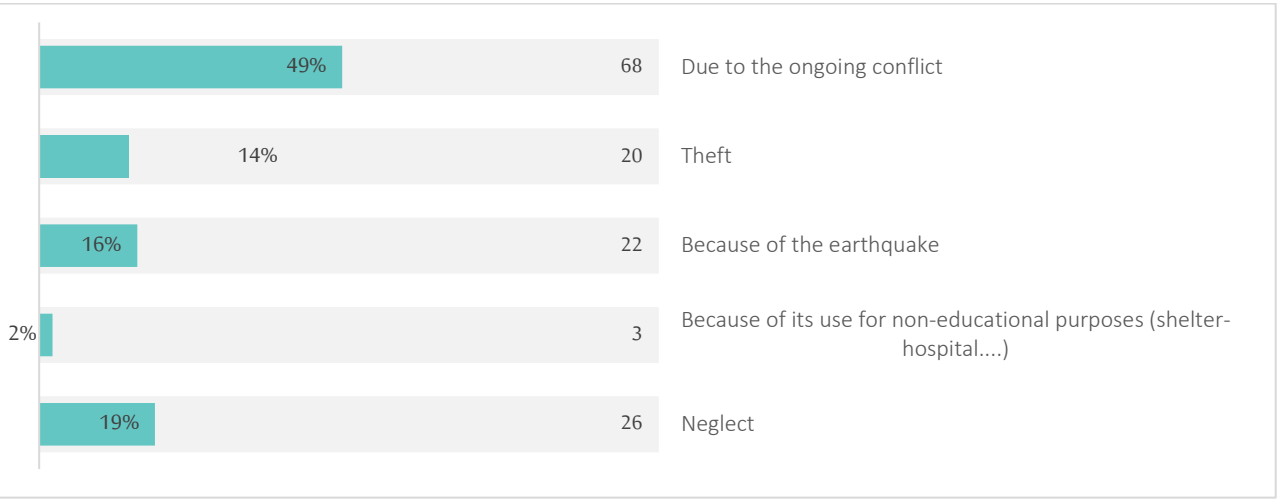


In northwestern Syria, Idleb Governorate has the highest proportion of partially destroyed schools still in use for education, accounting for 5% of the total assessed schools. Conversely, the northern countryside of Aleppo only has 1% of partially destroyed schools. The study's findings reveal that in the northeastern region of Syria, particularly in Ar-Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor governorates, an equal proportion of partially destroyed schools, totaling 98%, are still utilized for education. In each of these governorates, the percentage of partially destroyed schools stands at 2% of the total schools assessed.

Due to their proximity to conflict zones, schools located in areas affected by conflict face an elevated risk of being targeted by bombings. Consequently, these educational institutions may be in disrepair or abandoned, with valuable resources like equipment and supplies being robbed or damaged. Moreover, there are instances where schools are repurposed for non-educational purposes, exacerbating the challenge of accessing education for students. Hence, attributing the destruction of schools to a singular cause is inadequate, as these institutions are exposed to many factors contributing to their demise. In this study, key informants were consulted to discern the predominant reasons behind school destruction or the factors accounting for the largest portion of devastation.

According to the study, a significant portion of schools in Syria have been destroyed due to different reasons. The data reveals a spectrum of destruction affecting schools in the study area. Among the identified causes, neglect or abandonment due to displacement is notable, impacting 26 schools, representing 19% of the total. Additionally, repurposing for non-educational uses, such as shelters or hospitals, is evident in 3 schools, constituting 2% of the total. Earthquakes have left their mark on 22 schools, representing 16% of the total, while theft has affected 20 schools, comprising 14%. However, the most prevalent cause of destruction is the ongoing conflict, which has impacted 68 schools, accounting for 49% of the total. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of school destruction in the study area, with conflict emerging as the primary contributor, as highlighted by key informants.

Figure 7 Number/Percentage of partially destroyed operational schools according to the causes of destruction



3. Types of Operational Schools (Regular School - Other)

Preceding the onset of current events, Syria's educational framework encompassed two distinct categories: regular schools and rural schools. However, a new category of educational establishments has emerged due to wartime conditions and civilian displacement: temporary educational spaces or schools.

- **Regular schools:** These are schools whose buildings are planned and constructed to be schools, and they shall meet a set of criteria, including:
  - The capacity of the building should be proportional to the number of students enrolled.
  - Yards (open recreational spaces) shall be available, surrounded by a fence to protect students from external dangers. The size of the yards shall be commensurate with the number of students, and they shall be equipped for recreational activities.
  - There should be toilets and water taps commensurate with the number of students attending the school.
  - The building ceilings shall be high and have large windows facilitating classroom ventilation. Windows shall be protected by metal bars to protect children.
  - It shall have wide corridors and stairs to facilitate movement.
  - Rooms that contain means to support the educational process, such as laboratories, libraries, and computer labs (this condition shall be met starting from the second cycle of basic education).

- **Rural schools:** Before the conflicts, Syria had rural schools primarily located in small villages where there weren't enough students to warrant the construction of a conventional school building. Rural schools were typically comprised of multiple rooms within a rural house, and their primary objective was to provide easy access to education for children in the early stages of primary education (grades 1-6) to prevent them from dropping out. Due to inadequate numbers of teachers and classrooms, rural schools often combine students from various grades into a single classroom.

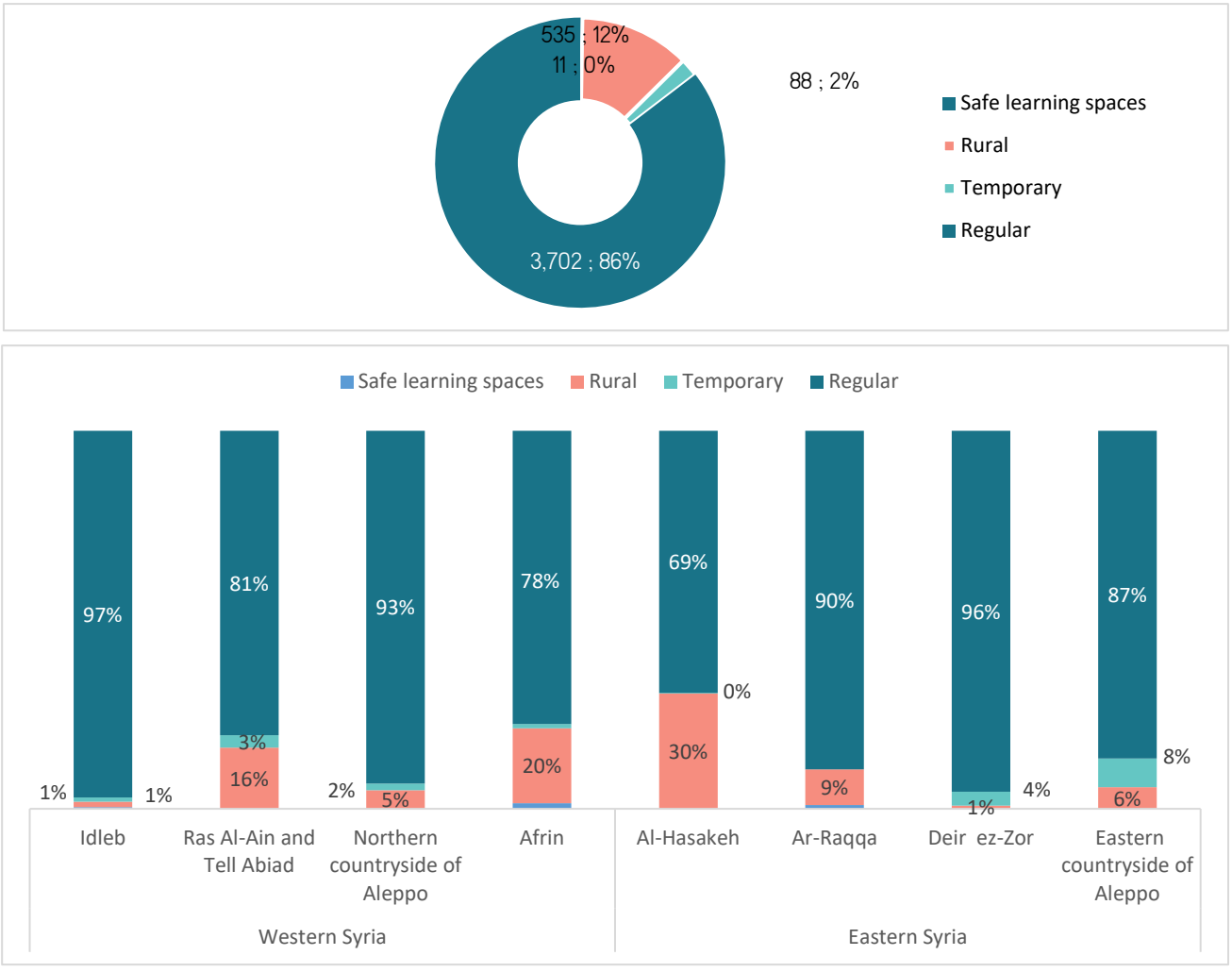
- **Temporary schools:** Temporary educational spaces were established in response to the ongoing displacement of civilians and services to meet the educational needs of displaced children who may have to stay in a particular location for a short period until it becomes safe to return home or until regular schools become available in their new place of settlement. These schools often take the form

of tents or caravans, and sometimes a room is set up in a house close to where the displaced communities are located and taken as a temporary school for children. These schools are often suited to the conditions of rural schools in combining several stages of education into a single classroom.

- **Safe educational places:** Alternative spaces are utilized for educational purposes in areas heavily bombed or close to conflict zones. These spaces often include basements of residential or other buildings converted into safe, educational places. These basements provide a relatively safer environment for students and teaching staff, reducing the risks to their lives in case their towns come under attack. They are also located near students' residences, so students avoid long distances in bombed-out cities and towns.

In the area, the distribution of school types varies significantly. Safe educational places, comprising 11 schools, represent a minute fraction of the total, making up less than 1% of the educational landscape. Rural schools, on the other hand, are more prevalent, with 535 establishments accounting for approximately 12% of the total. Temporary schools, providing essential education services in times of flux, constitute 88 schools, or roughly 2% of the educational infrastructure. The vast majority of schools, totaling 3,702 establishments, fall under the category of regular schools, representing a significant 86% of the educational institutions in the area.

Figure 8 Number/Percentage of operational schools by type



4. The Availability of Safety and Security Standards within Schools

According to the INEE Minimum Standards for Education, "The maximum distance between learners and their learning sites should be defined according to local and national standards. It is important to consider security, safety, and accessibility concerns such as soldiers' quarters, landmines, and dense bush in the vicinity." *Learners, parents, and other community members should be consulted about the location of learning spaces and potential dangers*."

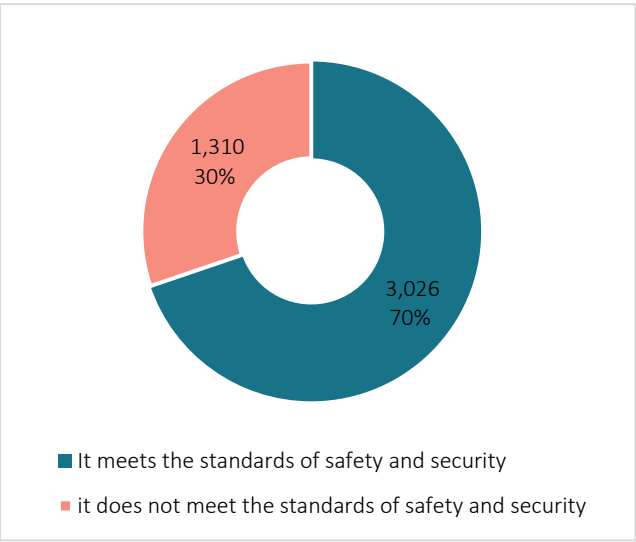
The standards for safe, educational spaces included the absence of building destruction that poses risks to students, the presence of a protective fence, and the use of metal bars to secure windows. The school should accommodate over 61% of students and provide a safe road that does not put their lives at risk.

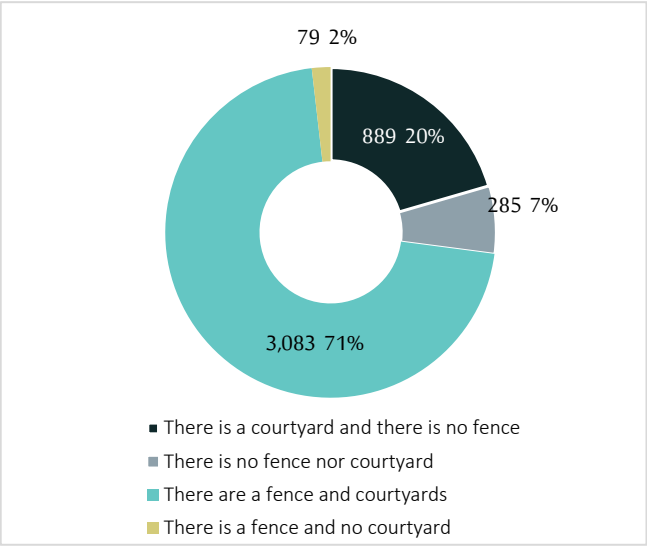
Regular schools should have a schoolyard as a fundamental requirement, providing a safe outdoor recreational area where students can rest, engage in sports, and participate in other non-classroom activities. The size of the schoolyard should be adequate and proportional to the number of students, considering their needs and the school's capacity. Additionally, it is important to surround the schoolyard with high fences to ensure the safety of children and protect them from external risks.

Based on safety and security standards included in the INEE Minimum Standards for Education, only 70% (3,026 schools) of the assessed operational schools met these standards, and 30% (1,310 schools) did not meet them.

The study revealed that 889 spaces (20%) feature yards but lack protective fences. Another 285 spaces (7%) have neither yards nor fences. Most spaces, totaling 3,083 (71%), boast yards and fences, providing enhanced student security and recreational areas. Conversely, a smaller proportion of spaces, numbering 79 (2%), are equipped with fences but lack accompanying yards. In total, there are 4,336 available spaces, each with its unique configuration catering to the diverse needs of educational settings.

Figure 9 Number/Percentage of schools that meet safety and security standards



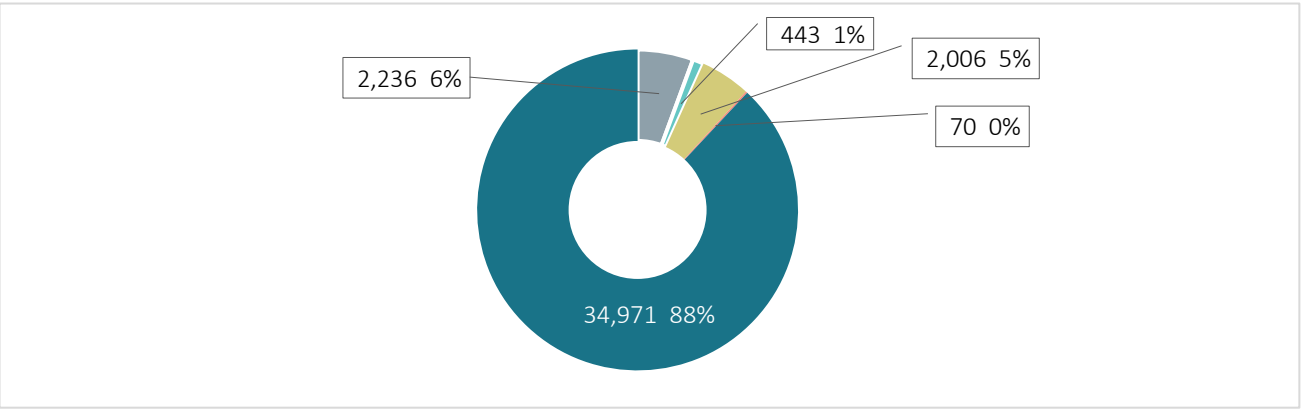


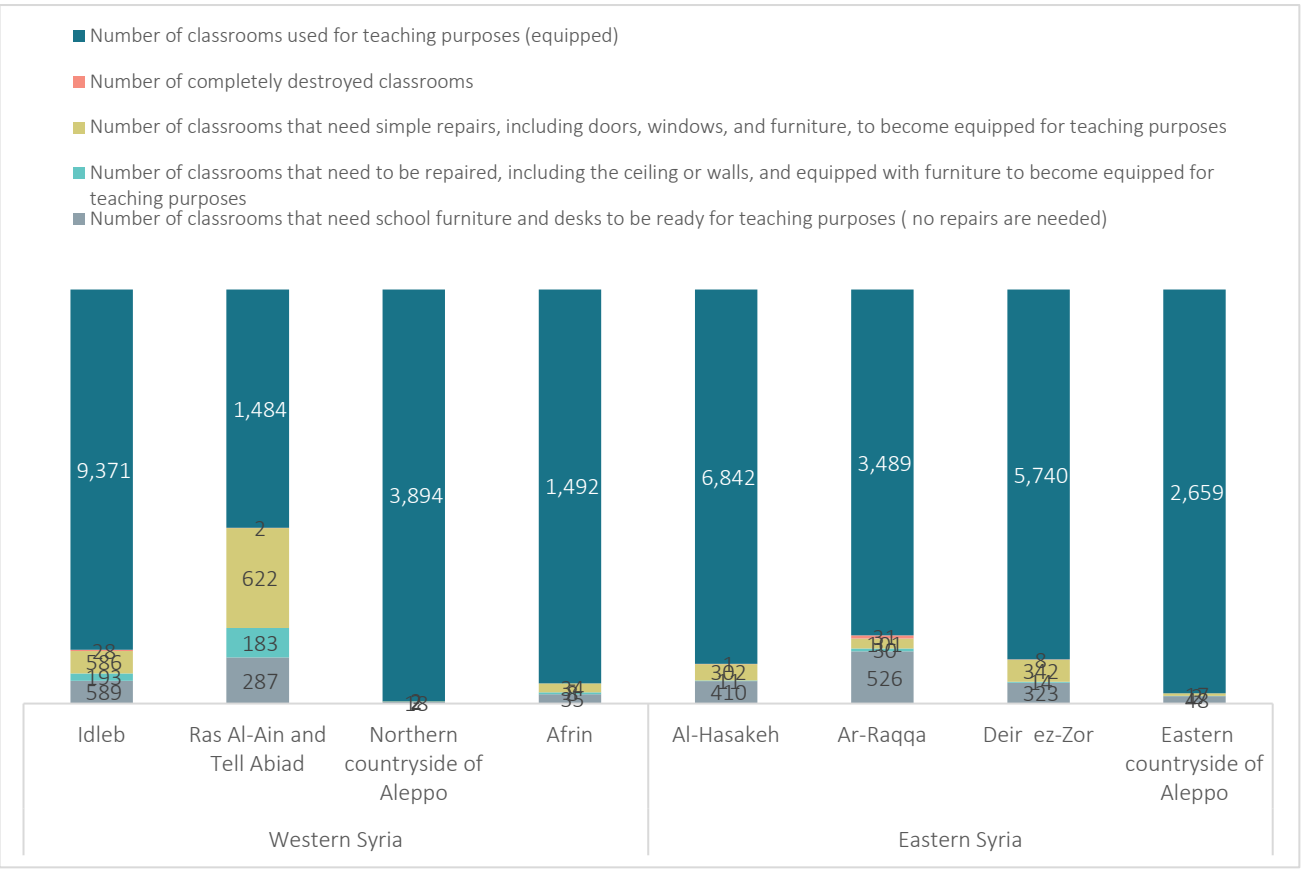
5. Condition of Classrooms

In the context of this study, classrooms are considered 'appropriately equipped' for the educational process if they meet certain criteria, including not being destroyed, having appropriate doors and windows, and being equipped with essential educational items such as desks and whiteboards.

The study found that within operational schools, 6% (2,236 rooms) of classrooms were appropriately equipped and ready for teaching without requiring any repair. In comparison, 1% (443 rooms) needed repairs, including ceiling or wall fixes and furniture provision, to become fully equipped for teaching. Additionally, 5% (2,006 rooms) required minor repairs such as windows, doors, and furniture provision to be prepared for teaching. Furthermore, 0.2% (70 rooms) of classrooms were completely destroyed and beyond repair. However, 88% (34,971 rooms) of classrooms were currently being used for teaching purposes and were fully equipped. The total number of classrooms assessed in the study amounted to 39,726.

Figure 10 Number/Percentage of classrooms by their readiness for education





In northwestern Syria, focusing on Idlib, 24% of classrooms require only school furniture, while 11% need ceilings, walls, and furniture repairs. Similarly, in Ras al-Ain and Tell Abyad, 11% of classrooms need furniture only, and 7% need repairs.

In northeastern Syria, particularly in Hassakeh, 5% of classrooms require only furniture, and in Raqqa, 7% need minor repairs. Deir ez-Zor shows 5% needing furniture only and 6% requiring minor repairs.

6. The Situation of Doors and Windows

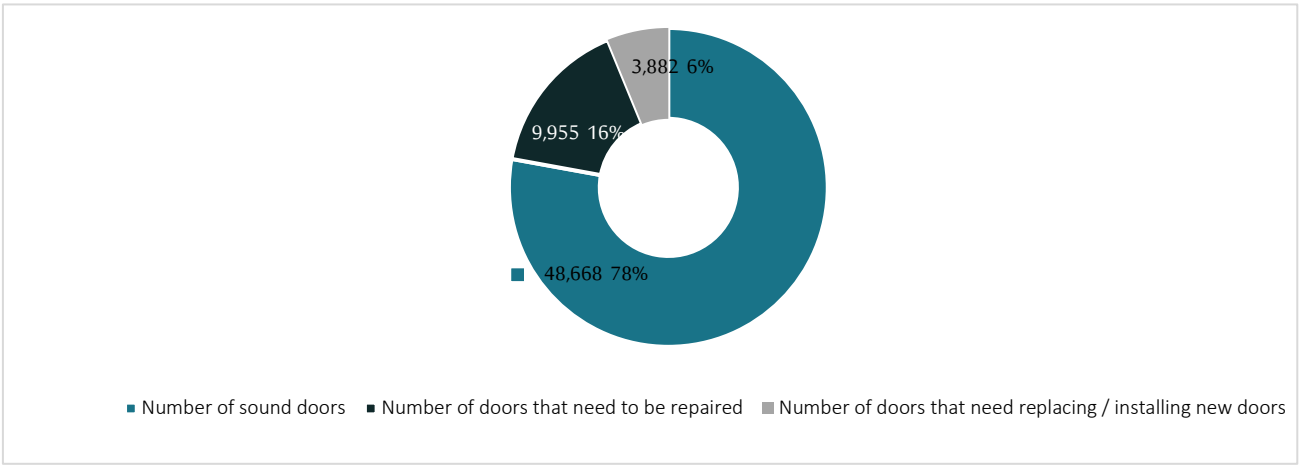
Classroom doors in Syria are commonly constructed from wood, rendering them susceptible to damage. Typically, these doors undergo periodic maintenance and replacement every few years. However, with the onset of war, the destruction of school facilities has escalated due to shelling and the diversion of schools for non-educational purposes. This has notably reduced the lifespan of classroom doors. In Syria, school windows primarily consist of glass, allowing sunlight to illuminate classrooms alongside wood or metal components. These windows necessitate regular maintenance, including glass replacement and upkeep of joints and locks. Wooden windows require more frequent attention to joints and locks compared to metal ones.

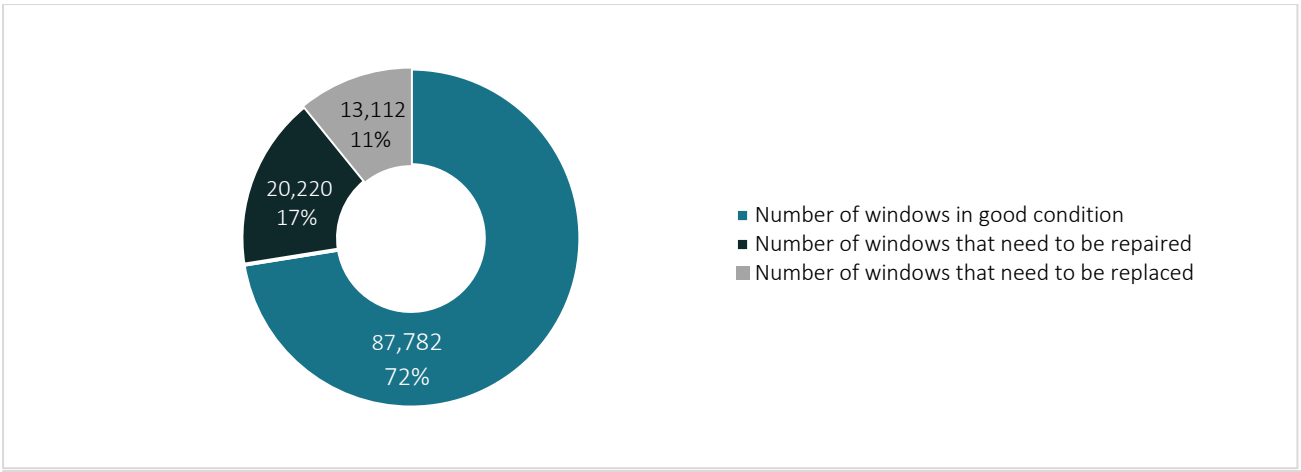
Moreover, windows, composed of fragile materials like glass and plastic, are more prone to damage than doors. They are exposed to external elements such as sunlight and humidity, particularly in conflict zones where nearby explosions can cause glass breakage or complete destruction. Continuous maintenance efforts are essential to ensure window safety, which is crucial for providing warmth to children during winter.

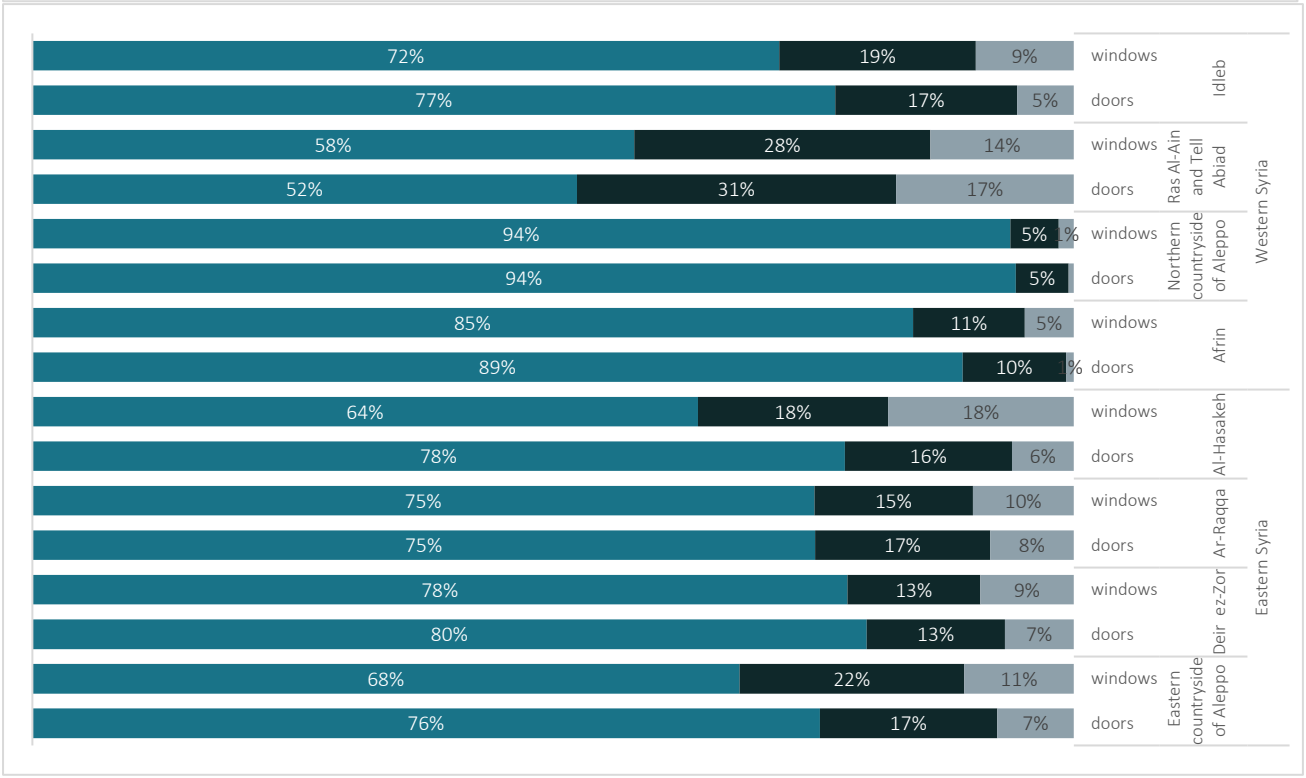
Based on the assessment, about 16% of the doors (9,955) need repairs, while approximately 6% (3,882) require replacement or installation of new doors.

Based on the assessment, around 17% of the windows (20,220) need repair, while about 11% (13,112) require replacement.

Figure 11 The status of doors and windows within the assessed schools



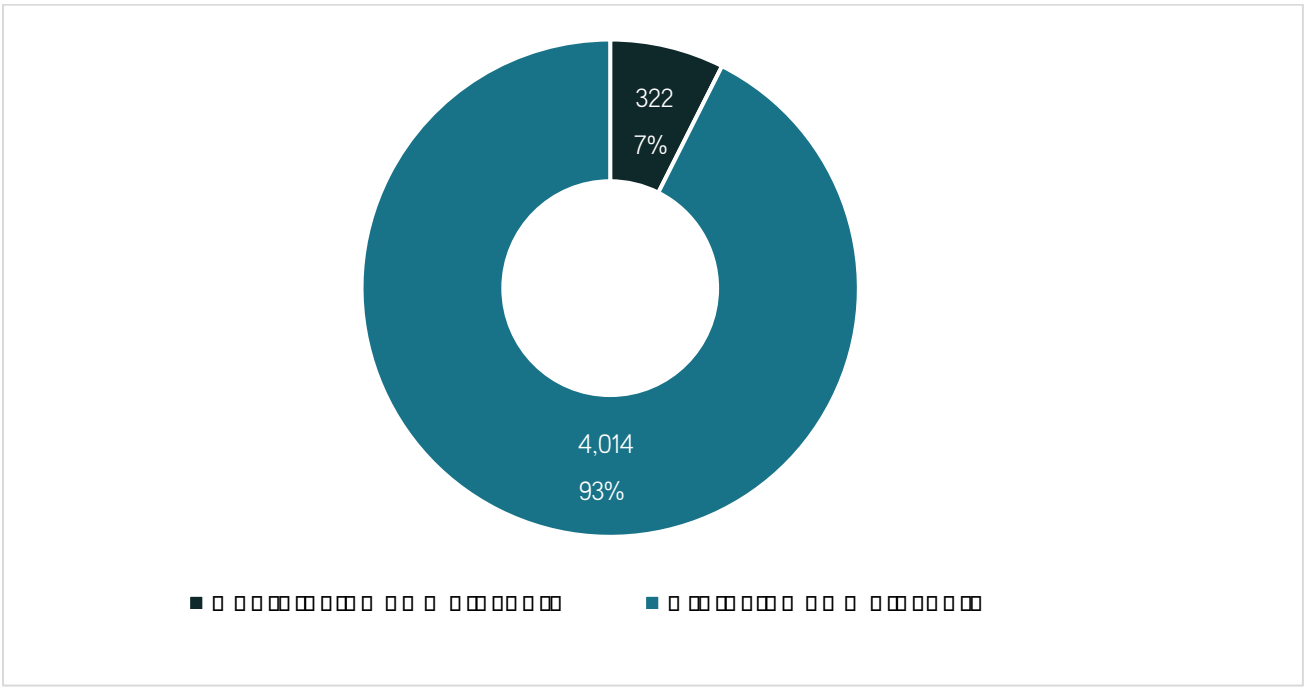

13,112
11%
20,220
17%
87,782
72%
Number of windows in good condition
Number of windows that need to be repaired
Number of windows that need to be replaced

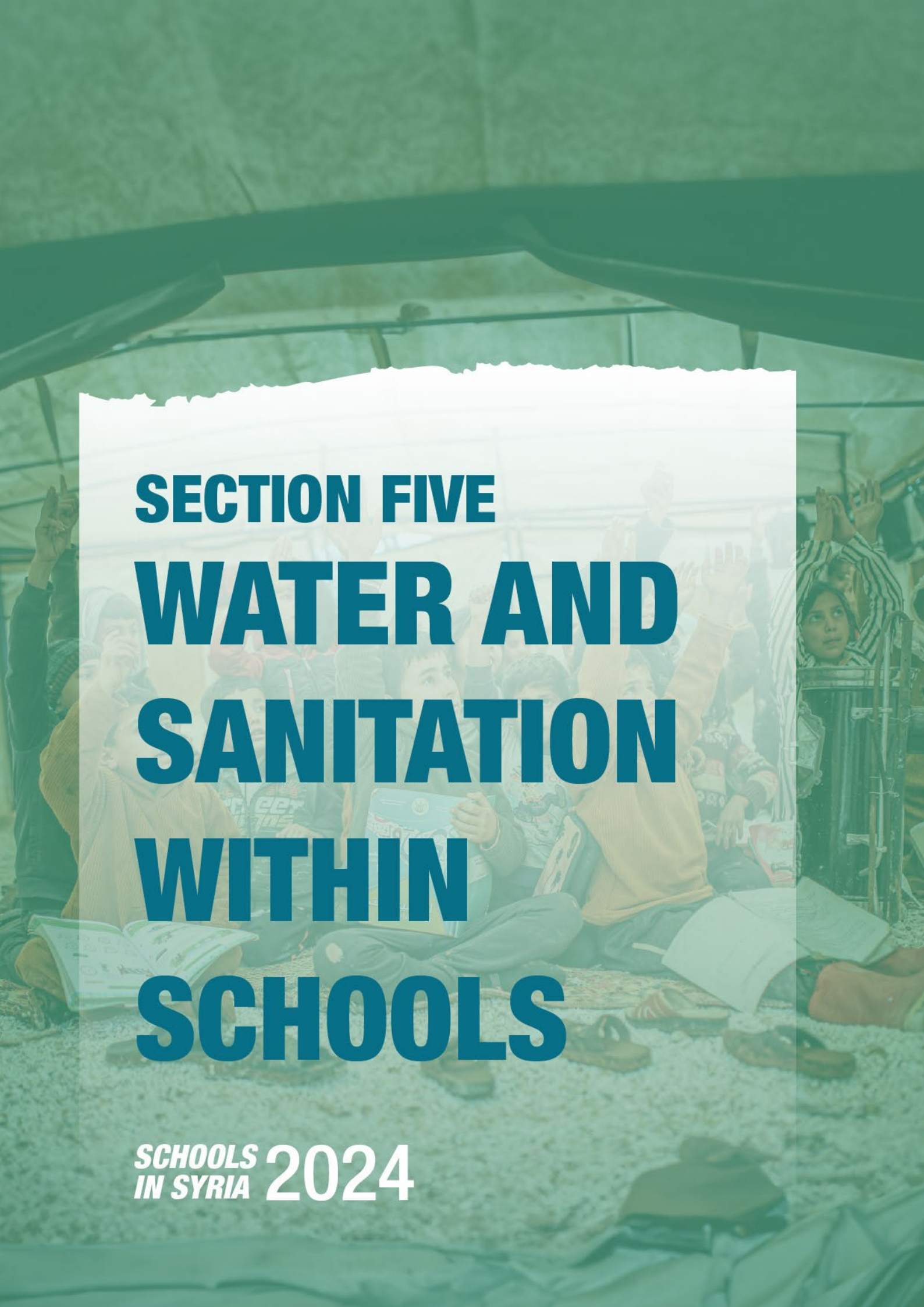

72% 19% 9% windows Idleb
77% 17% 5% doors
58% 28% 14% windows Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abiad
52% 31% 17% doors
94% 5% 1% windows Northern countryside of Aleppo
94% 5% doors
85% 11% 5% windows Afrin
89% 10% 1% doors
64% 18% 18% windows Al-Hasakeh
78% 16% 6% doors
75% 15% 10% windows Ar-Raqqa
75% 17% 8% doors
78% 13% 9% windows Deir ez-Zor
80% 13% 7% doors
68% 22% 11% windows Eastern countryside of Aleppo
76% 17% 7% doors
Western Syria
Eastern Syria

7. The Presence of Metal Bars to Protect the Windows

According to the study, 93% (4,014 schools) of the operational schools evaluated had metal bars installed on their windows. These bars served to safeguard students from external hazards and reduce the risk of accidents, such as falls from upper levels during recreational activities. However, 7% (322) of the schools assessed lacked this protective measure on their windows.

Figure 12 Materials covering the windows and the presence of metal bars to protect them





SECTION FIVE

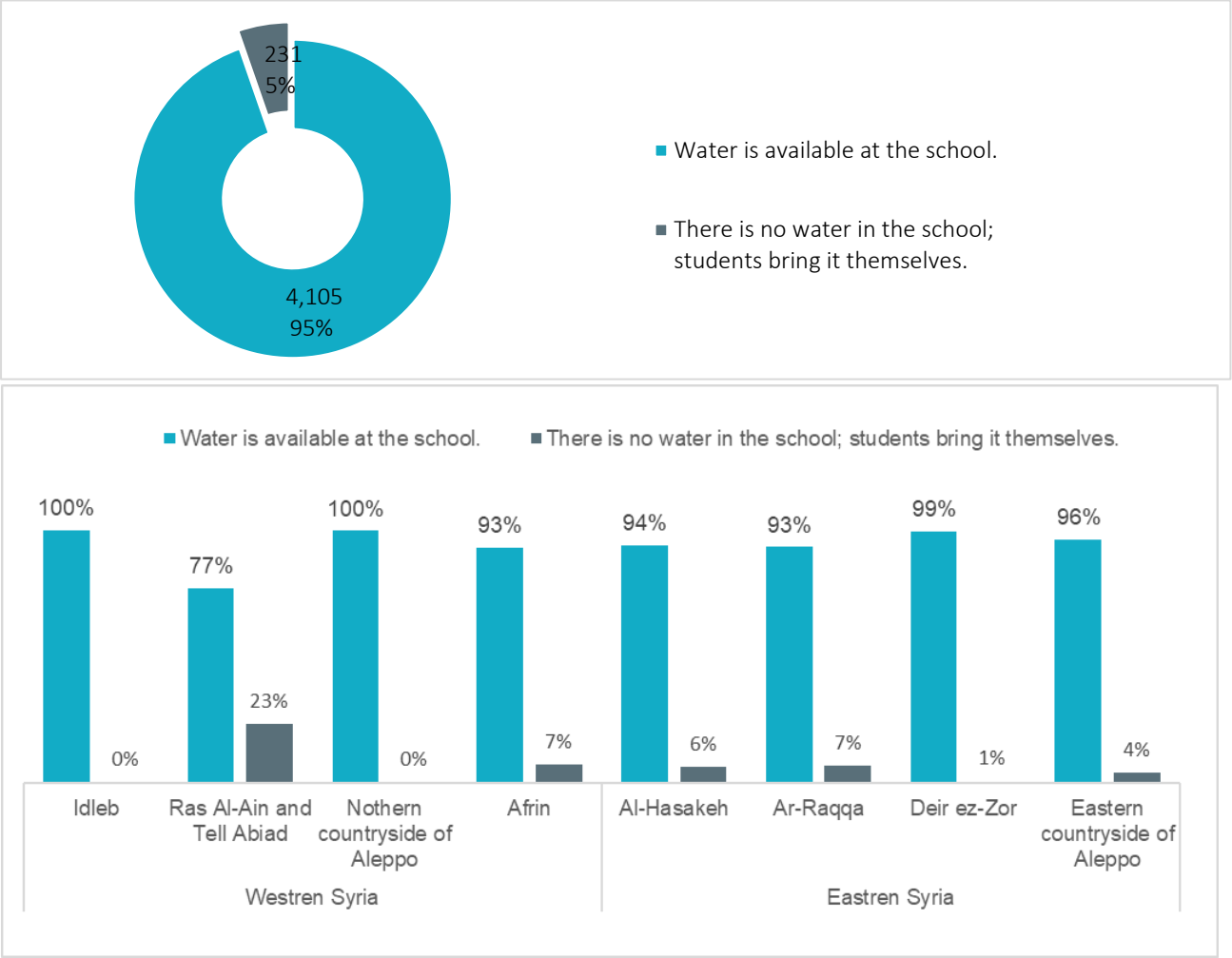
WATER AND SANITATION WITHIN SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 5: Water and Sanitation within Schools

1. Availability of Water in Schools

Figure 13 Number/Percentage of operational schools according to the availability of water within them



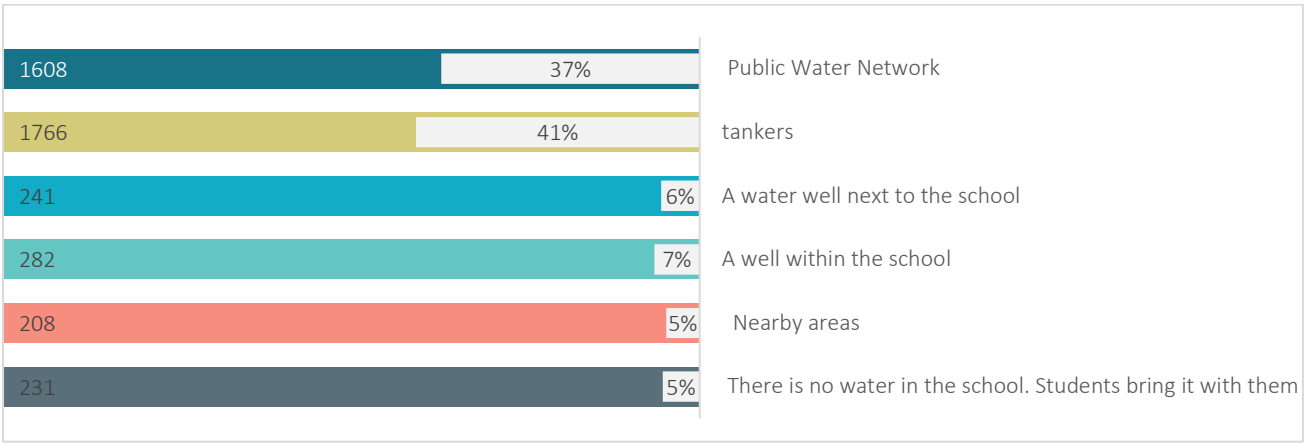
In northwestern Syria, while schools in Idlib and northern Aleppo have water available in all facilities at rates of 100%, a notable 23% of schools in Ras al-Ain and Tell Abiad lack water for general use, necessitating students to bring water from home, requiring students to bring their own. In Afrin, 93% of the assessed schools have water, and 7% do not.

In northeastern Syria, most areas have water accessibility rates ranging from 93% to 99%. Overall, across all assessed schools, water is available in 95%, with 5% lacking it entirely for general use within these schools, such as for toilets or personal hygiene, necessitating students to bring water from home.

2. The Means to Ensure Water for Drinking and General Use in Schools

The study found that almost half of the operational schools, 41% (1,766 schools), receive water through water trucks that transport water to the school. Following closely, 37% (1,608 schools) of schools get water from the public water network for drinking and general use. Additionally, 7% (282 schools) access water from a well within the school, while 6% (241 schools) have a well near the school that provides water. Meanwhile, 5% (231 schools) of schools lack water infrastructure, requiring students to bring drinking water from home, and in these schools, there is no water available for use (for toilets and hygiene). Finally, another 5% (208 schools) obtain water from nearby locations.

Figure 14 Number/Percentage of operational schools according to the means to access drinking water



3. The Availability of Appropriate Quantities of Drinking Water, Hand Washing, and Toilet Water in the Operational Schools

According to the Sphere standards,[7] "three liters of water a day should be provided for each student to drink and wash their hands (this amount does not include water for toilets)." According to Sphere standards, schools with water supply are divided into two categories. The first category includes schools where drinking water and handwashing facilities are available but in limited quantities, with an estimated water amount of less than 3 liters per student per day. The second category comprises schools with sufficient drinking water and handwashing facilities, providing an estimated water amount of 3 liters or more per student per day. During school visits, principals were queried about the quantity of drinking water and handwashing facilities available in their schools, which was then divided by the number of students. This approach aimed to obtain the most accurate information regarding the daily water supply for drinking and handwashing received by students.

According to the Sphere standards, "20-40 liters per day should be provided for each user of traditional siphon toilets connected to the sewage system, 3-5 liters per day for each user of water pushing toilets". According to Sphere standards, schools with water have been divided into two categories. The first category is schools with low water availability for toilets, and the amount of water per student is estimated to be less than 20 liters per day. The second category is schools with appropriate water availability for toilets, and the amount of water per student is estimated at 20 liters or more per day.[8] During school visits, officials were queried about the toilet water supply in schools, which was then divided by the number of students to determine the

[7] https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf

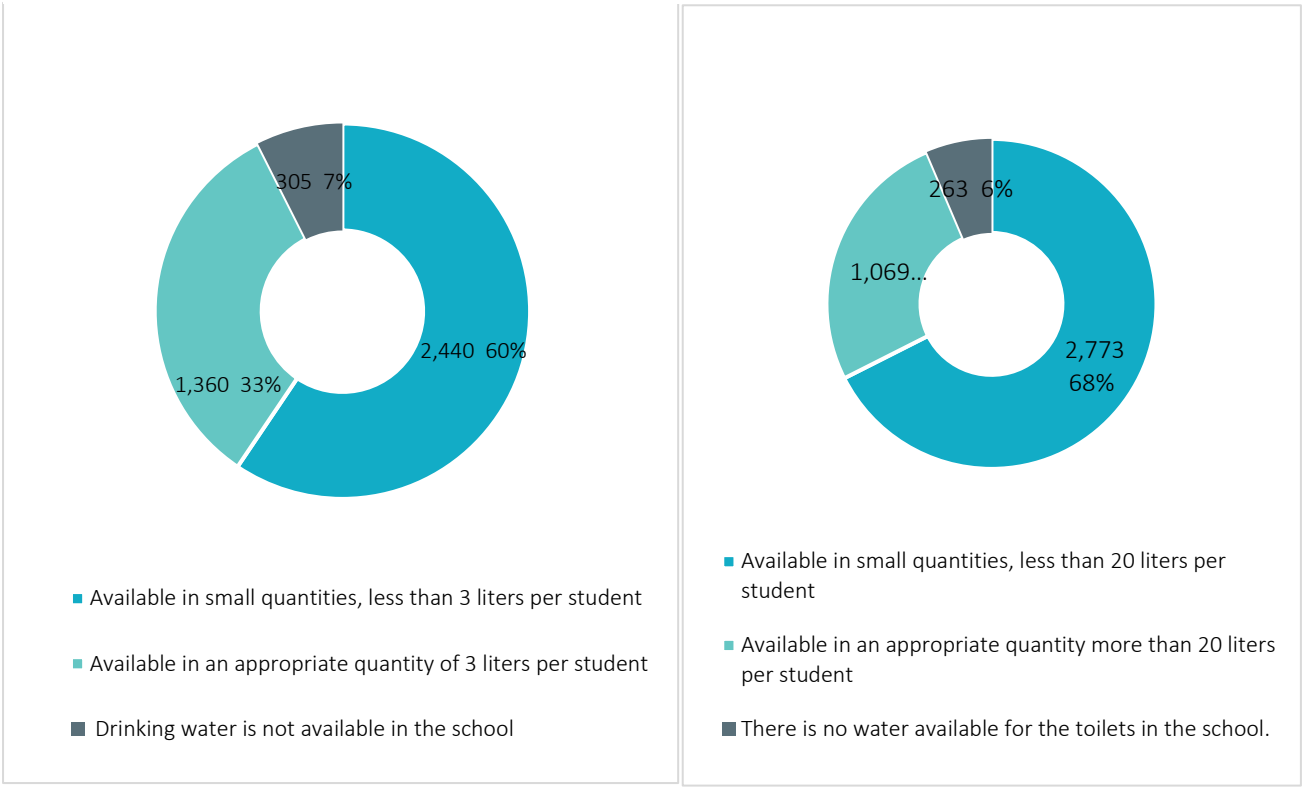
[8] https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf

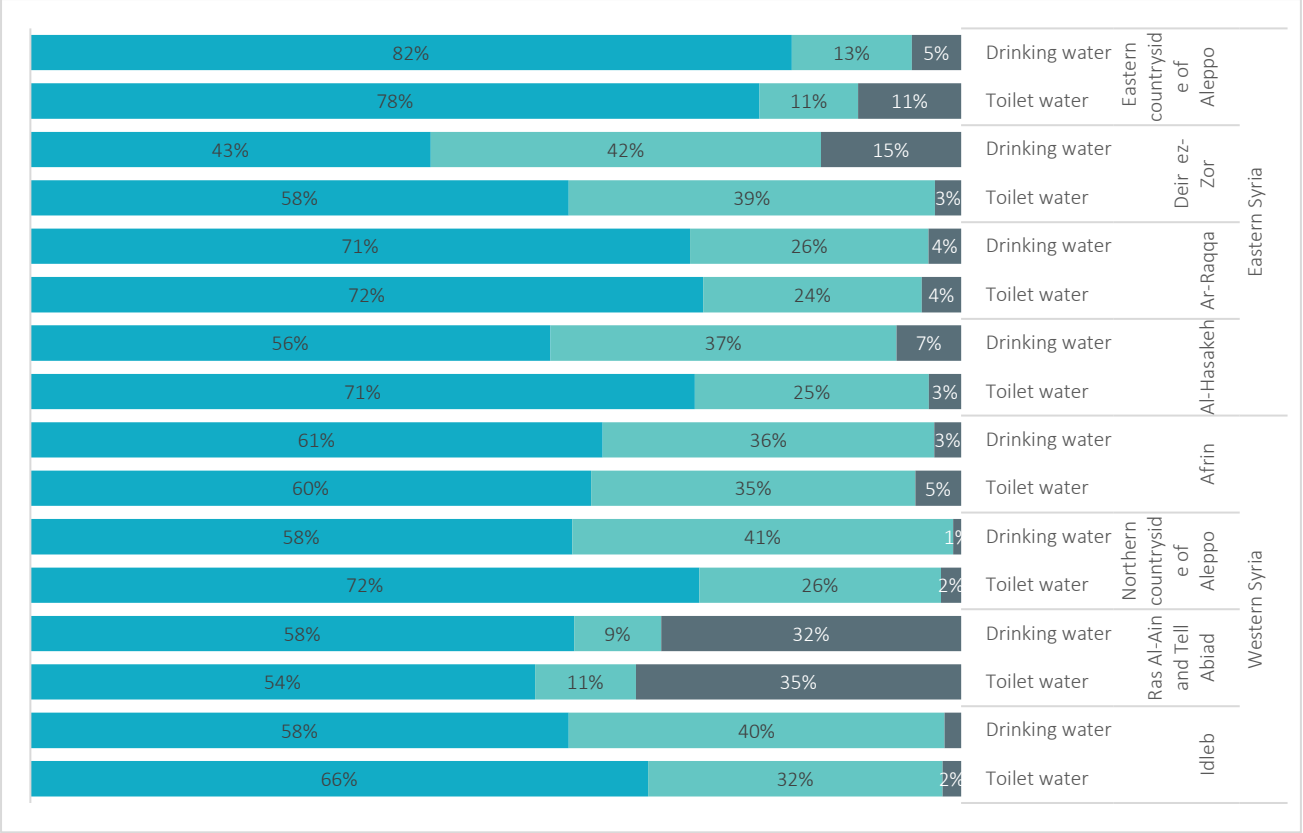
allocation per student per day. This approach aimed to gather the most accurate information regarding toilet water allocation for students.

The study revealed that 7% (305 schools) lacked access to drinking water in the operational schools examined. Among these schools, drinking water was provided in limited amounts, less than 3 liters per student, in 60% (2,440 schools), while in 33% (1,360 schools), appropriate quantities of drinking water were available.

Additionally, the study found that 6% (263 schools) of the operational schools had no access to water for toilet facilities. Among the remaining schools, 68% (2,773 schools) had water available in small quantities, less than 20 liters per student, and 26% (1,069 schools) had appropriate amounts of water for toilets.

Figure 15 The amount of water for drinking and general use within operational schools.





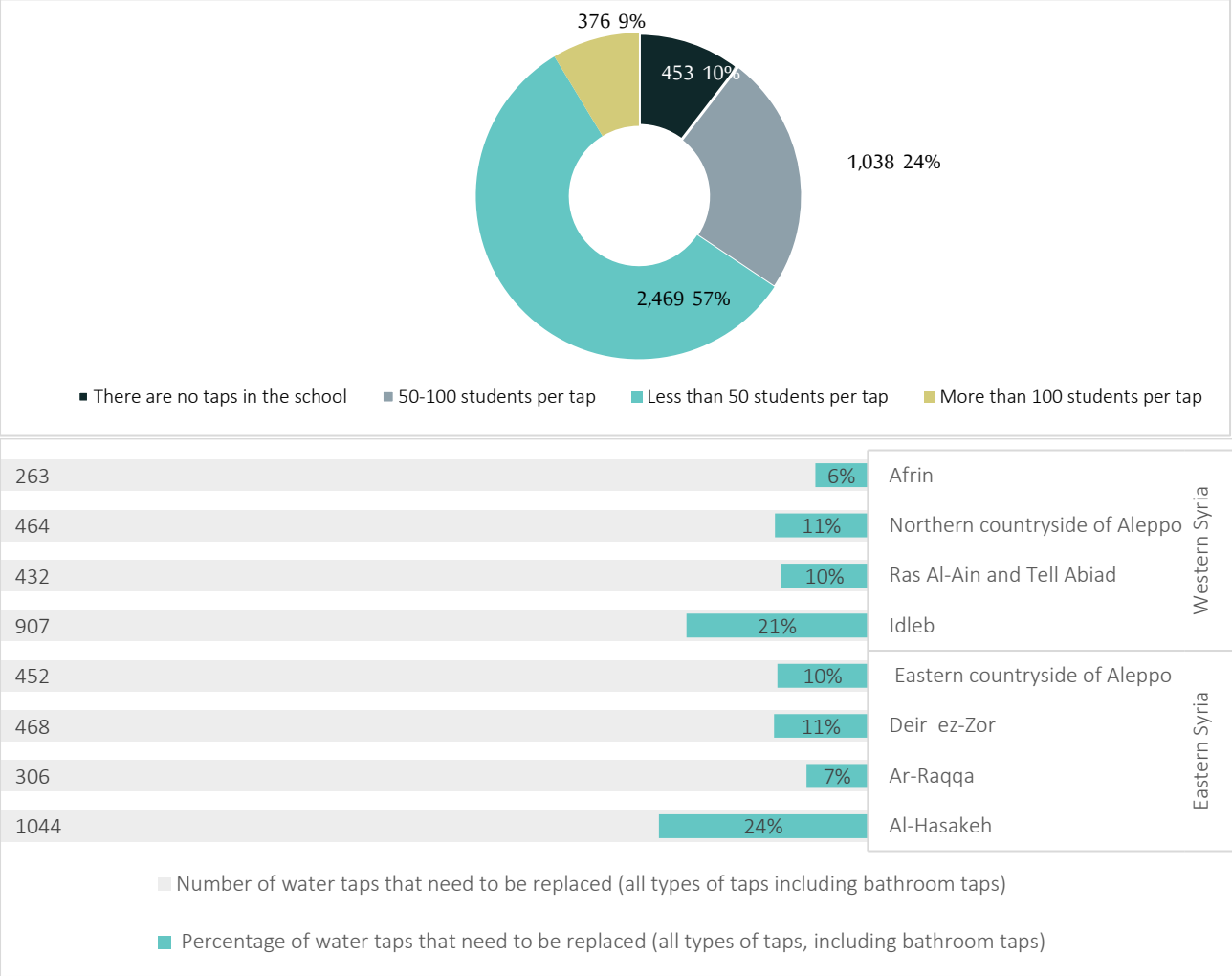
4. Number of Students Per Water Tap and Water Taps That Need Replacement

The typical break between classes in Syrian schools lasts about 30 minutes. However, ensuring smooth access to water taps during these breaks is essential to avoid congestion and delays. According to established standards, having fewer than 50 students per tap is acceptable to maintain an orderly flow and prevent overcrowding. When the number of students per tap exceeds 50, there is a possibility of experiencing minor congestion, which could impact access to water during the break. However, severe congestion is highly likely if the number of students per tap reaches 100 or more. This could lead to significant delays and may result in some students being deprived of drinking water within the limited break time. To mitigate these challenges, deliberate planning in distributing water taps is necessary.

Among the total operational schools providing water, 57% (2,469) had fewer than 50 students per tap, ensuring smoother access. Meanwhile, 24% (1,038 schools) accommodated 50 to 100 students per tap, while 9% (376) had over 100 students per tap, indicating potential congestion issues.

Furthermore, 10% (453 schools) lacked functional drinking water taps altogether, highlighting a concerning gap in water access. Additionally, the assessment identified 4,336 water taps in need of replacement across operational schools, encompassing taps used for drinking, sanitation, and other purposes.

Figure 16 Number of water taps for drinking compared to the number of students



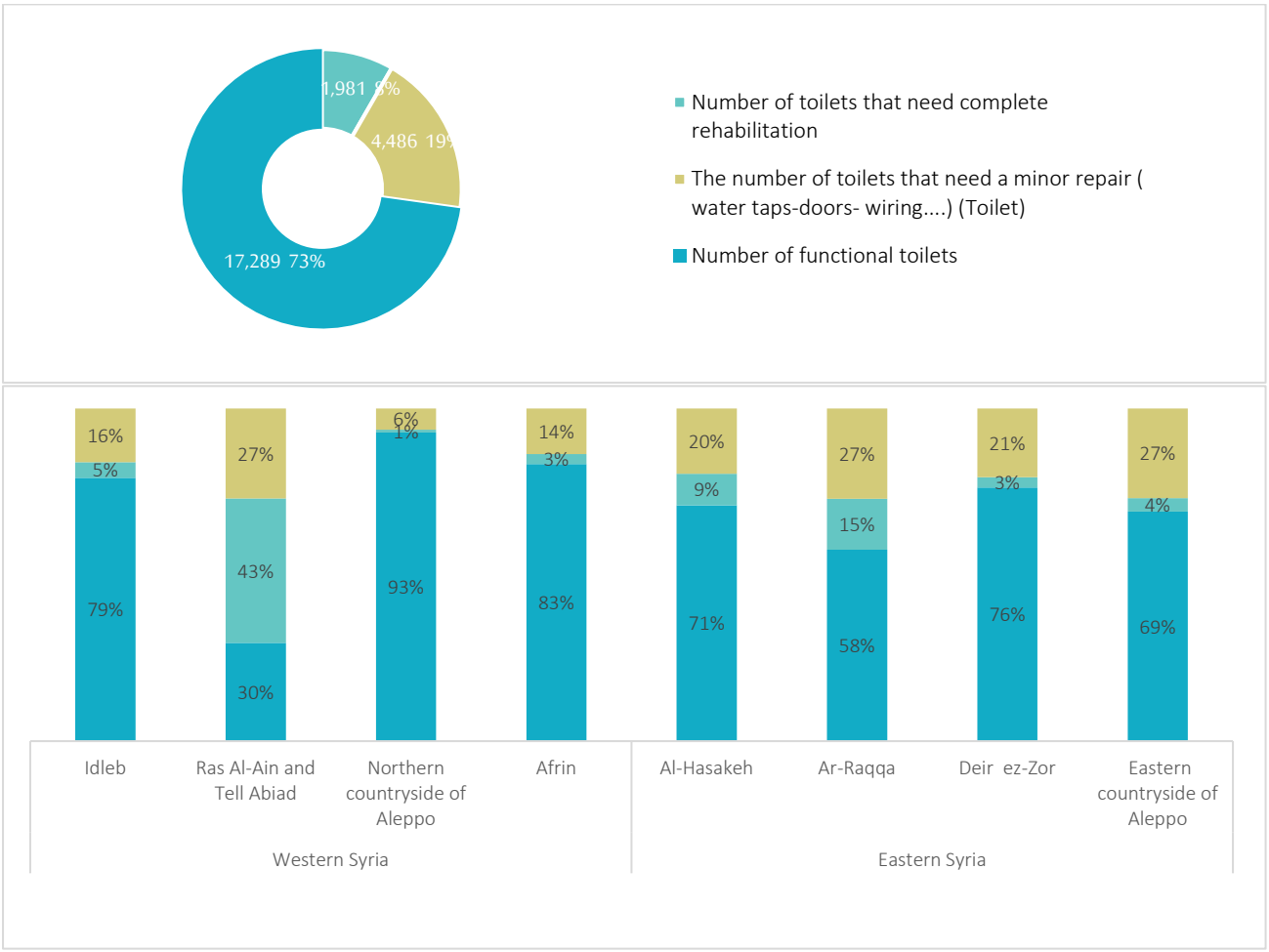
In northwestern Syria, the study found that 21% (907 taps) of the total water taps in operational schools within Idleb governorate and 10% (432 taps) in the Ras al-Ain and Tell Abiad area require replacement. Meanwhile, in northeastern Syria, 11% (468 taps) of water taps in operational schools within Deir ez-Zor governorate and 24% (1,044 taps) in Al-Hasakeh governorate need replacement. These findings emphasize the urgent need for infrastructure improvements to ensure adequate access to clean water in schools across both regions.

5. The Condition of Toilets in Schools

The toilet block in Syrian schools consists of several toilets; the building or block of toilets is divided into several toilets. According to the INEE Minimum Standards for Education9, *"sanitation facilities should be available within or near the learning environment*," school toilets need regular maintenance and must be cleaned regularly, especially in primary schools.

The assessment of operational schools revealed a total of 23,756 individual toilets. Of these, only 73% (17,289 toilets) were found to be functional and in good condition. Approximately 19% (4,486 toilets) were identified as needing minor repairs, such as fixing water taps, doors, or cleaning drains. Moreover, 8% (1,981 toilets) of the toilets required rehabilitation, which may involve reconstructing walls, ceilings, or drainage systems and, in some instances, necessitating the construction of entirely new facilities. These findings underscore the importance of addressing infrastructure issues to ensure proper school sanitation facilities.

Figure 17 Number/Percentage of toilets by their functional status



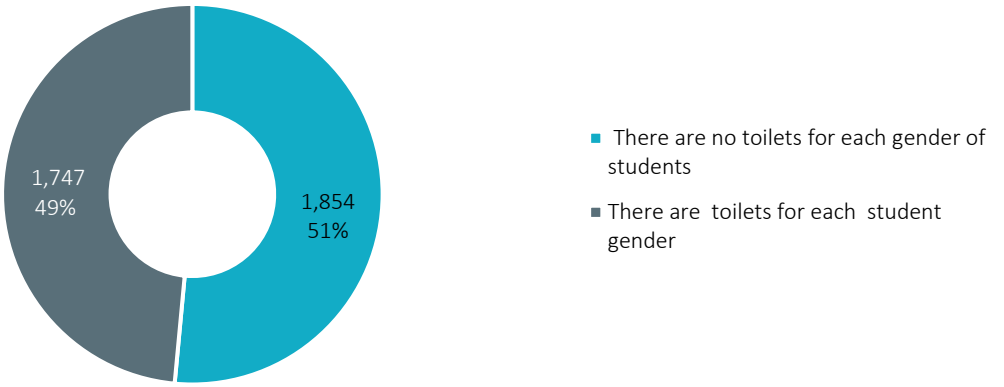
[9] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/INEE_Minimum_Standards_Handbook_2010%28HSP%29_EN.pdf

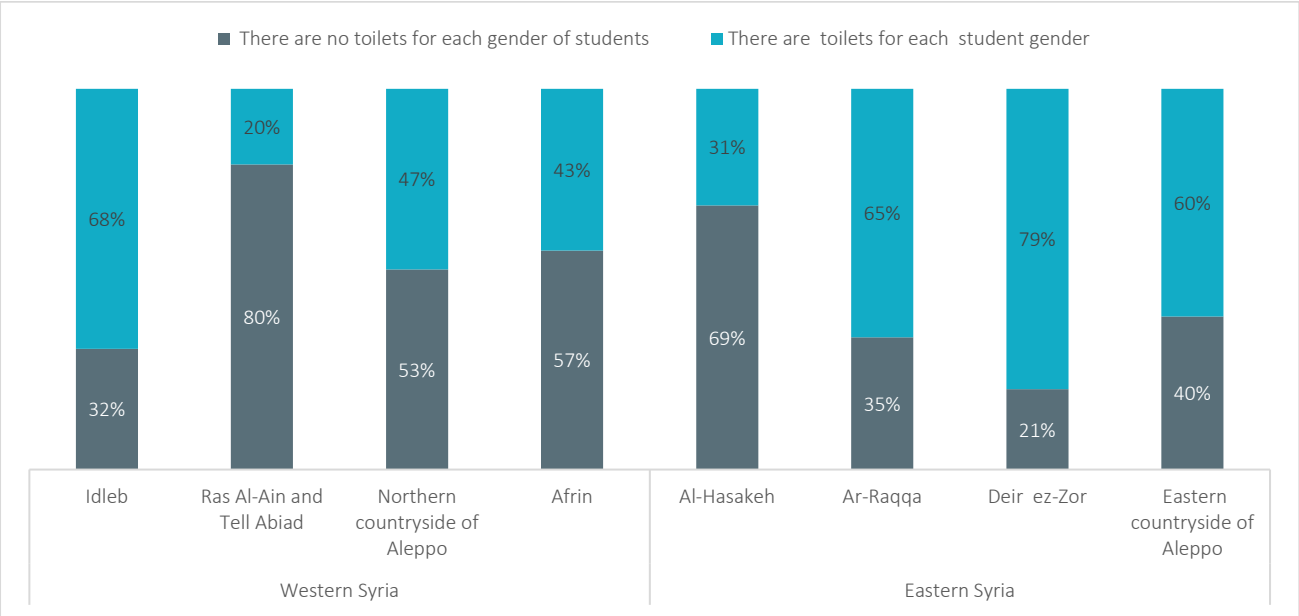
6. Availability of Gender-Segregated Toilets in Mixed-Gender Schools

The INEE Minimum Standards for Education states, *"Separate toilets for boys/ men, girls/ women should be located in safe, convenient, and accessible places."* Ensuring separate restroom facilities for male and female students is paramount in schools with mixed-gender populations. Moreover, it's essential to place female toilets at a distance from male facilities to uphold privacy and minimize the risk of harassment or abuse for all students. This arrangement fosters a safe and respectful environment where students can attend to their personal needs without concern for their privacy or safety.

According to the study, 51% (1,854 schools) of mixed-gender operational schools have segregated toilets for male and female students. However, nearly half, or 49% (1,747 schools), of these schools lack such gender-segregated facilities.

Figure 18 Number/ Percentage of mixed-gender schools by the availability of gender-segregated toilets



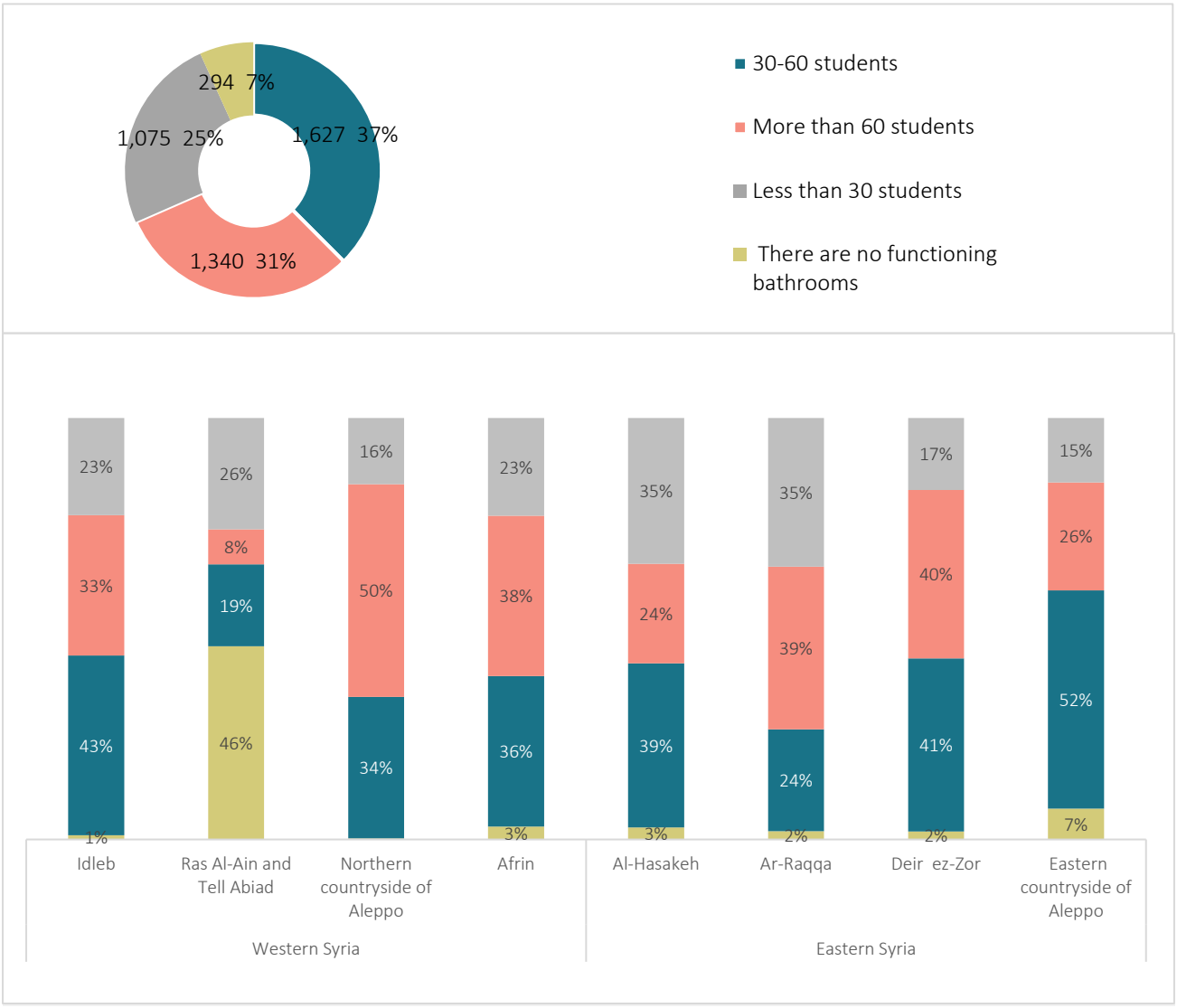


7. Numbers of Students Using the Same Toilet

According to the Sphere guidelines,[10] "One toilet should be provided for every 30 girls and one toilet should be provided for every 60 boys. If separate toilets cannot be provided from the start, measures can be taken to avoid girls and boys using the toilets at the same time."

According to the study, 7% (294 schools) of the operational schools assessed lack functional toilets. Moreover, in 31% (1,340 schools) of these facilities, over 60 students share a single toilet. Additionally, 37% (1,627) of the schools have between 30 and 60 students per toilet, while 25% (1,075 schools) have 30 or fewer students per toilet.

Figure 19 Number/Percentage of schools by the number of students using the same toilet



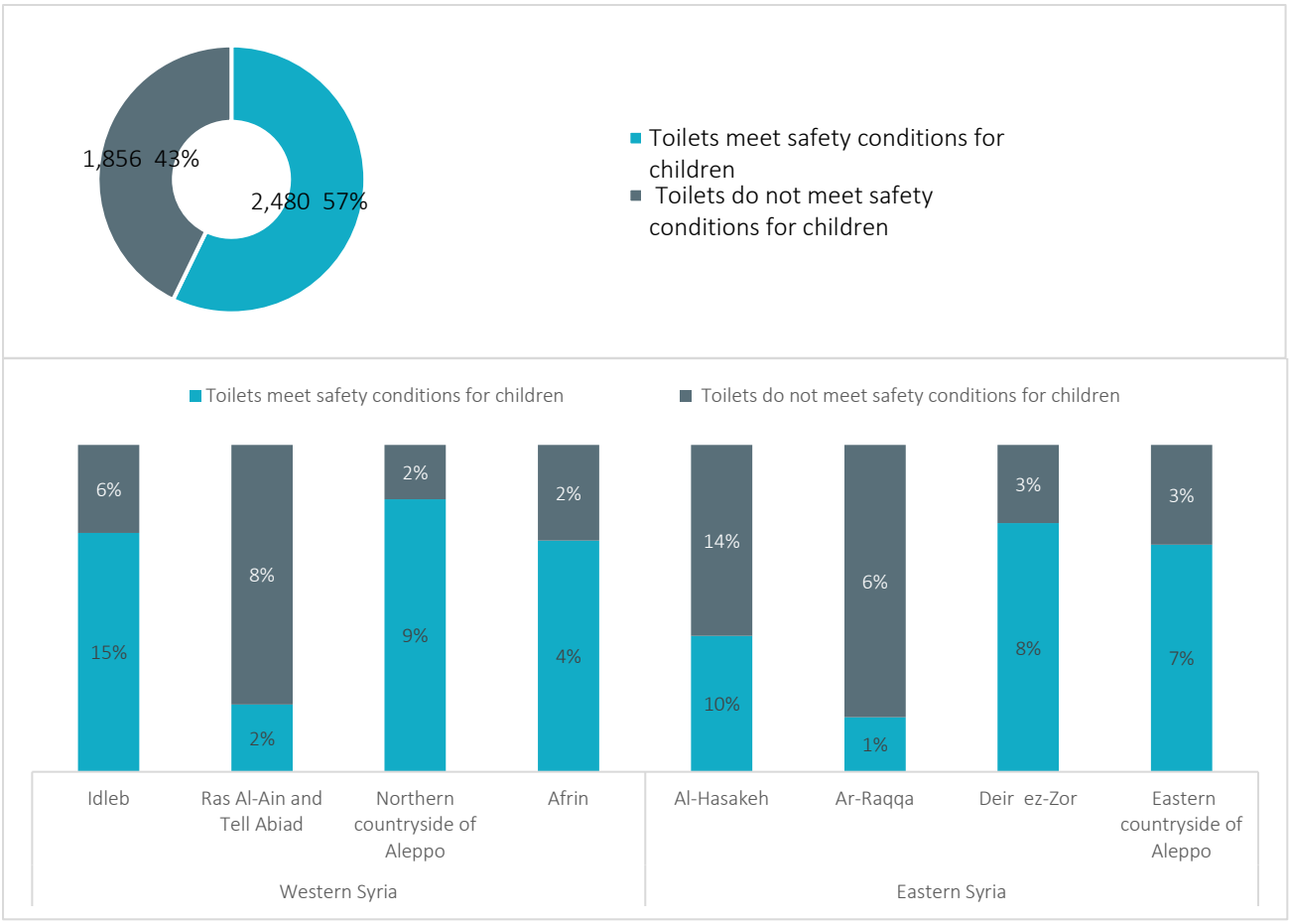
[10] https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf

8. Availability of Safety Standards Within the School Toilets

The INEE Minimum Standards for Education indicate, “Sanitation facilities should be accessible for persons with disabilities and should maintain privacy, dignity, and safety. Toilet doors should lock from the inside. To prevent sexual harassment and abuse, separate toilets for boys/men and girls/women should be located in safe, convenient, and easily accessible places.”

According to the study, 57% (2,480 schools) of operational schools met safety standards for students, while 43% (1,856 schools) did not. Furthermore, the majority of schools were found to lack the necessary facilities to accommodate children with physical disabilities.

Figure 20 Number/Percentage of operational schools by the availability of safety standards within toilets

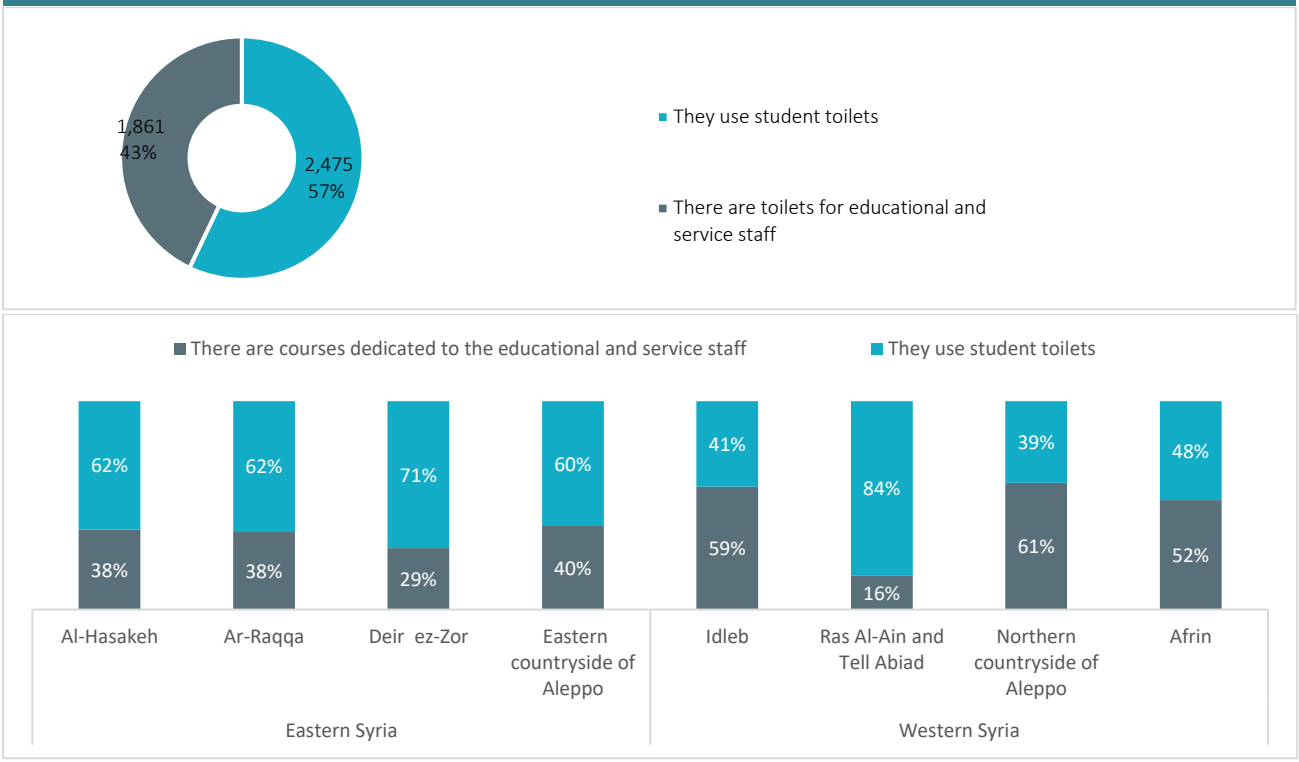


9. Availability of Toilets for the Teaching and Service Staff at Schools

Providing separate toilets for educational and service staff in schools is crucial for ensuring their well-being. These staff toilets should be separate from the students' facilities to guarantee privacy and prevent any potential instances of harassment.

The study revealed that only 43% (1,861 schools) of operational schools provided separate toilets for educational and service staff. In contrast, educational and service staff in 57% (2,475 schools) of the facilities utilized student toilets.

Figure 21 Number/Percentage of operational schools by the availability of toilets for educational and service staff



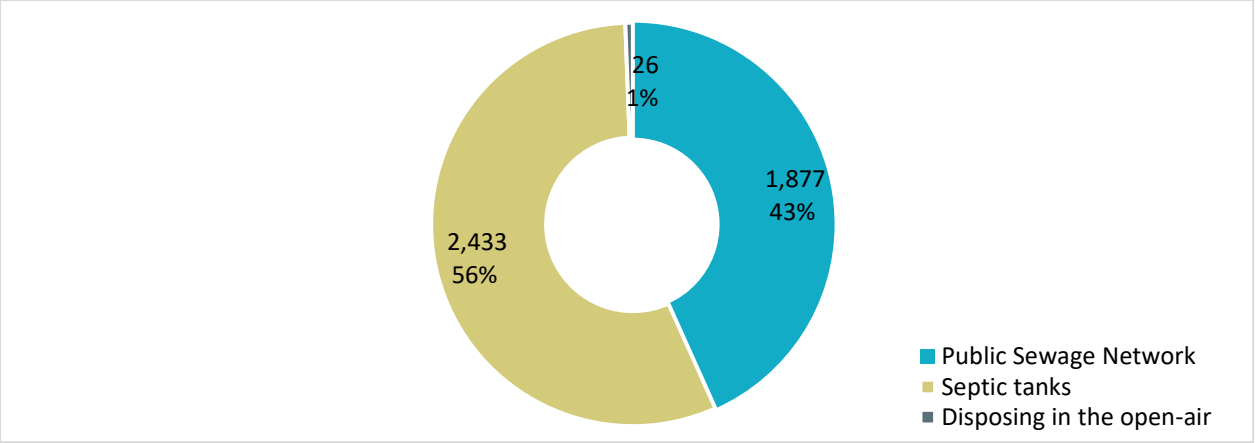
According to the Sphere project guidelines,[11] "*special attention should be paid to the disposal of child feces, which are usually more dangerous than adult feces (fecal-transmitted diseases among children are often higher, and children may not have formed antibodies to control diseases)*. Schools often rely on irregular septic tanks in rural areas for wastewater disposal due to the absence of a public sewage system. Military operations further damaged existing sewerage systems, prompting increased use of these irregular pits. Schools typically have only one septic tank with large student populations, leading to frequent overflow or flooding under heavy usage. Periodic tank dislodging becomes necessary, especially during winter or rainfall when irregular septic tanks are prone to flooding. This mixture of wastewater and rainwater can carry harmful germs, posing risks of diseases and infections.

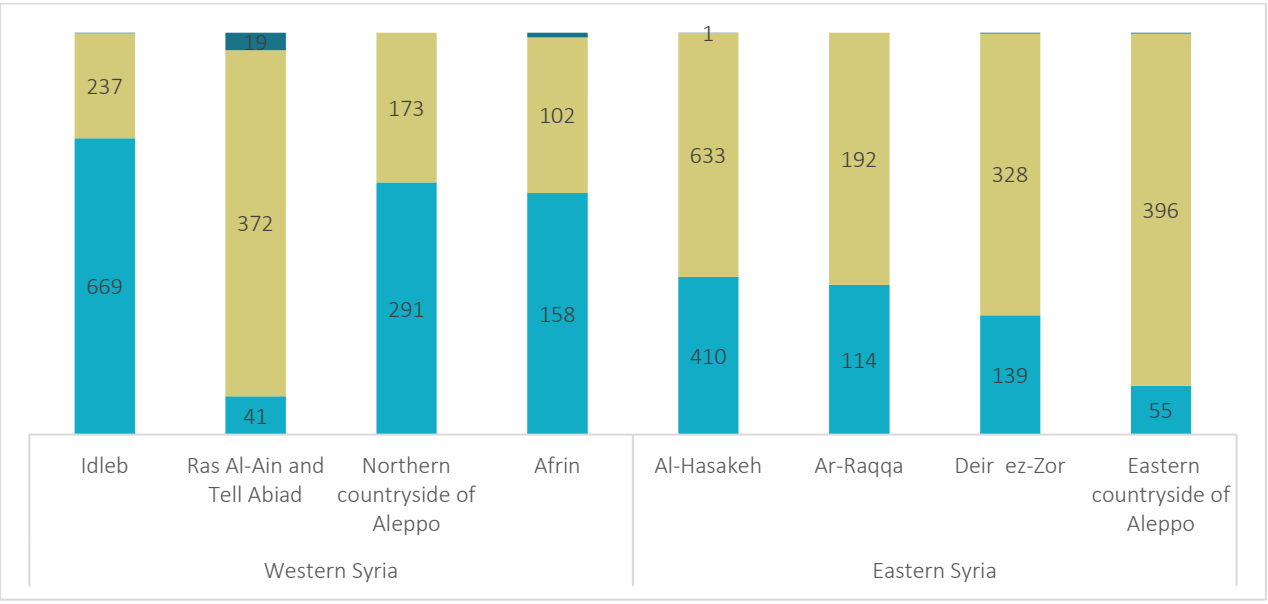
[11] https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf

10.Sewage Disposal Mechanisms at Operational Schools

Among the assessed operational schools, 43% (1,877 schools) utilize a sewage system for the disposal of toilet water, while 56% (2,433 schools) rely on septic tanks. A small fraction of schools, only 1% (26 schools), opt for open disposal of toilet water. Overall, the study investigated 4,336 schools' septic tank usage for toilet water disposal.

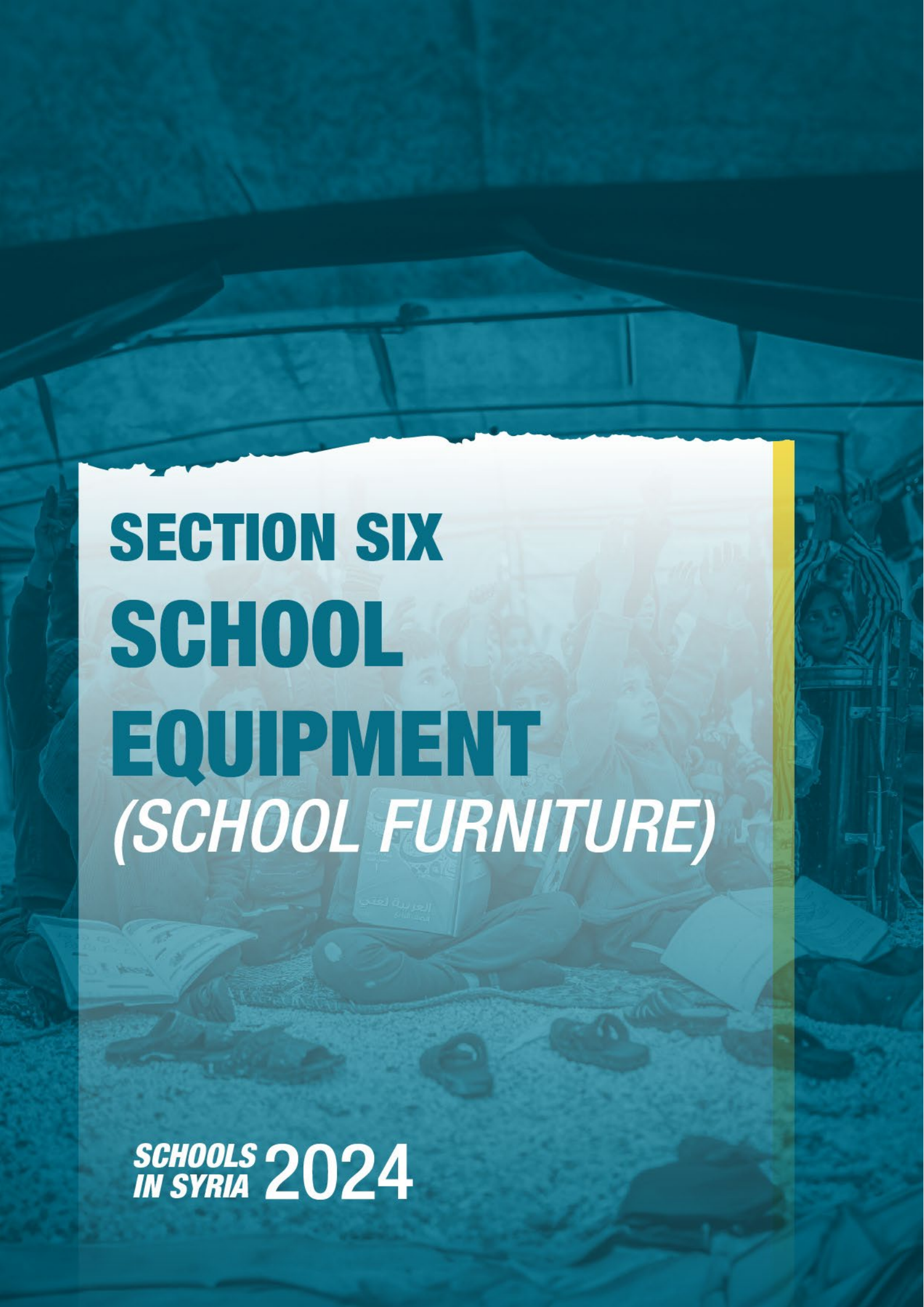
Figure 23 Number/Percentage of operational schools by the sewage disposal mechanisms.





In western Syria, particularly in Idleb, 74% (669 schools) of schools utilize sewage systems for toilet water disposal, while 26% (237 schools) rely on septic tanks. In Ras al-Ain and Tell Abiad, 9% (41 schools) have sewage systems, 86% (372 schools) use septic tanks, and 4% (19 schools) resort to open drainage. In Afrin, 60% (158 schools) rely on sewage systems, 39% (102 schools) utilize septic tanks, and 1% (3 schools) resort to open drainage.

Shifting to eastern Syria, in Al-Hasakeh, out of 1,044 schools, 39% (410 schools) have sewage systems, 61% (633 schools) use septic tanks, and only one school resorts to open drainage. In Raqqa, out of 306 schools, 37% (114 schools) utilize sewage systems, 63% (192 schools) rely on septic tanks, and none resort to open drainage. In Deir ez-Zor, 70% (328 schools) use septic tanks.



SECTION SIX
SCHOOL EQUIPMENT
(SCHOOL FURNITURE)

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

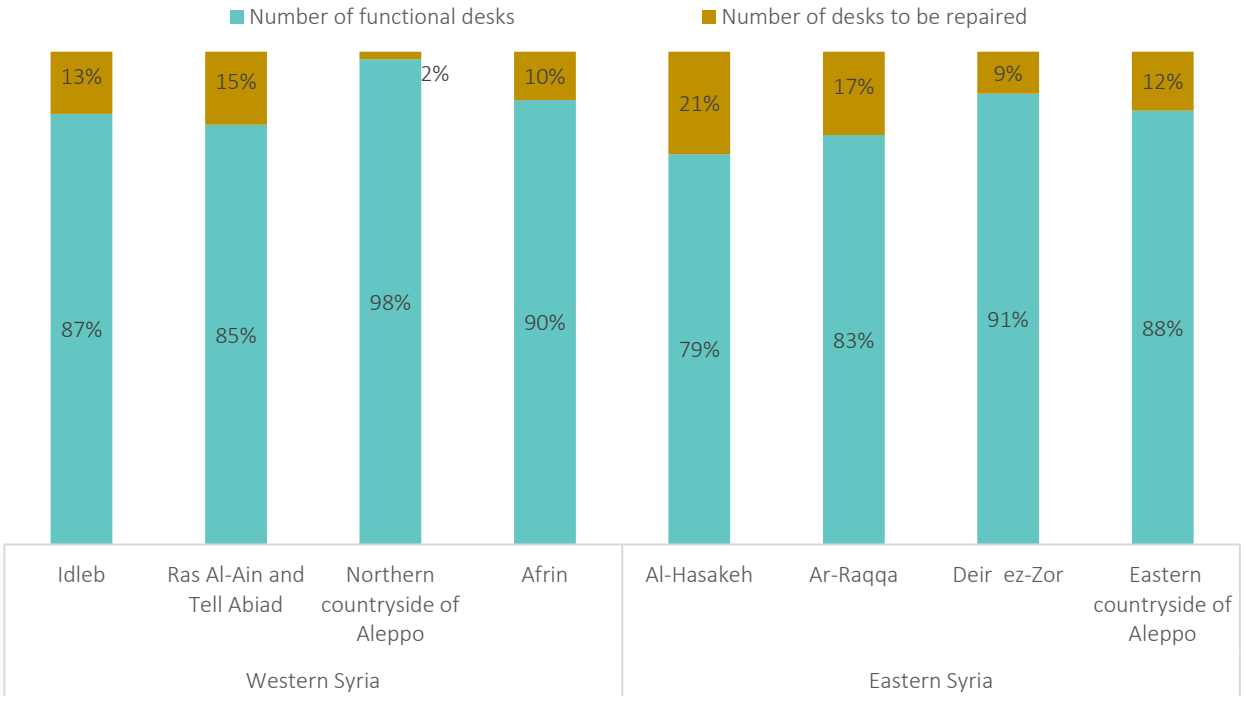
Section 6: School Equipment (School Furniture)

1. Status of Student Desks

In Syrian classrooms, study desks are a combination of sturdy metal frames and wooden surfaces. The metal frame provides stability, while the wooden board acts as the seating area, often featuring a drawer for personal items. Usually, these wooden surfaces require occasional maintenance, with damaged parts replaced as needed. However, the ongoing conflict has inflicted severe damage on school desks, with some being completely destroyed due to war-related factors like shelling and sabotage. This has created an immediate need to replace these desks with new ones.

The study highlights that most school desks are functional, comprising 88% (436,609 seats) of the total seat count. Conversely, 12% (62,237 seats) require maintenance to ensure functionality.

Figure 24 Number/Percentage of student desks within operational schools by their status

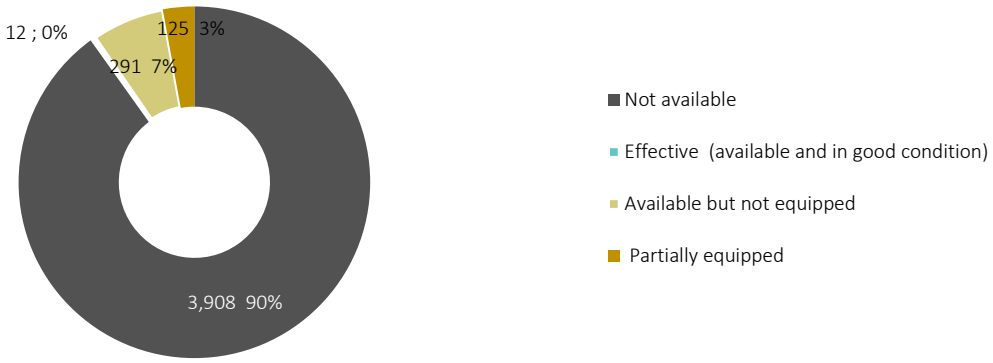


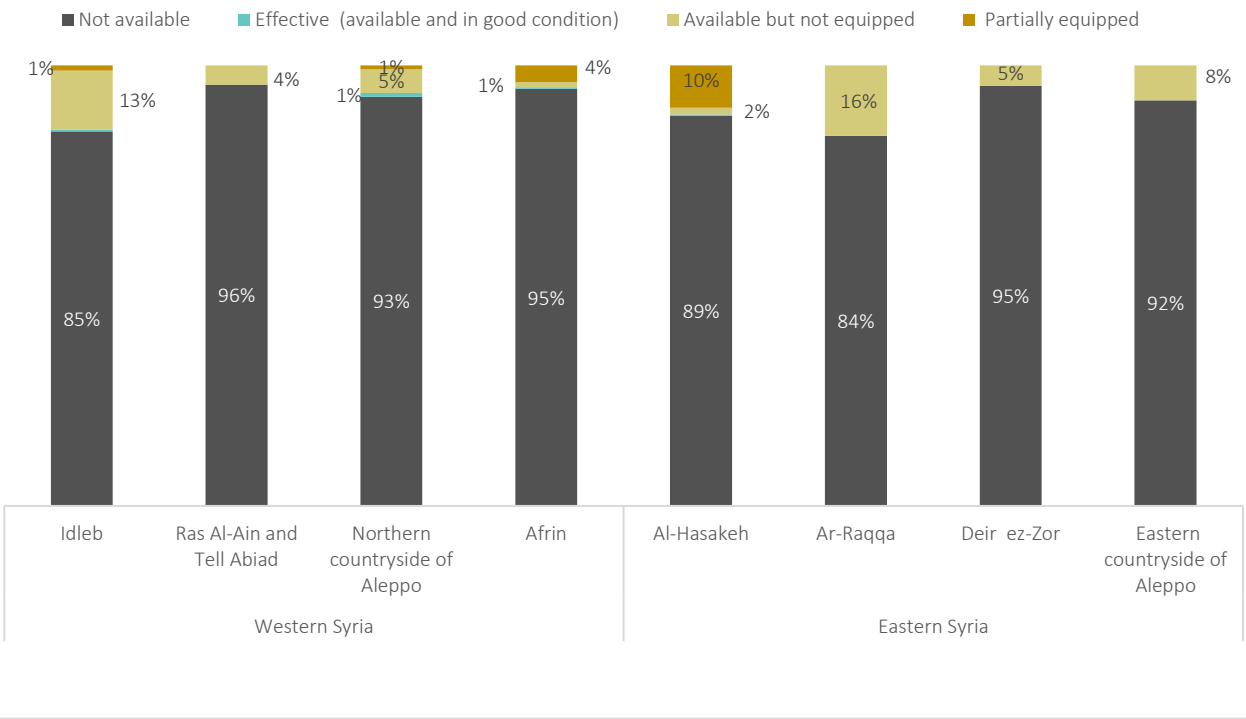
2. Availability Of School Laboratories

Some school supplies require teaching aids to simplify concepts and achieve learning outcomes through hands-on experiments. This report offers insights into the status of school laboratories, categorized into three levels. Level one denotes **unequipped laboratories** with designated space but lacking necessary equipment. Level two indicates **partially equipped laboratories** with incomplete resources, limiting usage. Level three represents **fully functional laboratories** where practical lessons are conducted effectively.

The study revealed that a significant majority, 90% (3,908 schools), of the operational schools assessed lacked laboratories. Laboratories were available in 7% of the schools (291) but remained unequipped. Partially equipped laboratories were found in 3% of the operational schools (125). Astonishingly, only 12 operational schools had fully equipped laboratories.

Figure 25 Number/Percentage of operational schools by availability of laboratories





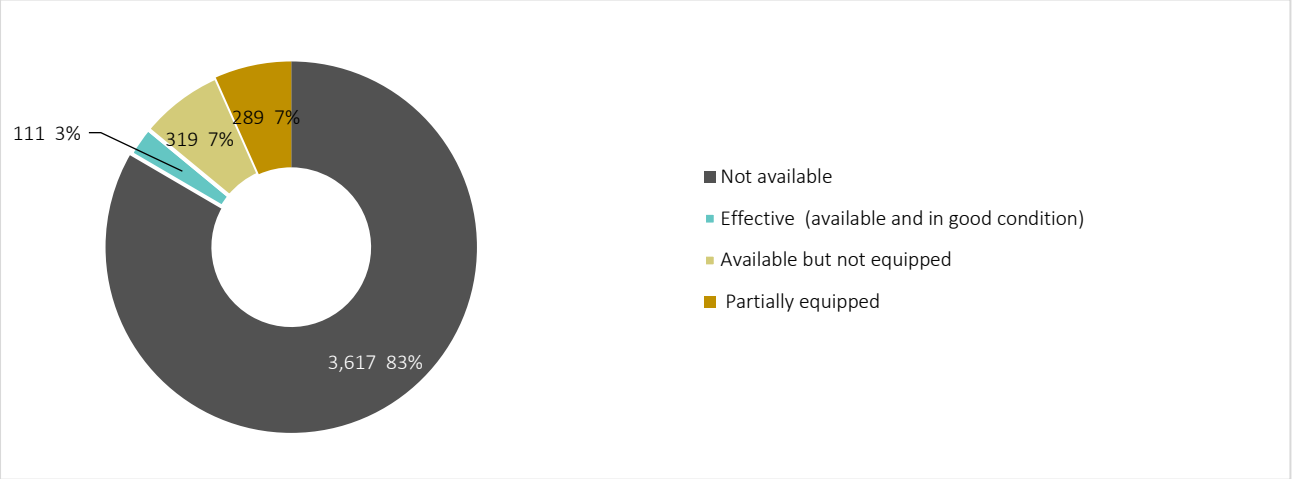
3. Availability of School Libraries

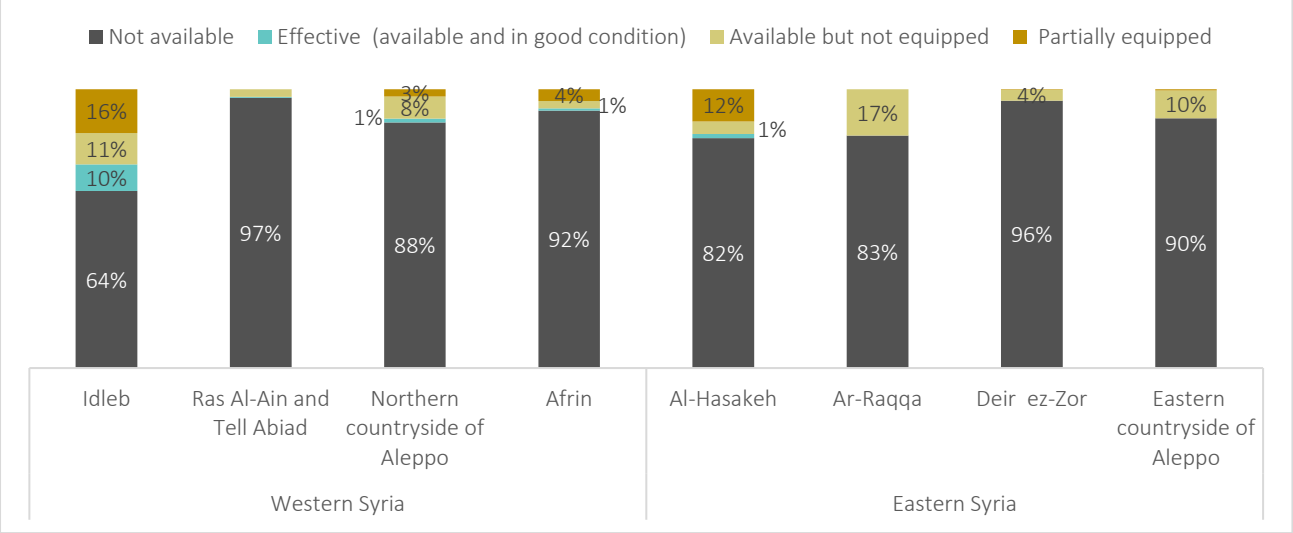
School libraries are essential in regular educational institutions, serving as valuable hubs for students to access information and engage in independent learning. Often, in larger schools with a significant student body, a dedicated space within the building is allocated for the library, equipped with books and references to support academic endeavors. Additionally, these schools may offer reading halls where students can enjoy reading during their free time. In smaller or medium-sized schools without designated reading areas, students can borrow materials from the library for home use, fostering a culture of learning beyond the classroom.

This report outlines the status of libraries in schools, categorized into three levels of readiness. At the first level, there are **unequipped libraries** lacking books and furniture despite having dedicated space. The second level comprises **partially equipped libraries** with incomplete book collections and equipment. Finally, the third level represents **fully equipped and functional libraries** that actively engage students.

The study uncovered that a mere 3% (111 schools) of the operational schools examined possessed fully functional libraries. Furthermore, 7% (289 schools) had partially equipped libraries, and another 7% (319 schools) lacked proper equipment despite having a library space. Alarmingly, the majority, totaling 83% (3,617 schools), had no library facilities whatsoever.

Figure 26 Number/Percentage of operational schools by the availability of school libraries



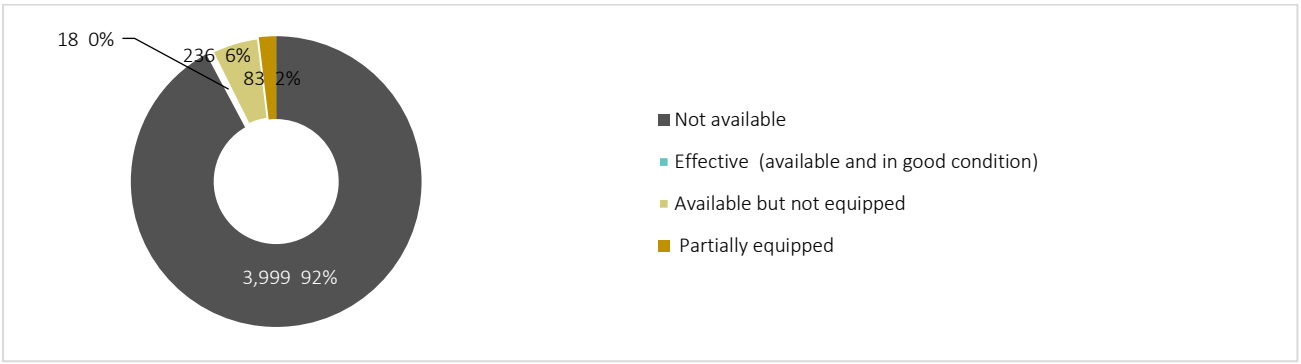


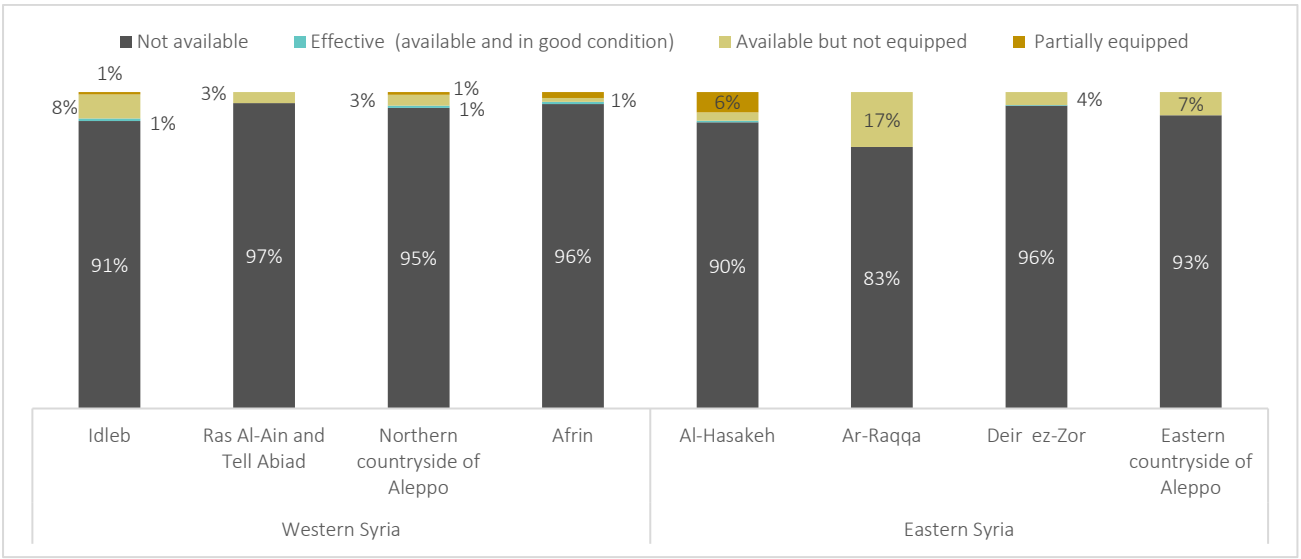
4. Availability of Computer Labs

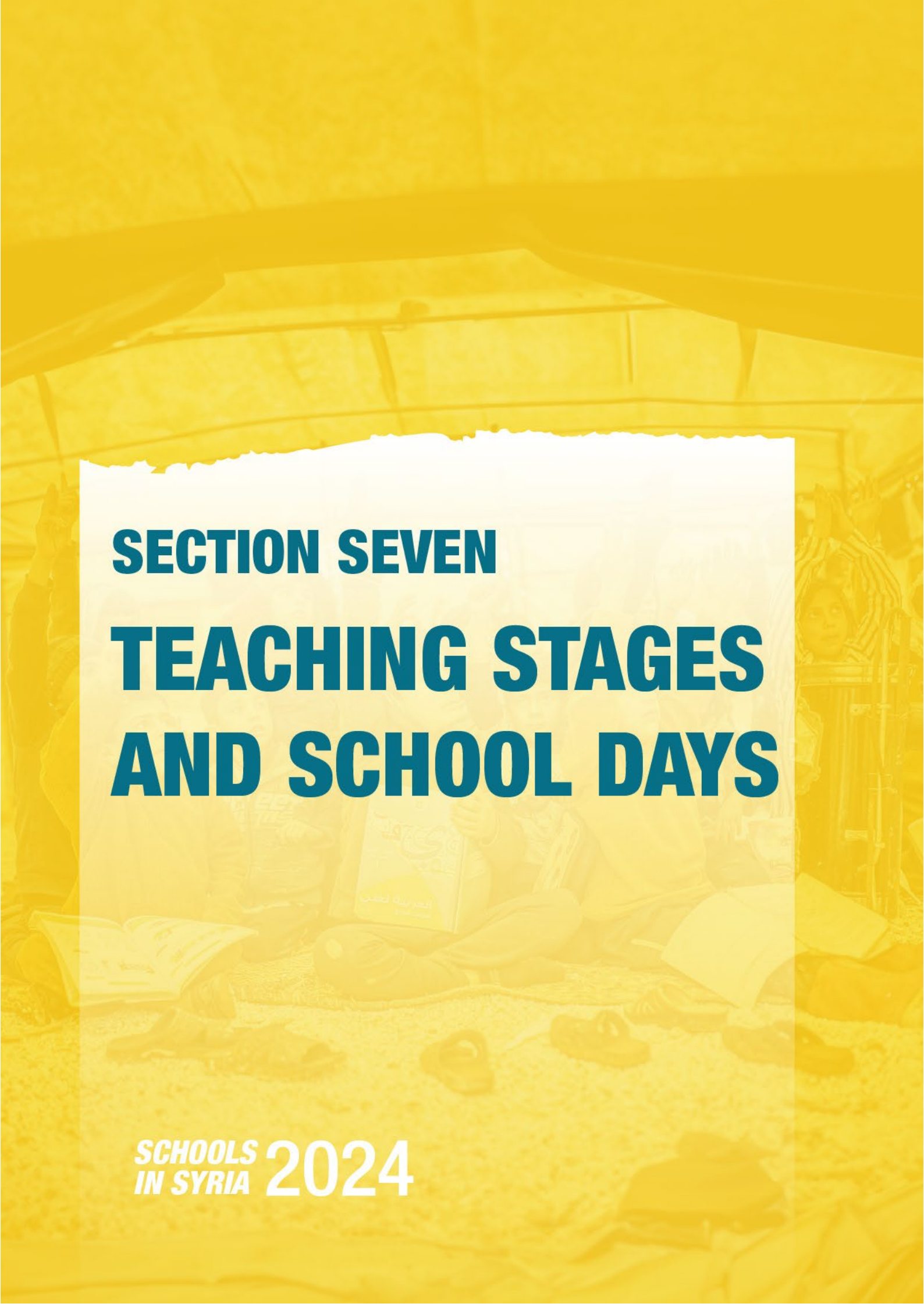
This report examines the accessibility and preparedness of computer labs in schools, categorized into three levels. First, there are **unequipped computer labs** with designated rooms that lack computers and essential equipment. Second, there are **partially equipped computer labs** featuring dedicated spaces but incomplete functionality due to a shortage of working computers and projectors, often resulting in limited usage. Finally, there are **functional computer labs** where practical computer technology classes are actively conducted, showcasing their functionality and utility.

The study revealed that only a minute fraction, comprising merely 16 out of the total operational schools assessed, had fully functional and effective computer labs. In contrast, 2% (83 schools) possessed partially equipped labs, and 6% (236 schools) had designated spaces for computer labs but lacked essential equipment. Strikingly, the vast majority, constituting 92% (3,999 schools) of the evaluated schools, were devoid of any computer labs.

Figure 227 Number/Percentage of operational schools by the availability of computer labs







SECTION SEVEN

TEACHING STAGES AND SCHOOL DAYS

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 7: Teaching Stages and School Days

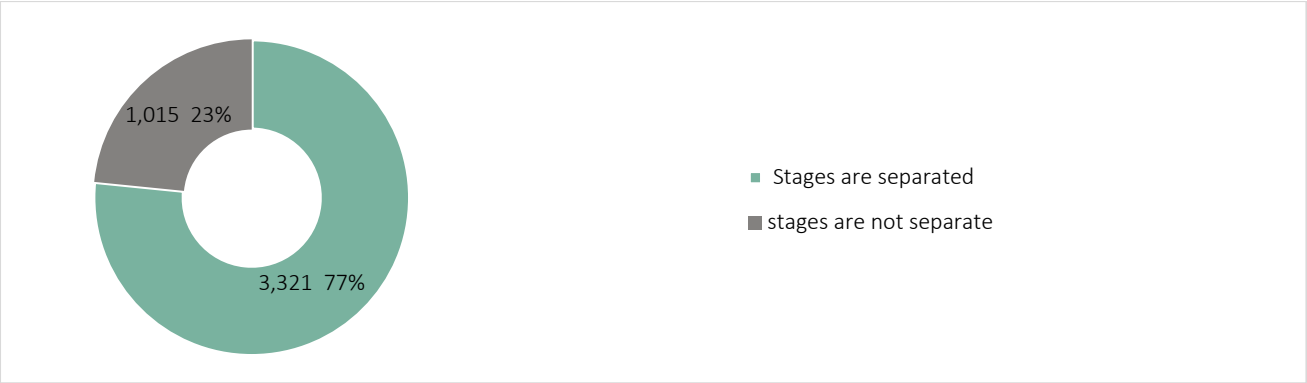
1. Separation of the Different Teaching Stages

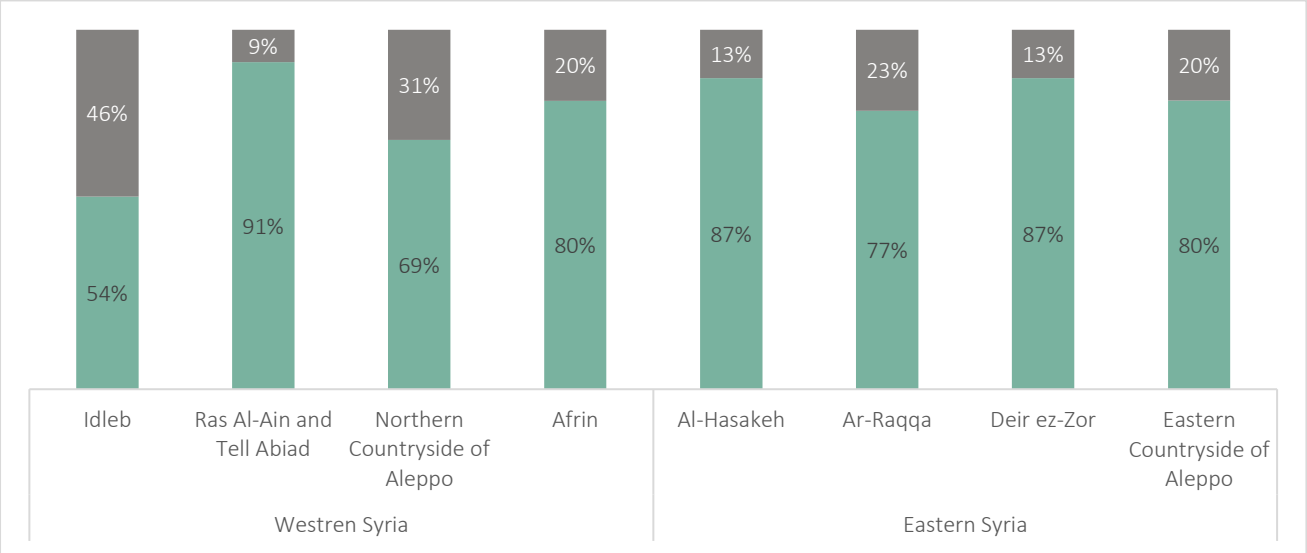
In Syria, the formal education system typically commences at the age of 6 for children. The educational structure encompasses two primary stages: basic education and secondary education. Traditionally, schools adhered to a system comprising primary schools (grades 1-6), preparatory schools (grades 7-9), and secondary schools (grades 10-12). Prior to the onset of the war in Syria, each educational stage operated independently from the others.

The organization of education into distinct stages, like basic and secondary education, is grounded in the belief that it fosters better development and learning for children. Segmenting students based on age and educational level aims to establish a safer and more conducive learning atmosphere. This division helps mitigate concerns like bullying, where older students might negatively influence younger ones. Children can flourish academically and grow positively by offering education tailored to their age.

The study revealed that 23% (1,015) of the operational schools assessed lacked grade separation, meaning various age groups were taught together, from primary to secondary levels. Conversely, 77% (3,321 schools) of the operational schools demonstrated clear grade separation, with each school exclusively dedicated to one educational stage.

Figure 28 Number/Percentage of schools that separate different grades.

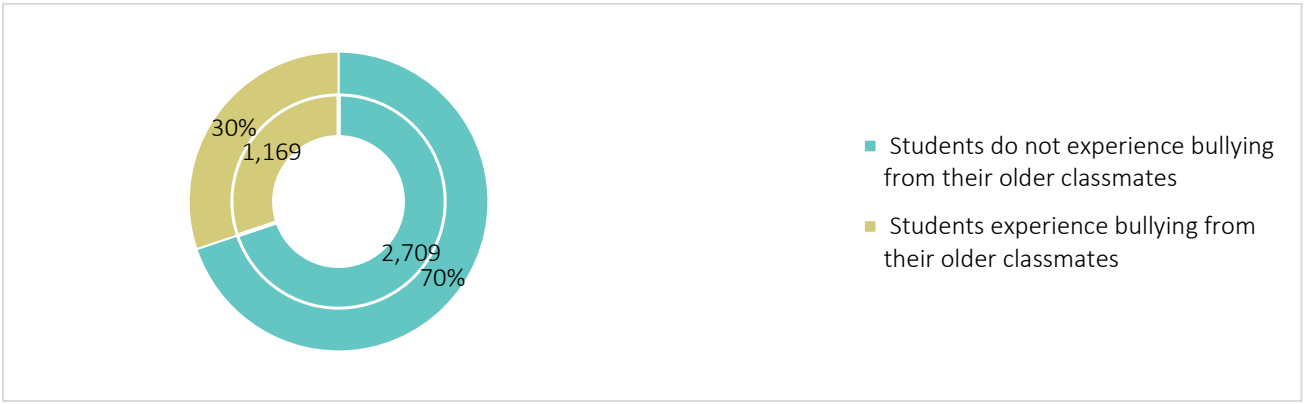




2. Teacher Survey: Younger Students Suffering from Harassment of Older Students Due to Having Students Whose Ages Do Not Match Their School Stages (Child Bullying)

During the teacher questionnaires, enumerators explored the possibility of bullying occurrences among younger students. They specifically inquired whether the mix of students at various educational stages within the same school or the presence of children whose age doesn't align with their schooling could foster instances of bullying. As per the responses from teachers, 30% (1,169 teachers) acknowledged observing cases of bullying among their students. Conversely, the majority of teachers, comprising 73% (2,709 teachers), indicated that they hadn't observed any bullying behavior among their students.

Figure 29 Number/Percentage of teachers surveyed by reporting bullying among their students.



3. Educational Stages

Before the outbreak of the war in Syria, the regime issued a decision to adopt three stages of study in the school system:

- The first cycle of basic education (grades 1-4).
- Second cycle of basic education (grades 5-9).
- Secondary education (grades 10-12): This stage includes branches of vocational study such as agriculture, trade, and industry, as well as general secondary school, which is the main branch.

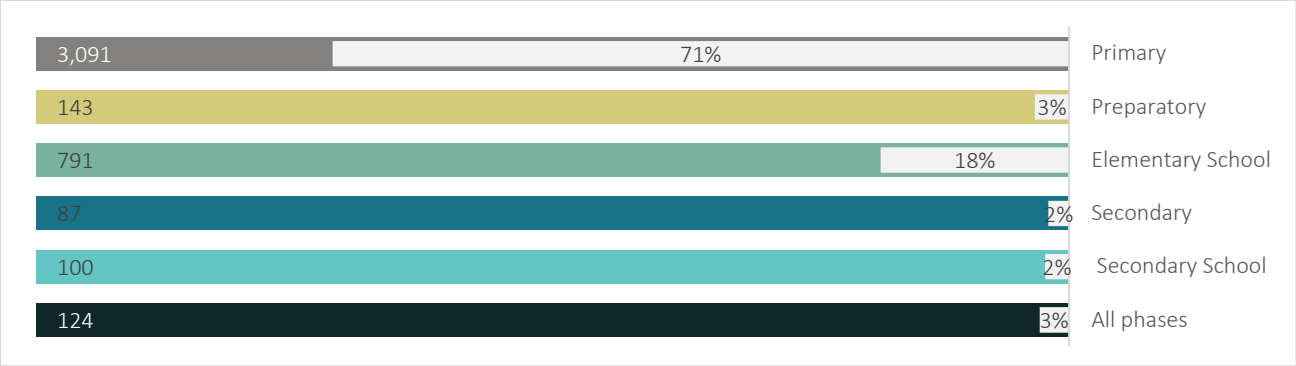
Schools in Syria could not implement the new decision for many reasons, including the lack of teaching staff, the number of schools, and their geographical distribution. The majority of schools continued to adopt the old division of educational stages, where the educational stages are divided into the old teaching system, which is still followed as follows:

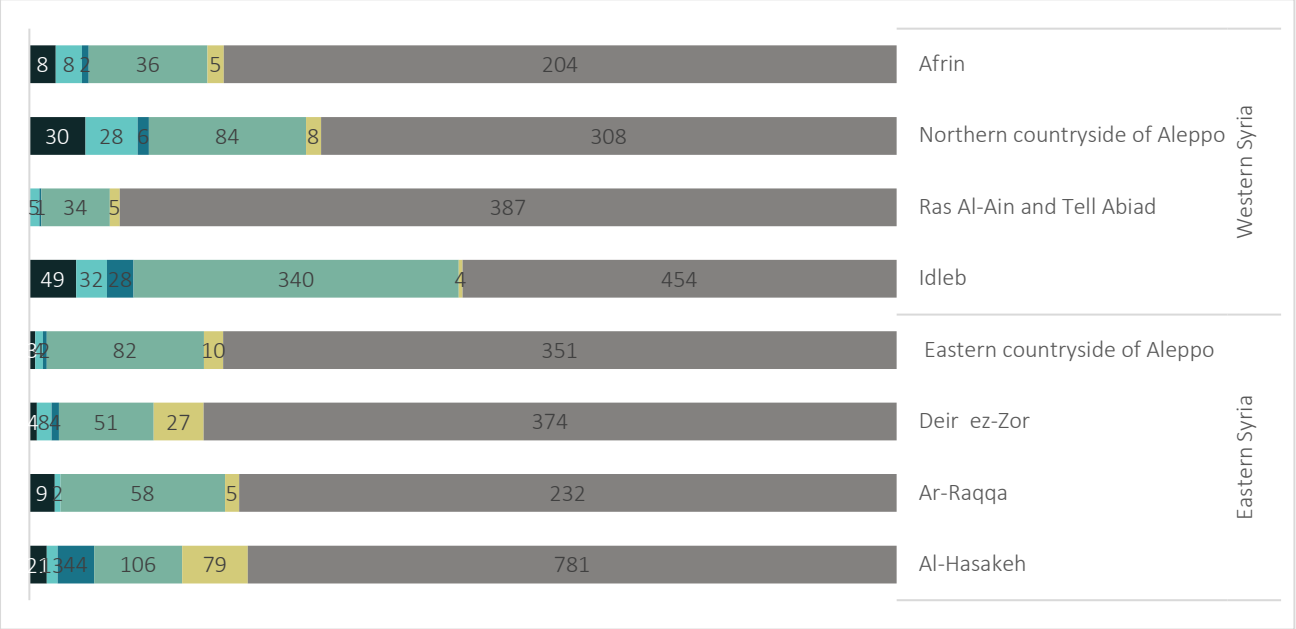
- Primary (grades 1-6).
- Preparatory (Grades 7-9).
- Secondary (Grades 10-12).

According to the study, the distribution of operational schools across different educational stages is as follows:

- 71% (3,091 schools) are dedicated to the primary stage (grades 1-6).
- 3% (143 schools) are dedicated to the preparatory stage (grades 7-9).
- 18% (791 schools) include both the primary and preparatory stages (grades 1-9).
- 2% (87 schools) are dedicated to the secondary stage (grades 10-12).
- 2% (100 schools) include both the preparatory and secondary stages (grades 7-12).
- 3% (124 schools) include all stages (grades 1-12).

Figure 30 Number/Percentage of schools by educational stages

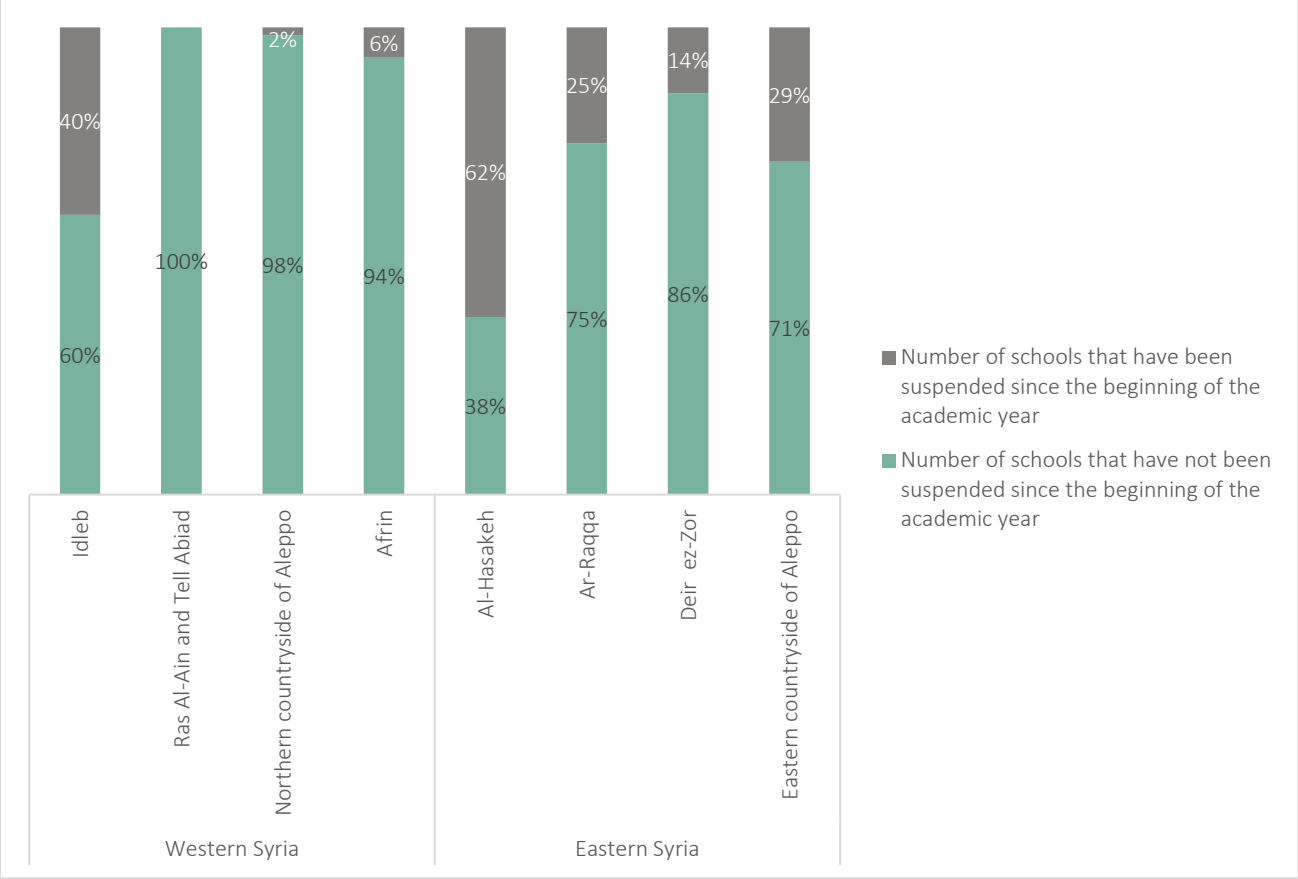


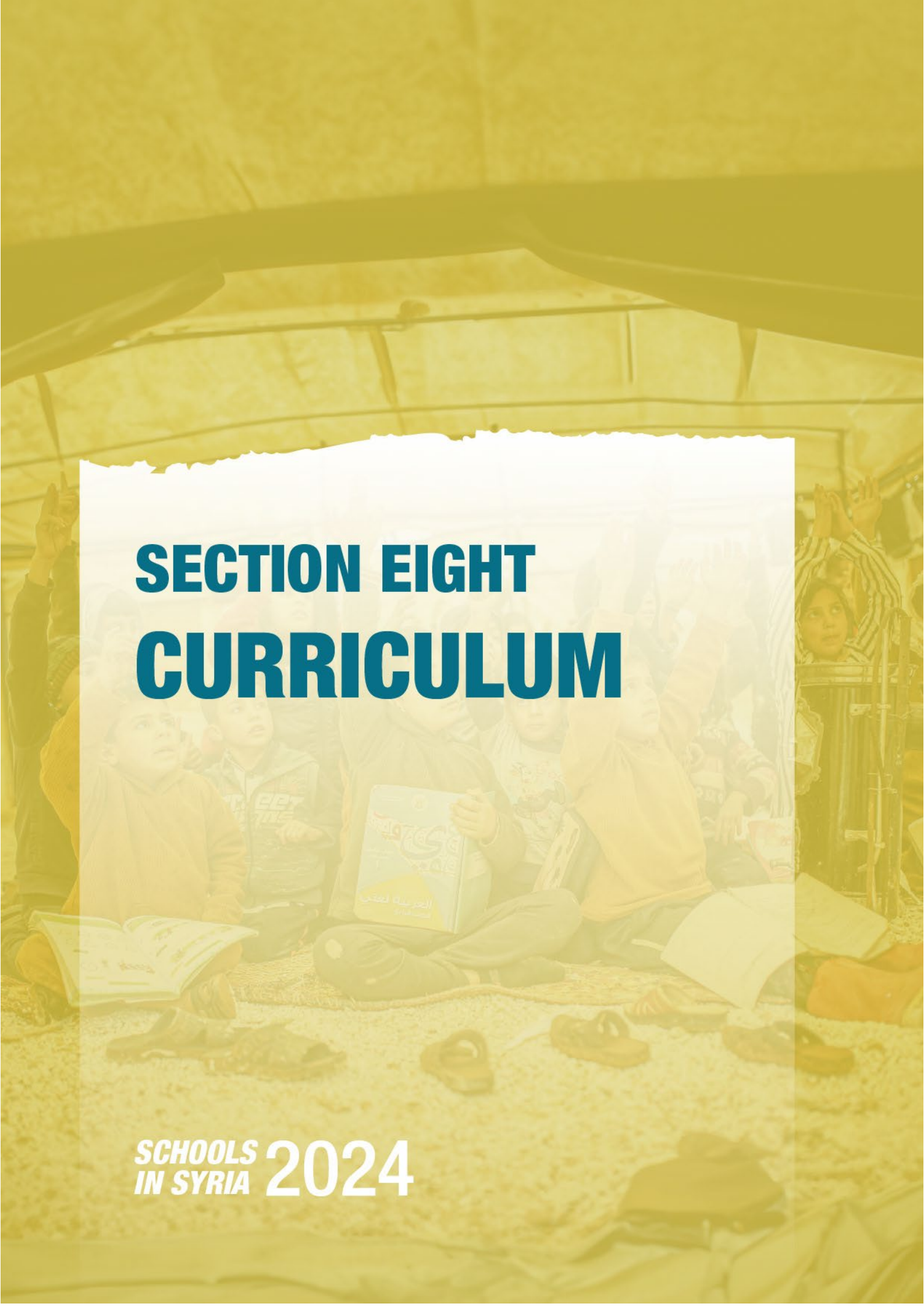


4. Suspension of School Attendance

The study explored school attendance suspensions in operational schools during the academic year 2023-2024. Findings revealed that attendance was suspended in 30% (1,308 schools) of the schools assessed, while it remained uninterrupted in 70% (3,028 schools) since the academic year began.

Figure 31 Number/Percentage of operational schools by the reduction of weekly working days





SECTION EIGHT
CURRICULUM

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 8: Curriculum

1. Curriculum Used

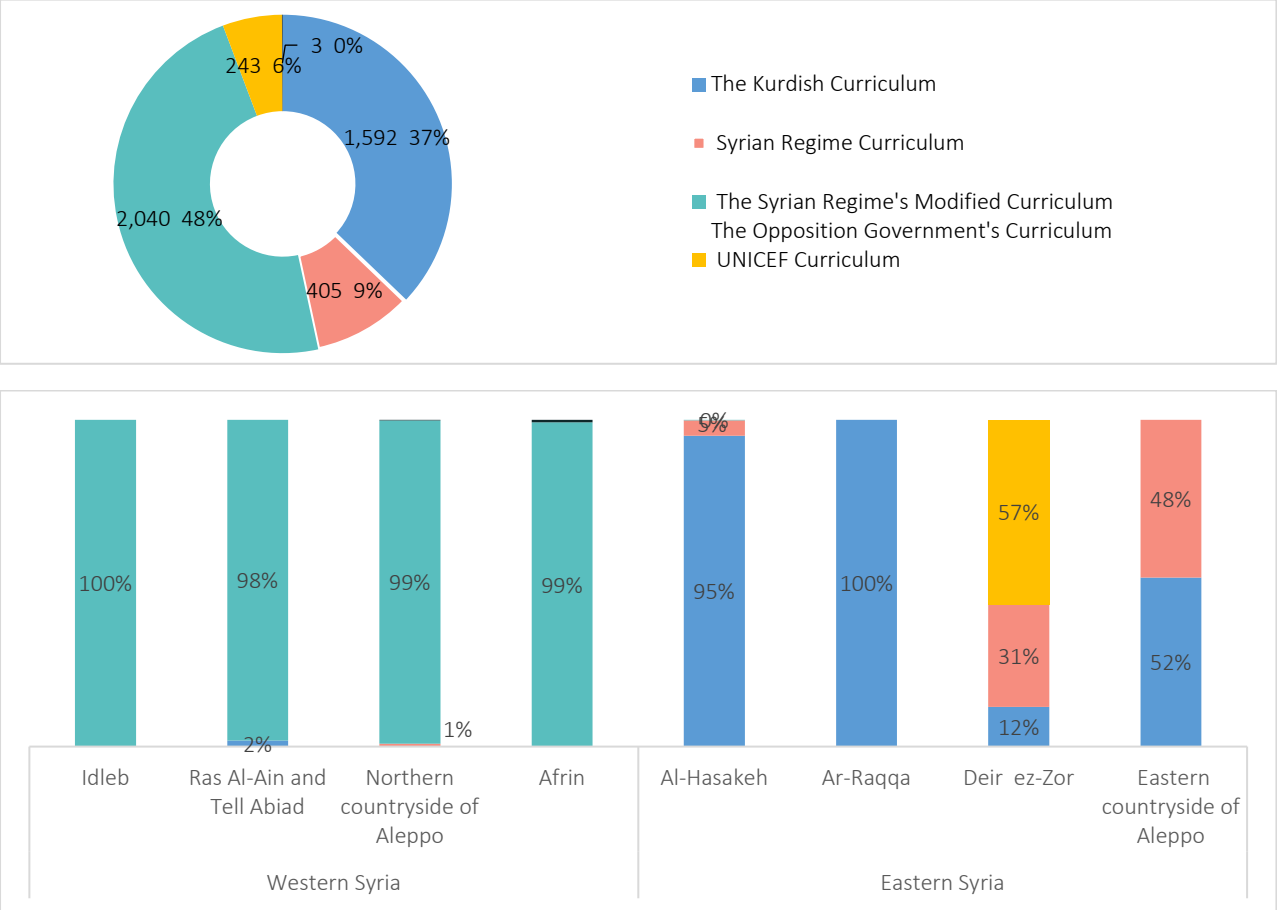
According to the INEE Minimum Standards, *"the12curriculum is defined as an action plan designed to enhance learners' knowledge and skills. It is applicable to both formal and non-formal education programs and should be relevant and adaptable to all learners. The curriculum encompasses objectives, learning levels, assessments, and teaching methods."*

1. Regime Curriculum:
    - The curriculum was sanctioned by the Syrian regime prior to the war outbreak.
    - Significant reforms were introduced during the 2017-2018 academic year, with the rapid production of new textbooks.
    - Implementation was initiated in lower grades and gradually transitioned to higher levels.
2. Modified Regime Curriculum (Opposition Government Curriculum):
    - Based on the pre-war Syrian Regime Curriculum, modified by expert teachers in 2014
    - Aimed at removing biased content and glorification of the regime
    - Revised versions printed and distributed with international support
3. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) Curriculum:
    - New curricula issued by the Education Department of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.
    - Includes Arabic and optional Kurdish language instruction
    - Notable differences in scientific subjects, political ideologies, and historical narratives
4. UNICEF Accelerated Curriculum (B-Curriculum):
    - Collaboration between the Ministry of Education and UNICEF to enhance access to quality education
    - Targeted at children aged 8-15 with limited or no prior formal education
    - Implemented in special classrooms attached to basic education schools, spanning grades 1 to 8 over four years
    - The mechanism involves designing curricula for every two academic years in one year, allowing accelerated learning.
    - Criteria for school selection and teacher qualification are outlined to ensure effective implementation.
    - The initial phase commenced in the 2015-2016 academic year, targeting first and second levels across approximately 200 schools nationwide.

The study reveals a diverse landscape of educational curricula across operational schools in Syria. It indicates that 48% (2,040 schools) of these schools implement the modified regime curriculum, also known as the opposition curriculum. Additionally, 37% (1,592 schools) adopt the curriculum issued by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Meanwhile, 9% (405 schools) adhere to the traditional Syrian regime curriculum. Interestingly, 6% (243 schools) of operational schools follow the UNICEF accelerated curriculum, reflecting a concerted effort to address educational challenges and cater to specific student needs.

[12] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/INEE_Minimum_Standards_Handbook_2010%28HSP%29_EN.pdf

Figure 23 Number/Percentage of schools that teach one type of curriculum by type of curriculum used



The conflict in Syria has led to the emergence of diverse curricula being implemented across the governorates. This phenomenon stems from several factors. One major factor is students' pursuit of recognized educational credentials, motivating them to follow curricula conducive to obtaining these certificates. Moreover, distinct governing entities may impose particular curricula within their territories. Additionally, some students' ages do not correspond to their designated educational stages, necessitating tailored curricula to address their unique learning requirements.

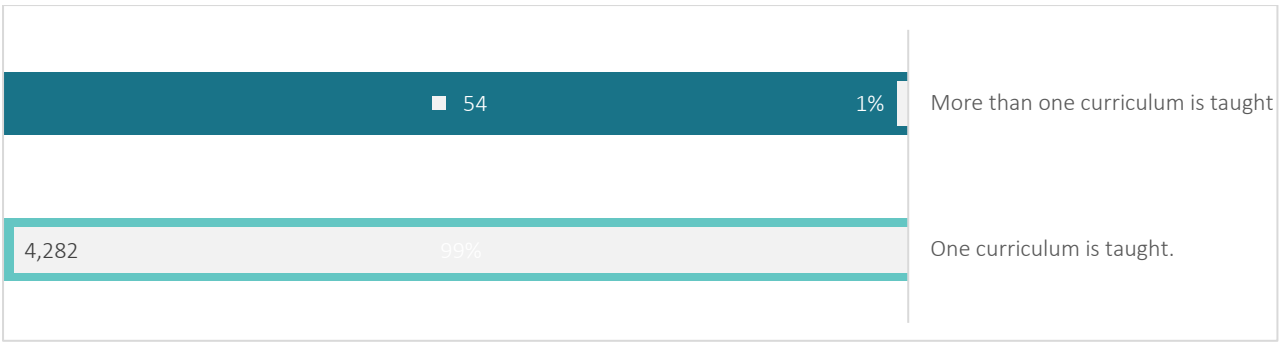
In the Syrian educational system, examinations and academic certificates are categorized into two distinct sections:

1. Transitional Stages: This section encompasses grades 1 to 8 and grades 10 and 11. Examinations for these stages are conducted internally within the school premises. Upon completion, students receive certificates issued by the school administration, often bearing the seal of the Directorate of Education.

2. Preparatory and Secondary Certificates: Grades 9 and 12 fall under this section. Examinations for these certificates are administered either nationally or within the territory governed by the respective authority. Following successful completion of the exams, certificates are issued by the Ministry of Education. It is imperative to note that these certificates must be certified and stamped by the relevant authority responsible for conducting the examinations.

Throughout the years of conflict in Syria, it's conceivable that certain schools have adopted multiple curricula. This could entail a transitional curriculum for certain grade levels alongside another curriculum tailored for preparatory and secondary certificates. The study's findings unveiled that in 99% of the operational schools surveyed, the same curriculum is uniformly taught across all levels. This underscores a cohesive approach to education and curriculum delivery. However, in 1% of the operational schools (54 schools), there exists a discrepancy in the curriculum, with multiple curricula being implemented.

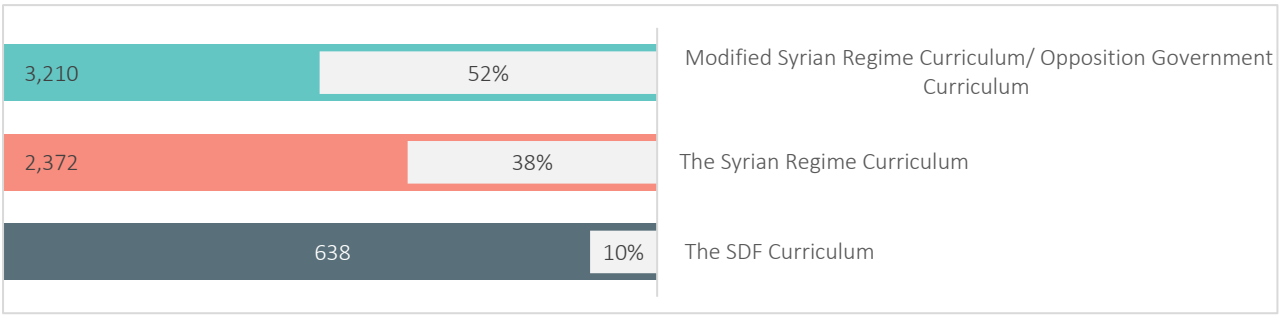
Figure 24 Number/Percentage of schools that teach multiple curricula

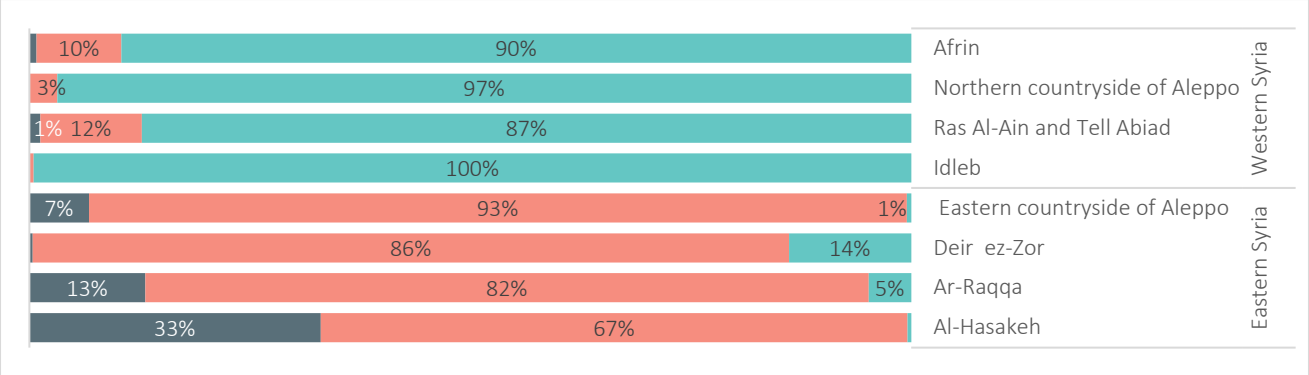


2. Parent Survey: The Curricula They Would Like Their Children to Study

The enumerators asked parents what curricula they would like their children to study in their schools. As per the study findings, half of the interviewed parents, constituting 52% (3,210 parents of students), voiced their preference for their children to be educated under the modified curriculum of the Syrian regime, also known as the opposition government curriculum. Meanwhile, 38% of parents (2,372 parents of students) favored their children studying the curriculum directly issued by the Syrian regime. Additionally, 10% of parents (638 parents of students) expressed a preference for their children to follow the curriculum administered by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Figure 25 Number/Percentage of parents interviewed according to the curricula they want their children to study.



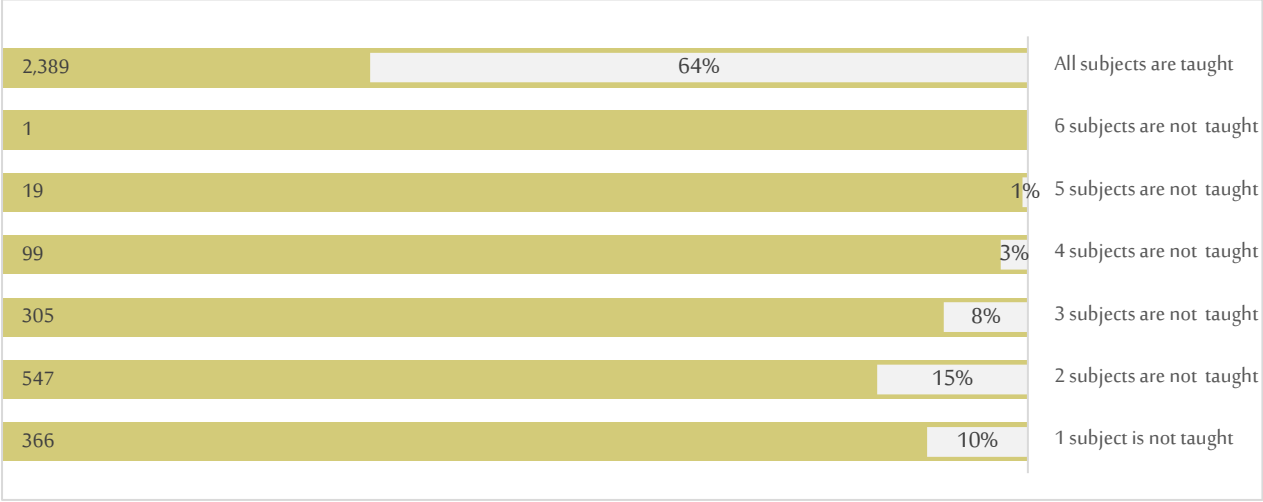


3. Subjects Included in the Curriculum

The report delves into the curriculum composition across different educational levels, spanning from basic education to secondary education. It highlights the progression of subjects as students advance through these stages, emphasizing a widening spectrum of learning opportunities. Core subjects were scrutinized, with ancillary topics such as philosophy, religious education, and national education omitted from the assessment. Notably, curricular variations across regions under differing governance, including the Syrian Interim Government, the Syrian regime, and SDF-controlled territories, were not distinguished.

The Schools in Syria report directed attention to six foundational subjects within the first basic education cycle (grades 1-4): mathematics, Arabic, English, painting, music, and sports. The findings underscored disparities in subject coverage among schools at this fundamental stage. Noteworthy revelations include 10% of schools (366 schools) lacking instruction in one subject, 15% (547 schools) without two subjects, 8% (305 schools) without three subjects, and 3% (99 schools) without four subjects. Most subjects not taught were painting, music, and sports, with a few schools not teaching English.

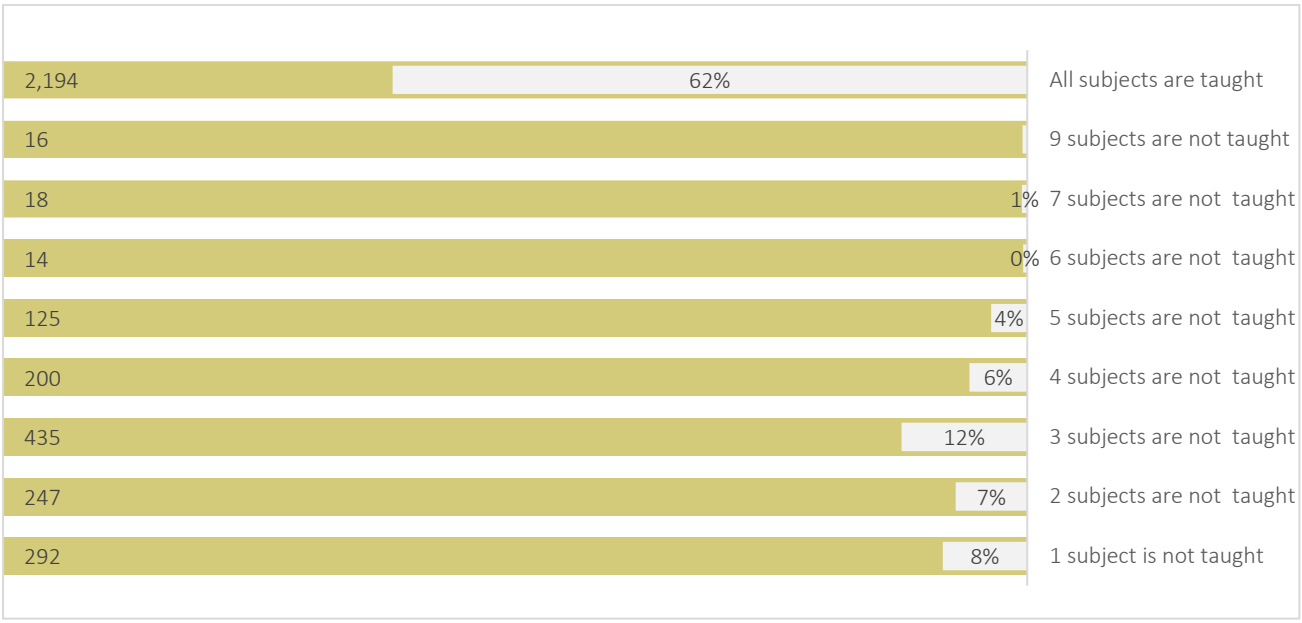
Figure 26 Number/Percentage of schools with a first cycle of basic education (1-4) by the number of skipped subjects



Data for the second basic education cycle (grades 5-9) were meticulously collected across thirteen primary subject areas: mathematics, Arabic language, English language, science, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, computer technology, music, and painting. The study findings unveiled varying degrees of subject coverage within this educational phase. Specifically, among schools in the second cycle of basic education, 8% (292 schools) skipped one subject from their curriculum, 7% (247 schools) lacked instruction in two subjects,

while 12% (435 schools) did not include three subjects. Additionally, 6% (200 schools) did not cover four subjects, 4% (125 schools) omitted five subjects, and a mere 14 schools did not encompass six subjects. Lastly, 1% (18 schools) did not provide instruction in seven subjects. Physical education and arts (music and painting) are often not taught as teachers focus only on basic subjects. Computer technologies are not taught because of the lack of equipped computer labs in schools. Some schools do not teach physics, chemistry, history, and geography.

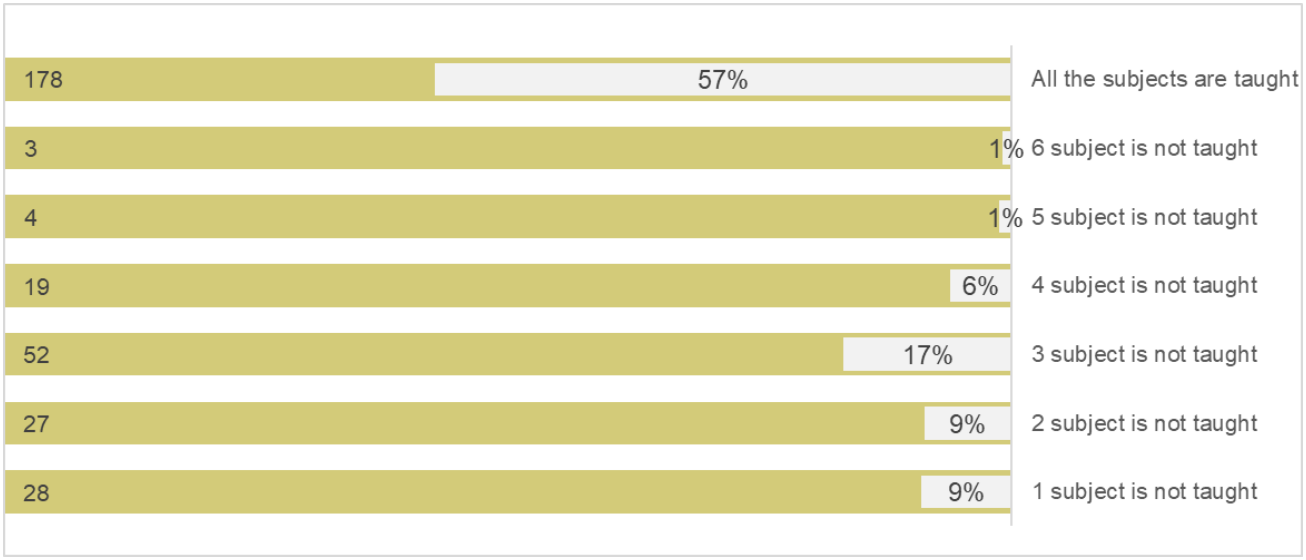
Figure 27 Number/Percentage of schools with a second cycle of basic education (5-9) by the number of skipped subjects



For the secondary stage (grades 10-12), data collection encompassed 13 key subjects: mathematics, Arabic, English, science, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, computer technology, music, and drawing. According to the study, 28 secondary schools lacked instruction in one subject, while 27 schools skipped two subjects from their curriculum. Additionally, 52 schools were found not to teach three subjects, and 19 schools did not cover four subjects. The study revealed that 57% of secondary schools provide instruction in all subjects. In the secondary stage, subjects such as physical education and arts (music and painting) are frequently overlooked as teachers concentrate solely on core subjects.

Moreover, the absence of equipped computer labs in schools often leads to excluding computer technology from the curriculum. Certain schools also do not offer physics, chemistry, history, and geography. Furthermore, beyond the omission of fundamental subjects, it's noteworthy that supplementary subjects like philosophy and national education, which are part of the secondary certificate exams in areas under the regime's control, are not included in the secondary certificate exams in other areas of control, namely opposition-controlled areas and SDF-controlled areas.

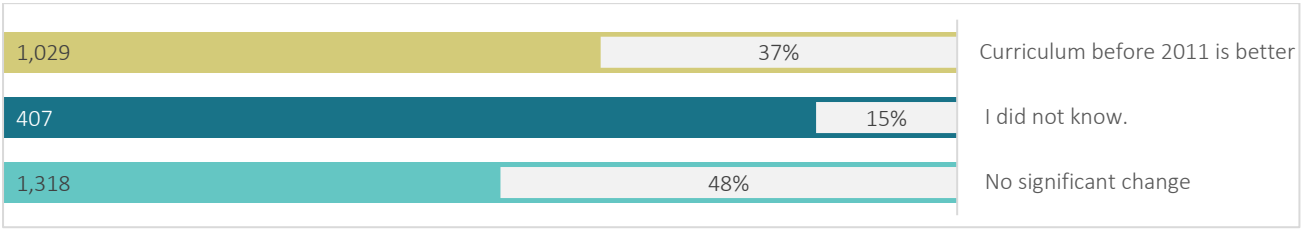
Figure 28 Number/Percentage of secondary stage schools by the number of skipped subjects

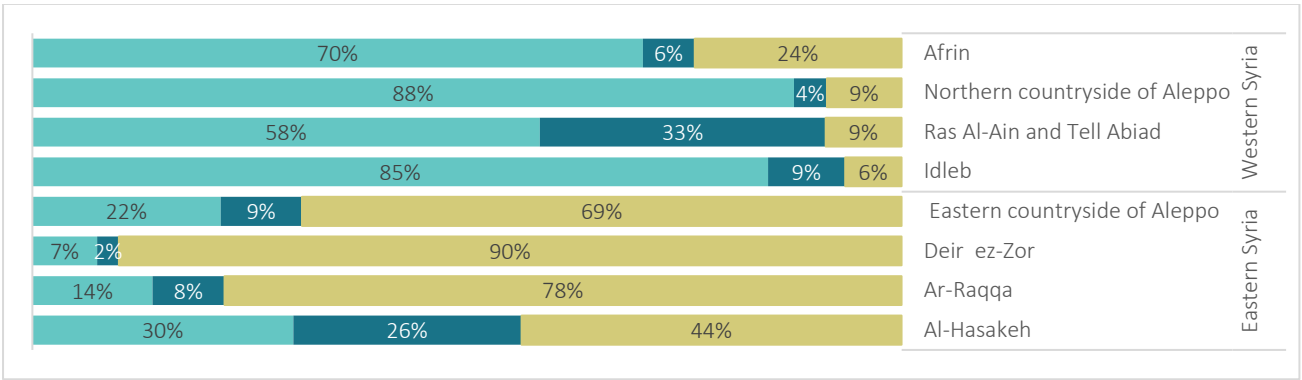


4. Teacher Survey: Teachers' Opinions on the Type of Curriculum Used

During the survey conducted with teachers, enumerators delved into educators' perceptions of the curricula they presently teach, contrasting them with those in use before the Syrian conflict erupted in 2011, marking the advent of diverse curriculum models. Among the respondents, 48% (1,318 teachers) noted no significant shifts in the curriculum. Interestingly, 37% (1,029 teachers) expressed a sentiment favoring the pre-2011 curricula, considering them superior to the current ones. Moreover, 15% (407 teachers) admitted uncertainty regarding the disparities between the present curricula and those employed before 2011.

Figure 29 Number/Percentage of teachers interviewed by their opinion of the current curricula now and before 2011

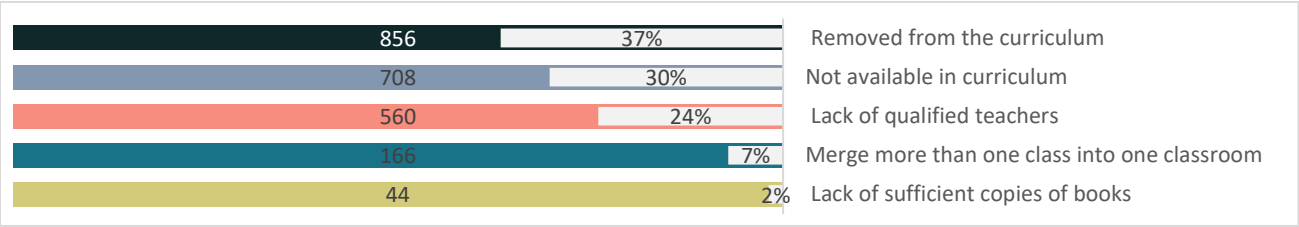




5. Reasons for Skipping Some School Subjects

The research findings elucidate two primary factors contributing to excluding specific educational content from school curricula. Firstly, deliberate removal accounted for 37% (856 schools) of the operational institutions surveyed, signifying a purposeful decision to omit these materials. Secondly, approximately 30% of schools (708 institutions) cited curriculum deficiencies as the cause, indicating a lack of requisite materials within the existing framework. In 24% of schools (560 institutions), the absence of qualified teachers resulted in the neglect of certain subjects. Furthermore, the amalgamation of multiple grade levels in a single classroom, observed in around 7% of schools (166 institutions), hindered effective subject instruction. Additionally, inadequate textbook availability was reported in approximately 2% of schools (44 institutions), further exacerbating the issue of omitted subjects in the instructional process.

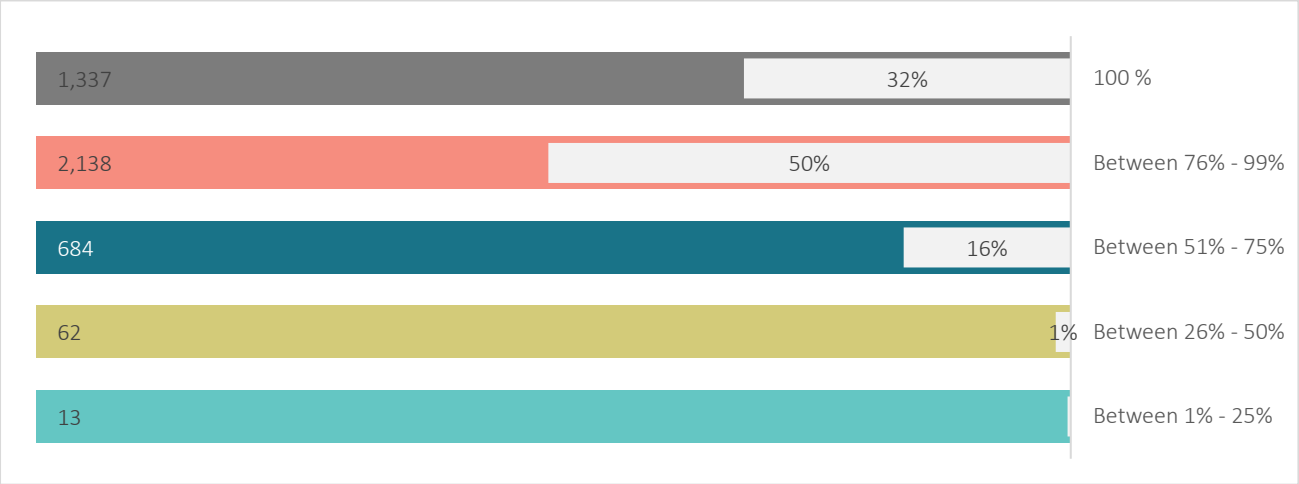
Figure 30 Number/Percentage of schools according to the main reasons for skipping some school subjects

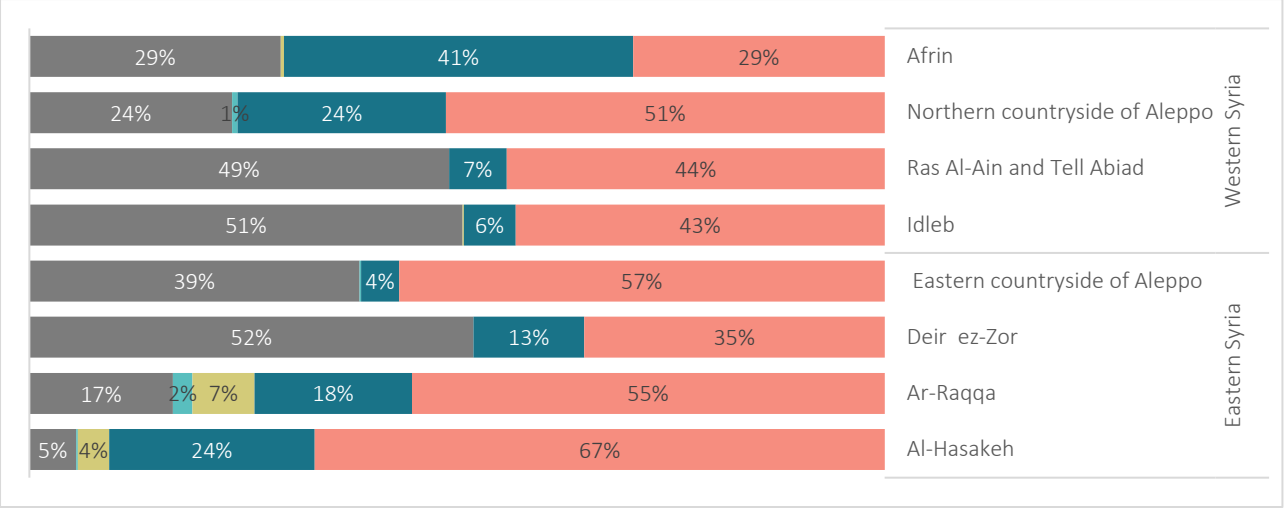


6. Percentage of Curricula Taught During the Last Academic Year

The extent to which the curriculum is implemented, allowing students to advance beyond their current educational stage, serves as a key indicator of the efficacy of the educational process. This metric underscores teachers' adherence to the annual educational plan stipulated by the education directorate. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that this percentage alone does not comprehensively depict students' actual academic proficiency and levels. The study findings reveal that the curriculum was fully delivered in 32% (1,337 schools) of the surveyed operational schools. In 50% (2,138 schools), coverage ranged from 76% to 99% of the prescribed curriculum. Moreover, in 16% (684 schools), the curriculum was taught to a degree spanning 51% to 75%. A mere 1% (62 schools) managed to cover 26% to 50% of the curriculum. Conversely, less than 25% of the curriculum was covered in 13 of the evaluated schools.

Figure 31 Number/Percentage of schools by the percentage of the curriculum taught during the past year



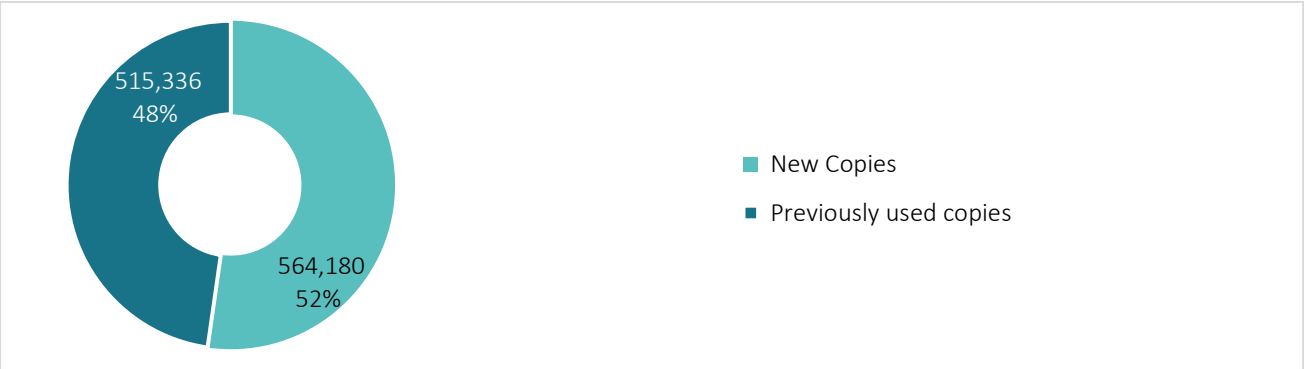


7. Sources of Textbooks

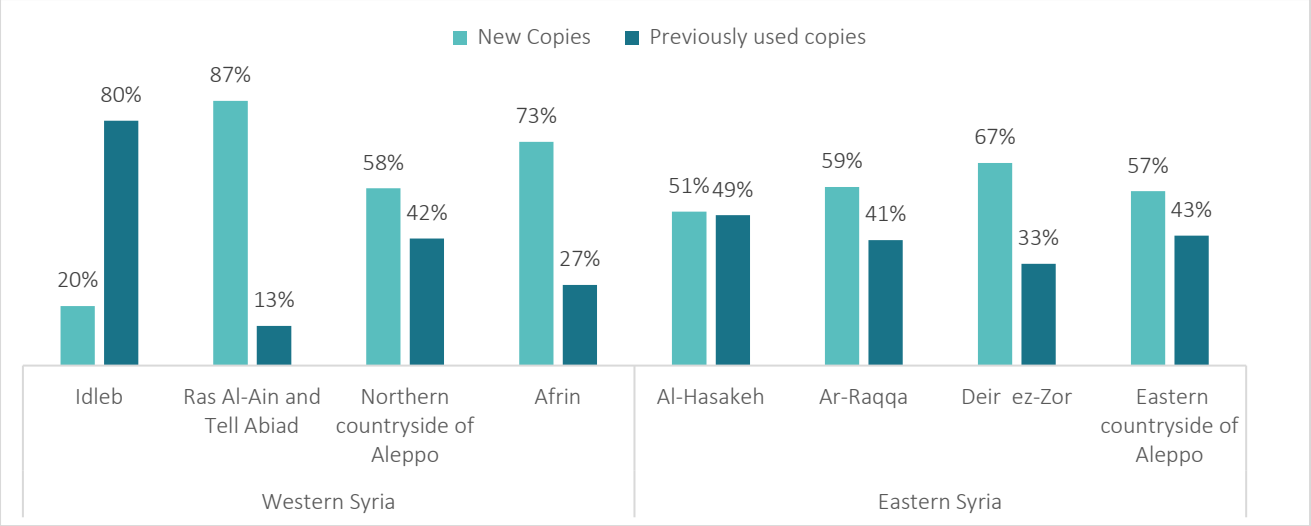
The INEE Minimum Standards emphasize the provision of textbooks at the beginning of the school year[13], stating that "sufficient teaching and learning materials should be provided and purchased locally, in an appropriate and time-bound manner." Adequate copies of the textbooks should be secured at the beginning of the school year and distributed to students immediately after they attend school. The key informants confirmed that the bulk of the textbook copies are distributed more than several months after the start of the school year.

Among the evaluated operational schools, a substantial inventory of textbooks is accessible, totaling 1,079,516 copies. However, insights from the study indicate that a significant portion, comprising 48% (515,336 copies), consists of previously utilized textbooks. These texts, having been used by students in prior academic years and subsequently returned to the school, pose limitations to the intended pedagogical advantages. Specifically, students who have previously interacted with these textbooks have likely completed exercises and activities contained within, thereby diminishing the efficacy of repetitive engagement for new students. Additionally, concerns arise due to the condition of these reused textbooks, as some may exhibit damaged or missing pages, further hindering their utility and instructional value.

Figure 41 Number/Percentage of new and used books out of the total number of books available



[13] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/INEE_Minimum_Standards_Handbook_2010%28HSP%29_EN.pdf



8. The Need for Copies of the Textbooks

The study's findings underscore a tangible educational disparity within operational schools, revealing a staggering textbook demand. With a total requirement of 677,334 copies, it becomes evident that a substantial portion of students, approximately 57%, are deprived of access to updated learning materials. This deficit impedes their academic progress and exacerbates the already challenging learning environment. The stark increase in the percentage of students lacking textbooks, as compared to the previous edition of the Schools in Syria report, highlights the pressing need for concerted efforts to bridge this gap and ensure equitable access to educational resources.

The historical data from previous editions of the report reveals a notable fluctuation in the demand for curriculum copies across different years. In the 8th edition report [14], schools necessitated 579,615 copies, marking a slight increase from the 7th edition of the report[15], it was found that schools required 605,814 copies of the curriculum.

However, this trend contrasts with the 6th edition[16], where the demand stood at 424,026 copies, showcasing a significant decrease compared to the previous (5th) edition report,[17] where the needed textbooks were 557,945. The 4th edition report[18] stated that the textbooks required were 222,378 copies. These fluctuations underscore the dynamic nature of educational resource needs within Syrian schools over time, necessitating a nuanced approach to address the evolving challenges and ensure consistent access to quality learning materials for all students.

[14] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-08-thematic-2023-en-2/

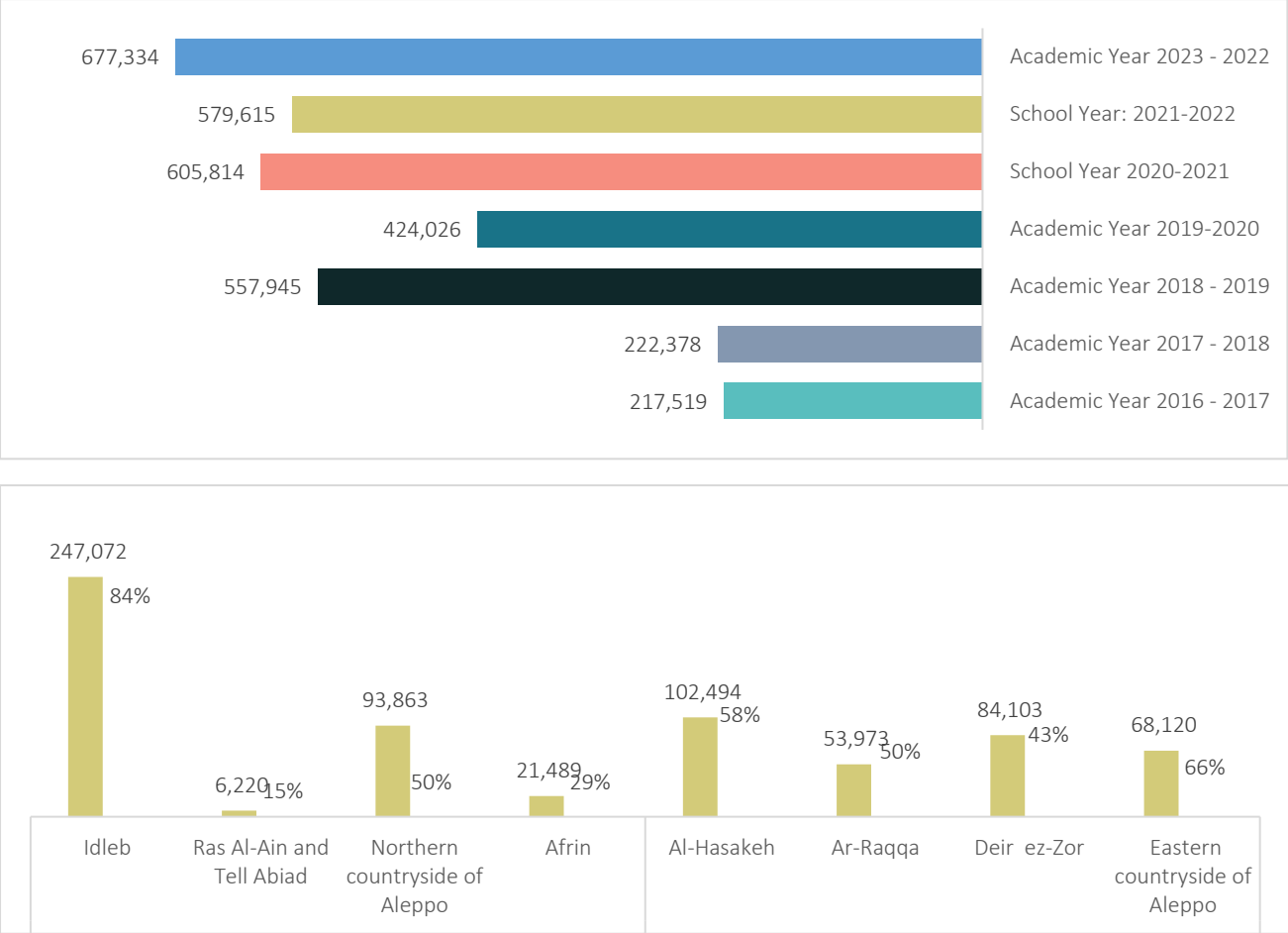
[15] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-07-thematic-2022/

[16] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-syria-06-thematic-2021/

[17] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria/

[18] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-2018/

Figure 42 Number of textbook copies needed at the operational schools

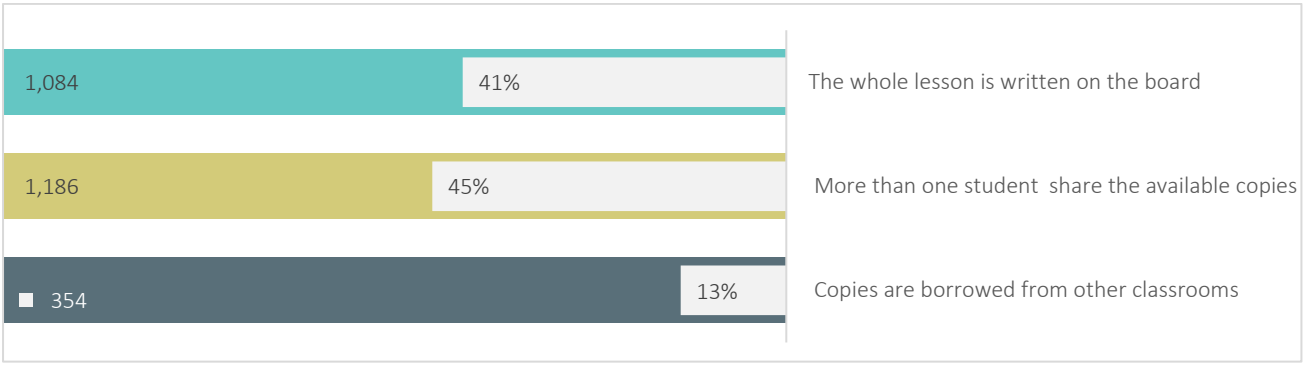


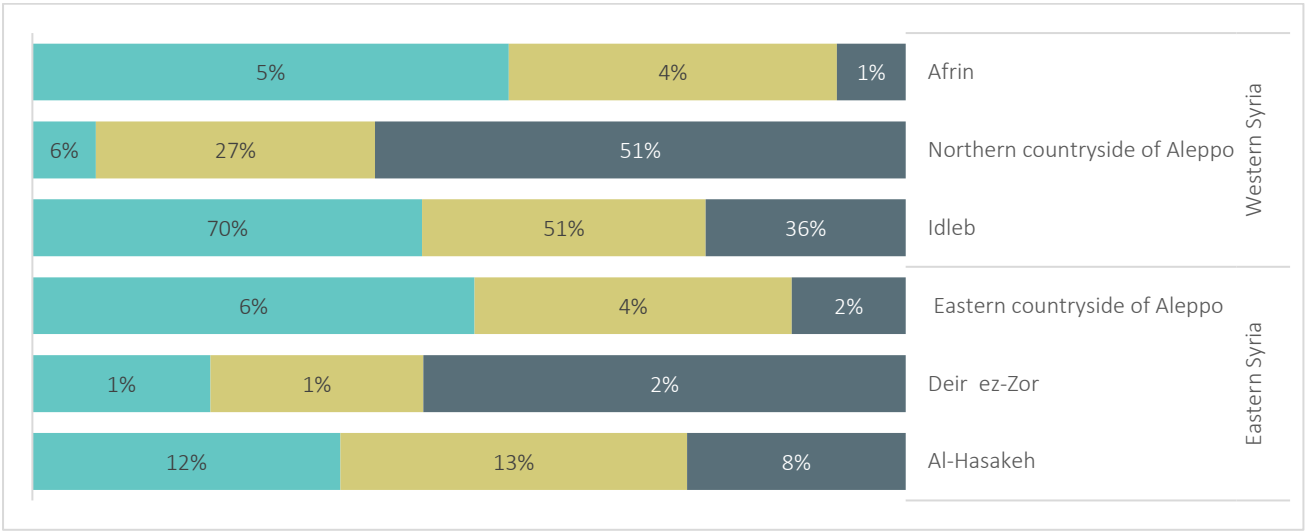
Textbook copies encompass the set of instructional materials utilized within the educational curriculum, with the number of books varying depending on the educational phase. During the initial stage of basic education covering grades 1 to 4, the required textbooks typically fall within the range of 4 to 6 textbooks. As students progress into the subsequent phase of basic education, spanning grades 5 to 9, the textbook requirement expands to encompass between 8 to 10 textbooks. Upon advancing to secondary education levels, encompassing grades 10 to 12, the textbook inventory further increases to include between 10 to 14 books.

9. Teacher Survey: Mechanisms for Dealing with the Shortage of Textbook Copies in Classrooms

The data illustrates the prevalence of various strategies employed by teachers to address textbook shortages within classrooms. The most common practice observed involves accommodating more students than available textbook copies, representing 45% (1,186 teachers) of the teachers. Additionally, teachers frequently resorted to writing the entire lesson content on the board, constituting 41% (1,084) of surveyed teachers. Borrowing copies from other classroom stocks is also utilized, though less frequently, accounting for 13% (354 teachers) of the overall teachers. These findings underscore teachers' significant challenges in ensuring equitable access to learning materials, prompting resourceful adaptations to facilitate effective teaching and learning experiences despite constraints.

Figure 43 Number/Percentages of teachers surveyed by mechanisms of dealing with the shortage of textbooks





SECTION NINE
CERTIFICATES

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

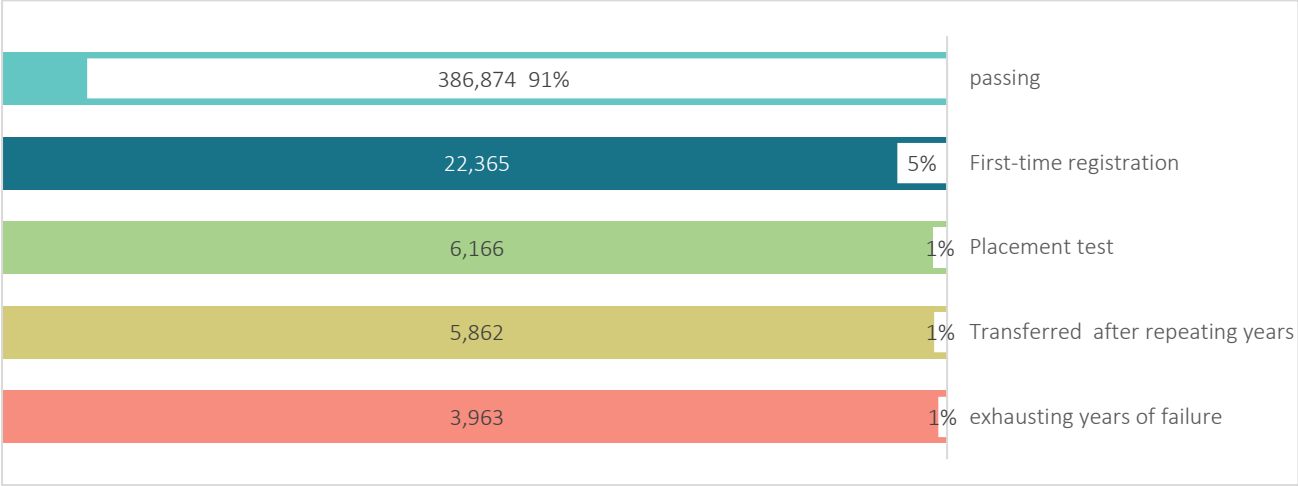
Section 9: Certificates

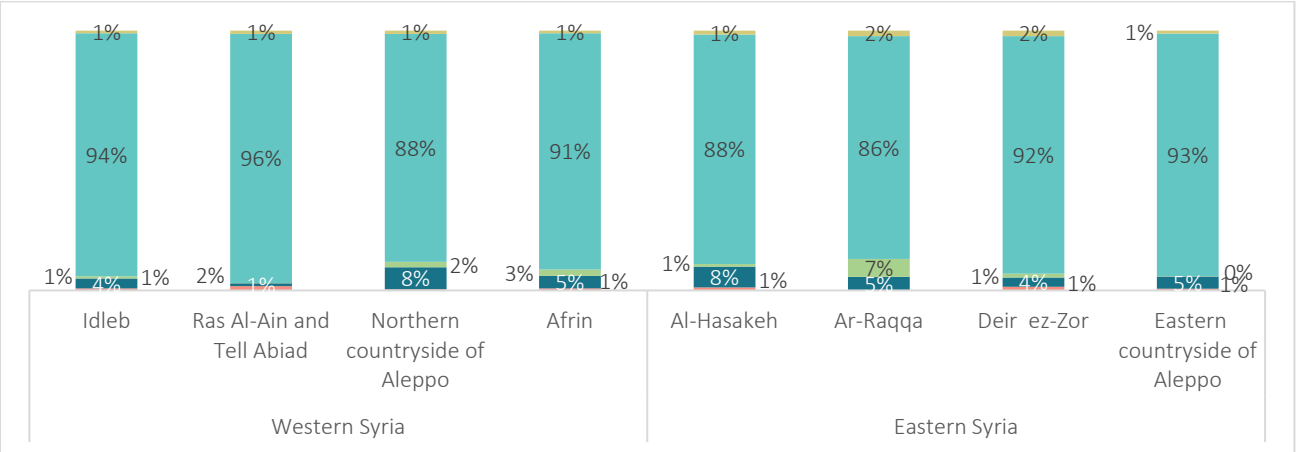
1. Mechanisms of Students' Access to the Current School Grade

Prior to the commencement of the ongoing conflict in Syria, students had several methods for advancing from one school stage to the next. These methods included progression through passing grades, transferring after repeating years, and exhausting years despite academic failures. However, the difficulties of war necessitated the introduction of two additional methods to facilitate student advancement. These measures entail undergoing placement tests to assess academic proficiency and placement accordingly, as well as enrolling in schools for the first time.

The study's results indicate that the primary method for student progression, encompassing 91% of students, involves advancing to higher grades upon successfully passing final exams. Approximately 5% of students entered their current educational stage through initial enrollment, excluding those in the first grade. Additionally, 1% of students moved up after undergoing placement tests. Another 1% reached their current grade after exhausting years despite academic failure, while an additional 1% advanced a grade due to previous grade repetition.

Figure 44 Percentage of students promoted to higher grades.





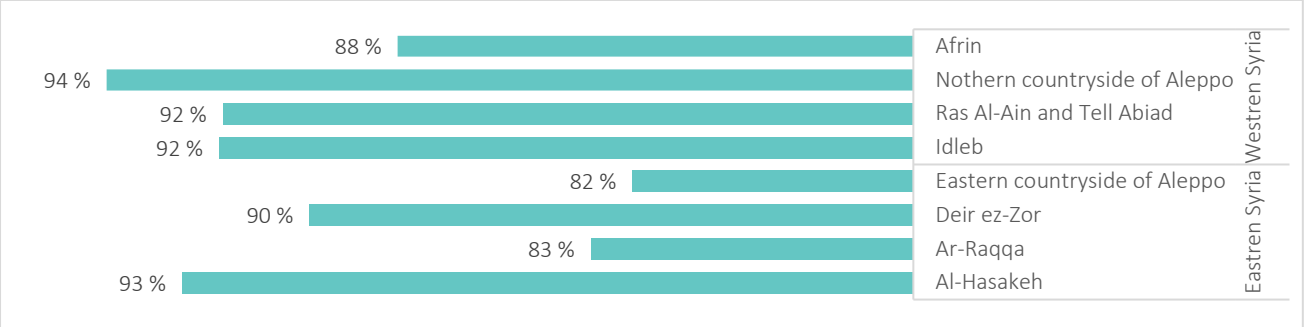
- **Passing:** After the academic year, students must take final exams based on the curriculum they have studied throughout the year. Completing these exams indicates they have met the requirements to advance to the next grade.
- **Transferring after repeating years:** Students are sometimes promoted to the next grade after repeating the same educational grade for two consecutive years due to not meeting the passing requirements initially.
- **Exhausting years of failure:** Some students advance to the next grade due to exhausting their "failure years," where a student fails for several consecutive years and is transferred to the next grade because they are no longer allowed to stay in the same grade, due to mismatch between their age and other students, and at the same time, they can't be excluded as the compulsory education law obliges students to attend school until the completion of first and second cycles of primary education (grades 1-9). It should be mentioned that the student can fail only two years in the first cycle of primary education (grades 1-4) and only two years in the second cycle of primary education (grades 5-9). If the two years of failure expire, the student automatically advances to the next grade even if they have not passed the exams.
- **Placement test:** Specialized teachers conduct a "placement test" mechanism for out-of-school children (dropout children) and children who do not have official documents that identify the grade they have completed. The specialized teachers test the abilities of these children using quick tests to determine their level of education and the educational grade they should join.
- **First-time registration:** The student's grade is determined by age during first-time registration in those schools. In such cases, no placement tests are conducted, and no learners' official documents are required to identify the grade they have completed; first-grade students are accepted in this case.

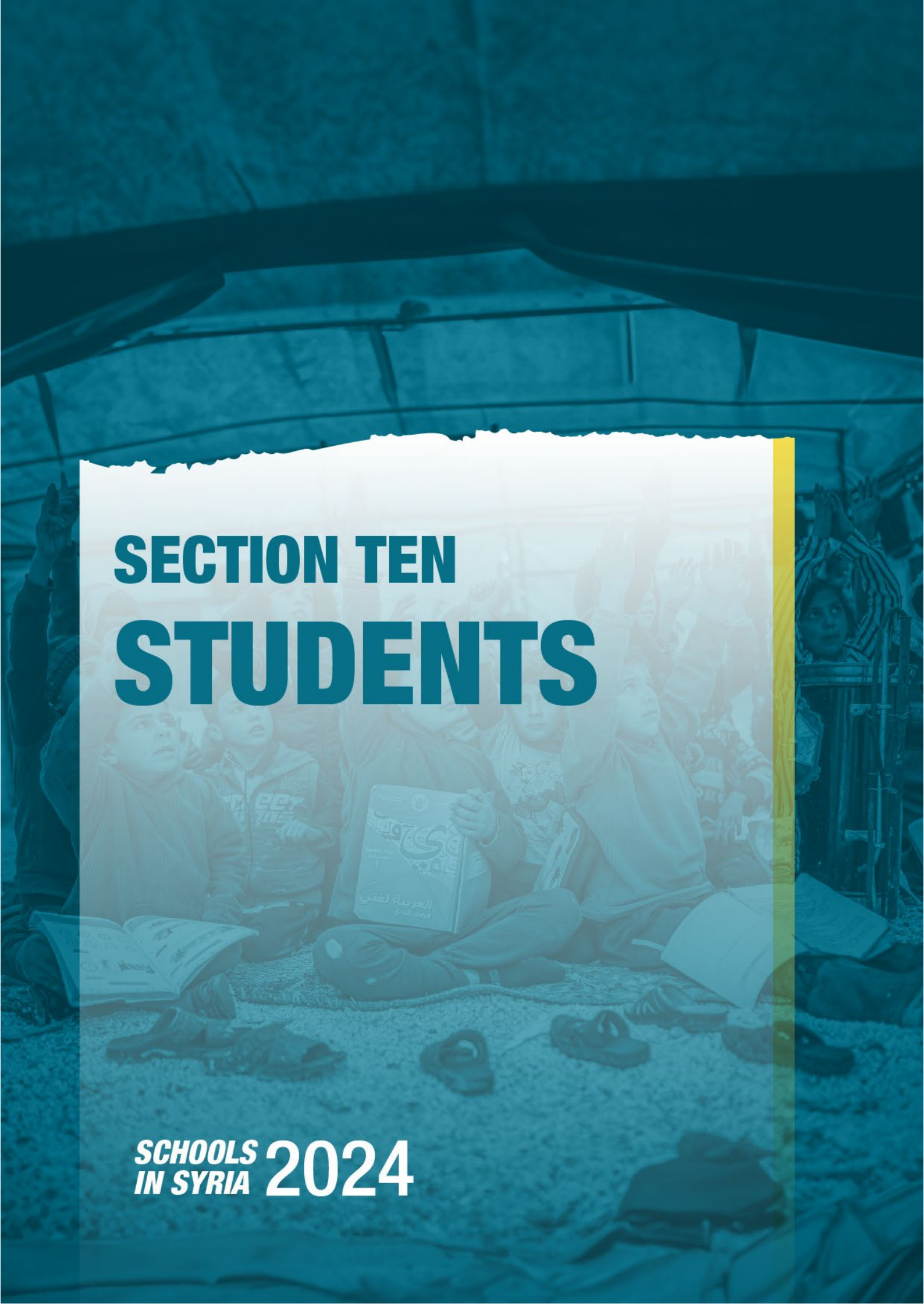
2. Teacher Survey: Percentage of Students Whose Ages Align with Their School Grades

Surveys administered by enumerators among teachers sought insights into the alignment between students' ages and their corresponding school grades. From the teachers' responses, the average percentage of students whose educational levels match their grades was determined to be 91% across the assessed schools.

In the NWS region, the average alignment percentage in Afrin stands at 88%, while Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad report 92%, and northern Aleppo countryside records 94%. Similarly, Idleb governorate indicates a 92% alignment rate. In NES, surveyed teachers reported alignment percentages of 82% in the eastern countryside of Aleppo, 90% in Deir-ez-Zor, 83% in Ar-Raqqa, and 93% in Al-Hasakeh governorate.

Figure 45 Percentage of teachers surveyed by students whose educational levels align with their school grades according to the teachers.





SECTION TEN
STUDENTS

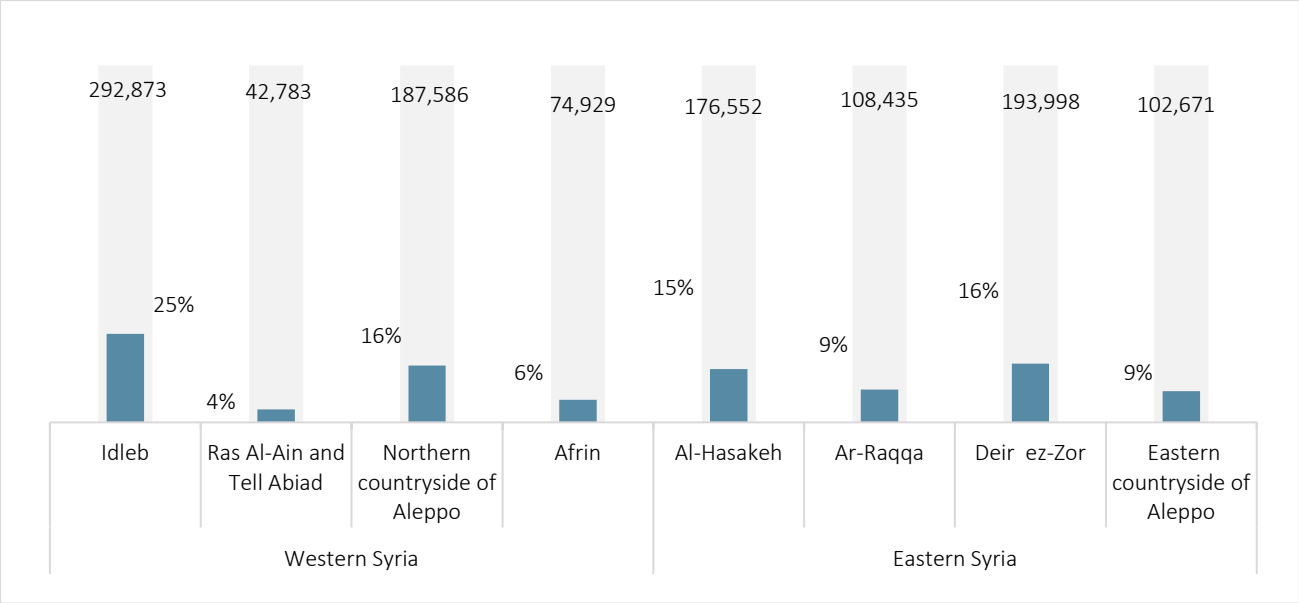
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 10: Students

1. Numbers of Student

In the current version of the Schools in Syria Report (the academic year 2023-2024), the number of students in operational schools reached 1,179,827. In the eighth edition of the report[19], the number of students in operational schools reached 1,057,693. In the seventh edition[20] of the report, the number of students in operational schools reached 1,030,382.

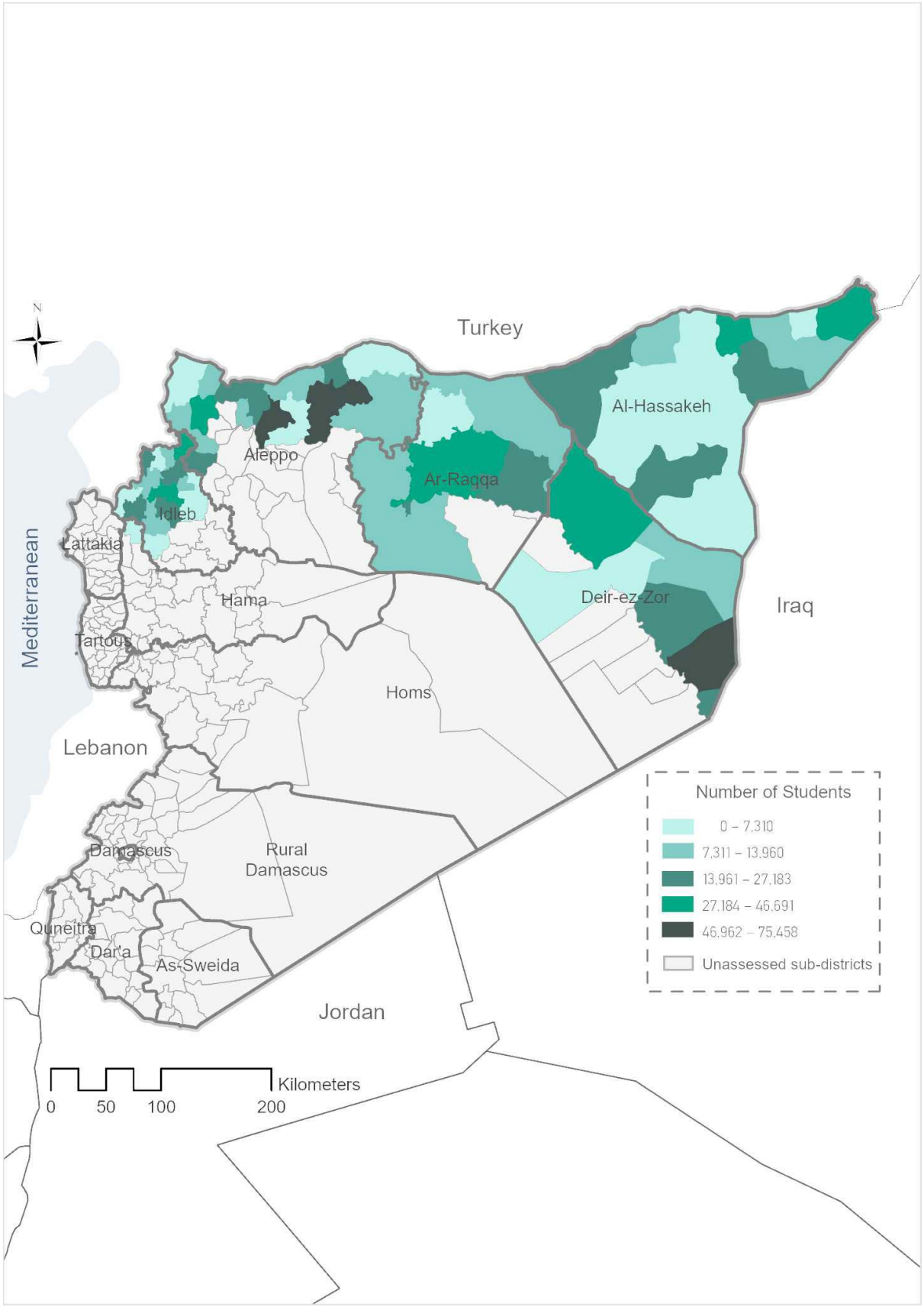
Figure 46 Comparison of the number of students in the operational schools according to three editions of the Schools in Syria Report



[19] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-08-thematic-2023-en-2/

[20] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/schools-in-syria-07-thematic-2022/

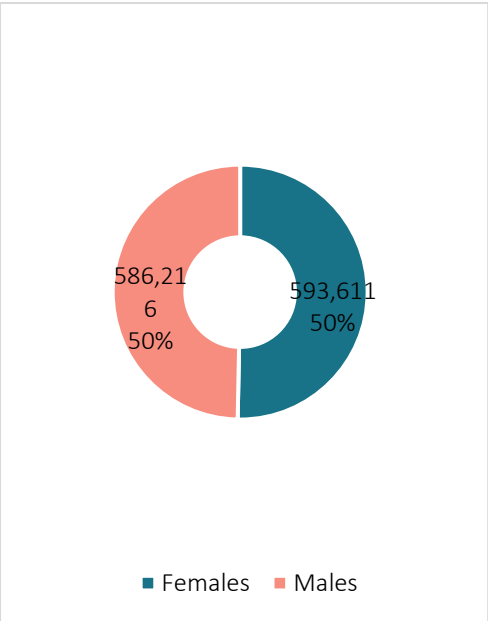
Map 3 Number of students in operational schools at the sub-district level

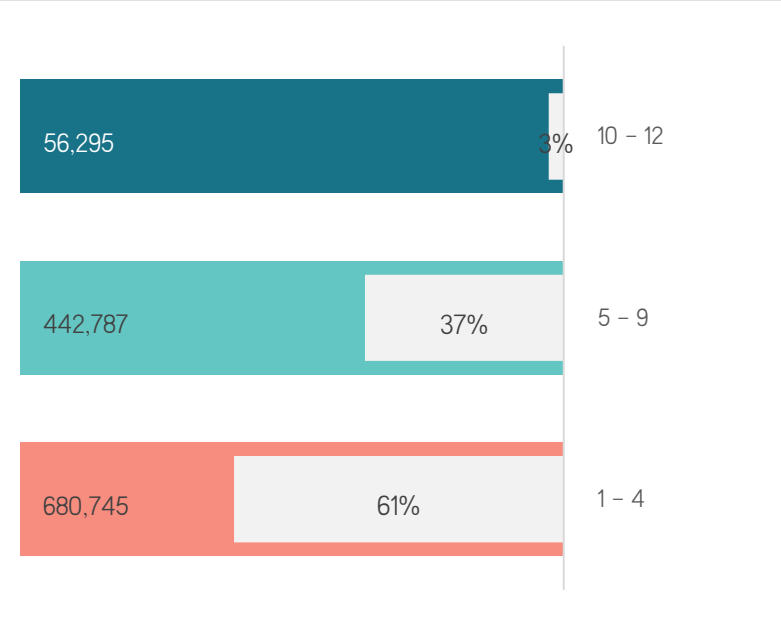


2. Gender of Students

The data presents an equal gender distribution within the population, with females constituting 50% (593,611 individuals) and males also comprising 50% (586,216 individuals). This balanced representation underscores parity between genders within the studied demographic, with an equal number of females and males making up the total population.

Figure 47 Number/Percentage of students in operational schools by age groups



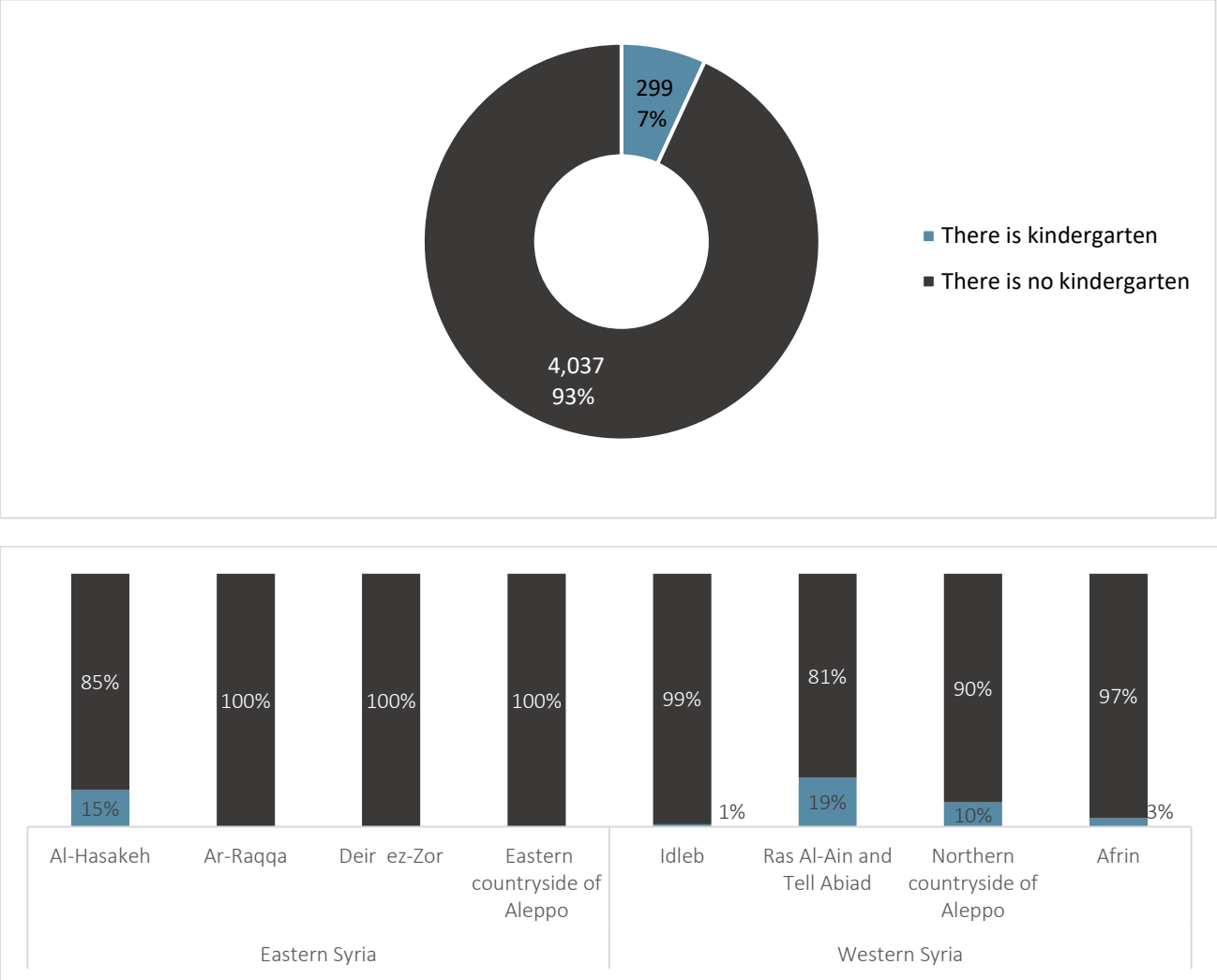


The data reveals a breakdown of student enrollment across different grade levels within the educational system. Among the total student population, 61% (680,745 students) are distributed across grades 1 through 4. The middle grades, spanning grades 5 to 9, account for 37% (442,787 students). Finally, the higher grades, encompassing grades 10 through 12, consist of 3% (56,295 students). This distribution highlights a predominant concentration of students in the early years of schooling, followed by a significant but lesser proportion in the middle grades, with a relatively smaller cohort in the higher grade levels.

3. Availability of Kindergartens within Schools

The study found that only 7% (299 schools) of the assessed operational schools had kindergartens (pre-primary education).

Figure 48 The availability of kindergartens within schools



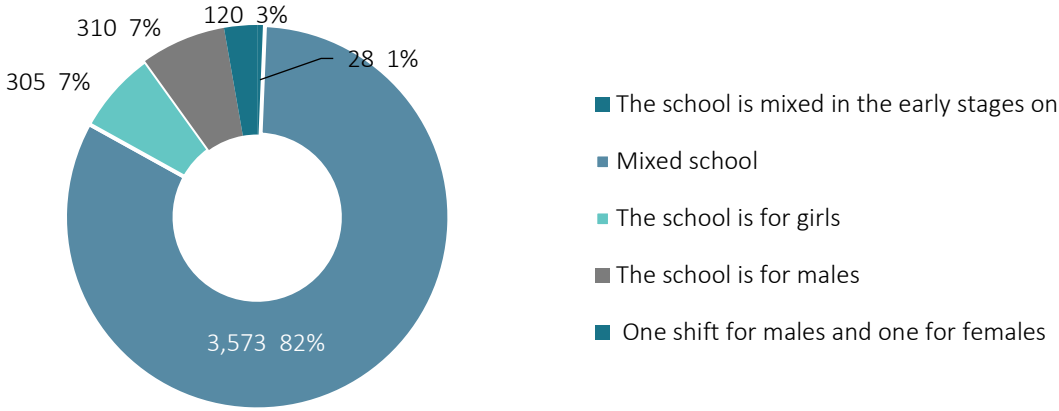
The INEE Minimum Standards for Education defines early childhood[21] development as "the processes children aged 0 to 8 years develop their optimal physical health, mental awareness, emotional confidence, social competence and readiness to learn. These processes are supported by comprehensive social and financial policies and programming, including health, food, WASH, hygiene, education, and child protection services. All children and families benefit from high-quality education programs, but the disadvantaged groups benefit the most." Before the war in Syria, pre-school (pre-primary) education was uncommon. Parents interested in preschool sent their children to private schools, and many families could not afford private preschool. In 2006, a new branch of the Faculty of Education called Kindergartens was established. Graduates of this branch specialize in early childhood development. With parents increasingly aware of the importance of early childhood education, schools started to recognize the need to open preschool levels.

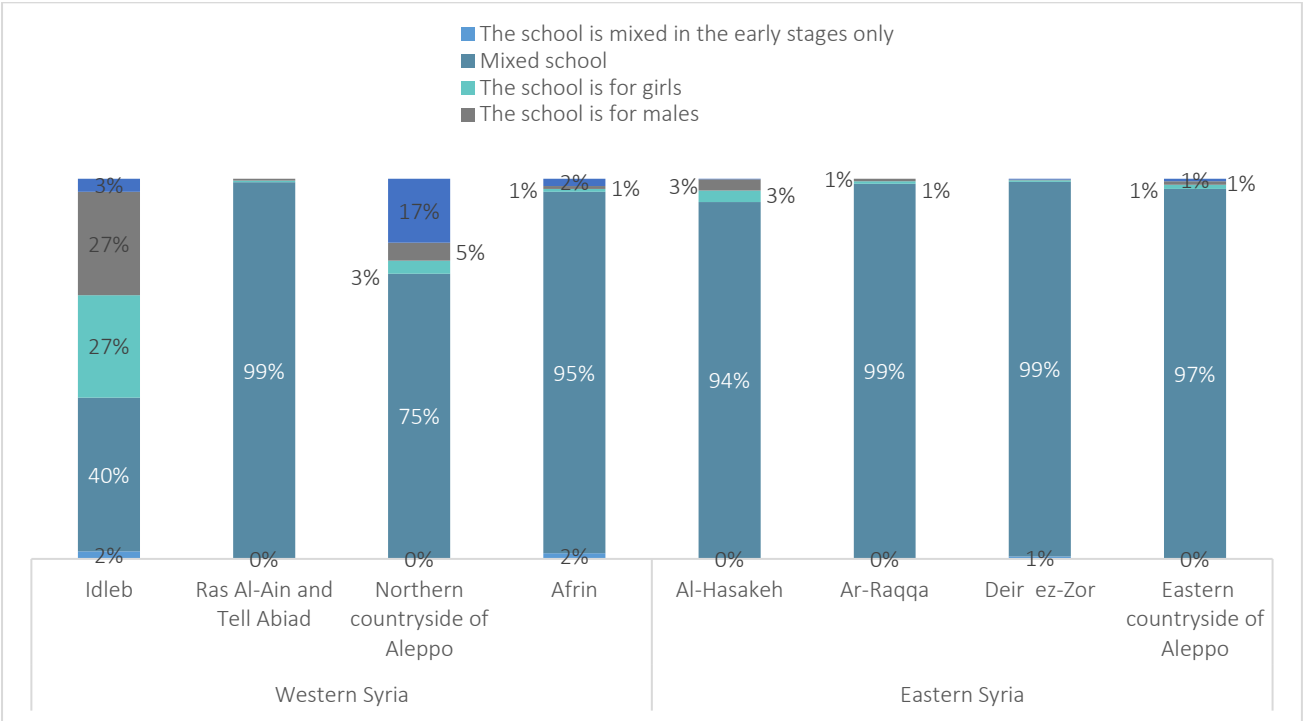
[21] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ARB_INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework_v2.pdf

4. Segregation of Students by Gender

The data shows that 82% (3,573 schools) of the total assessed schools are mixed schools with male and female students, 7% (310 schools) of the schools are for male students only, and 7% (305 schools) are for female students only.

Figure 49 Number/ Percentage of schools by segregation of students by gender





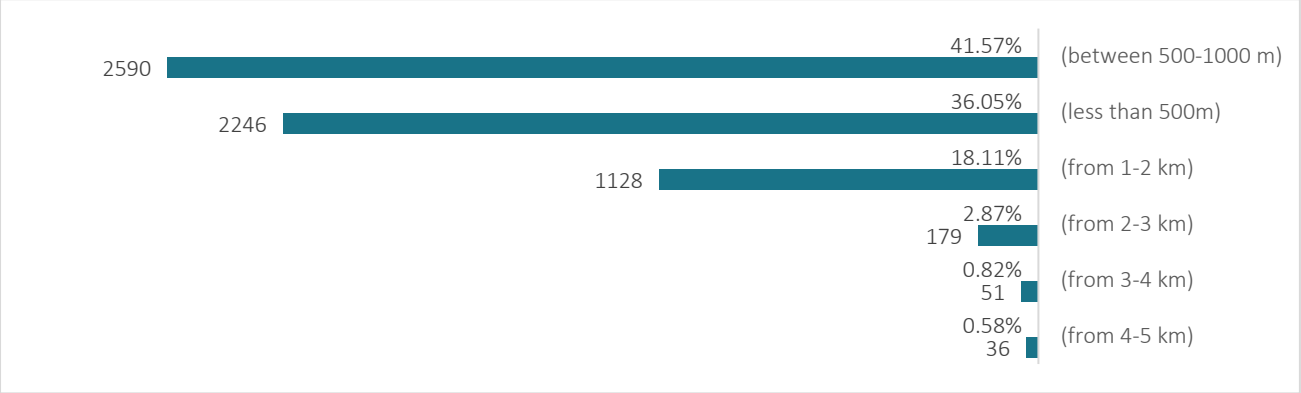
Preceding the conflict in Syria, the practice of segregating students by gender predominantly commenced during the preparatory stage, where certain schools were designated exclusively for males and others for females. Primary education, spanning grades 1 through 6, typically remained mixed-gender, while both preparatory and secondary schools were often single-gender establishments. However, in certain villages with limited educational facilities, mixed-gender schools existed across all educational tiers due to constraints in the number of available schools. In such instances, gender segregation occurred at the classroom level, with separate classes designated for male and female students. A singular mixed-gender preparatory or secondary school was also present in some villages.

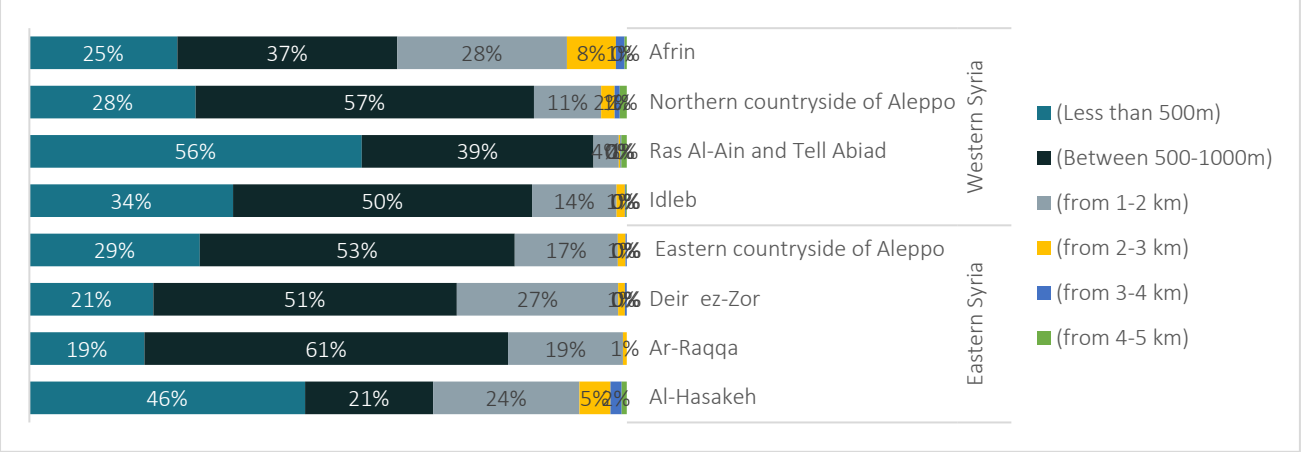
With the onset of the Syrian conflict and the resultant constraints on movement due to deteriorating security conditions, a shift towards mixed-gender schooling has become more prevalent, accommodating students of both genders. This study underscores that most schools now enroll students of both genders at the primary level. However, within the same school, the second cycle of basic education and the secondary stage often consist of students from only one gender. In cases where schools encompass both the first and second cycles of basic education (Grades 1 - 9), both genders are typically represented in the first cycle (Grades 1 - 4), while the second cycle (Grades 5 - 9) predominantly comprises students of one gender.

5. Parents Survey: The Distance from the Communities to Schools

The survey conducted with the parents revealed that 41.57% live within a distance of 500 to 1,000 meters from their educational institutions. Additionally, 36.05% of students live less than 500 meters from their schools.

Figure 50 Number/Percentage of parents surveyed by the distance between their homes and children's schools





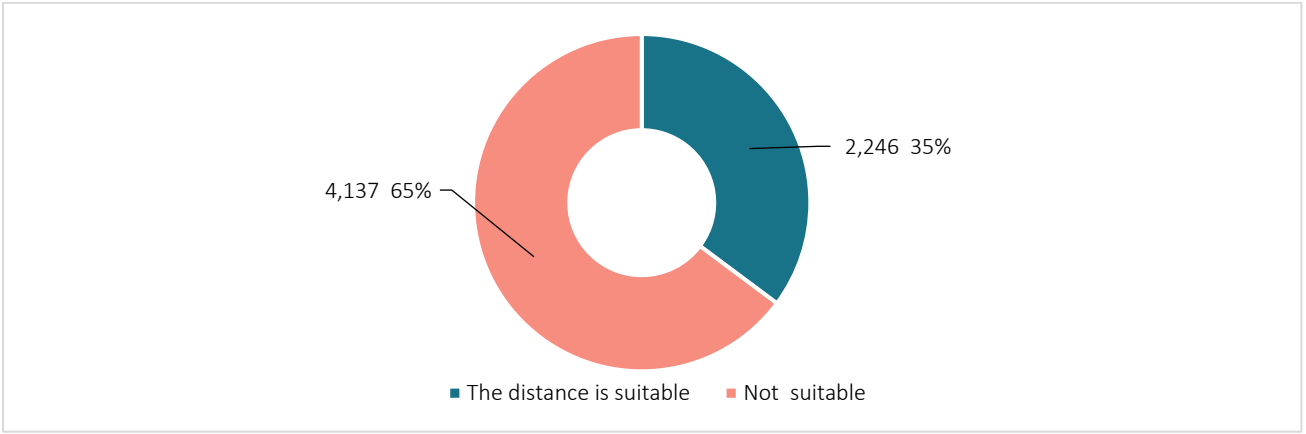
The suitable distance between students' residences and schools varies based on the characteristics of each community. In urban areas, particularly large and well-organized cities, multiple schools catering to different educational stages are typically present within each neighborhood. The number of schools correlates with the population of students in the area, facilitating convenient walking distances for students to reach their schools. Generally, the distance between students' homes and schools remains under 500 meters. In cases where the distance exceeds this threshold, public transportation options are accessible and commonly used. Public buses operate safely within populated city areas, providing a secure mode of transportation for children and mitigating their exposure to potential harassment during travel.

In contrast, in rural areas characterized by extensive agricultural land and dispersed housing, schools are often situated at distances exceeding 500 meters, sometimes surpassing 1,000 meters. Primary schools in rural settings are typically situated closer to students' residences, or the establishment of 'rural schools' serves as a viable solution to minimize lengthy commutes for children. However, for preparatory and secondary education levels, students may need to traverse considerable distances to access schooling. Notably, not all villages host preparatory and secondary schools, and the availability of public transportation in rural areas may be inconsistent.

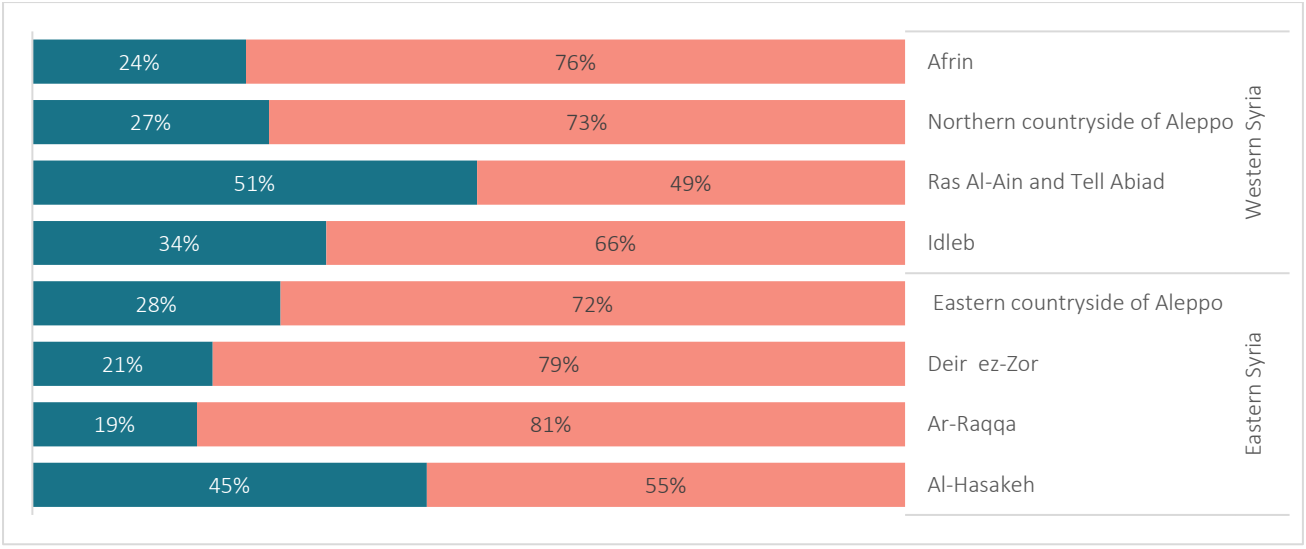
Children's transportation use may pose safety concerns in certain scenarios, particularly when routes pass through sparsely populated or uninhabited areas, increasing the risk of potential harassment. The determination of suitable distances between schools and students' residences typically lacks standardized guidelines. Instead, it hinges on the specific characteristics of the environment in which children reside, whether rural or urban and the availability of safe and accessible transportation options to school. Furthermore, transportation affordability aligns with the student's socioeconomic status, ensuring that costs remain reasonable and do not impose undue financial strain on parents.

According to the INEE Minimum Standards for Education[22], "The maximum distance between learners and learning spaces should be determined according to local and national standards. It is important to consider safety and security issues to accessibility, such as soldiers' quarters, landmines, and dense bush nearby. Learners, parents, and other community members should be consulted about the location of educational places and potential dangers." Through the parents, the study asked about the students whose home distance to school is considered suitable for them regardless of their distance from their homes. The results showed that 65 % (4,137) of parents did not find the distance suitable for students. On the other hand, 35% (2,246) found the distance suitable between the school and the home.

Figure 51 Percentage of parents surveyed by students whose schools are at a suitable distance from their homes.



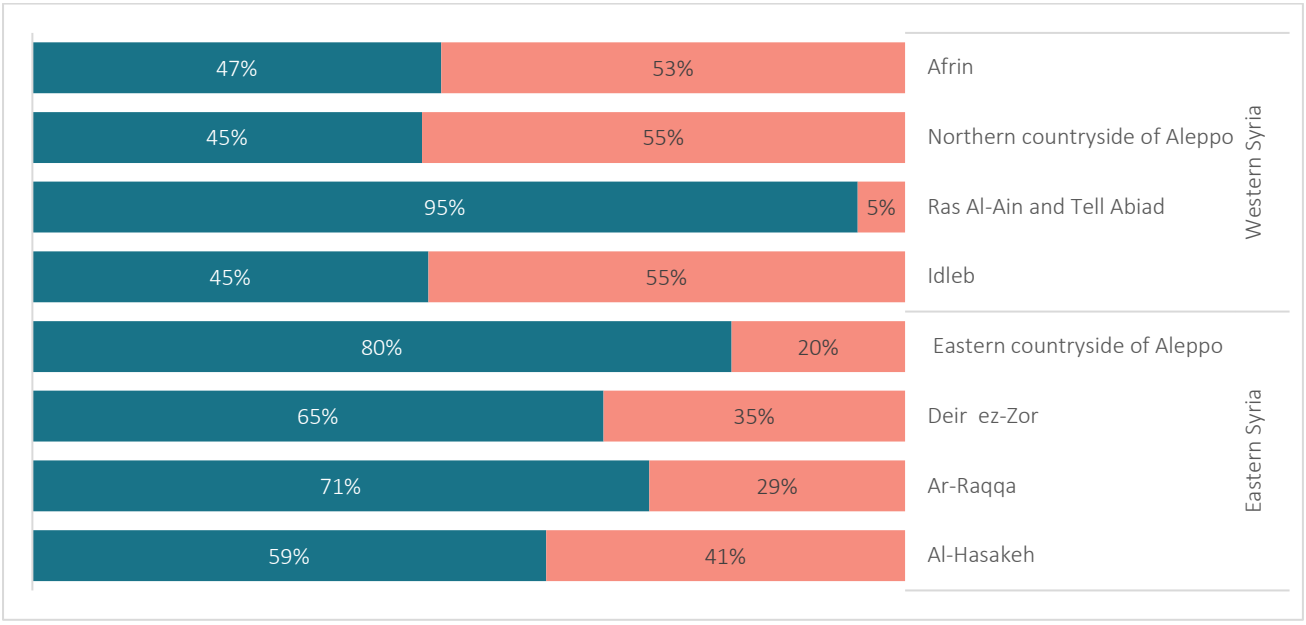
[22] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ARB_INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework_v2.pdf



6. Parent Survey: Vulnerability of Students on Their Way to School

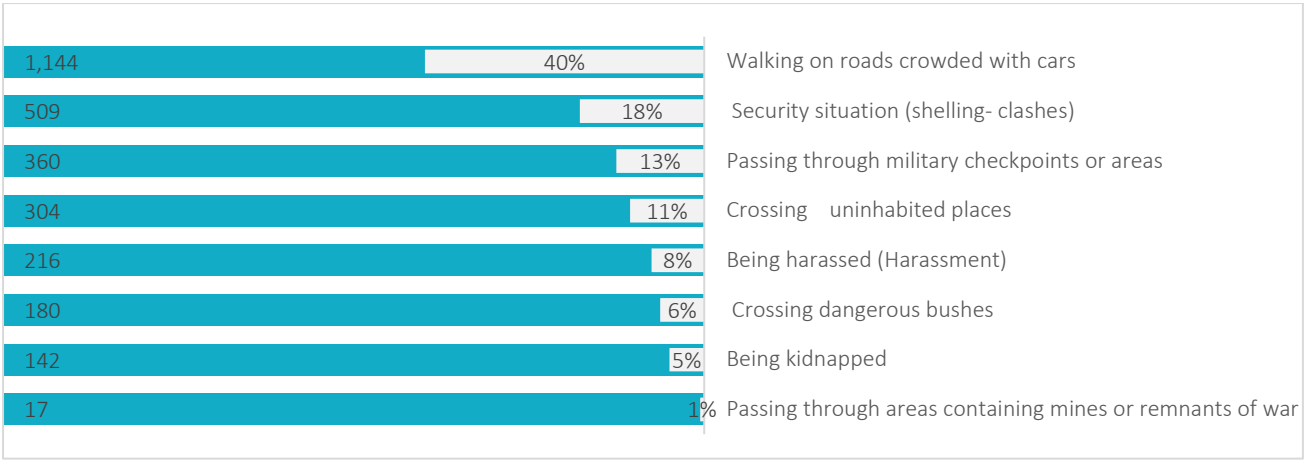
The study results showed that students in 41% (2,872 schools) of the operational schools were exposed to different risks on their way to school, while the road to 59% (4,183 schools) of the schools was safe.

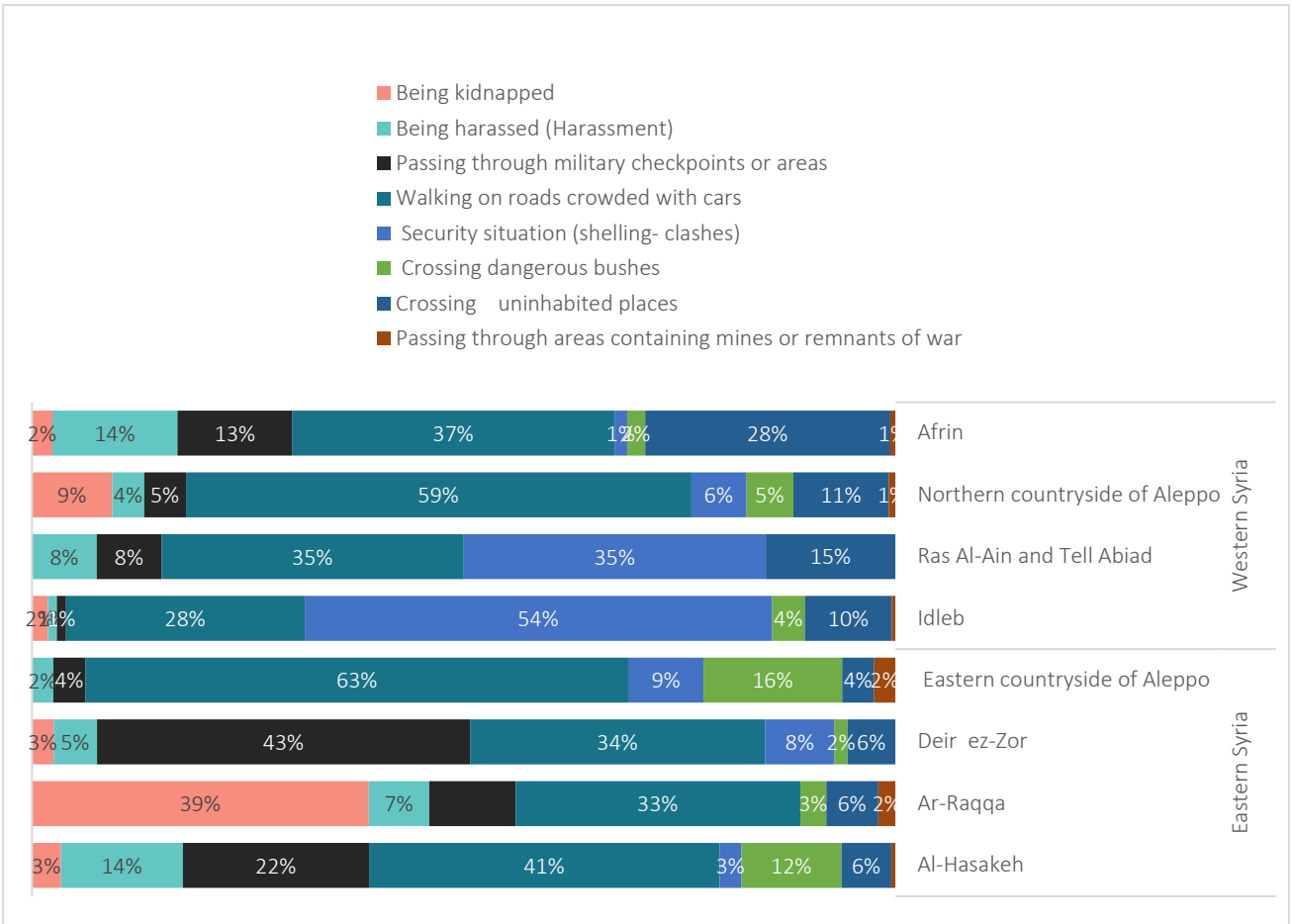
Figure 52 Number/Percentage of parents surveyed according to students' vulnerability on the way to school



Among the foremost hazards encountered by students en route to school was navigating through areas with dense traffic. The lack of essential traffic management infrastructure, including road signs, traffic lights, designated pedestrian pathways, and the absence of traffic law enforcement personnel, significantly heightened the risks to their safety. Subsequently, the security situation emerged as the second major concern, wherein students faced potential exposure to bombings or conflicts. Following closely behind was the challenge of schoolchildren traversing military checkpoints or military zones to access their educational institutions.

Figure 53: Number/Percentage of parents surveyed according to types of risks students are exposed to on their way to school

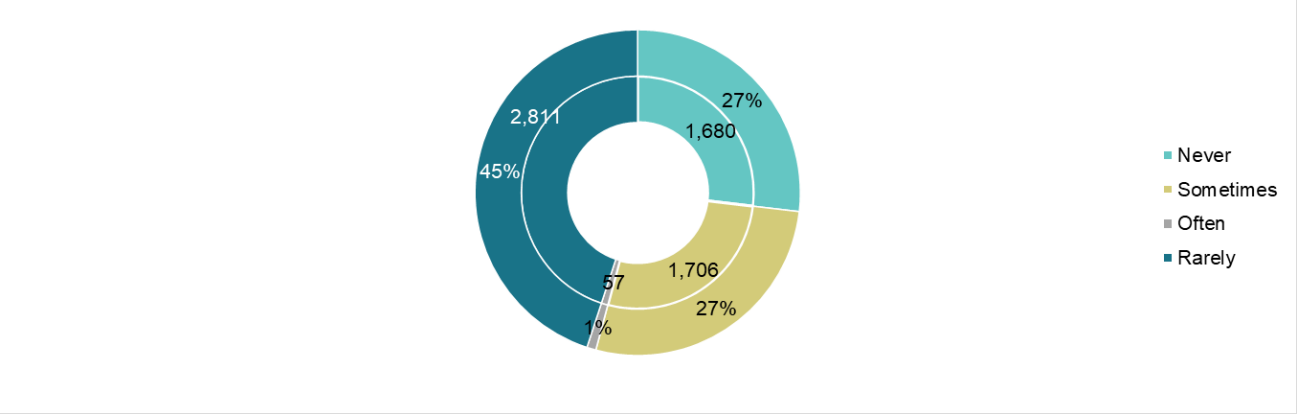


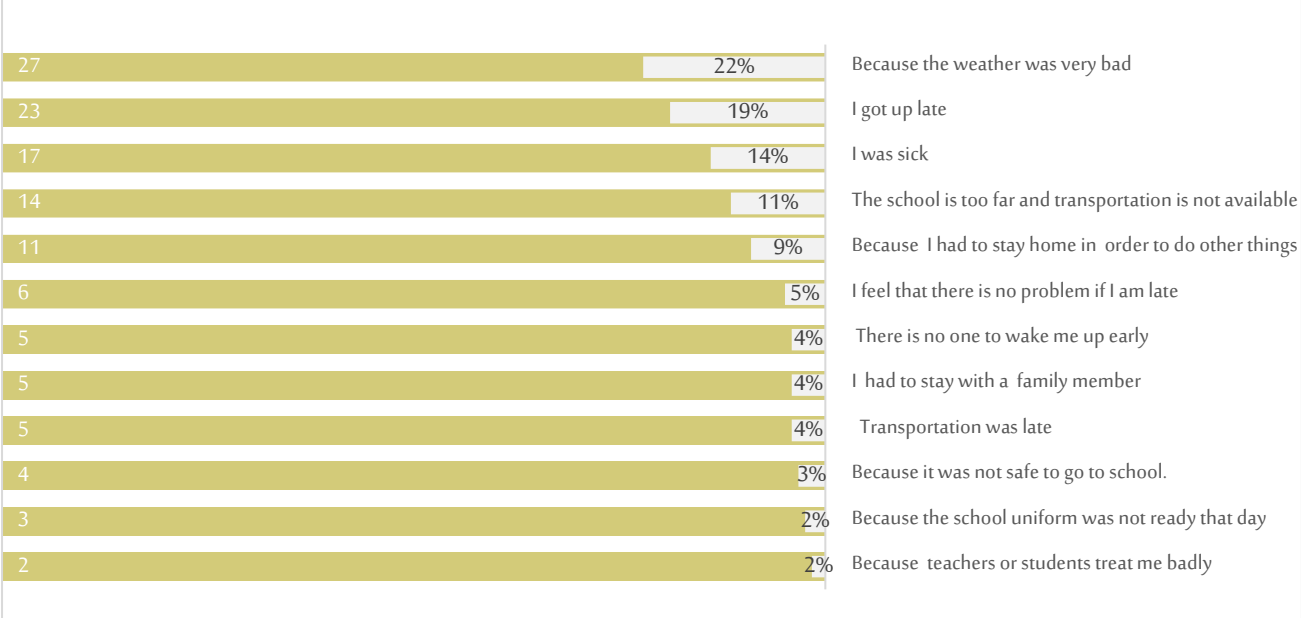


7. Student Surveys: Reasons for Being Late to School in the Morning

Through opinion surveys with students[23], the enumerators asked if they were late to school in the morning and, if they were late to school, what the reasons were. 73% (4,574 students) reported being late for school earlier. Of the students who were sometimes or often late, 22% (27 students) were late because the weather was terrible, 19% (23 students) were late because they woke up late, 14% (17 students) were late because they were sick, and 11% (14 students) were late because the schools are away and they do not have means of transportation.

Figure 54: Number/Percentages of students surveyed according to their being late to school and the reasons behind that





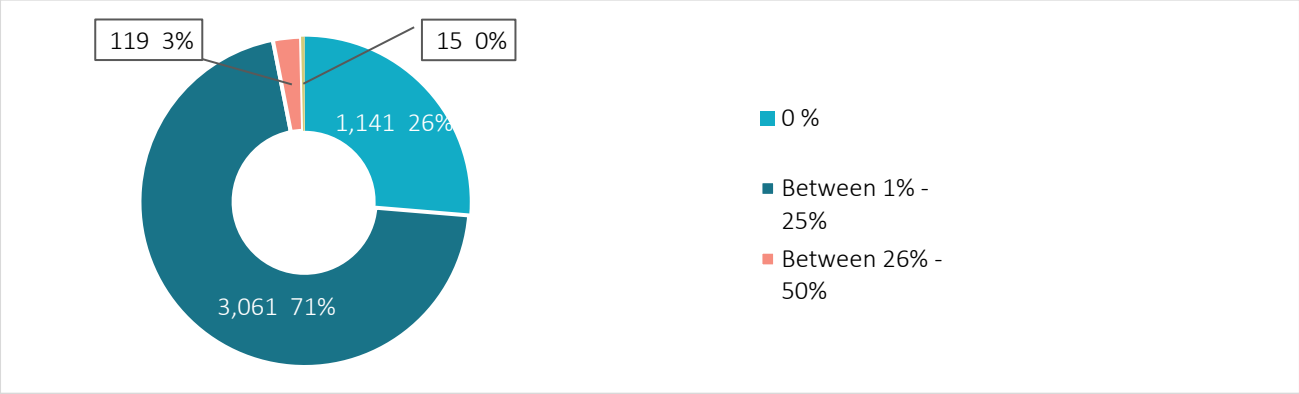
[23] IMU enumerators conducted surveys with 6,261 children aged 6-18 years in 6 governorates. Females constituted 43% of the children and males 57% of the children. 2% of the children surveyed had a disability.

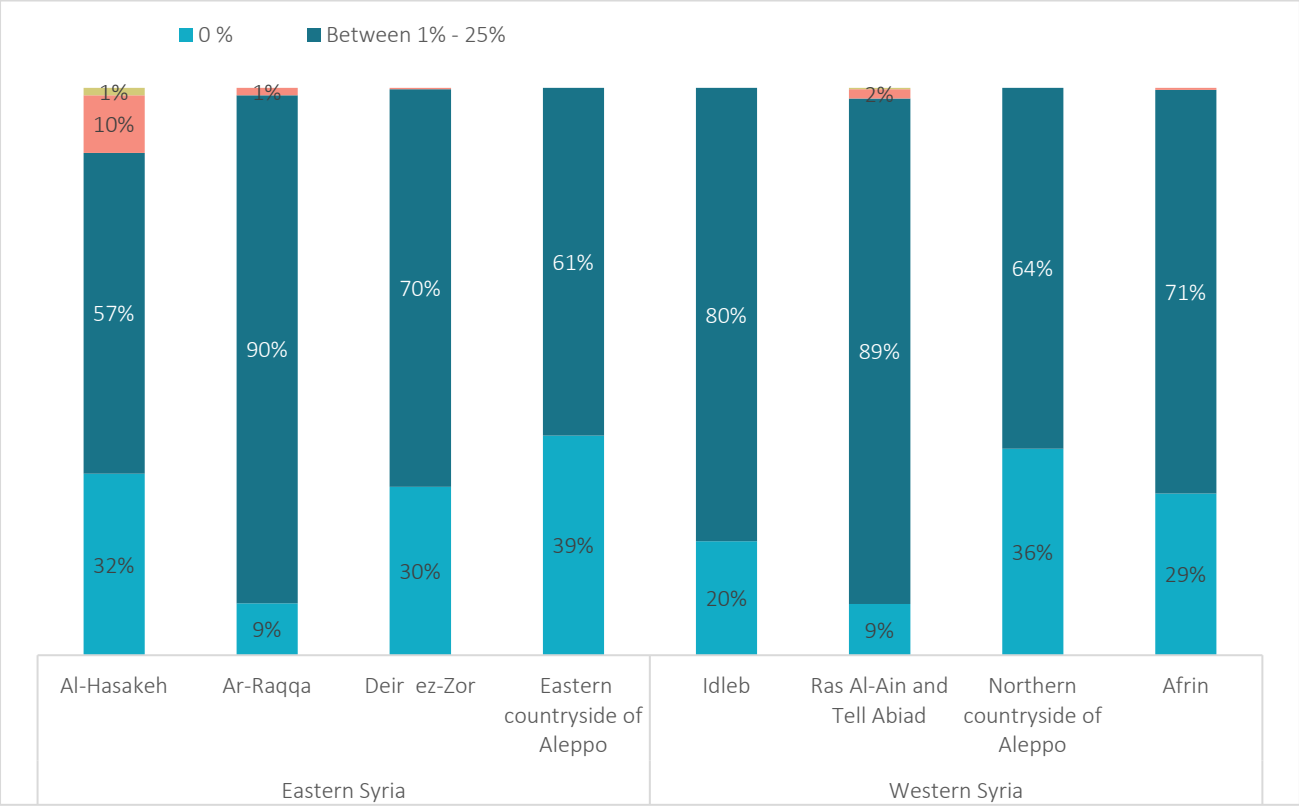
8. Student Commitment to School Attendance

School days are five days per week, Sunday to Thursday. Some students attend school less than five days per week, which is classified in this report as repeated absences from school. The period of absence may be continuous (for one month or more continuously) or separate (one or more days per week).

According to the study, a mere 3% (119 schools) consistently experience absenteeism rates ranging from 26% to 50%, whereas a substantial 71% (3,061 schools) report less than 25% absenteeism rates. These findings underscore a notable decrease in students' dedication to attending school this year compared to previous years.

Figure 55: Number/Percentage of schools according to the percentage of students who are constantly absent from school

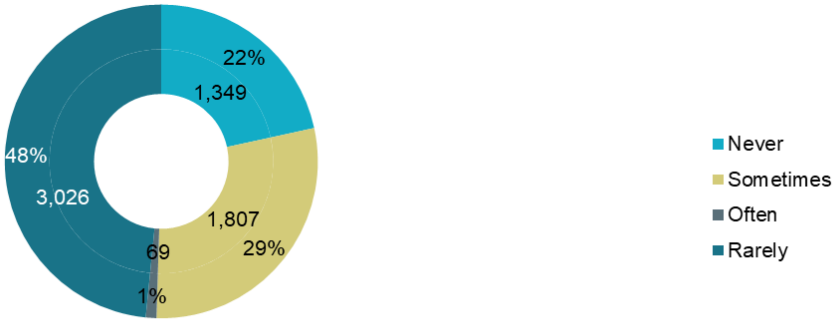


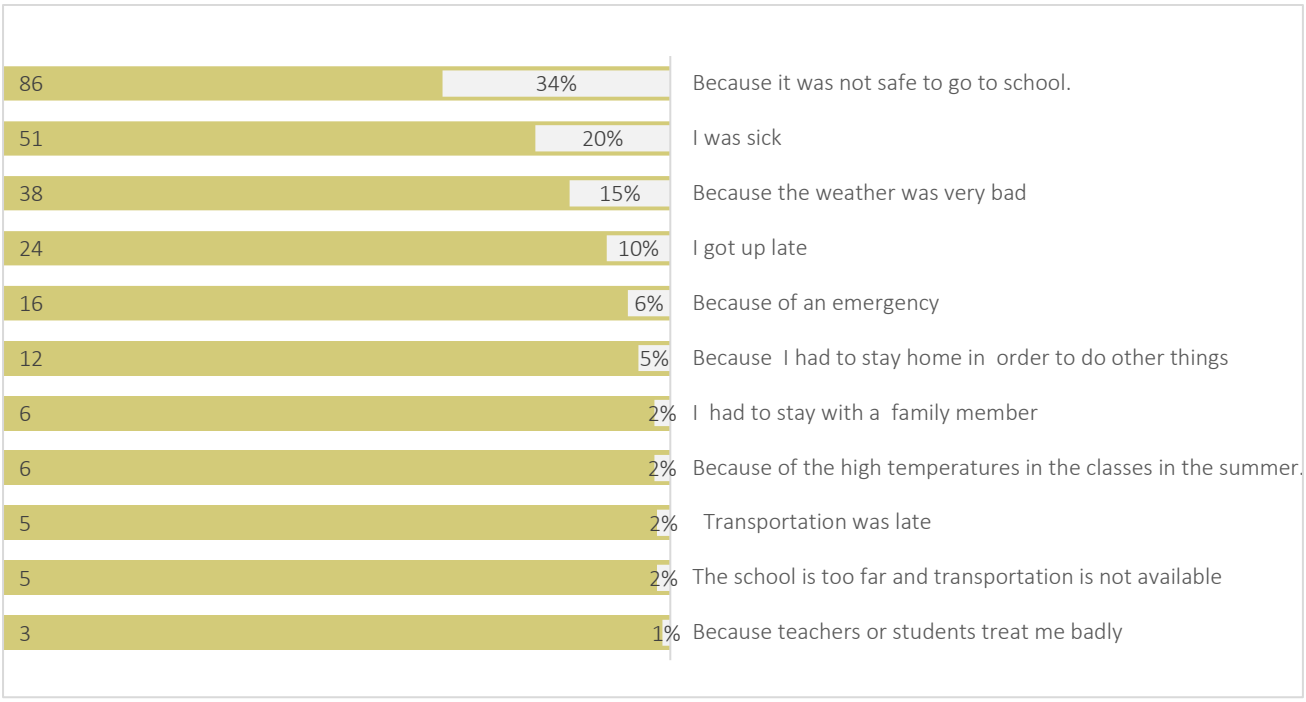


9. Student Survey: Reasons Behind Students' Skipping School

During surveys conducted with students[24], enumerators inquired about their school attendance and the reasons behind any absences. Of the surveyed students, 78% (4,902) acknowledged having previously missed school. Among those who were consistently or frequently absent, 34% (86 students) cited safety concerns as the primary reason. In comparison, 20% (51 students) reported illness, 15% (38 students) attributed their absence to inclement weather, and 10% (24 students) stated that they were absent due to staying up late.

Figure 56 Number/Percentage of students surveyed by skipping school and reasons for skipping





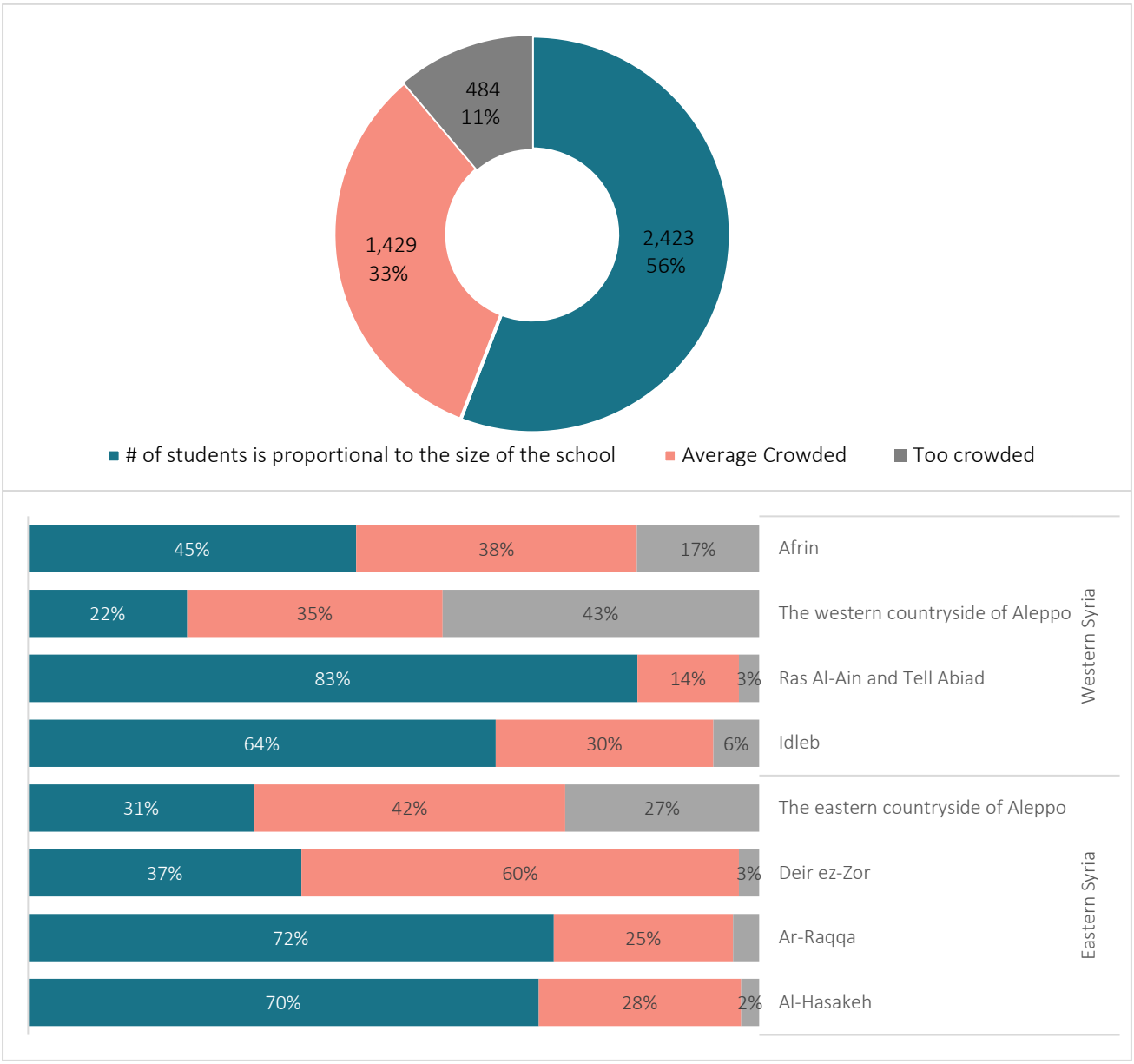
[24] IMU enumerators conducted surveys with 6,261 children aged 6-18 years in 6 governorates. Females constituted 43% of the children and males 57% of the children. 2% of the children surveyed had a disability.

10.Overcrowded Classrooms

The most significant number of classrooms in Syria is designed to accommodate 30 students. For this assessment, classrooms with fewer than 30 students were considered not crowded, classrooms with 30-40 students were considered moderately crowded, and classrooms with more than 40 students were considered overcrowded.

The findings indicate that out of the operational schools assessed, 11% (484 schools) are deemed excessively crowded, 33% (1,429 schools) have an average level of crowding, and 56% (2,423 schools) are considered uncrowded.

Figure 57 Number/Percentage of schools by overcrowding of students within classrooms



According to the INEE Minimum Standards for Education[25], "Education facilities should be designed considering who uses the learning spaces and how they use them. Spaces should be appropriate for gender, age, physical ability, and cultural considerations. A realistic local standard for the maximum class size should be established, and sufficient space should be left, if possible, for additional classes if the attendance rate increases to enable a gradual reduction in the use of multiple shifts."

11.Difficulties Faced by Students in Schools

The study examined the difficulties and obstacles students in schools face related to home and school. At the forefront of the difficulties related to home and experienced by students in schools are children's assistance to their parents in house chores/farm. In the second place came the neglect of parents and their failure to follow the educational level of their children. In the third and fourth place came the lack of income, money, or resources available to families to provide educational supplies for their children and child labor outside the house. This is due to the deterioration of economic and living conditions in light of the ongoing war in Syria. In fifth place came the fact that parents do not value education and its importance and are unaware of the risks associated with their children dropping out of school.

Figure 58 Home-related difficulties faced by students in schools

Low difficulty – High difficulty

East-west	level of analysis	The child helps in the house/farm	Parent neglect	Lack of income to send children to school school	The child works outside the home	Parents do not value education	Parents are unaware of the formal education	Parents do not approve of the formal school curriculum	Displacement	Cultural beliefs	Marriage and/or pregnancy	Language problems	Children with psychological disorders	Children who join/recruited by armed groups	military conscription	Deteriorating living situation	School overcrowding
Eastern Syria	Al-Hasakah																
	Al-Raqqa																
	Deer Al Zour																
	Eastern Aleppo countryside																
Western Syria	Idlib																
	Ras al-Ayn and Tal Abyad																
	Northern Aleppo countryside																
	Afrin																
Total																	

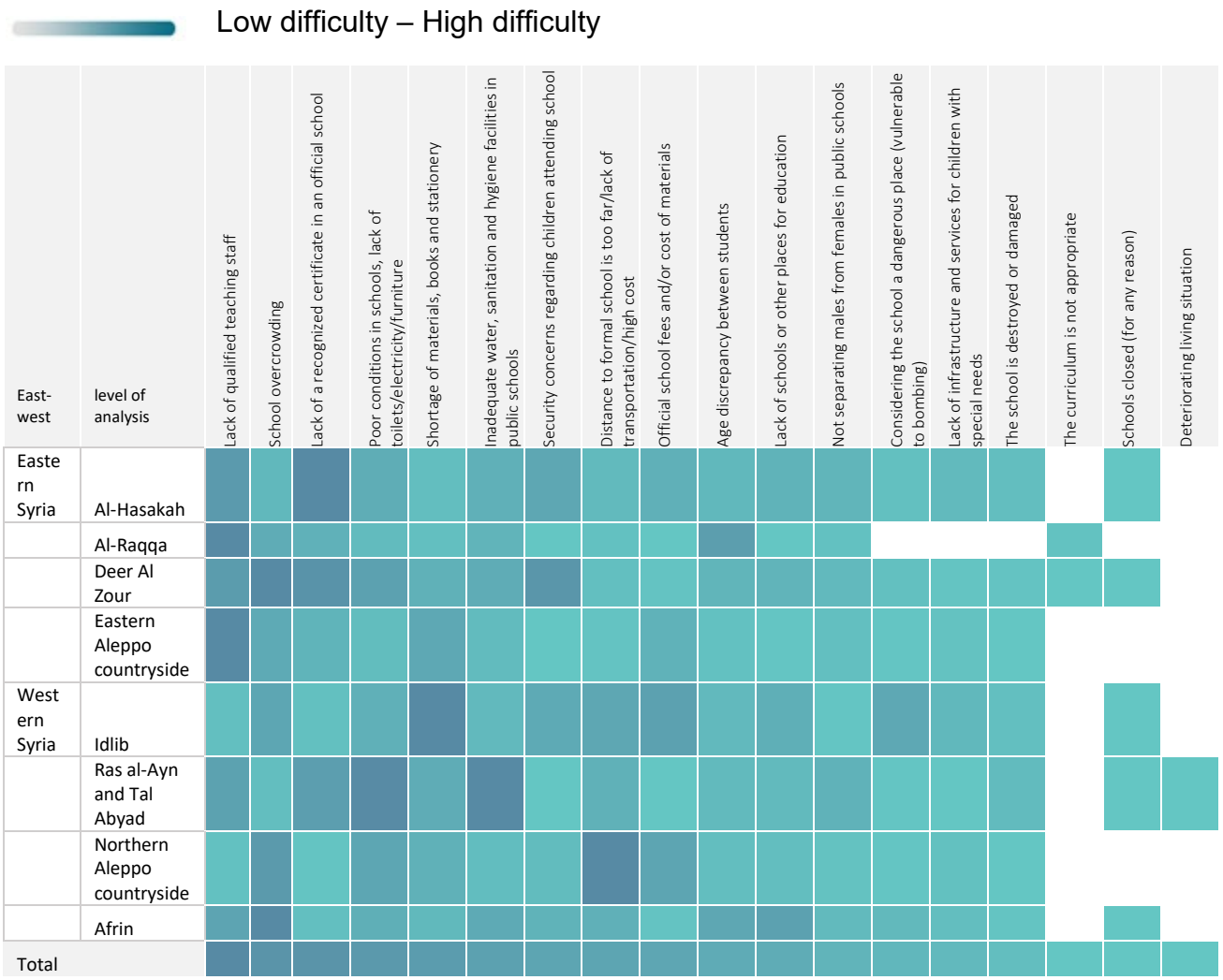
The study delved into the various challenges and barriers that students encounter in their educational journey stemming from both home and school environments. Topping the list of home-related difficulties students face in schools is the significant contribution children make to household chores or farm work, thereby impacting their availability for attending school. Following closely behind is parental neglect, where parents fail to monitor or support their children's educational progress adequately. Ranked third and fourth are the financial constraints experienced by families, resulting in a lack of resources to procure essential educational materials for their children and the necessity for children to engage in employment outside the home. These challenges are exacerbated by the economic downturn and deteriorating living conditions exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Syria.

[25] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ARB_INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework_v2.pdf

In fifth place is the lack of parental appreciation for the value of education and their limited understanding of the risks associated with their children dropping out of school. Addressing these home-related obstacles requires comprehensive interventions considering the socio-economic context and providing targeted support to families and students to ensure access to quality education despite the prevailing challenges.

Regarding the challenges and impediments students encounter within the school environment, the primary concern arises from the deficiency of qualified and specialized teaching personnel essential for delivering quality education. The issue of overcrowded classrooms is closely followed by the issue of overcrowded classrooms, which compromises the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. Ranking third is the lack of accreditation for educational certificates, which undermines their value and recognition. Ranked fourth are the substandard conditions prevalent in schools, including inadequate facilities such as insufficient toilets, electricity, and furniture essential for facilitating the educational process. In fifth place, the shortage of educational materials, books, and stationery compounds students' difficulties, hindering their ability to engage fully in learning activities. Lastly, public schools' inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities ranks sixth, further exacerbated by the lack of sufficient support for educational institutions and initiatives. Addressing these school-related challenges necessitates comprehensive reforms and investments to enhance infrastructure, staffing, and resource allocation to ensure a conducive learning environment for all students.

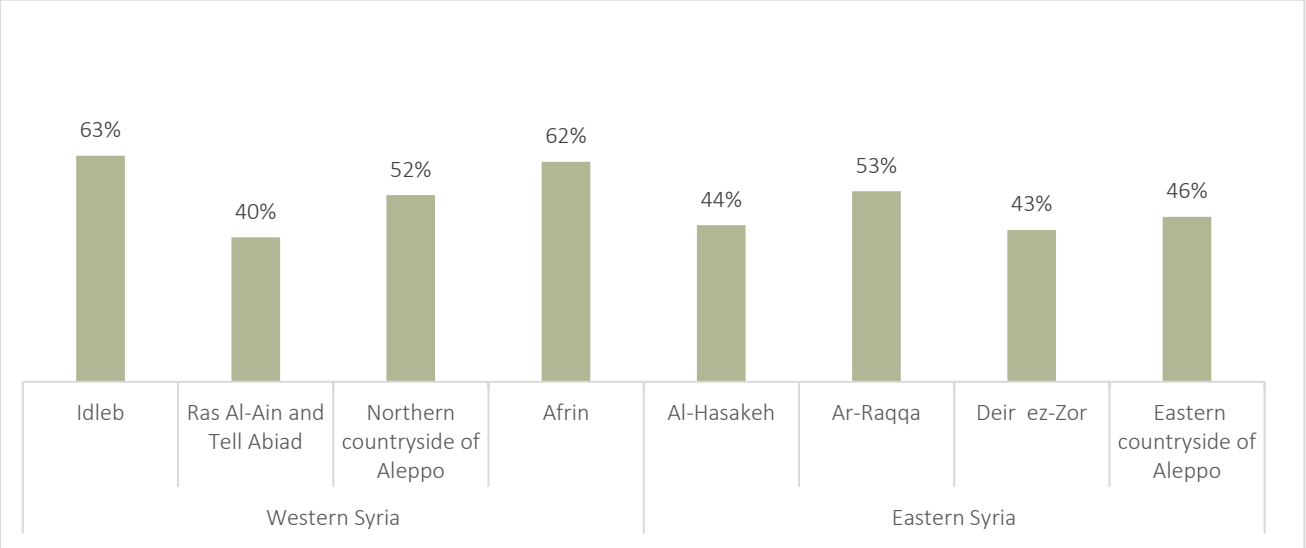
Figure 59 School-related difficulties faced by students in schools



12.Percentage of Students Dropping out (Children out of School)

This report section estimates the percentages of out-of-school children aged between 6 and 18. The numbers of students within schools were subtracted from the age group of the population aged between 6 and 18 years.

Figure 60 Percentage of dropout children (Out of school)



In 2020, the IMU produced the JENA report in northwestern Syria in areas [26]outside the regime's control under the supervision of the Education Cluster Cross Border Turkey and Save the Children International in cooperation with a group of education partners composed of 22 Syrian humanitarian organizations. The results of this study showed that 56% (1,037,932 children) of children in northwestern Syria were enrolled in schools, while 44% (815,518 children) were out of school (school dropouts). On January 24, 2021, on the International Day of Education occasion, [27]the Regional Coordinator issued a joint statement for the Syrian Crisis and UNICEF's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. The statement was titled: "Ten Years of War in Syria and More Than Half of the Children Are Still Deprived of Education." The statement included, "In Syria, more than 2.4 million children are out of school, nearly 40 percent of whom are girls. The number likely increased in 2020 due to the "COVID-19" pandemic, which has exacerbated the disruption of education in Syria."

In northwestern Syria, findings from the study revealed that Idleb governorate exhibits the highest proportion of out-of-school children, with 63% of children aged 6 to 18 not attending school. Following closely behind, Afrin recorded a rate of 62%, trailed by the northern countryside of Aleppo at 52%. The prevalence of out-of-school children is notably pronounced in areas densely populated with displaced individuals.

In northeastern Syria, the study outcomes indicate that Ar-Raqqa governorate registers the highest percentage of out-of-school children, with 53% of children aged 6 to 18 not enrolled in educational institutions. This is followed by the eastern countryside of Aleppo at 46%, Al-Hasakeh governorate at 44%, and Deir ez-Zor governorate at 43%.

[26] https://acu-sy.org/ar/imu_reports/02-2022/

[27] https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/after-almost-ten-years-war-syria-more-half-children-continue-be-deprived-education

13.Reasons for Dropping Out and Difficulties Preventing Children from Attending School

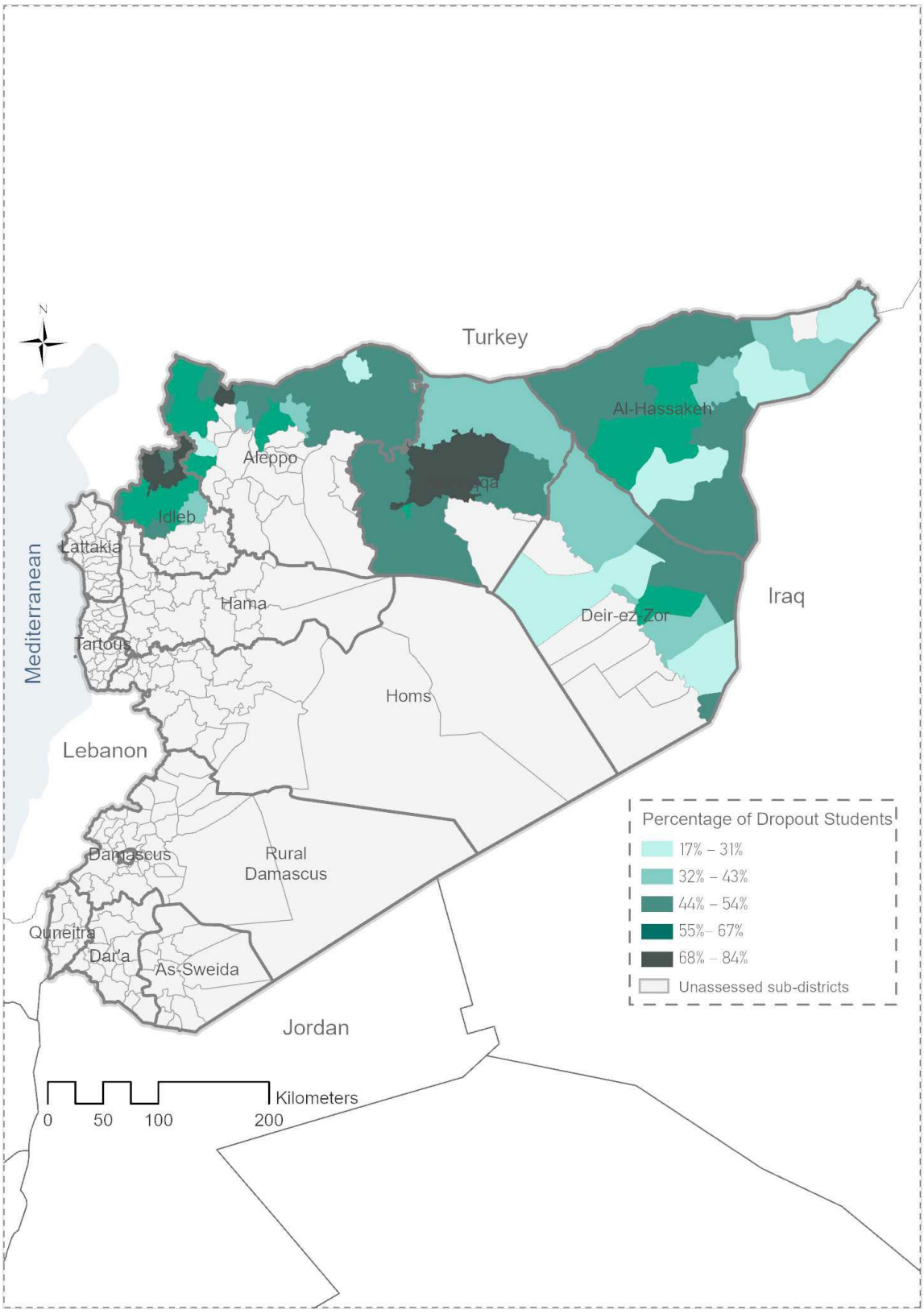
The study looked at school-related difficulties and obstacles that prevent students from attending school. The lack of qualified teaching staff is at the forefront of school-related difficulties. In second place came public schools' lack of recognized certificates. In third place came the school fees and cost of subjects. The reasons also included a shortage of books and stationery, lack of toilets/ electricity/furniture, and security concerns related to going to school. The overcrowding of schools was one of the main reasons for this.

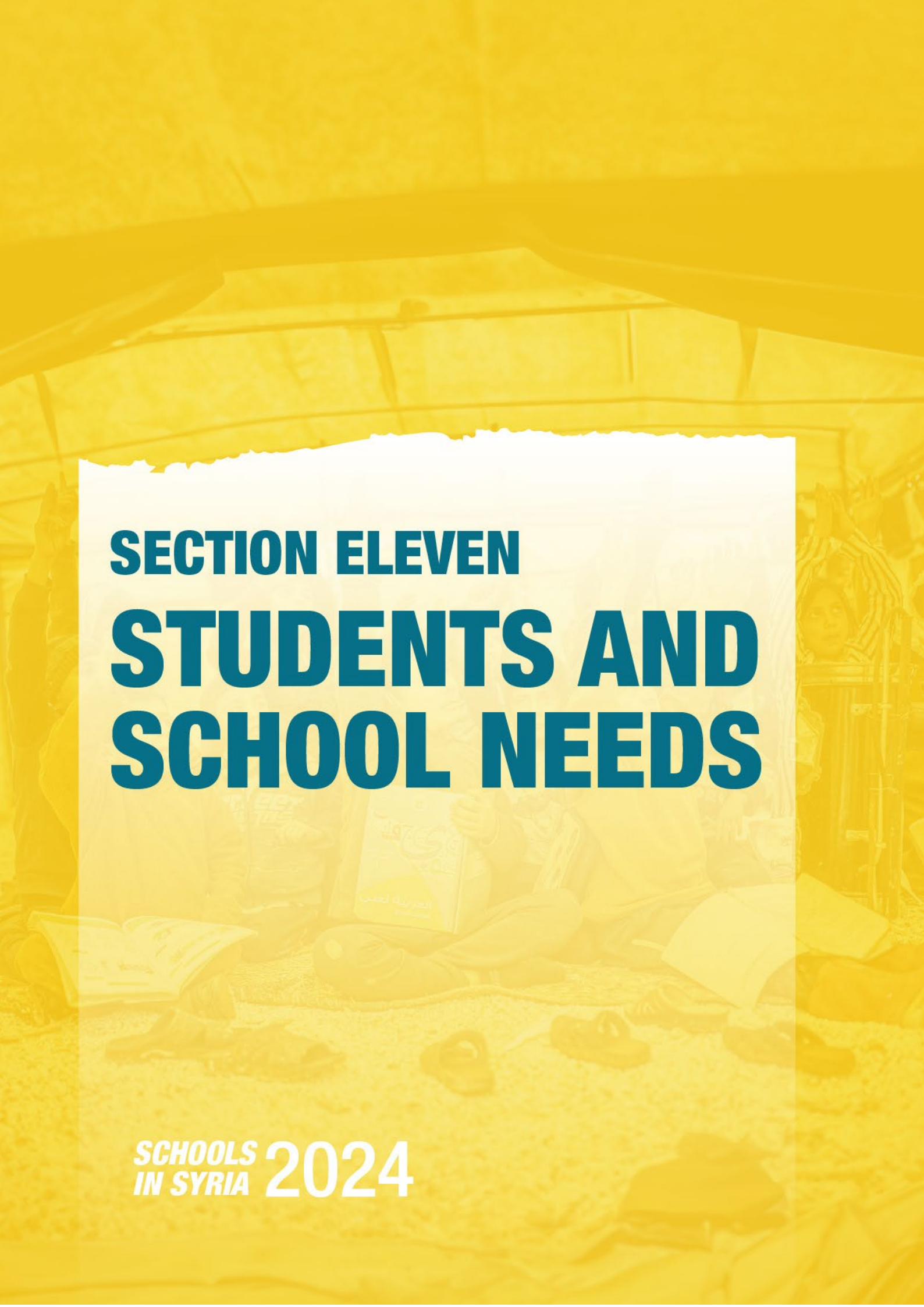
Figure 61 School-related reasons that prevent children from attending school

Low difficulty – High difficulty

East-west	level of analysis	Lack of qualified teaching staff	School overcrowding	Lack of a recognized certificate in an official school	Poor conditions in schools, lack of toilets/electricity/furniture	Shortage of materials, books and stationery	Inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in public schools	Security concerns regarding children attending school	Distance to formal school is too far/lack of transportation/high cost	Official school fees and/or cost of materials	Age discrepancy between students	Lack of schools or other places for education	Not separating males from females in public schools	Considering the school a dangerous place (vulnerable to bombing)	Lack of infrastructure and services for children with special needs	The school is destroyed or damaged	The curriculum is not appropriate	Schools closed (for any reason)	Deteriorating living situation
Eastern Syria	Al-Hasakah																		
	Al-Raqqa																		
	Deer Al Zour																		
	Eastern Aleppo countryside																		
Western Syria	Idlib																		
	Ras al-Ayn and Tal Abyad																		
	Northern Aleppo countryside																		
	Afrin																		
Total																			

Map 4 Estimated rates of dropouts.





SECTION ELEVEN

STUDENTS AND SCHOOL NEEDS

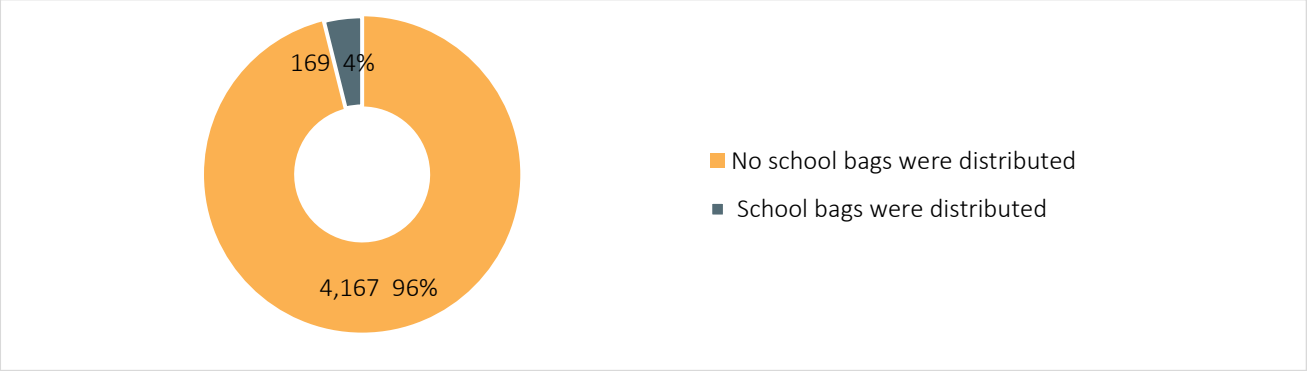
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

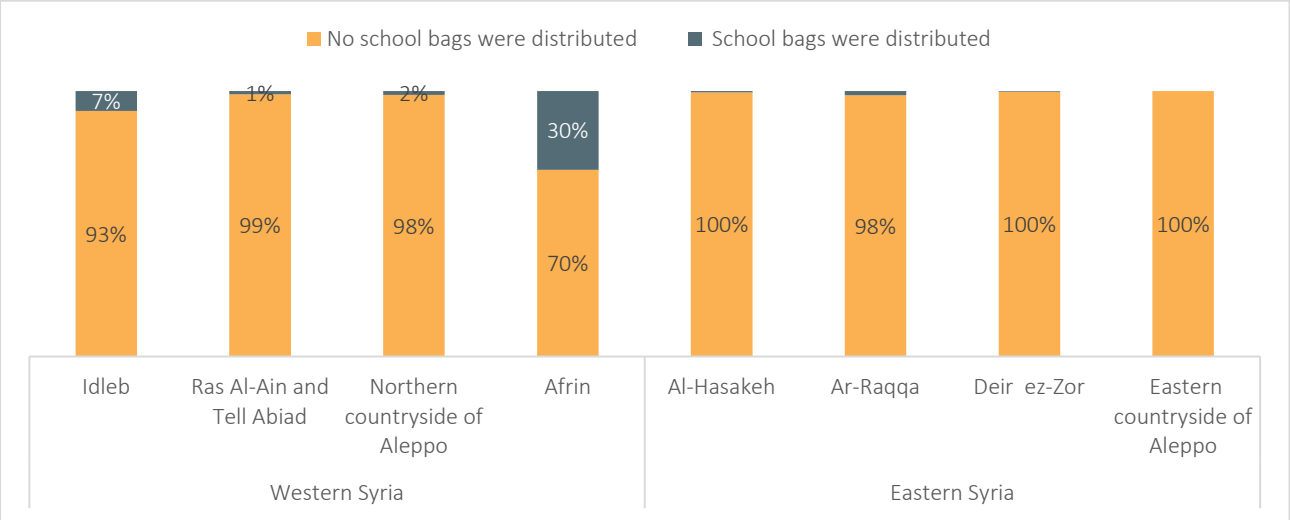
Section 11: Student and School Needs

1. Student Requirements

No school bags were distributed to students in 96% (4,167 schools) of the assessed operational schools.

Figure 62 Number/Percentage of schools according to the distribution of school bags



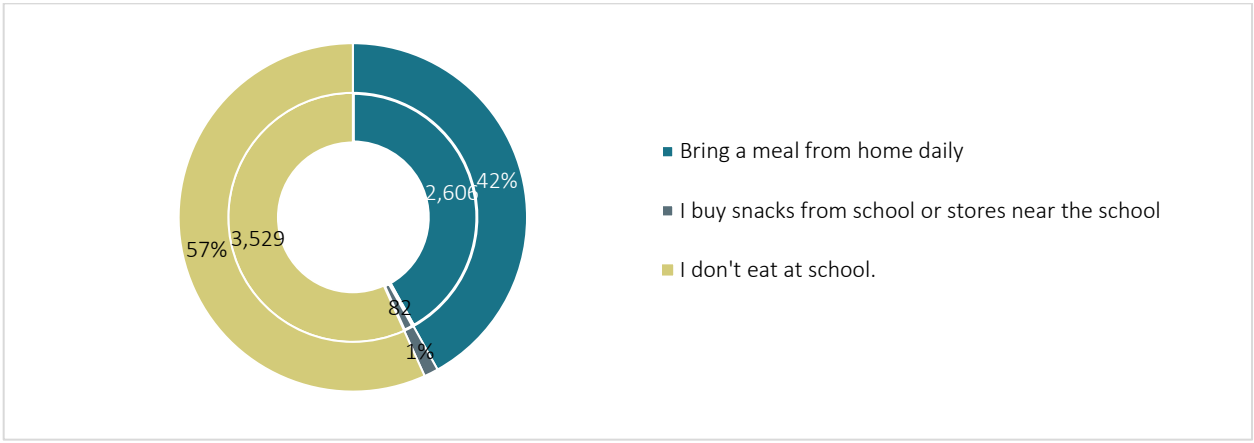


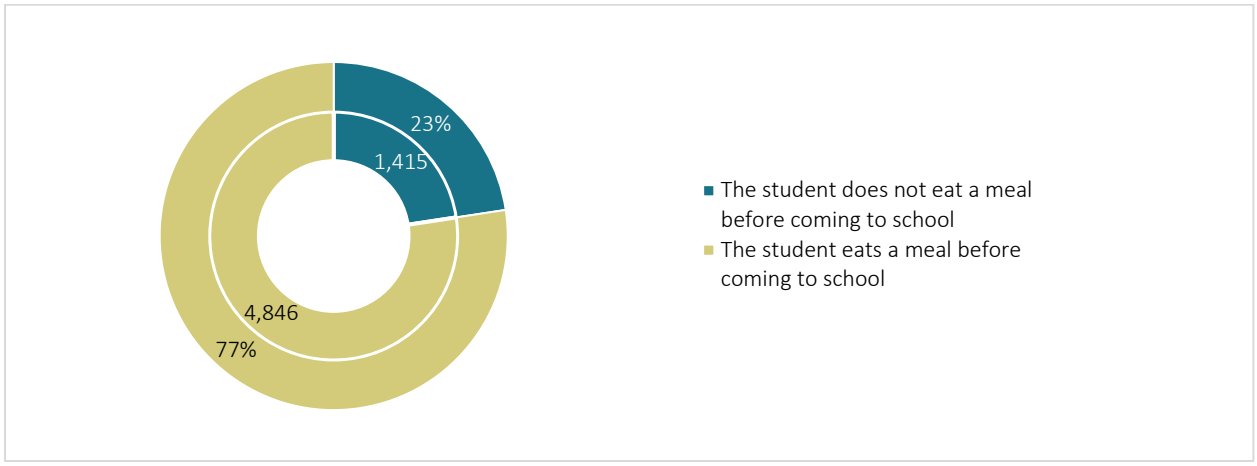
The distribution of school kits varies across different schools, with some providing notebooks and pens to students, while others include winter clothing alongside essential supplies like notebooks and pens. As highlighted in other sections of this report, students face shortages of textbooks, activity books, and notebooks, while schools lack adequate heating systems and fuel and may have damaged windows. Parents' economic challenges further exacerbate the situation, potentially depriving children of education due to worsening living conditions. These circumstances underscore the critical importance of supplying students with essential school supplies, uniforms, and winter clothing. Establishing standardized content for school kits and student supplies among education partners could help mitigate discrepancies in the kits received by students. Additionally, coordination with other sectors involved in winter clothing distribution would ensure the provision of such clothing within schools, potentially incentivizing student attendance. Such distribution efforts could significantly address factors leading to student dropout stemming from deteriorating family living conditions.

1. Student Survey: Eating a Meal Before Coming to School or During School

Through surveys administered by the researchers to students, inquiries were made regarding their consumption of a light breakfast before arriving at school and their food intake during break times. The findings revealed that 23% of the surveyed students, totaling 1,415 individuals, reported not having a light breakfast prior to school in the morning. Regarding food consumption during school hours, 57% of the surveyed students, amounting to 3,529 individuals, indicated that they do not eat while at school. Conversely, 42% of the respondents, comprising 2,606 students, bring their meals from home daily, while 1% (82 students) mentioned that they buy meals from the school or stores nearby the school. [28]

Figure 63 Student Survey: Percentage/Number of students surveyed by Pre- and In-School Meals



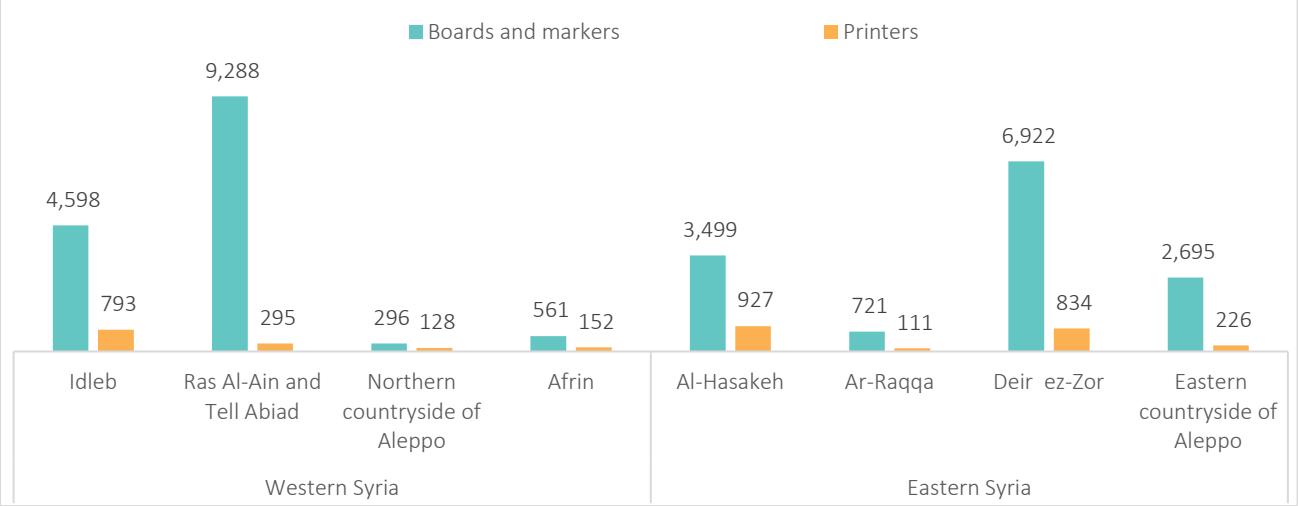


[28] IMU enumerators conducted a survey with 6,261 children aged 6-18 years in and out of school in 6 governorates. Females constituted 43% of the children, males 57% of the children, and 2% of the children surveyed had a disability.

2. Basic Needs of Schools

The assessment revealed that schools needed approximately 28,580 whiteboards, markers, and 3,466 printers.

Figure 64 Number of whiteboards, markers, and printers operational schools need.



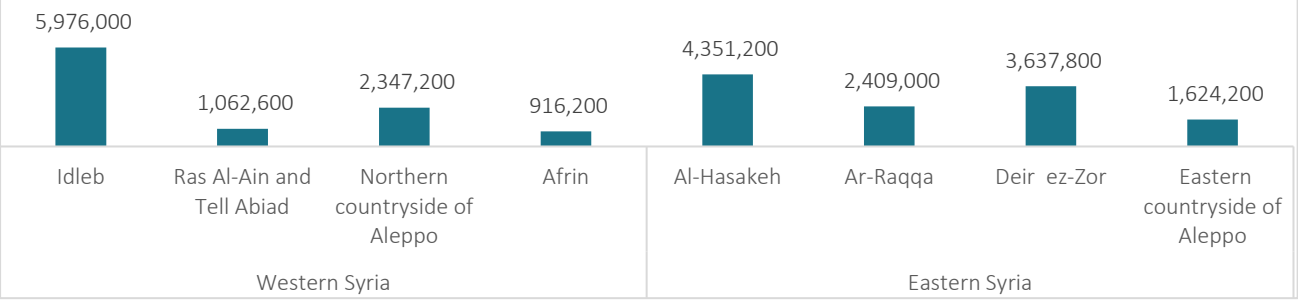
In response to the limited availability of textbooks and the insufficient training of teachers, whiteboards have become essential tools in education, especially in regions experiencing shortages of educational materials. In such cases, educators find themselves obliged to present entire lessons on whiteboards to address the deficiency in textbooks. The demand for whiteboards and markers in schools operating in northwestern Syria amounted to 14,743 units, while in northeastern Syria, it reached 13,837 units.

Within school settings, printers serve the crucial function of reproducing official documents and examinations for students. Moreover, in instances where textbooks are scarce, some schools rely on printers to reproduce exercises or chapters from textbooks to mitigate the impact of severe shortages. As a result, schools must acquire printers and maintain a steady supply of essential resources such as ink cartridges and paper. The required number of printers for operational schools in northwestern Syria stood at 1,368; in northeastern Syria, it amounted to 2,098.

3. School Needs of Heating Fuel

As per the assessment, operational schools necessitate 22,324,200 liters of diesel annually. This quantity of diesel would sustain the heating systems of these schools for five hours each day over the course of four months.

Figure 65 The demand for heating fuel by operational schools

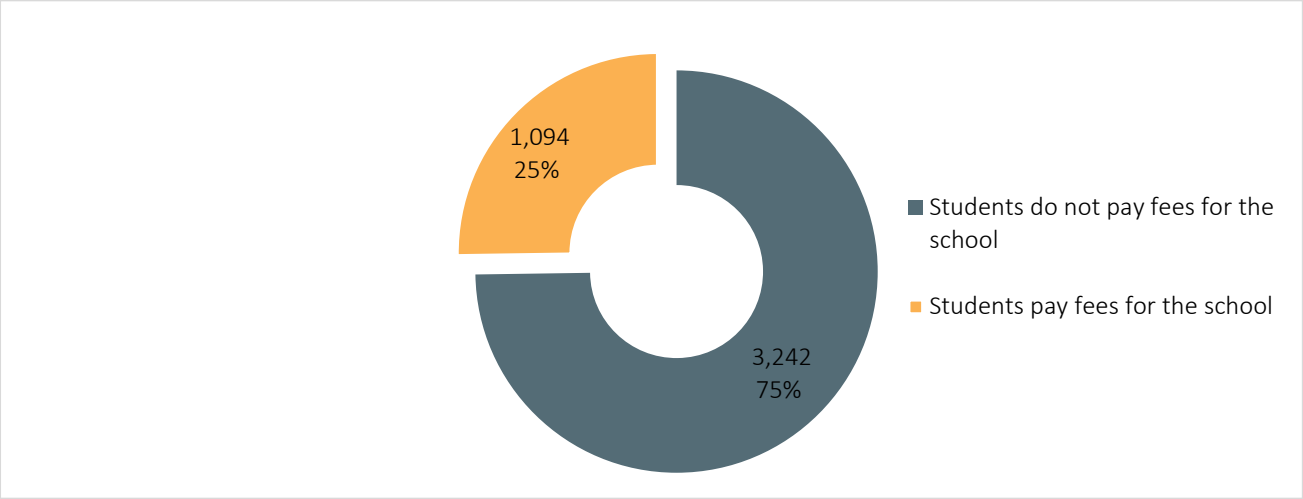


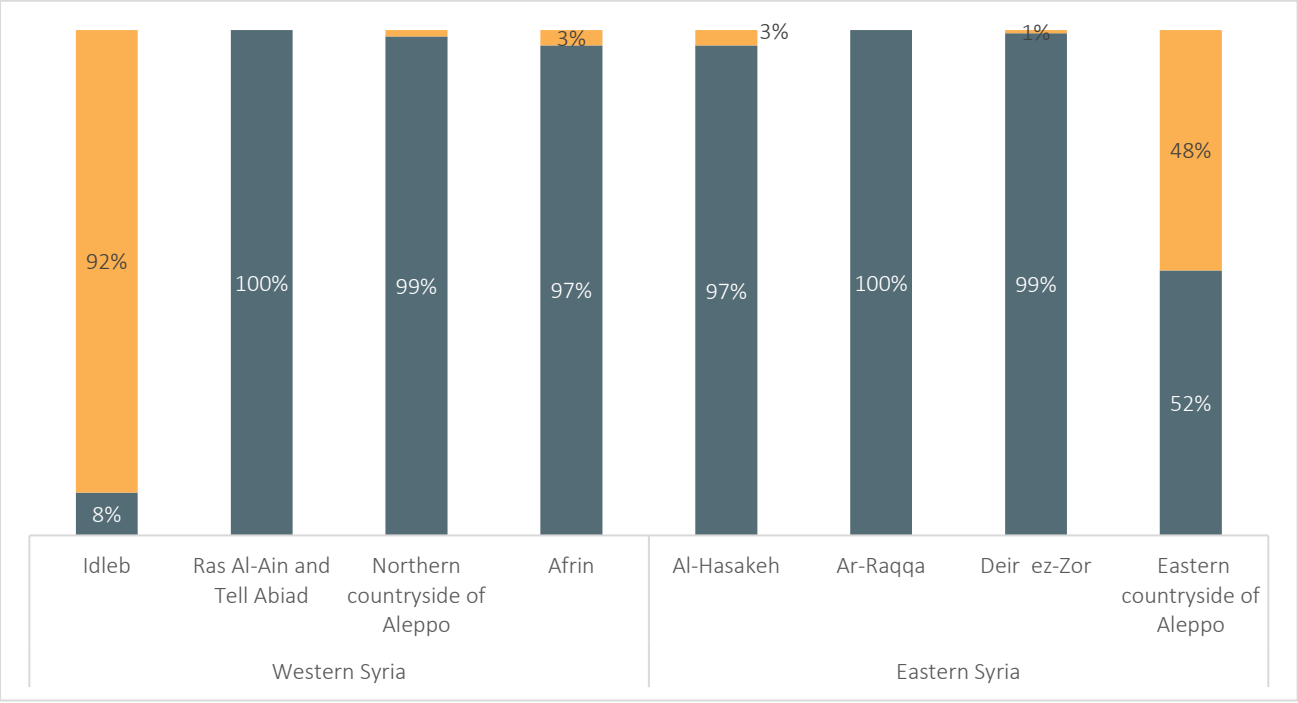
In Syria, the academic year begins in September and ends in June, with most school days occurring during the winter season, characterized by harsh cold, continuous rain, and occasional snow. During this period, schools in Syria typically utilize heaters for four months, with an average daily consumption of 5 liters of diesel per heater.

4. Fees to be Paid by Students for Schools

The study findings revealed that a massive portion of assessed schools, comprising 25% (1,094 establishments), necessitate students to pay annual financial fees. These fees, delineated as contributions and activities, are essential for addressing crucial school requirements, including heating, fuel, maintenance, and various operational needs. Furthermore, they provide symbolic remuneration to teachers currently deprived of salaries. Notably, Idleb Governorate has the highest percentage among all governorates, with a striking 92% of schools enforcing financial fees on students. This underscores the pervasive practice of financial burden imposition on students within the educational landscape, signaling a systemic issue requiring careful consideration and potential intervention.

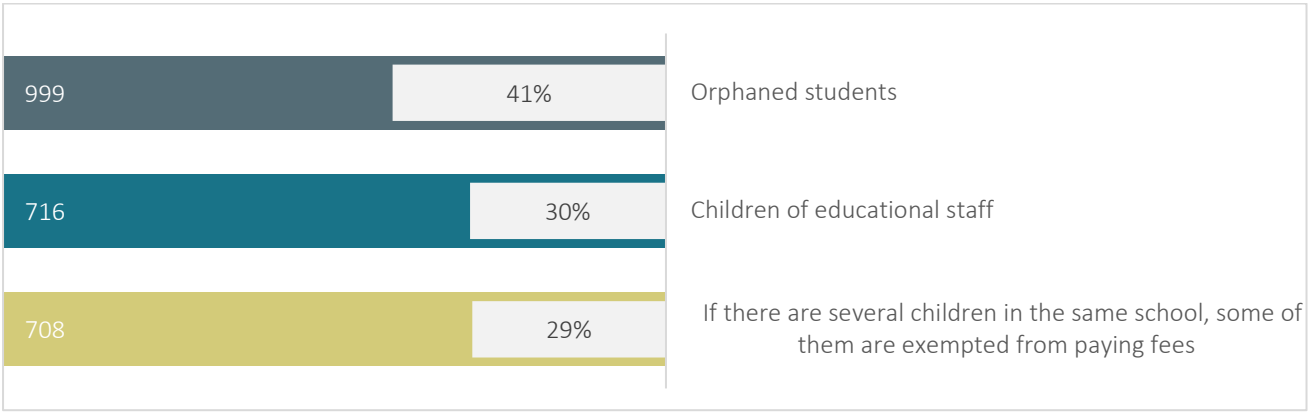
Figure 66 Number/Percentages of schools by fees paid by students





The value of the fees imposed by the school is not high (not exceeding $1 per student), and they are paid only once during the academic year. The Joint Education Needs Assessment (JENA) report for out-of-school children indicates that 16% did not attend school due to financial fees required by the school, which the students cannot afford to pay.[29] The current study showed that there are categories of students who are exempted from paying financial fees, as orphaned students in 999 schools are exempted from paying financial fees, and in the event that there are several children in the same school, some of them are exempted from paying fees in 708 schools. The children of educational staff are exempted from paying fees in 716 schools.

Figure 67 Number/Percentage of schools by categories of students exempted from paying fees



[29] https://acu-sy.org/imu_reports/jena-02-jan2022/

SECTION TWELVE
TEACHERS

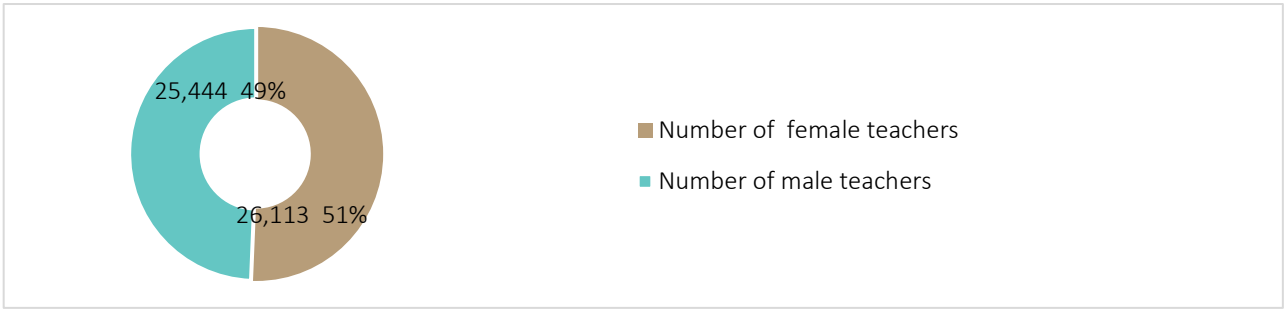
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

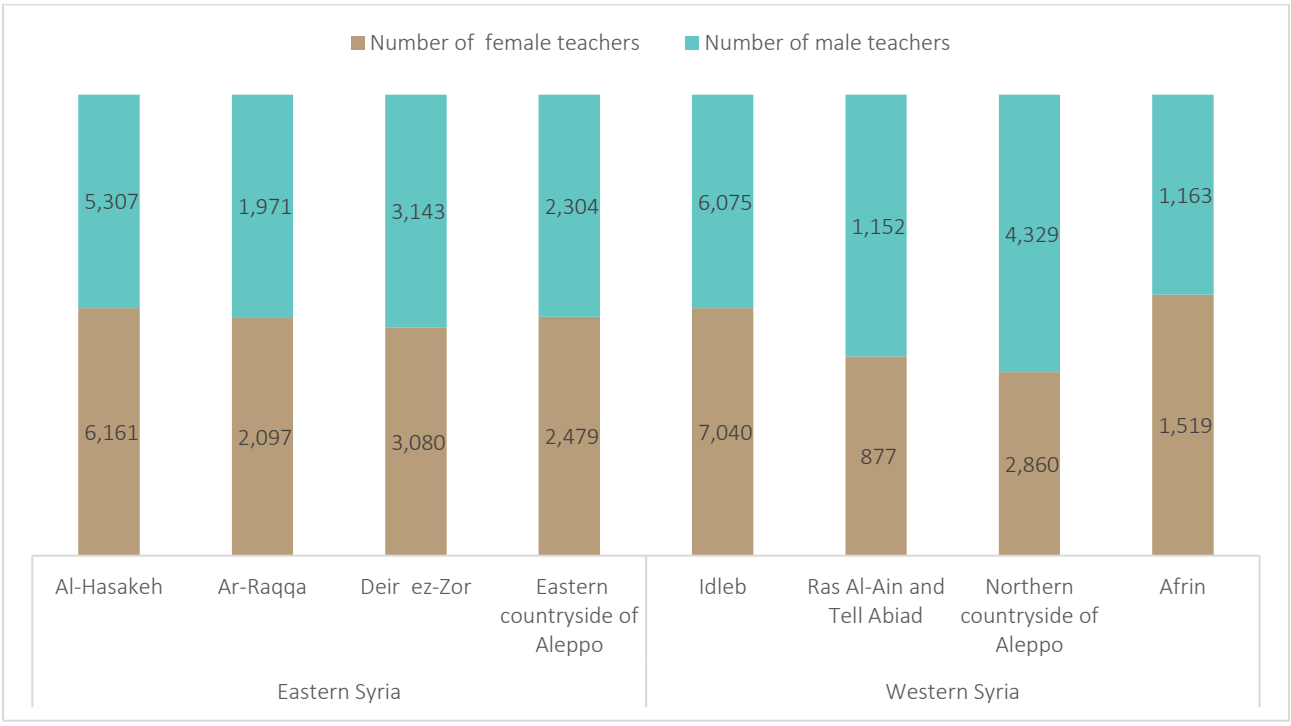
Section 12: Teachers

1. Numbers of Teacher

Within the assessed operational schools, there was a total of 51,557 teachers. The study revealed that 51% (26,113 teachers) of the teaching staff in these schools were female, while 49% (25,444 teachers) were male.

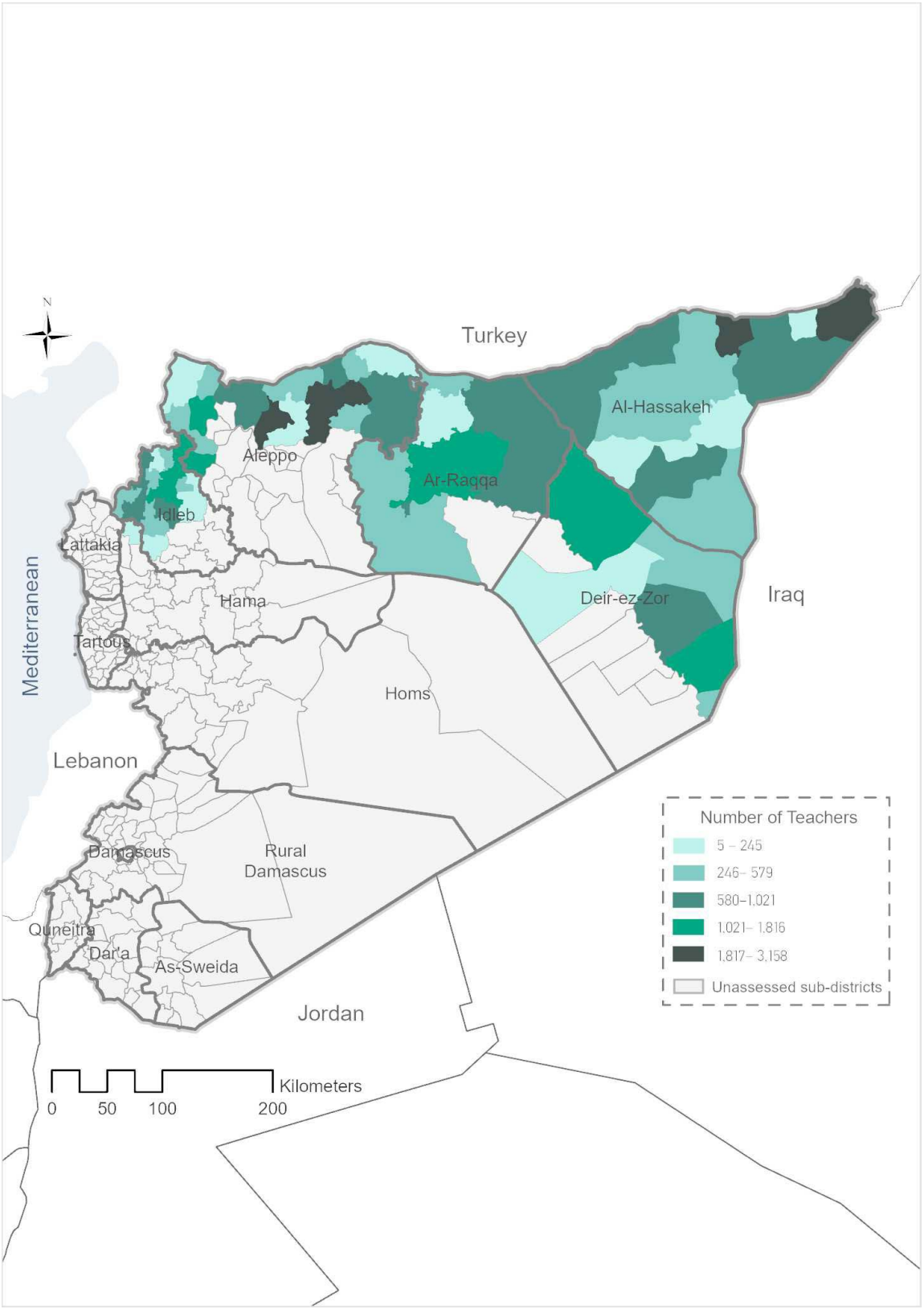
Figure 68 Number/Percentage of teachers by gender





Prior to the onset of conflict in Syria, the educational sector consistently grappled with a deficit in teaching personnel, relying extensively on teachers employed under temporary contracts, referred to as substitute teachers within the Syrian context, to address the educational requirements. This statistic encompasses all teachers present in operational schools during the assessment, irrespective of their employment status. Achieving a harmonious balance between male and female representation within the teaching and administrative staff holds paramount importance, particularly in mixed-gender educational institutions. In instances where one gender, be it male or female, predominates among the student body, it is frequently observed that the gender makeup of the administrative and teaching staff mirrors that of the majority gender within the school community.

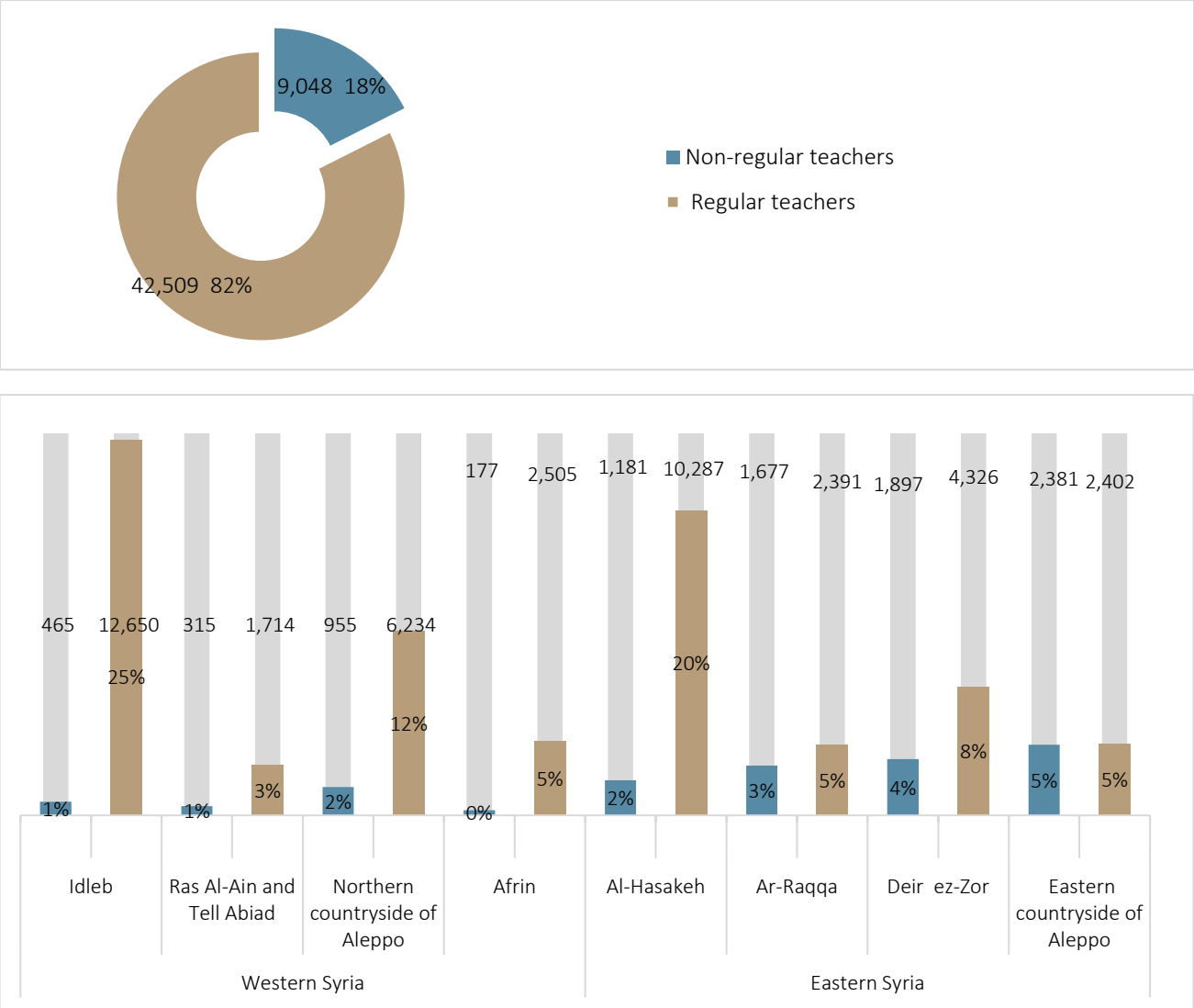
Map 5 Number of teachers at the sub-district level



2. Teachers' Employment Status

The study's findings unveil that 82% of the teachers encompassed within the analysis, totaling 42,509 individuals, hold the status of regular teachers. These professionals have obtained qualifications from colleges or institutes facilitating the pursuit of a career in teaching. Concurrently, 18% of individuals, amounting to 9,048 teachers, entered the profession as a response to the shortage of regular educators. Termed as non-regular teachers within the study, this subset represents those who lack formal qualifications from educational institutions.

Figure 69 Number/Percentage of teachers by employment status



The term "regular teachers" in this report refers to teachers who were employed with permanent contracts by the Directorate of Education affiliated with the Syrian government before the ongoing conflict in Syria. These teachers went through a recruitment competition organized by the Ministry of Education under the Syrian government and signed permanent employment contracts. They participated in this competition after completing their studies at universities or intermediate institutes, such as faculties of arts, sciences, fine arts, and teacher training institutes, which qualify them to teach students according to their respective specializations.

Following the outbreak of the war in Syria, the directorates of education affiliated with the Syrian Interim Government (opposition government) established institutes for teacher training and branches of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in areas outside the control of the Syrian government, specifically in Idleb and Aleppo provinces. These institutes and branches were created to train teachers and bridge the shortage of teaching staff. Graduates from these institutes and colleges were considered regular teachers.

In brief, regular teachers have graduated from universities or institutes that qualify them for a teaching profession. Those who do not meet this criterion are considered non-regular teachers. What distinguishes regular teachers is their ability to effectively manage classrooms and their knowledge of effective methods in dealing with students of all ages and situations. Their education includes studying "Teaching Methods," and some teachers hold a Diploma of Education.

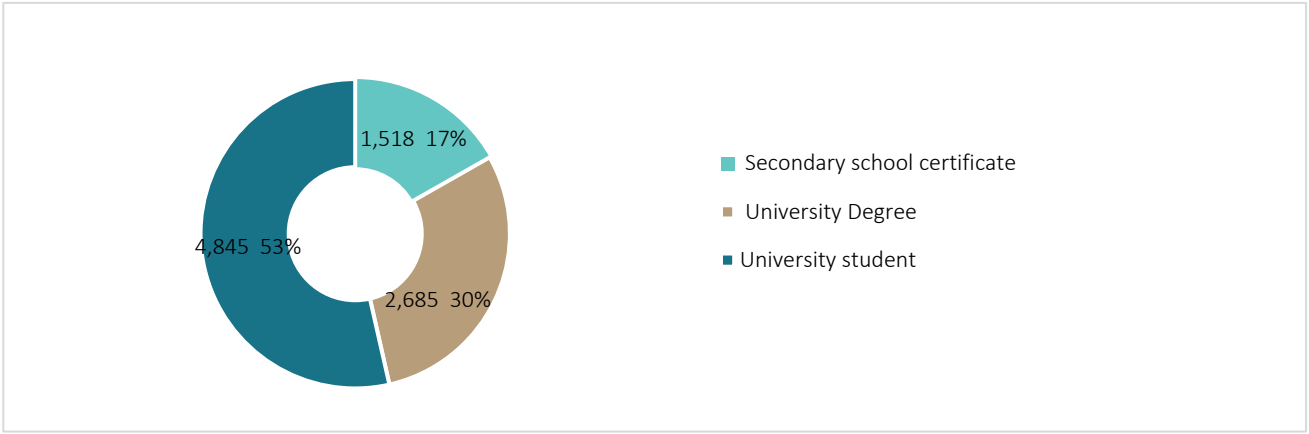
The INEE Minimum Standards for Education define[30] teaching methods as "the approach chosen and used in delivering learning content to encourage the acquisition of knowledge and skills among all learners." Before the war in Syria, the Directorate of Education under the Syrian government used to enter into temporary employment contracts with individuals who were not specialized in education and assigned them to areas facing severe shortages of teachers.

Short-term contracts were often made with university students to compensate for teachers on maternity leave in the absence of qualified replacements. These appointed individuals were commonly referred to as "non-regular teachers." Additionally, high school graduates and university students who had not completed their studies due to the conflict were allowed to teach in schools. They were also known as "non-regular teachers."

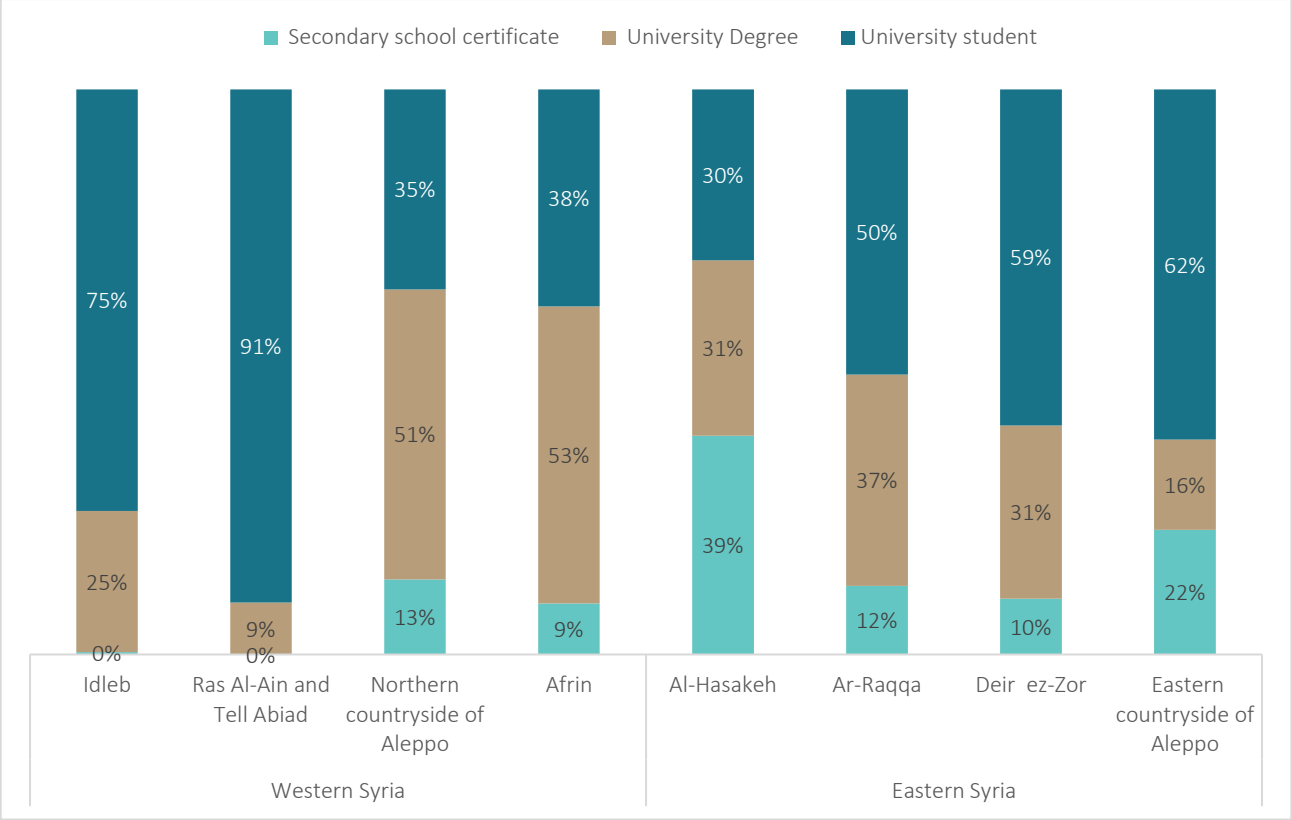
3. Academic Qualifications of Non-Regular Teachers

The study findings reveal that 30% (2,685 non-regular teachers) have obtained degrees from universities or institutes not specialized in teaching. This indicates that their higher education was completed in institutions that do not focus on student instruction. Additionally, 53% (4,845 non-regular teachers) are university students pursuing higher education without graduating, while 17% (1,518 non-regular teachers) possess only a high school diploma or lower educational qualifications.

Figure 70 Number/Percentage of non-regular teachers according to their educational qualifications



[30] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ARB_INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework_v2.pdf



Individuals holding university degrees or certificates from non-educational institutes differ from regular teachers due to their lack of specialized scientific knowledge in educational subject matter and their unfamiliarity with teaching methodologies acquired through university or institute studies. This subset of non-regular teachers could greatly benefit from participating in courses covering teaching methods, classroom management, and student interaction, enhancing their effectiveness in the educational realm.

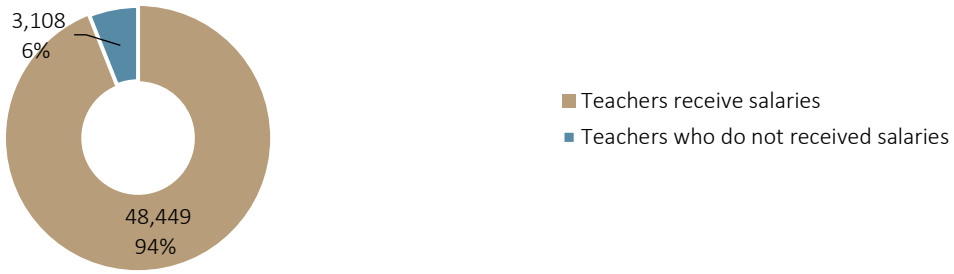
Students at universities or institutes: A significant number of university or institute students in areas outside the control of the Syrian government could not complete their studies in universities or institutes located in government-controlled areas due to security conditions. As a result of the shortage of teaching staff and the urgent need for teachers, it may be beneficial to qualify these students for teaching in the early stages after providing them with necessary training courses in the field of education.

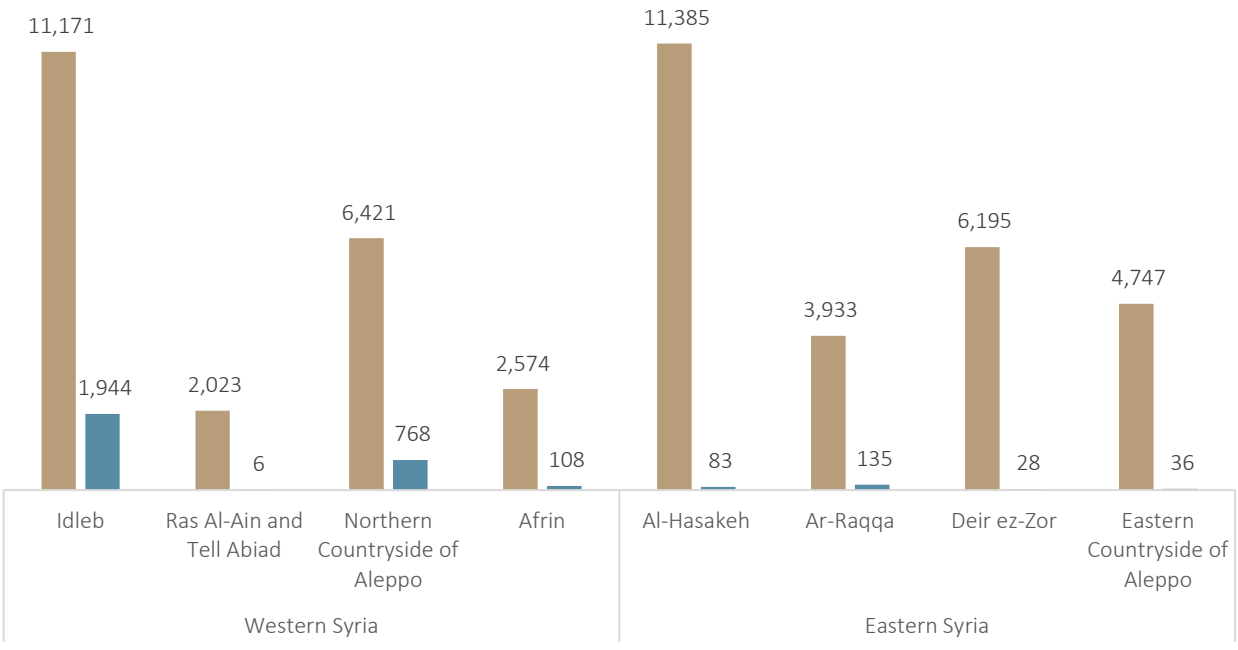
Secondary school graduates and below: Occasionally, individuals with a secondary school diploma are employed to teach basic reading and math skills to students in early grades after undergoing training courses. However, those who do not possess at least a secondary school diploma are not suitable for pursuing a teaching profession.

4. Teachers Receiving Salaries

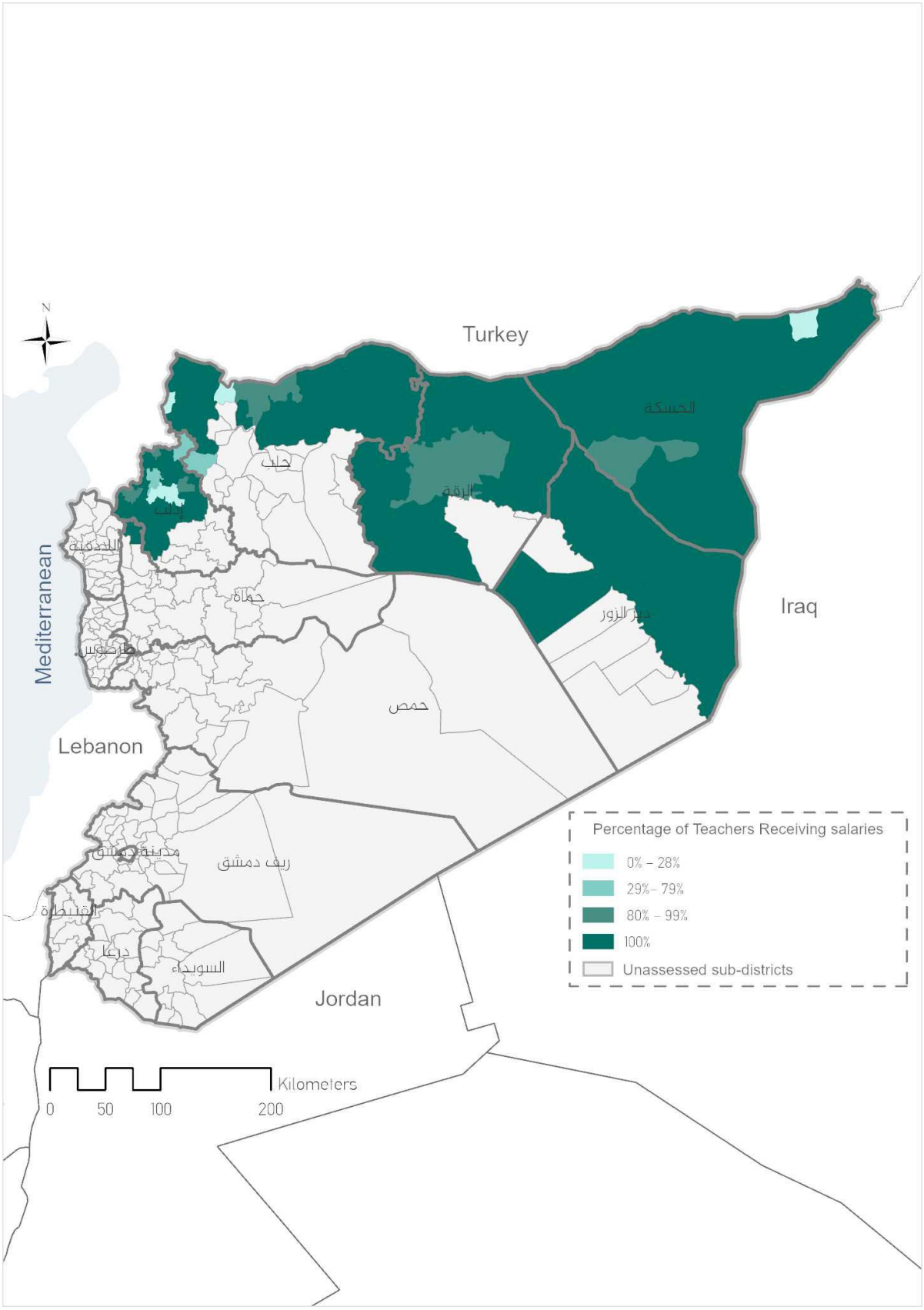
The study's revelations highlight that during the academic year 2023-2024, a substantial majority of assessed teachers in surveyed schools, totaling 48,449 individuals, received salaries from diverse funding streams, accounting for 94% of the assessed teachers. In contrast, 6% of teachers, numbering 3,108, did not receive any salaries. Of particular note is that Idleb displayed the highest proportion of teachers devoid of salaries, constituting 15%, 1,932 teachers out of the governorate's total assessed teachers, which stands at 13,115.

Figure 71 Number/ percentage of teachers receiving salaries





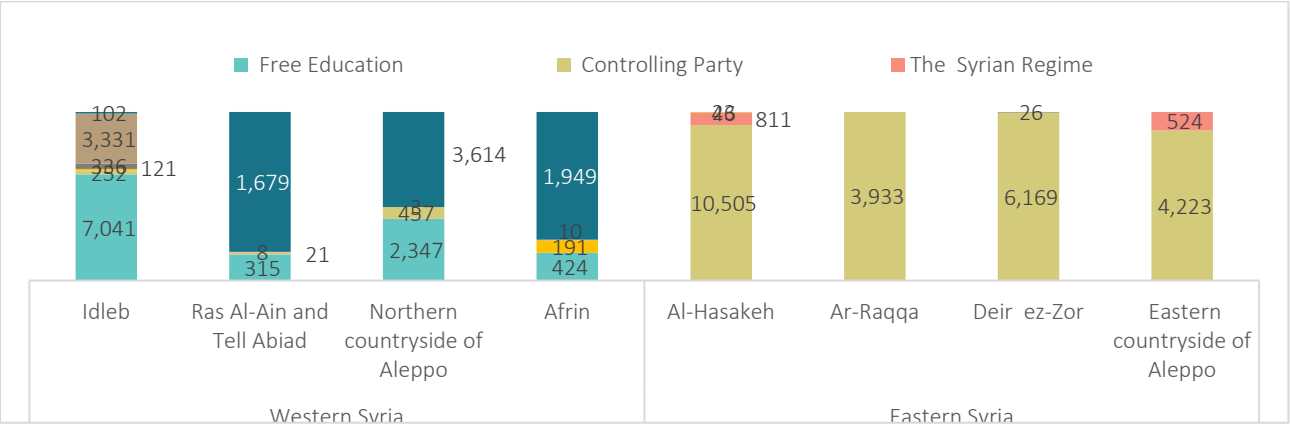
Map 6 Percentage of teachers receiving salaries- sub-district level



5. Sources of Salaries (Donor Entities)

The study findings unveiled that 52% of teachers, totaling 25,548 individuals, receive salaries from the governing authority within their respective regions. Additionally, 21% of teachers, comprising 10,127 individuals, receive compensation from the Free Education Directorate, while the Turkish Maarif Foundation reimburses 15% (7,344 teachers). Another 7% of teachers, totaling 3,364 individuals, receive salaries from local organizations, while international organizations fund 1% (362 teachers). In stark contrast, a mere 1,346 teachers receive salaries from the government-affiliated education directorate.

Figure 72 Number/Percentage of teachers receiving salaries according to the entities providing the salaries



According to the INEE Minimum Standards for Education[31], "Adequate and sufficient compensation should be provided to enable teachers and other education personnel to focus on their work without seeking additional income sources to meet their basic needs. An adequate payment system for teachers and other educational personnel should be established or improved as quickly as possible when needed. The payment system should acknowledge that it is primarily the responsibility of education authorities to ensure adequate compensation. Effective coordination between all stakeholders, including education authorities, unions, community members, committees, associations, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations, is crucial in establishing a foundation for coordinated policies and sustainable practices. This collaborative approach supports the transition from recovery to long-term development in the education sector."

[31]https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ARB_INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework_v2.pdf

6. Average Salaries of Teachers

The Payment of teachers' salaries by donor entities is in three currencies: the Syrian Pound, the US Dollar, and the Turkish Lira. Salaries were calculated in US Dollars based on the data collection date to facilitate salary comparison. The exchange rate of 1 US Dollar was set at 14,500 Syrian Pounds, and 1 US Dollar was set at 32 Turkish Lira. The study results revealed that international organizations pay the highest average salaries to teachers, with an average of $160. Local NGOs ranked second with an average of $147, followed by the Free Education Directorate with an average of $117. Other entities ranked fourth with an average of $102, followed by controlling entities with an average of $71. The Syrian regime paid the lowest average salaries, with an average of only $21.

Figure 73 The average salary of teachers - the highest / lowest value in USD by the party that pays the salaries

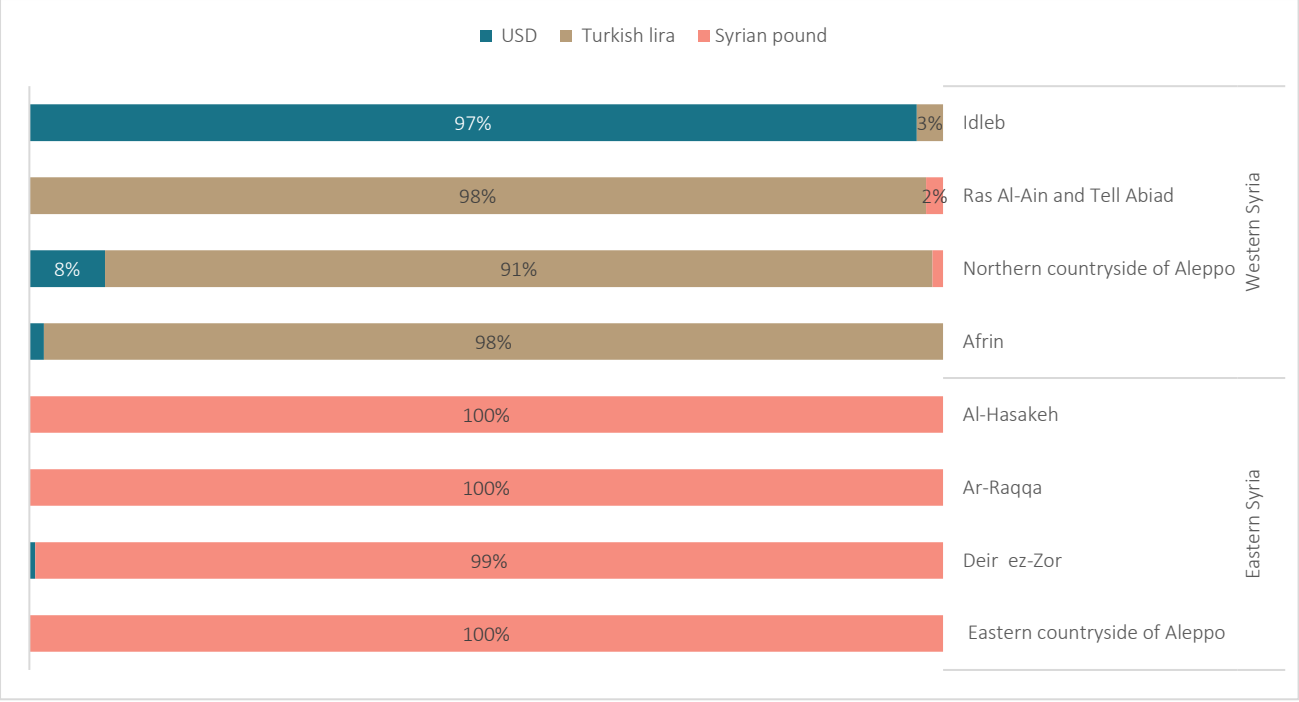
INEE confirms the need to confront market forces: "Compensation can be monetary or non-monetary. The system should be equitable and sustainable. Once implemented, compensation policies set a precedent that teachers and other education personnel will expect to be maintained. In displacement situations, qualified teachers and other education personnel may be more likely to move where there are higher wages, even if it means crossing borders. It is important to consider market forces such as the cost of living; demand for teachers and other professionals; wage levels in similarly qualified professions, such as health care; the availability of qualified teachers and other education personnel."

The Syria cross-border Education Cluster and partners working in the education sector is working on establishing mechanisms to unify teachers' salaries in Syria. Several working groups have been formed, resulting in a guide for standardizing salaries within various grades in the education sector. However, the absence of mandatory mechanisms for implementing these standards has rendered them unused by most stakeholders. Salary discrepancies still persist within the same geographical area.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the education directorates in Idleb and Aleppo (western rural Aleppo) took the initiative to draft a preliminary salary scale and a leave system for teachers in collaboration with various stakeholders. The meeting was held on the Syrian Education Platform hosted by the Assistance Coordination Unit. A working group was also formed within the platform to develop the draft salary scale, including representatives from the Ministry of Education in the Syrian Interim Government, the education directorates in Idleb and western rural Aleppo, Manahel program, and several humanitarian organizations working in the education sector (Emisa, Child Guardians, Ata'a).

What distinguishes the salaries paid by the Turkish government is their stability and sustainability. The Turkish Education Directorate pays teachers in Turkish Lira, and salaries are transferred to teachers' bank accounts through the Turkish Post (PTT), which has opened branches in the northern countryside of Aleppo. On the other hand, sources from schools receiving support from local and international organizations or the Free Education Directorate reported that salary support is unstable and dependent on the donor entity. Salaries are often delayed for over two months and suspended during the summer break, as salaries are disbursed based on school attendance days. This poses a challenge for teachers and forces them to seek other professions. It is worth mentioning that a significant number of specialized teachers in certain subjects have sought employment with other entities that offer higher and more stable salaries. This has created a significant gap in the educational process. Most foreign language teachers have opted to work for international organizations in non-teaching administrative positions, resulting in a shortage of foreign language teachers. Similarly, a significant number of psychological counselors have chosen to work with humanitarian organizations outside the field of education, particularly in the medical field.

Figure 74 Ratios of teachers' salaries by currency in which salaries are paid

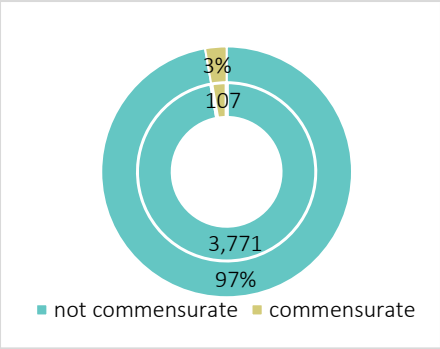


The study elucidates that salaries in Afrin, the northern countryside of Aleppo, Ras al-Ain, and Tell Abyad are predominantly issued in Turkish lira, facilitated by the Turkish Maarif Foundation through the Turkish Post (PTT), which has established branches across these regions. Conversely, 97% of salaries in Idleb province are denominated in US dollars. In the eastern governorates under the administration of the SDF, all remunerations are disbursed in Syrian pounds, overseen by the SDF-affiliated education directorate.

7. Teacher Survey: The Proportionality of Salary/Incentive to Daily Living Requirements

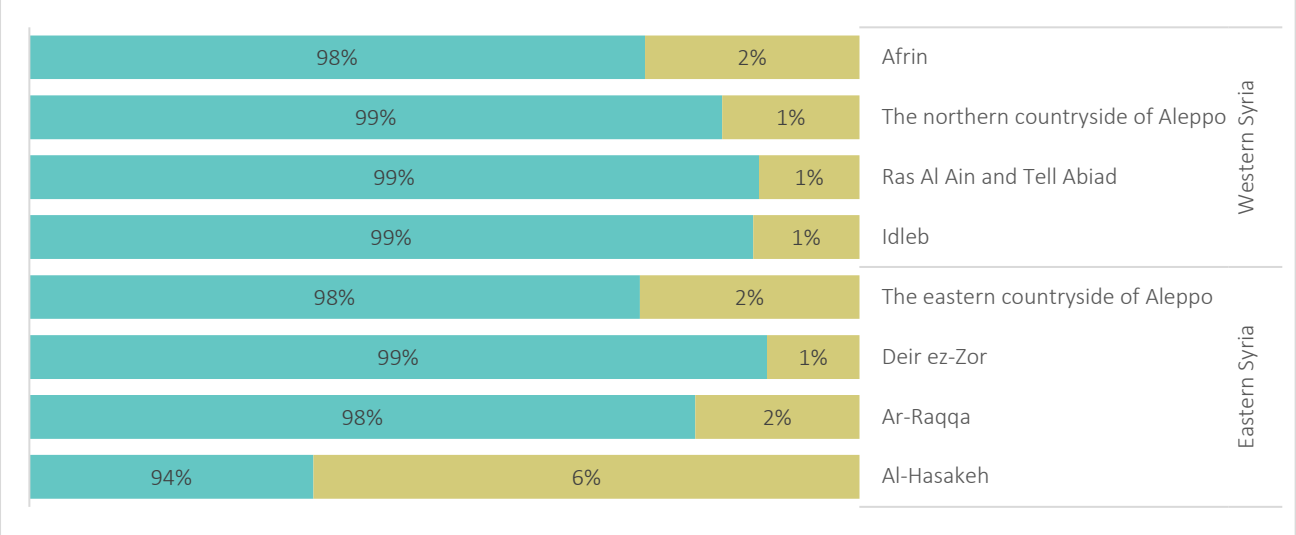
In perception surveys conducted among teachers[32], they were questioned regarding the sufficiency of their salaries to cover their daily living expenses. Only 3% of respondents, amounting to 107 teachers, affirmed that their current salaries adequately meet their everyday financial requirements. Conversely, an overwhelming 97%, totaling 3,771 teachers, expressed dissatisfaction, citing their salaries as insufficient to address their daily life demands.

Figure 75 Number/percentage of teachers surveyed by the adequacy of their salaries to meet daily life requirements



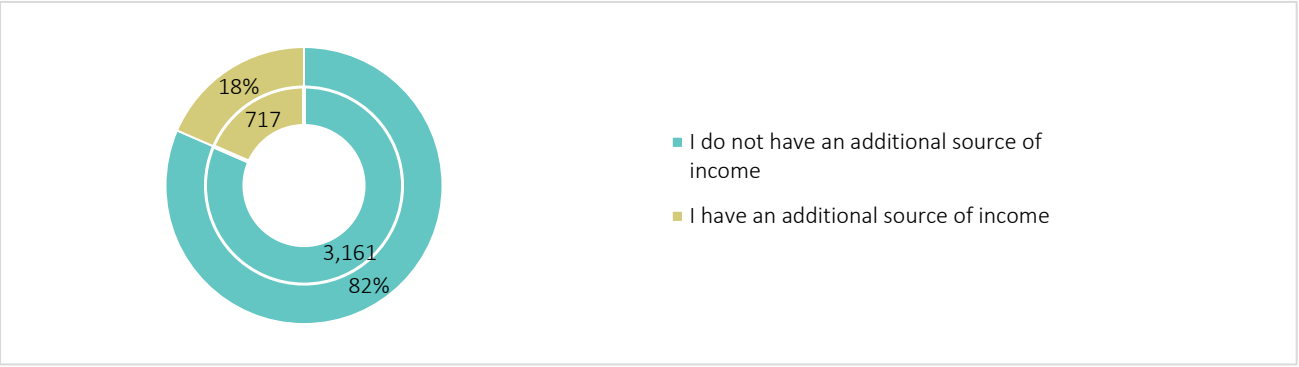
According to the "Action Towards Increased Quality Education for Internally Displaced Children" report by Save the Children, "At least 180,000 education personnel have left the education system."

According to the survey conducted with the teachers, when asked if they had additional sources of income apart from teaching, 82% (3,161 teachers) responded that they did not have any other sources of income. In comparison, only 18% (717 teachers) indicated they had additional income sources.



[32] IMU enumerators conducted surveys with 3,878 in-school and out-of-school teachers in 6 governorates, 44% of surveyed teachers were female, and 56% were male.

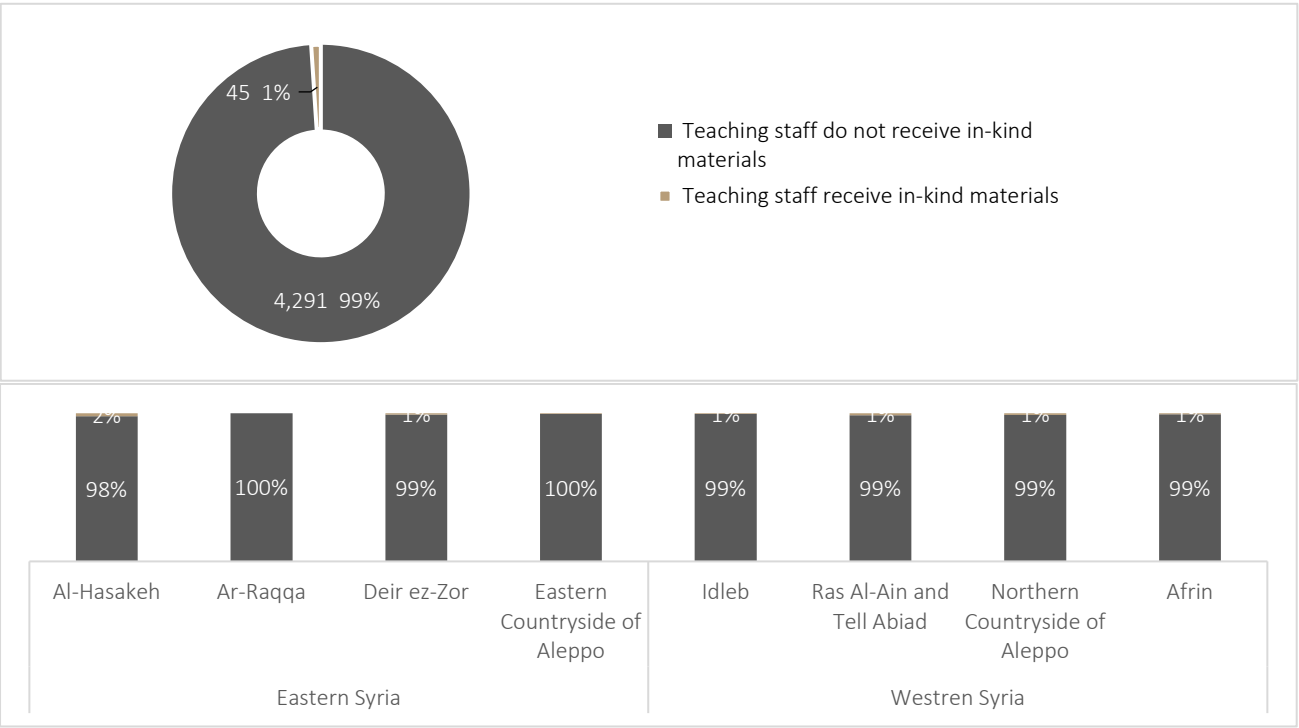
Figure 76 Number/percentage of teachers who have additional sources of income.



8. Teachers Receive In-Kind Materials

Merely 1% of the assessed schools, comprising 45 establishments, disclosed that teachers receive supplementary in-kind materials in addition to their salaries. Conversely, the overwhelming majority, accounting for 99% or 4,291 schools, stated that teachers do not receive any such in-kind provisions.

Figure 77 Number/percentage of operating schools where teachers receive in-kind assistance

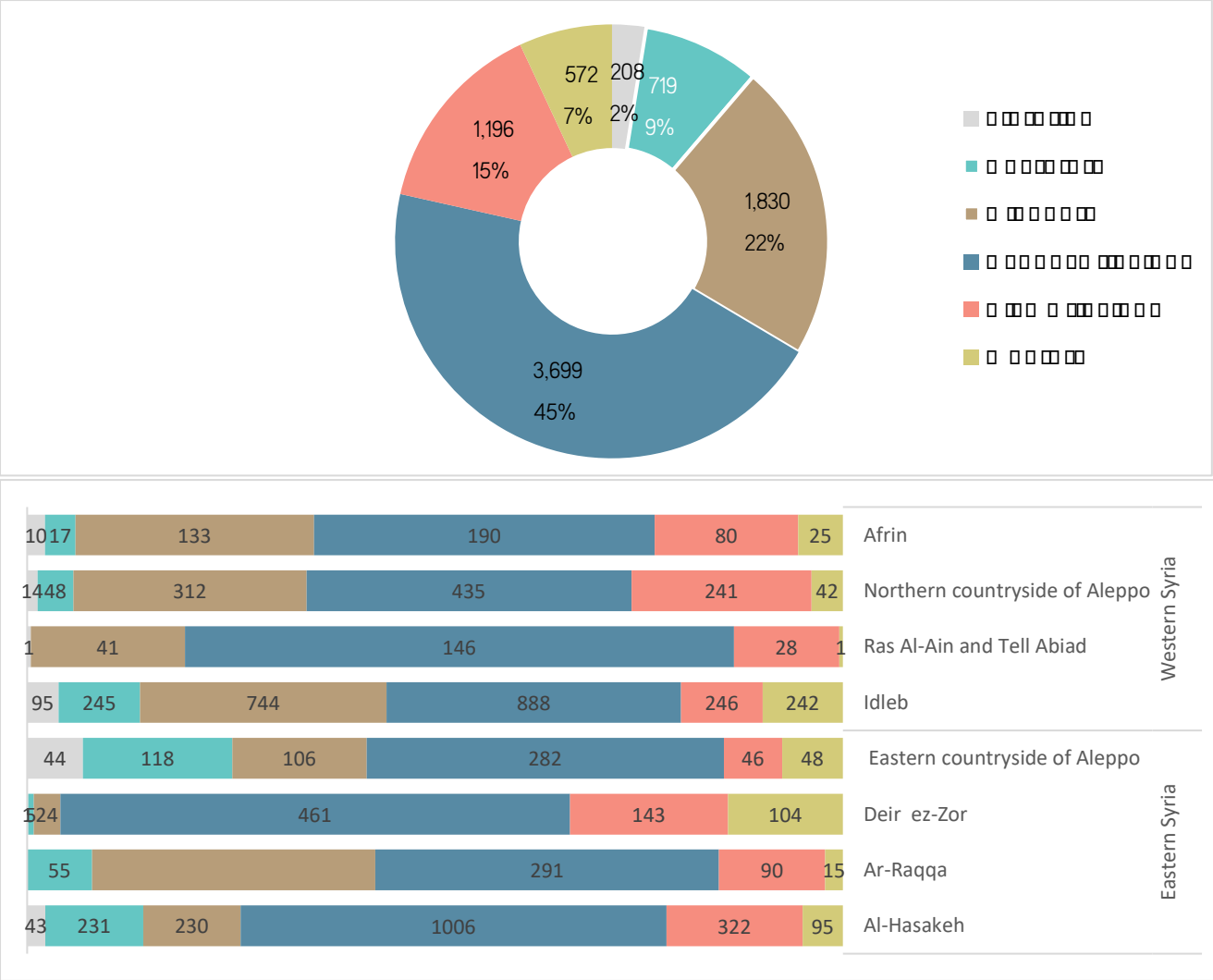


Amid the deteriorating living standards in areas beyond government control, coupled with the inadequacy of teachers' salaries to sustain their daily needs, and some educators not receiving any compensation, certain organizations have initiated efforts to provide in-kind assistance to teachers within schools. This endeavor aims to alleviate the financial strain on educators, thereby reducing their dependence on potentially unstable alternative sources of income and mitigating the risk of losing valuable educational professionals. Typically, these in-kind provisions are targeted toward schools where teachers receive lower or no salaries compared to others. Various organizations distribute aid through food baskets or other essential materials to bolster the educational process.

9. Administrative and Service Cadres

The study findings unveiled that 45% of the administrative and support personnel in the surveyed schools hold the position of principal, amounting to 3,699 individuals. Additionally, 15% of the staff are assistant principals, totaling 1,196 assistant principals. Secretaries comprise 9% of the personnel, with 719 individuals fulfilling this role. Furthermore, 7% of the staff are grade mentors, accounting for 572 mentors, while 2% are librarians, totaling 208 individuals. Cleaners constitute the largest segment at 22%, with 1,830 individuals serving in this capacity.

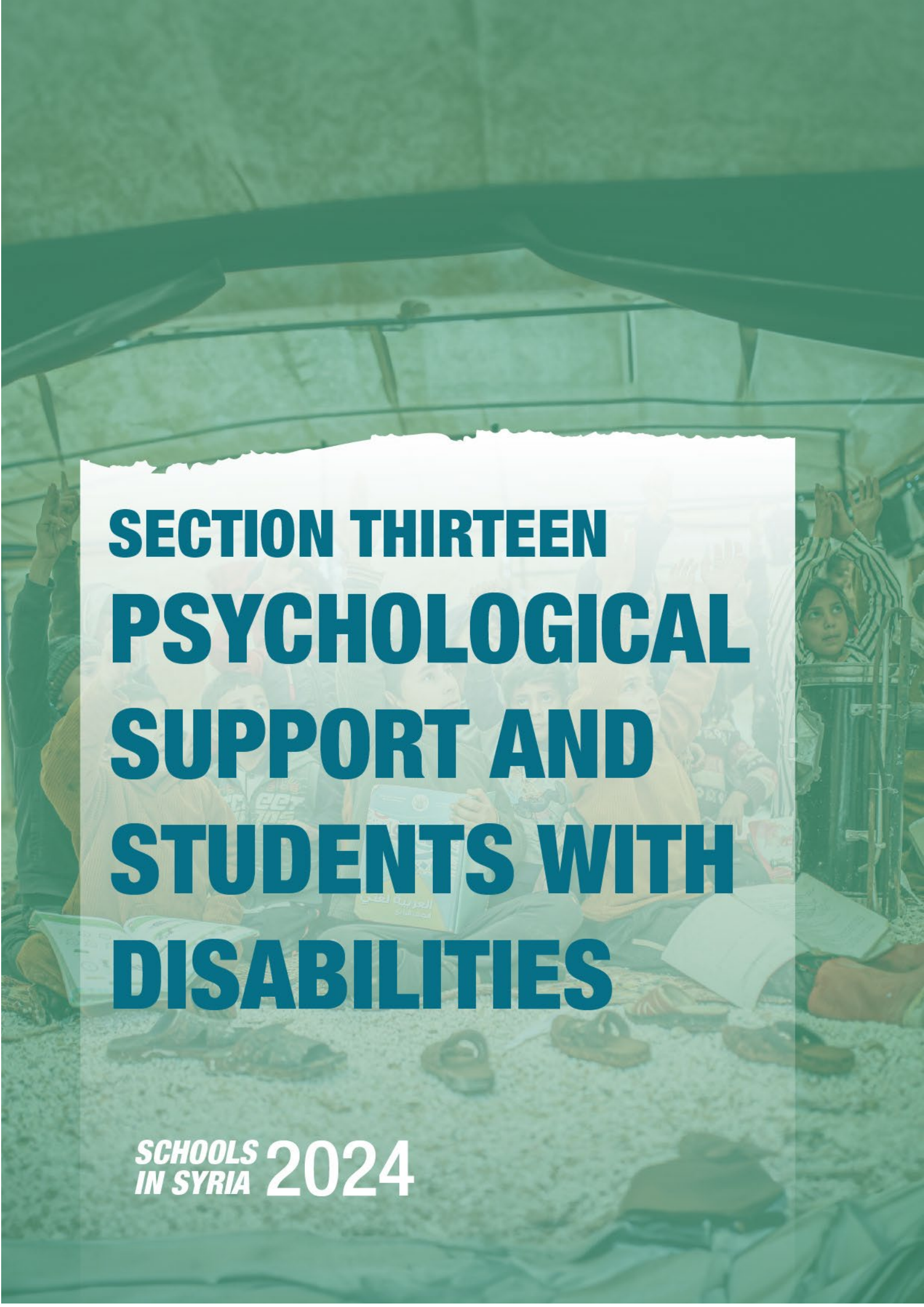
Figure 78 Number/ percentage of administrative cadres at schools according to their job description



- The primary duties entrusted to a school principal encompass the meticulous supervision of the educational framework within schools and the meticulous enforcement of protocols and guidelines. Conventionally, each school is led by a sole principal. Nevertheless, within certain non-traditional educational settings, such as rural schools, temporary education centers, and safe learning spaces, scenarios may arise where no principal is appointed or administrative responsibilities are collectively shared among the teaching staff.
- Certain schools may feature dual principalships in regions beyond government jurisdiction, with one principal designated by the Syrian government and the other by the Ministry of Education under the Syrian Interim Government's auspices. Larger educational institutions may also designate an assistant principal to assist the principal in overseeing school operations by assuming some administrative

duties. Additionally, in schools operating on a dual-shift basis, where classes are held in both morning and evening sessions, principals and assistant principals may alternate in managing the school.

- School mentors oversee students outside of classrooms and take charge of teaching classes on behalf of teachers when one of them is absent. They also monitor student attendance and communicate with parents in case of student absences.
- School mentors assume responsibility for supervising students beyond the confines of classrooms and serve as substitutes for teachers during their absences. Moreover, they oversee student attendance and liaise with parents regarding any instances of student absenteeism.
- The responsibilities of school secretaries primarily entail the meticulous organization and maintenance of student and faculty records and documentation.
- The task of librarians revolves around supervising the libraries within schools and lending books and references to students. Due to the lack of equipped libraries in the majority of schools, librarians also assume the responsibilities of student supervision that mentors would typically carry out.



SECTION THIRTEEN
PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

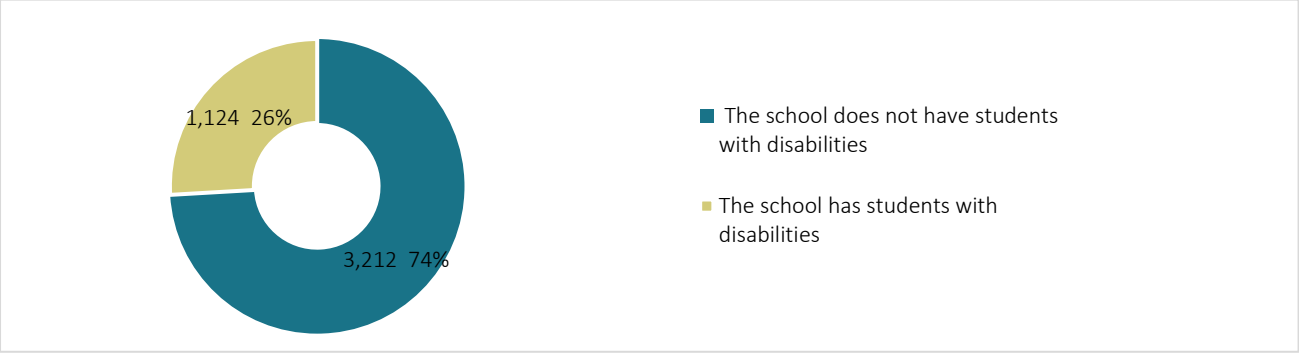
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

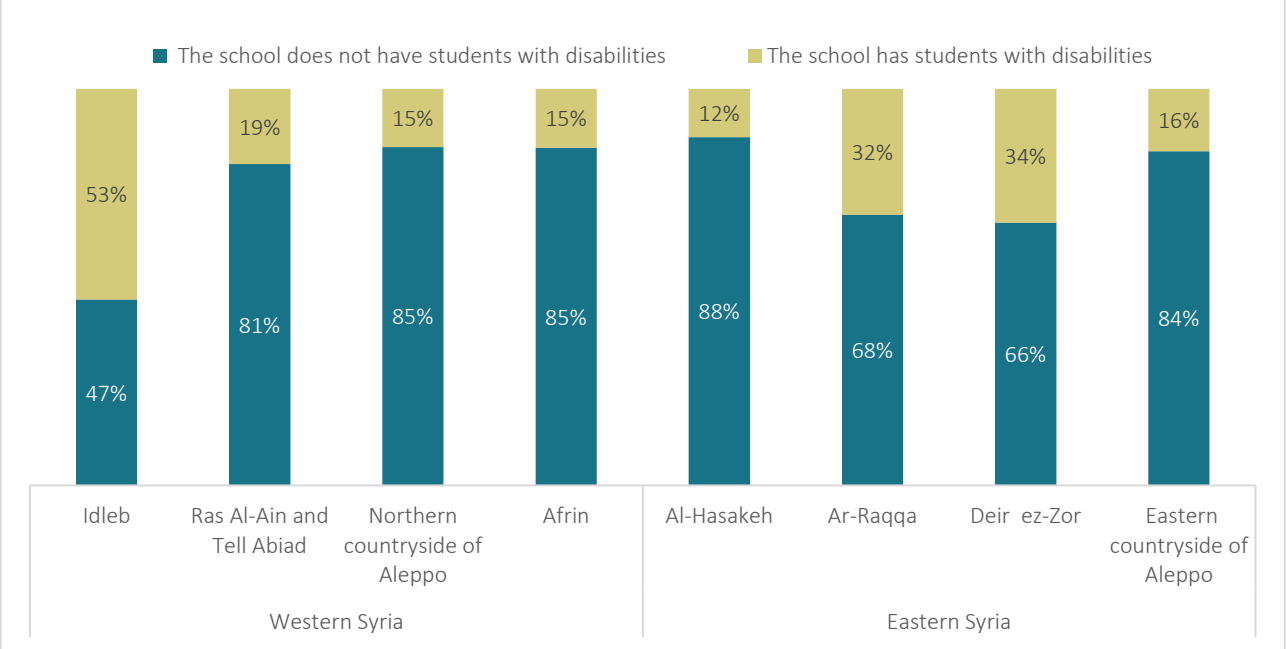
Section 13: Psychosocial Support and Students with Disabilities

1. Children with Disabilities in Schools

The prevalence of disabilities among children in Syria has surged amidst the backdrop of wartime circumstances. Frequently, children sustain injuries from shelling or landmine detonations, resulting in diverse forms of impairment. According to the study, a mere 26% (1,124 schools) of the evaluated educational institutions accommodate children with disabilities, while the majority, constituting 74% (3,212 schools), do not. This discrepancy underscores the potential educational deprivation faced by children with disabilities in regions where these schools are situated.

Figure 79 Number/Percentage of schools with children with disabilities

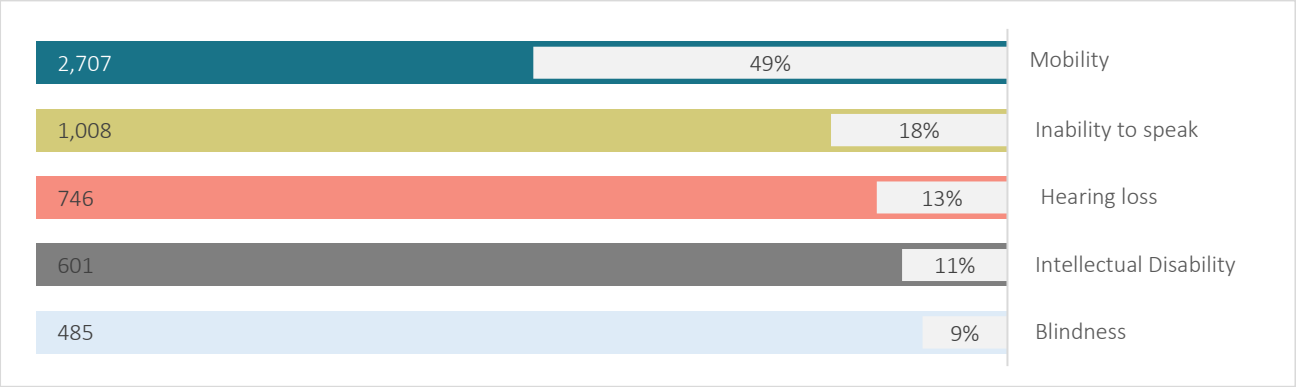


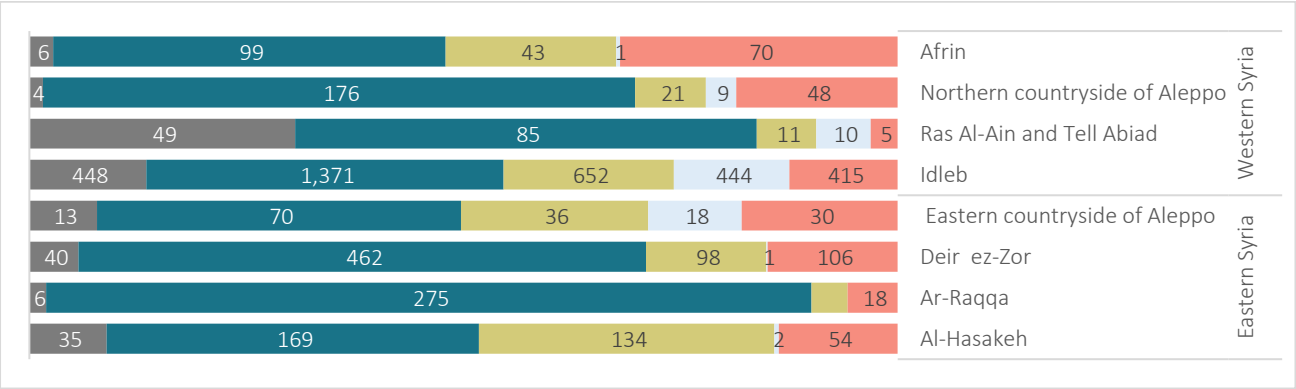


2. Students with Disabilities in Schools by Type of Disability

The number of students with disabilities within the assessed schools reached 5,547 students with disabilities. Physical disabilities accounted for 49% (2,707 students) of the total disabilities experienced by the students. Visual impairment accounted for 9% (485 students with visual impairment), while intellectual disabilities accounted for 11% (601 students with intellectual disabilities). Inability to speak accounted for 18% (1,008 students with speech difficulties), and hearing loss accounted for 13% (746 students with hearing loss).

Figure 80 Number/Percentage of students with disabilities within schools by type of disability



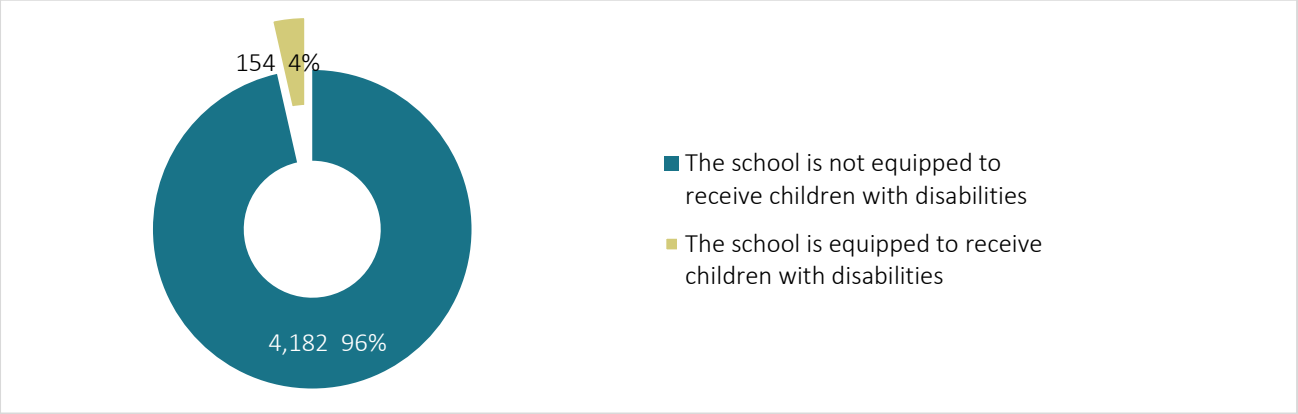


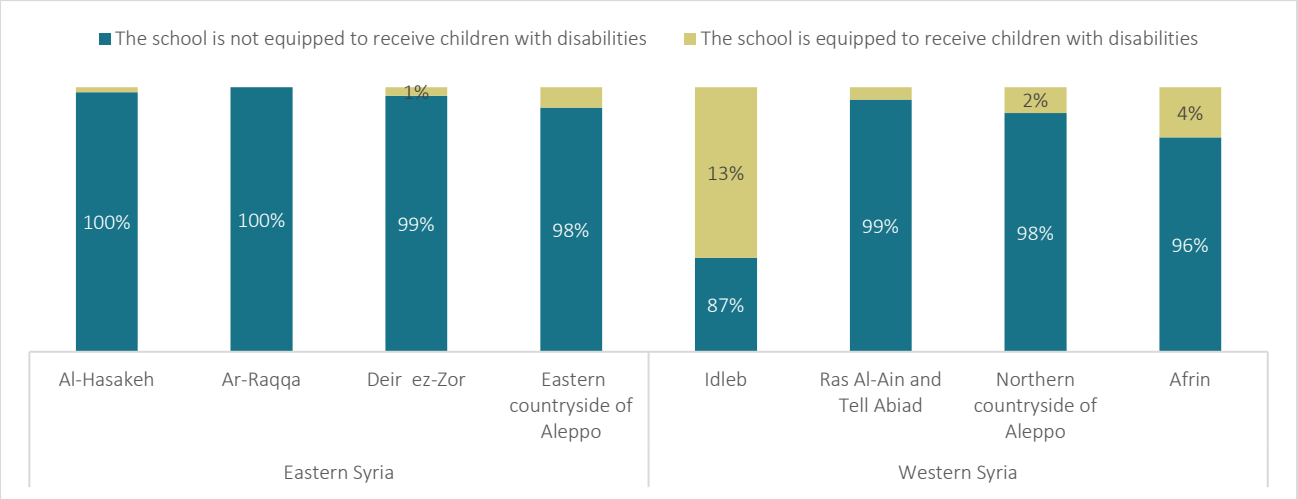
Mobility impairments often arise as a consequence of injuries sustained from artillery or aerial attacks amid the ongoing conflict in Syria. Furthermore, various disabilities present significant diagnostic challenges, particularly those necessitating specialized expertise that is scarcely available in the assessed regions. The exacerbated living conditions endured by families hinder their ability to access specialized medical professionals capable of accurately diagnosing their children's conditions. Notably, numerous children have been identified with delayed speech development, and a condition often misconstrued due to the scarcity of specialists. Consequently, parents may only discern later that their child's speech delay is attributable to underlying hearing difficulties. In such instances, the provision of hearing aids emerges as a critical initial intervention. However, given the delayed detection of hearing impairments, specialized guidance is imperative to facilitate speech acquisition. The absence of such specialists, whether within or outside the school setting, can exacerbate the child's predicament, fostering feelings of isolation and neglect among peers and educators alike. Similarly, residents residing in the study's covered areas encounter formidable obstacles in diagnosing intellectual disabilities.

3. Equipped Schools to Receive Children with Movement Disabilities

The study findings reveal that a mere 4% (154 schools) of the evaluated operational schools possess the necessary facilities to accommodate children with mobility impairments. Conversely, the overwhelming majority, comprising 96% (4,182 schools), lack the requisite infrastructure to cater to such students despite the presence of 5,847 disabled students within 4,336 of the surveyed schools.

Figure 81 Number/Percentage of schools according to their equipment to receive children with disabilities





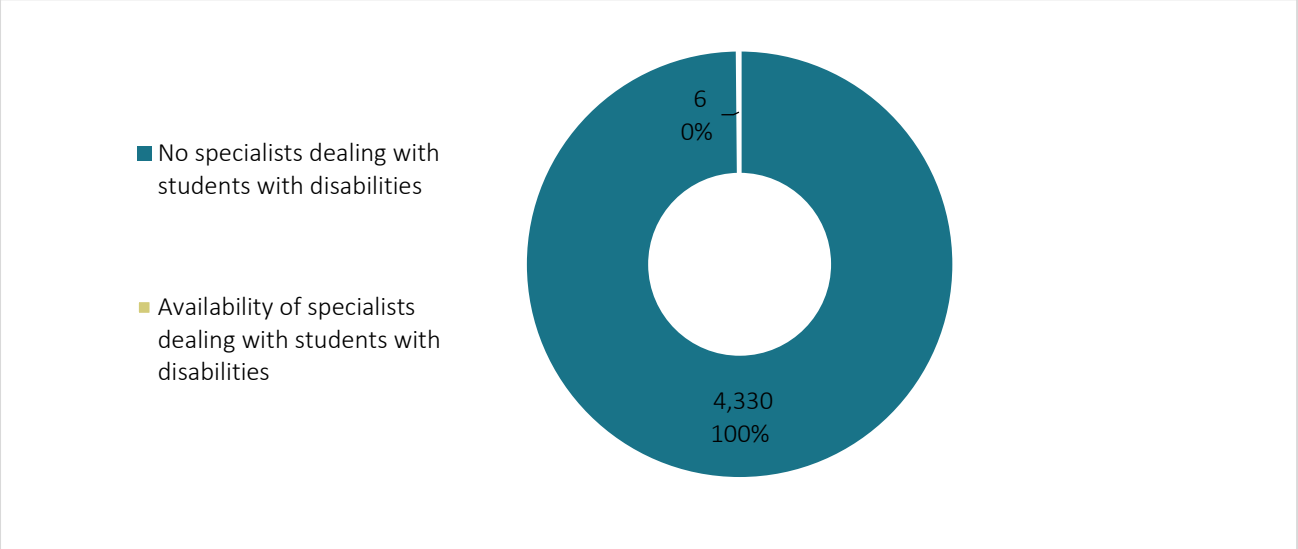
According to the minimum standards for education by INEE[33], "Careful consideration should be given to the needs of people with physical and visual disabilities when designing educational facilities. Entrances and exits should be accessible to people in wheelchairs or those using mobility aids. Additionally, classroom space, furniture, water, and sanitation facilities should meet the needs of people with disabilities. When identifying or constructing educational facilities, it is advisable to collaborate at the local and national levels with organizations representing individuals with various disabilities and parents of students with disabilities and youth with disabilities."

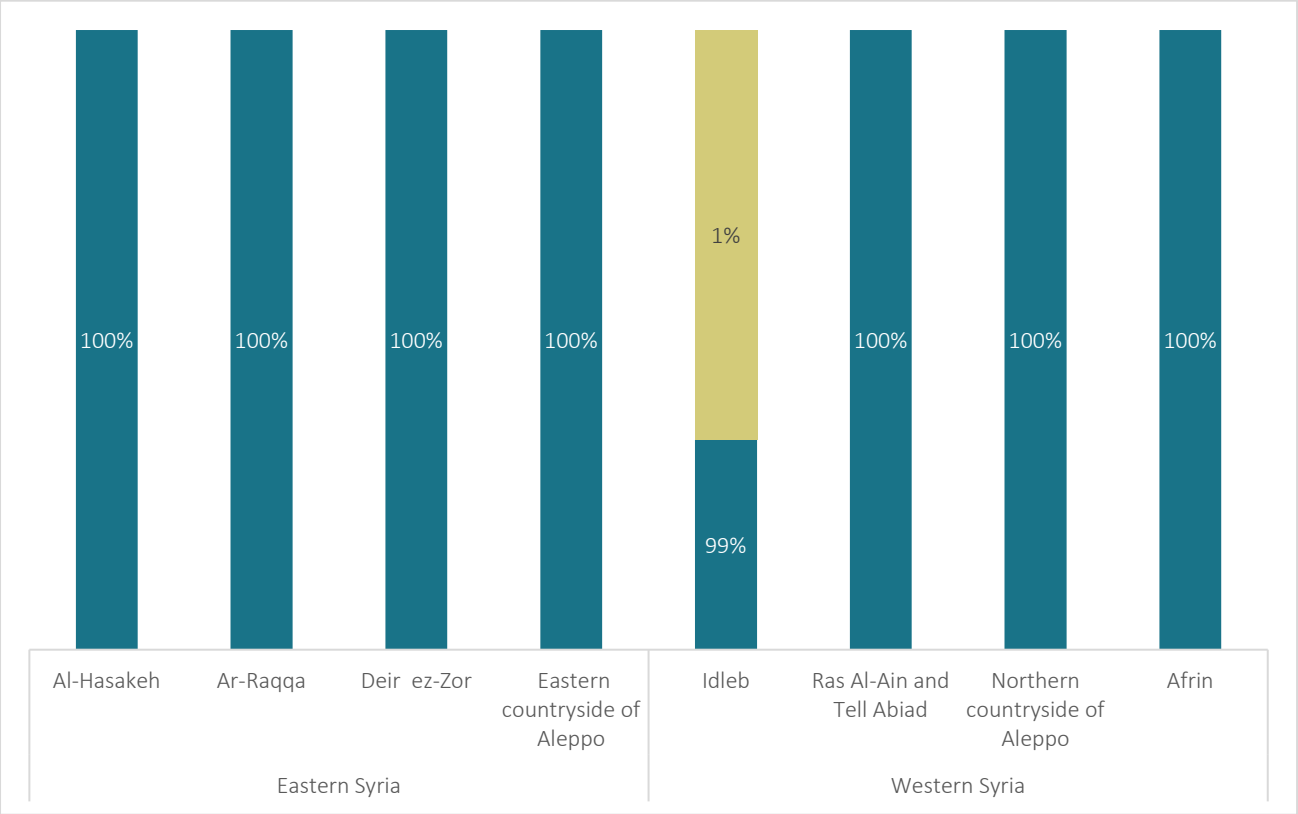
[33] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ARB_INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework_v2.pdf

4. Availability of Specialists for Children with Disabilities in Schools According to Their Needs

The study findings unveiled that among the total of 4,336 assessed schools, only 6 had specialists available to support students with disabilities. Notably, these specialists were solely present in the province of Idleb. However, the remaining 4,330 assessed schools lacked any specialists to cater to children with disabilities.

Figure 82 Number/percentages of schools according to the presence of specialists for children with disabilities

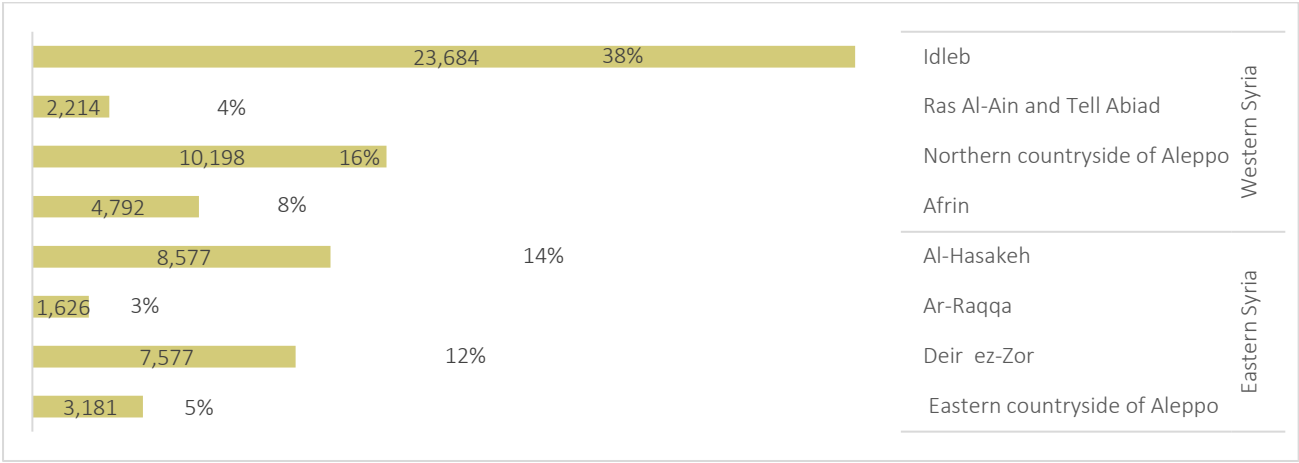




5. Orphans in Schools

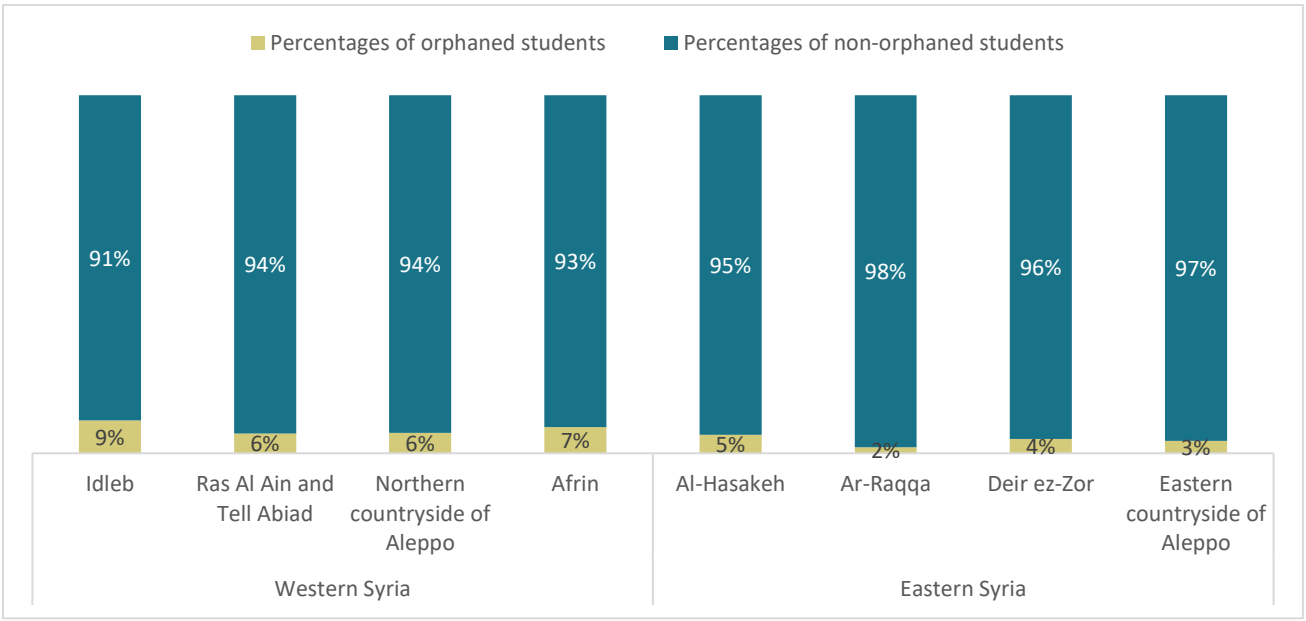
Amidst the persistent conflict, Syria has witnessed an increase in the number of orphaned children in recent years. Tragically, many youngsters have been bereaved of one or both parents as a consequence of military operations targeting civilian populations. A staggering count of 61,849 orphaned students was recorded within the schools assessed. Notably, the province of Idleb harbored the highest concentration, constituting 38% of the total orphaned student population within the surveyed schools, equating to 23,684 orphaned students.

Figure 83 Number/Percentage of orphaned students in schools



The largest percentage of orphaned students out of the total number of school students was found in the Idleb region, where they accounted for 9% of the total number of students within the schools. Their percentage in Afrin was 7% of the total number of students, and their percentage in Ras Al Ain, Tell Abiad, and the Northern countryside of Aleppo was 6%, while in Al-Hasakah, it was 5%. In Deir ez-Zor, the percentage was 4%; in the eastern countryside of Aleppo, it was 3% of the total students. In ar-Raqqa, it was 2%.

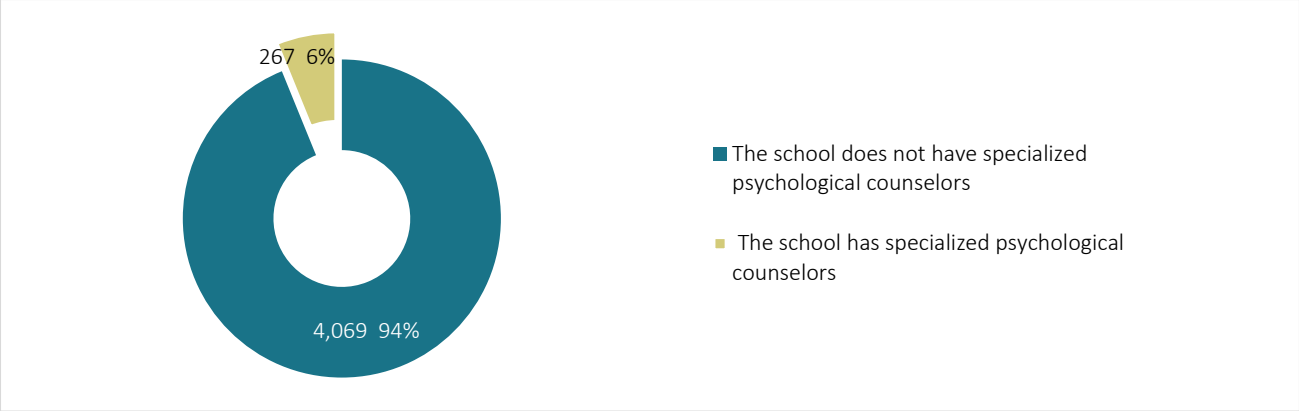
Figure 84 Percentage of orphan students out of the total student number

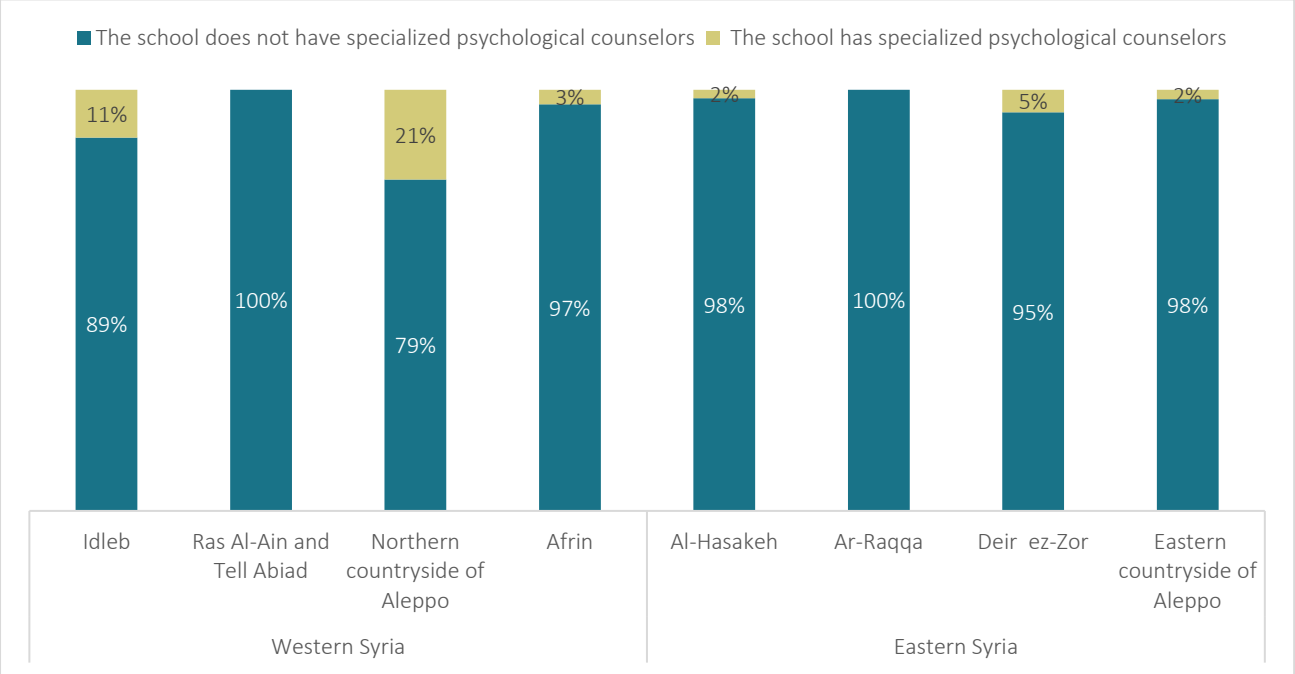


6. Psychological Counselors in Schools

As per the study findings, a vast majority, encompassing 94% (4,069) of the evaluated schools, lack the presence of psychological counselors. In stark contrast, only a meager 6%, equivalent to 267 schools, are equipped with the services of psychological counselors.

Figure 85 Number/Percentage of schools based on the presence of psychological counselors



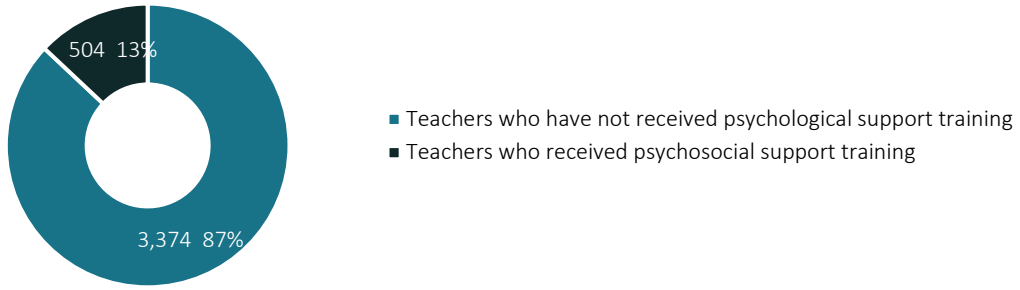


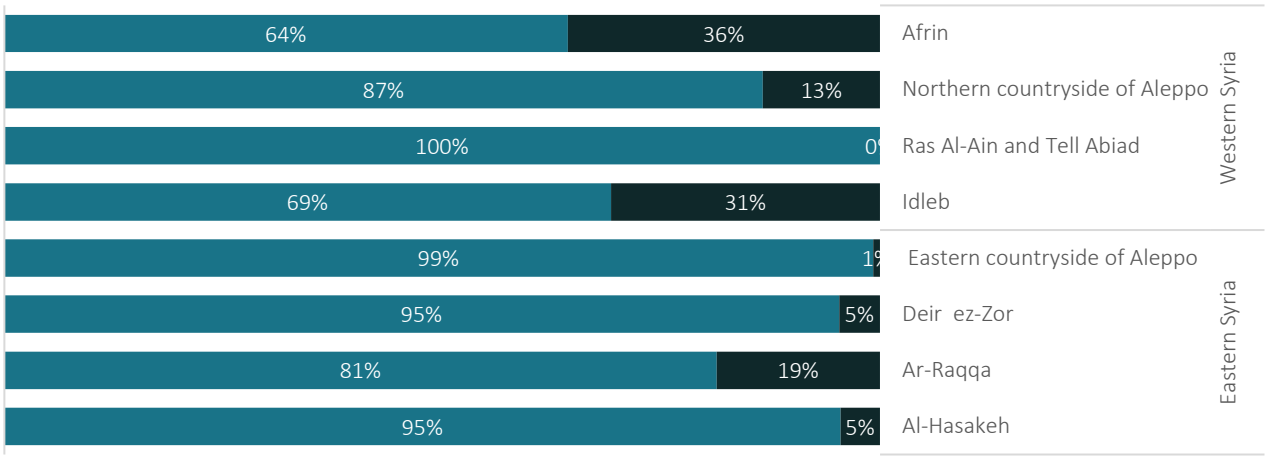
Prior to the onset of current events, a prevalent practice in schools involved the inclusion of a psychological counselor, typically sourced from the faculty of psychology. These counselors played a pivotal role in attending to the psychological needs of students, diligently monitoring their well-being, and liaising with parents as needed to aid children in navigating mental hurdles, particularly during the formative adolescent years. However, the absence of institutions graduating psychological counselors in regions beyond government jurisdiction necessitates an alternative approach. Consequently, a pressing need arises to impart training courses to a segment of the administrative staff, empowering them to address certain psychological challenges that students may encounter in school settings.

7. Teacher Survey: Availability of Teachers Trained in Psychosocial Support

Results of the study show that only 13% (504 schools) of the evaluated schools had teachers who underwent training courses in the field of psychosocial support. All teachers in these schools don't need to have undergone training in this field, as a department within the same school may have received psychosocial support training while another department did not.

Figure 86 Number/Percentage of surveyed teachers who underwent psychosocial support training





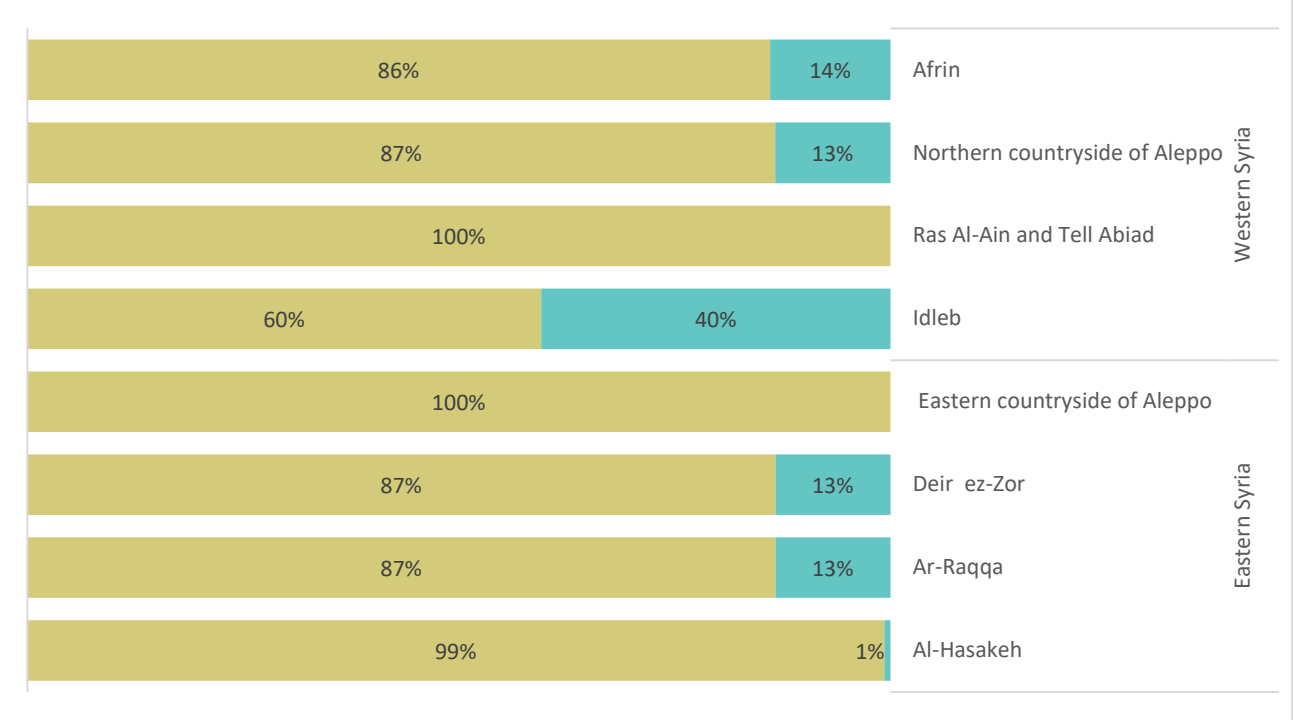
As per the minimum standards of education set by INEE[34], "Teachers and other education personnel receive regular and organized training according to their needs and circumstances." Due to the significant number of children in Syria experiencing psychological trauma due to the ongoing events, it was necessary to train all teachers to interact with children during war and respond during disasters. Having many children in a single classroom requires experience, quick response, and organization from teachers to protect children and minimize harm as much as possible during any disaster. Additionally, teachers must be trained to address the prevalent symptoms among children resulting from the ongoing war in Syria.

[34] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ARB_INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework_v2.pdf

8. Teacher Survey: Training Courses in Education During Disasters

In perception surveys administered by enumerators among teachers[35], respondents were queried regarding their participation in training courses related to education during disasters. Merely 13% of teachers, totaling 493 individuals, affirmed receiving such training, whereas an overwhelming majority of 87%, comprising 3,385 teachers, indicated a lack of exposure to courses in this domain.

Figure 87 Number/Percentage of surveyed teachers based on receiving training in education during disasters

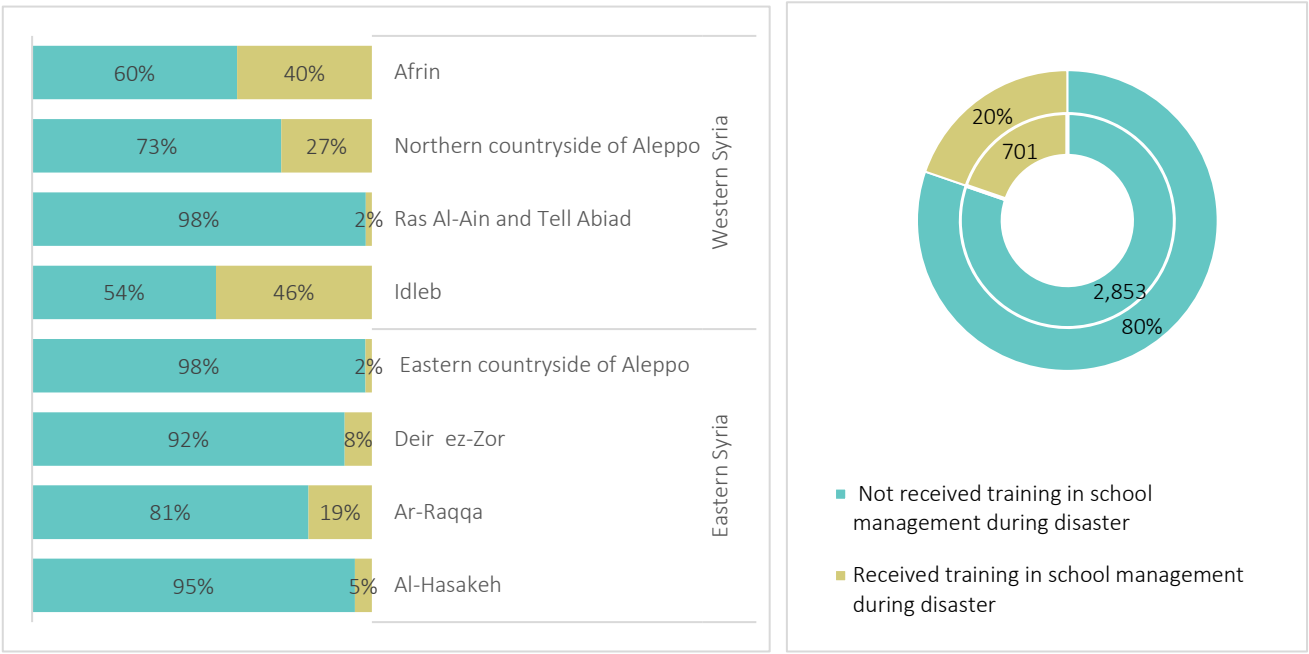


[35]IMU enumerators conducted surveys with 3,878 in-school and out-of-school teachers in 6 governorates, 44% of surveyed teachers were female, and 56% were male.

9. Principal Survey: Training Courses in School Management during Disaster

Per perception surveys administered by enumerators among school principals[36], inquiries were made regarding their engagement in training programs concerning school management during disasters. Results indicated that merely 20% of respondents, comprising 701 principals, reported undergoing such training, while the vast majority, totaling 80% (2,853 principals), did not partake in courses within this domain.

Figure 88 Number/Percentage of surveyed principals attending training courses in management during disasters

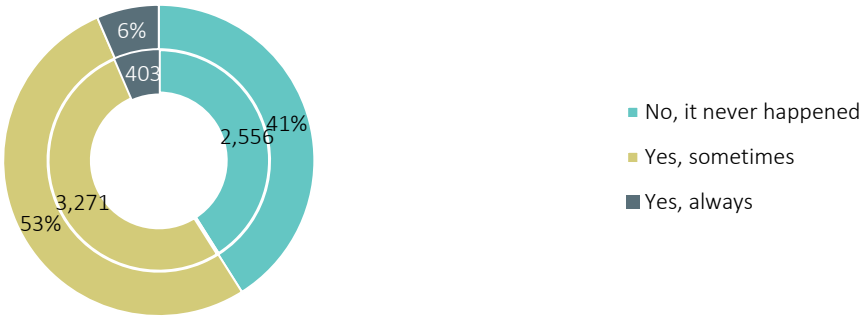


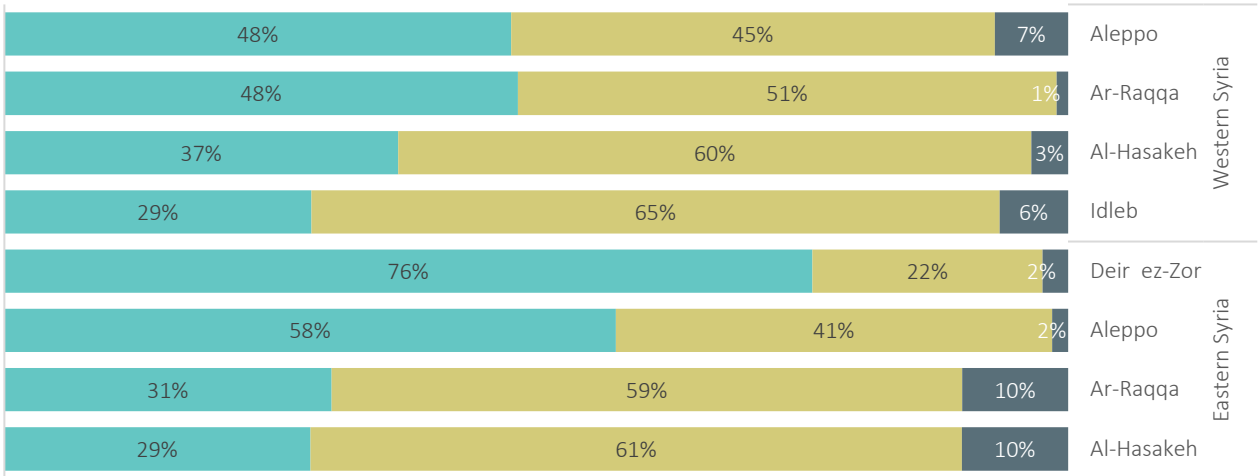
[36]Questionnaire interviews were conducted with 3,554 principals or vice principals in the assessed schools. Among the principals/ vice principals surveyed, 25% were female, while 75% were male.

10.Parent Survey: Children's Expression of Unwillingness to Attend School

According to perception surveys conducted by enumerators with parents[37], they were asked whether their children expressed unwillingness to attend school. 6% (403 individuals) of parents reported that their children always express unwillingness to go to school, while 53% (3,271 individuals) mentioned that their children sometimes express unwillingness to go to school.

Figure 89 Number/percentages of surveyed parents regarding their children's desire to go to school





[37] IMU enumerators conducted surveys with 6,383 parents of school-age children (both in and out of school) in 6 governorates; 43% of surveyed individuals are female, 57% are male, 78% are from the host community, and 22% are IDPs.

11.Student Survey: Symptoms Related to Students' Emotions within Schools

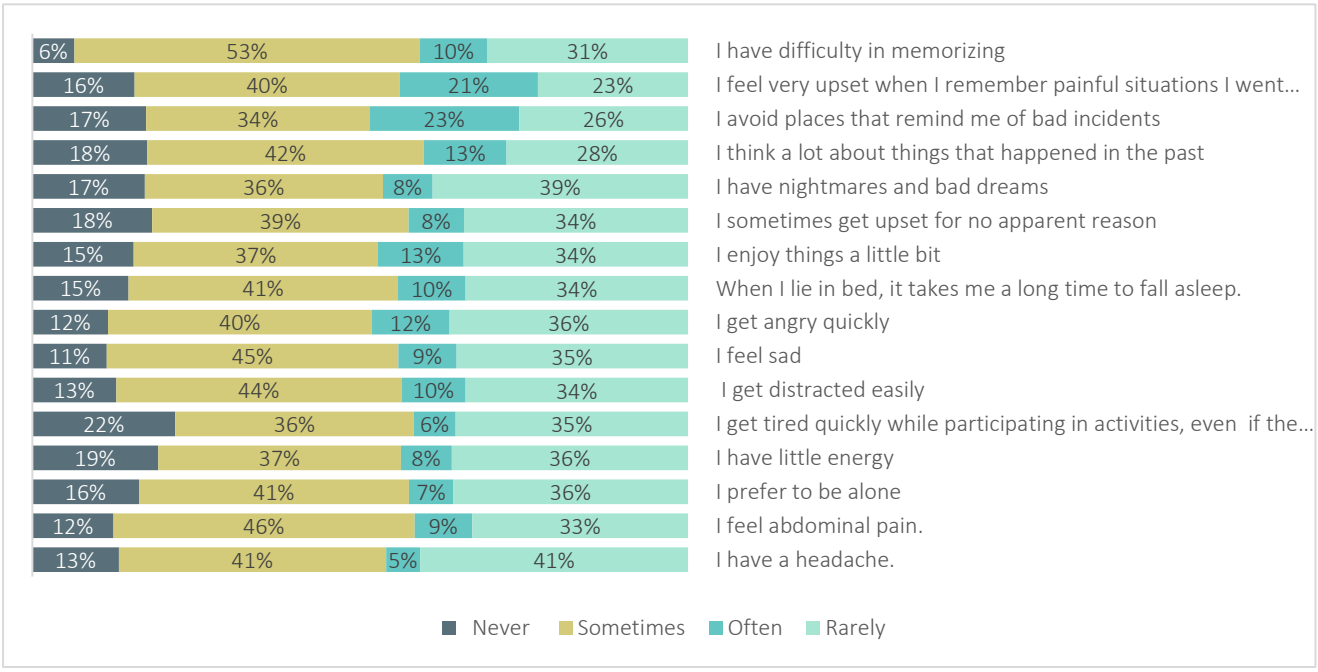
Through perception surveys conducted by enumerators with students[38], participants were asked about the frequency of experiencing various emotional symptoms within a month. Among the most commonly reported symptoms was difficulty in memorizing information and lessons. Results showed that 10% of surveyed students, totaling 626 individuals, reported often experiencing this symptom, while 53% (3,318 students) mentioned experiencing it occasionally. Additionally, 31% (1,941 students) reported rarely encountering this difficulty.

Furthermore, 9% (563 surveyed students) reported often being easily distracted, while 44% (2,755 students) indicated occasional distractions. Conversely, 34% (2,128 students) stated that they rarely experience such distractions.

Moreover, 10% (626 students) reported often experiencing prolonged periods of falling asleep when lying in bed, with 19% (1,190 students) mentioning occasional occurrences of this issue. Additionally, 41% (2,567 students) stated that they rarely encounter difficulties falling asleep.

Lastly, 21% (1,315 students) reported often feeling intense distress when recalling painful experiences, while 40% (2,505 students) mentioned occasionally experiencing this phenomenon. Moreover, 23% (1,440 students) stated that they rarely encounter such distressing feelings.

Figure 90 Percentage of surveyed students by the prevalence of symptoms related to students' emotions.

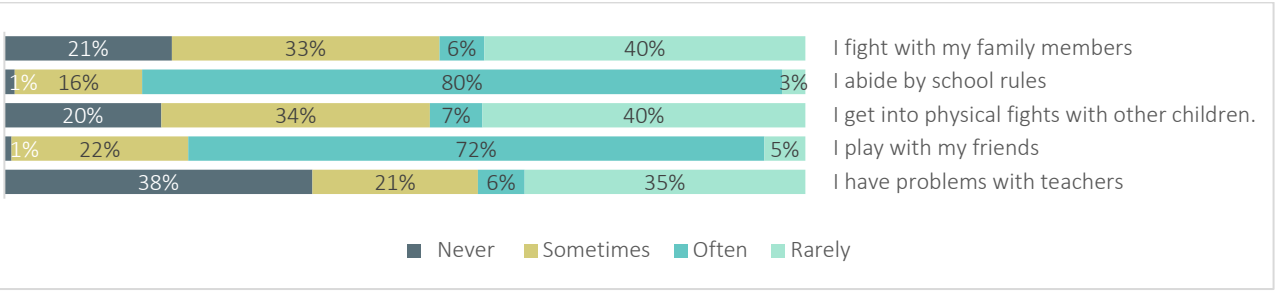


[38] IMU enumerators conducted a survey with 6,261 children aged 6-18 years in and out of school in 6 governorates. Females constituted 43% of the children, males 57%, and 2% of the children surveyed had a disability.

12.Student Survey: Symptoms Related to Students' Interaction

In perception surveys administered by enumerators among students[39], participants were queried about the frequency of encountering various social interactions within a month. Among the predominant adverse phenomena reported by the surveyed students were engaging in physical altercations with peers and experiencing conflicts within their families. Conversely, the majority of respondents indicated partaking in recreational activities with friends and adhering to the regulations set forth by their educational institutions.

Figure 91 Percentage of surveyed students by the prevalence of interaction-related symptoms among students



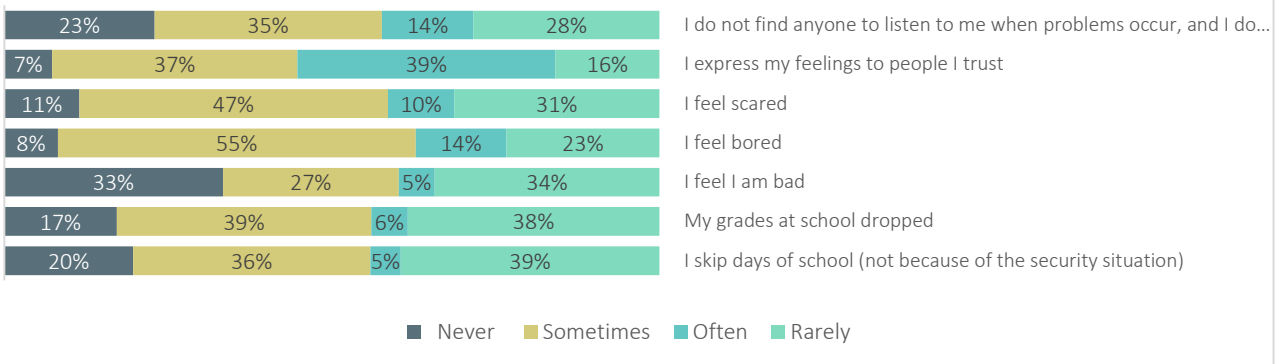
13.Student Survey: Symptoms Related to Self-Awareness Among Students

Per perception surveys administered by enumerators among students, participants were asked about the frequency of encountering various phenomena related to self-awareness within a month. The findings revealed that 14% (877) of surveyed students reported feeling bored most frequently, while 55% (3,444) mentioned experiencing boredom sometimes. Additionally, 23% (1,440) of students stated rarely feeling bored.

Moreover, 6% (376) of students reported often feeling that their grades in school have declined, with 39% (2,442) of students indicating occasional feelings of grade decline. Similarly, 38% (2,380) of students reported rarely experiencing this sensation.

Furthermore, 10% (626) of students mentioned frequently experiencing fear, while 47% (2,943) reported feeling fear sometimes. Additionally, 31% (941) of students stated they rarely experienced fear.

Figure 92 Percentage of students surveyed by the prevalence of symptoms related to students' self-awareness

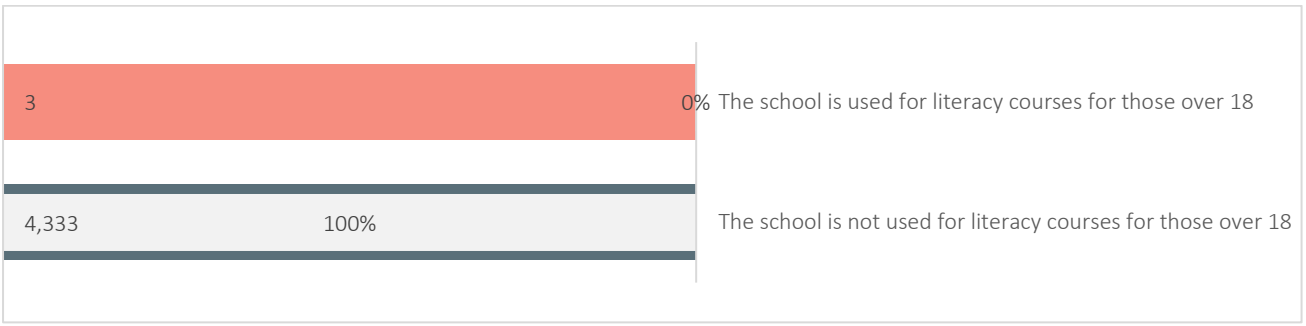


[39] IMU enumerators conducted a survey with 6,261 children aged 6-18 years in and out of school in 6 governorates. Females constituted 43% of the children, males 57% of the children, and 2% of the children surveyed had a disability.

14.Using Schools in Literacy Courses for Individuals Over the Age of 18

According to the study, merely four schools among the evaluated operational institutions were designated for literacy courses catering to individuals aged 18 and above. These educational facilities are situated in the rural areas of northern Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor. When repurposing schools for literacy programs, it becomes imperative to maintain a clear distinction between the enrolled students and the adult learners. Such segregation is essential to mitigate any potential discomfort or harassment children might encounter from the presence of adult learners. This separation can be facilitated by allocating distinct educational spaces or scheduling literacy courses during different time slots.

Figure 93 Number/percentages of schools according to their use of literacy courses



15.Principal Survey: Receiving Training on Safe Referral Pathway

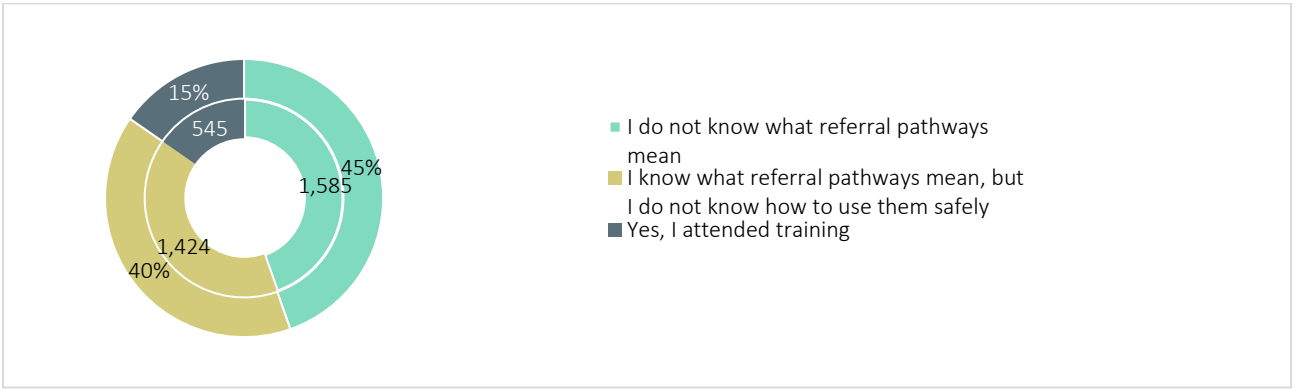
The standard [40]operating procedures for preventing and responding to gender-based violence define referral pathways as "flexible mechanisms that connect survivors to effective and safe support services, such as medical care, mental health services, psychosocial support, police assistance, and legal/justice support."

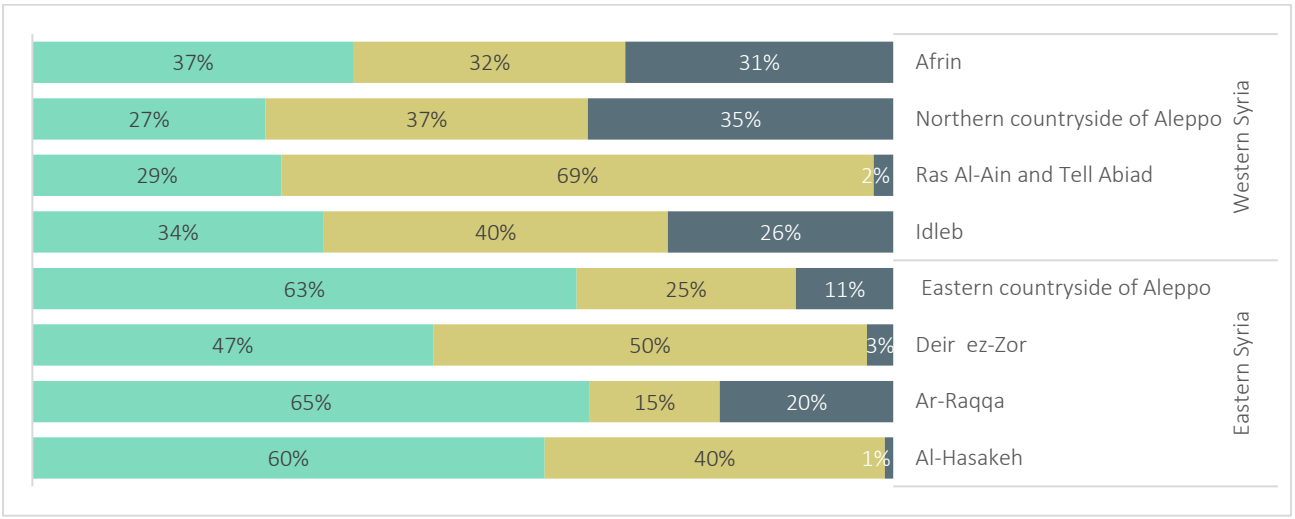
In perception surveys conducted among school principals [41], participants were questioned about their familiarity with and training on the safe use of referral pathways. Findings revealed that 45% (1,585) surveyed principals admitted to being unaware of the concept of referral pathways and had not previously heard of it. Additionally, 40% (1,424) principals indicated awareness of referral pathways but lacked knowledge of utilizing them safely. Notably, only 15% (545) of the surveyed principals reported receiving training on safely using referral pathways.

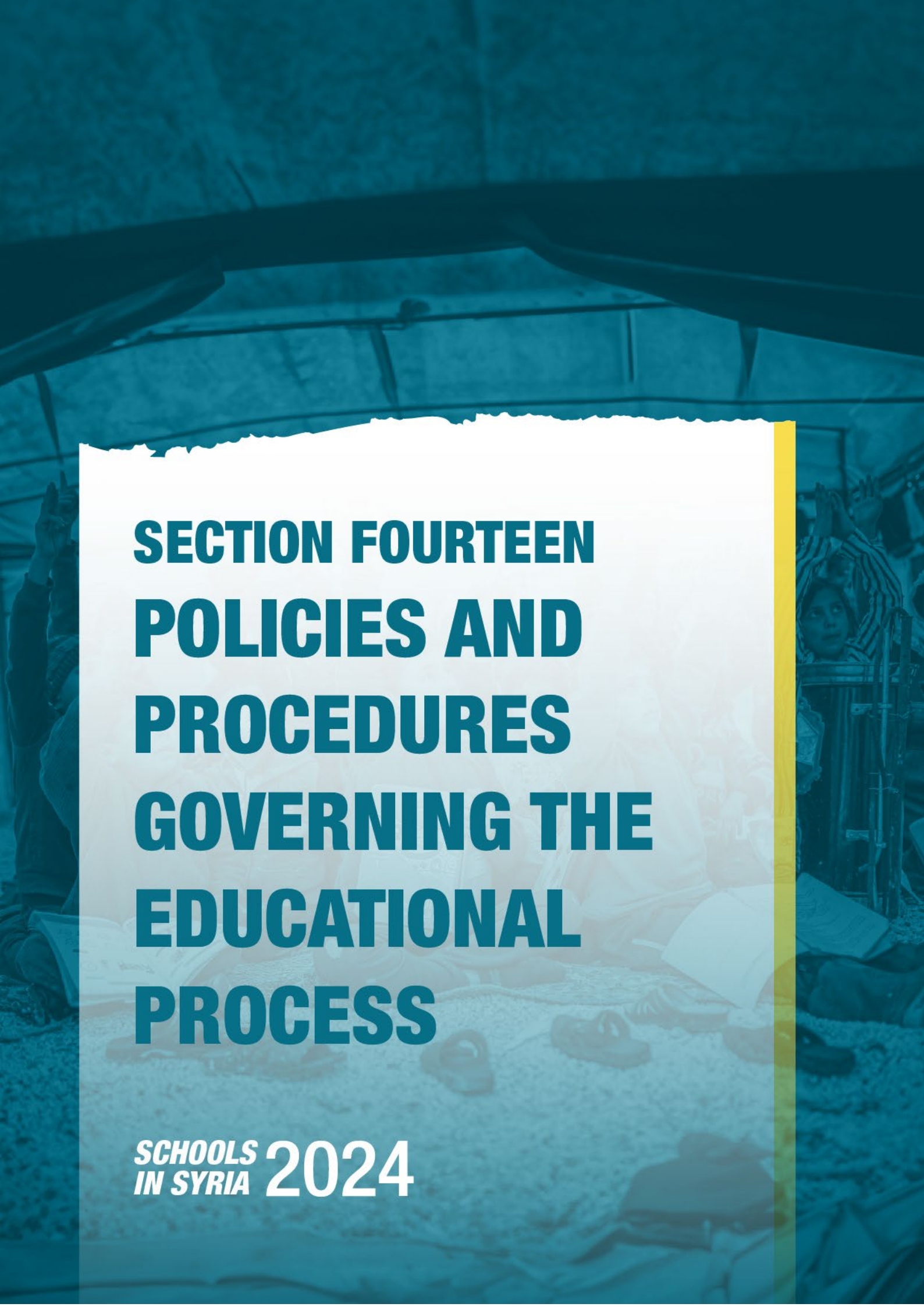
[40] https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/gbv_sc_sops_2018_arabic_final.pdf

[41]Questionnaire interviews were conducted with 3,554 principals or vice principals in the assessed schools. Among the principals/ vice principals surveyed, 25% were female, while 75% were male.

Principal Survey: Figure 94 Number/Percentage of surveyed school principals receiving training on the safe use of referral pathways







SECTION FOURTEEN
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

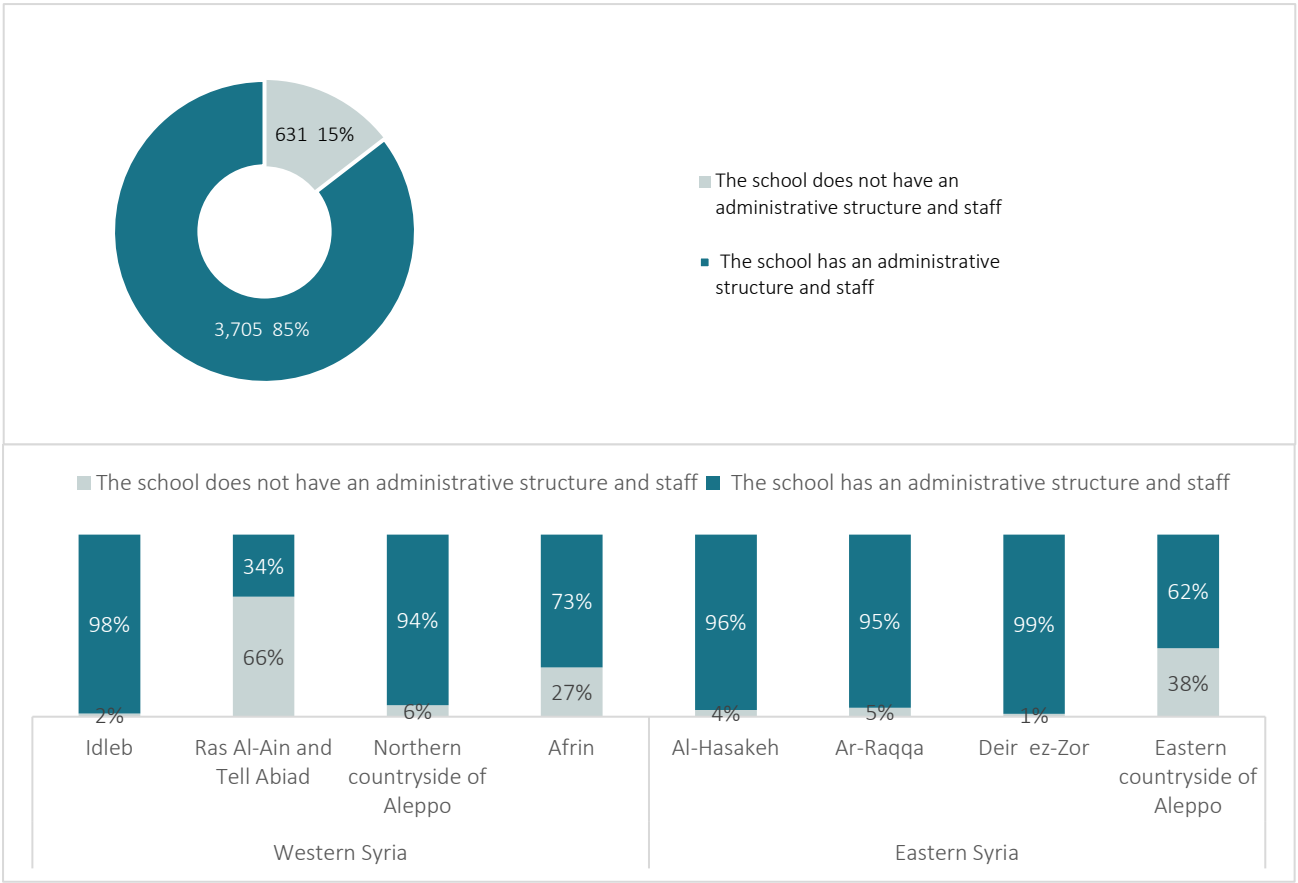
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 14: Policies and Procedures Governing the Educational Process

1. The Presence of an Administrative Structure and Administrative Staff

Establishing a coherent administrative framework alongside appointed personnel was deemed an essential prerequisite within formal educational settings preceding the onset of the ongoing Syrian conflict. In rural school contexts, the administrative setup often revolved around a solitary principal figure with minimal additional administrative support. Should a designated principal be absent, one of the teaching staff occasionally assumed the duties incumbent upon this role. Central to the function of the administrative body was the enforcement of regulations and protocols delineated by educational directorates and institutional clusters. The conducted surveys clearly stated that 85% (3,705 schools) of the surveyed operational schools boasted a clearly defined administrative structure with accompanying personnel, whereas 15% (631 schools) lacked this organizational integrity.

Figure 95 Number/percentages of schools according to the presence of an administrative structure and staff within them

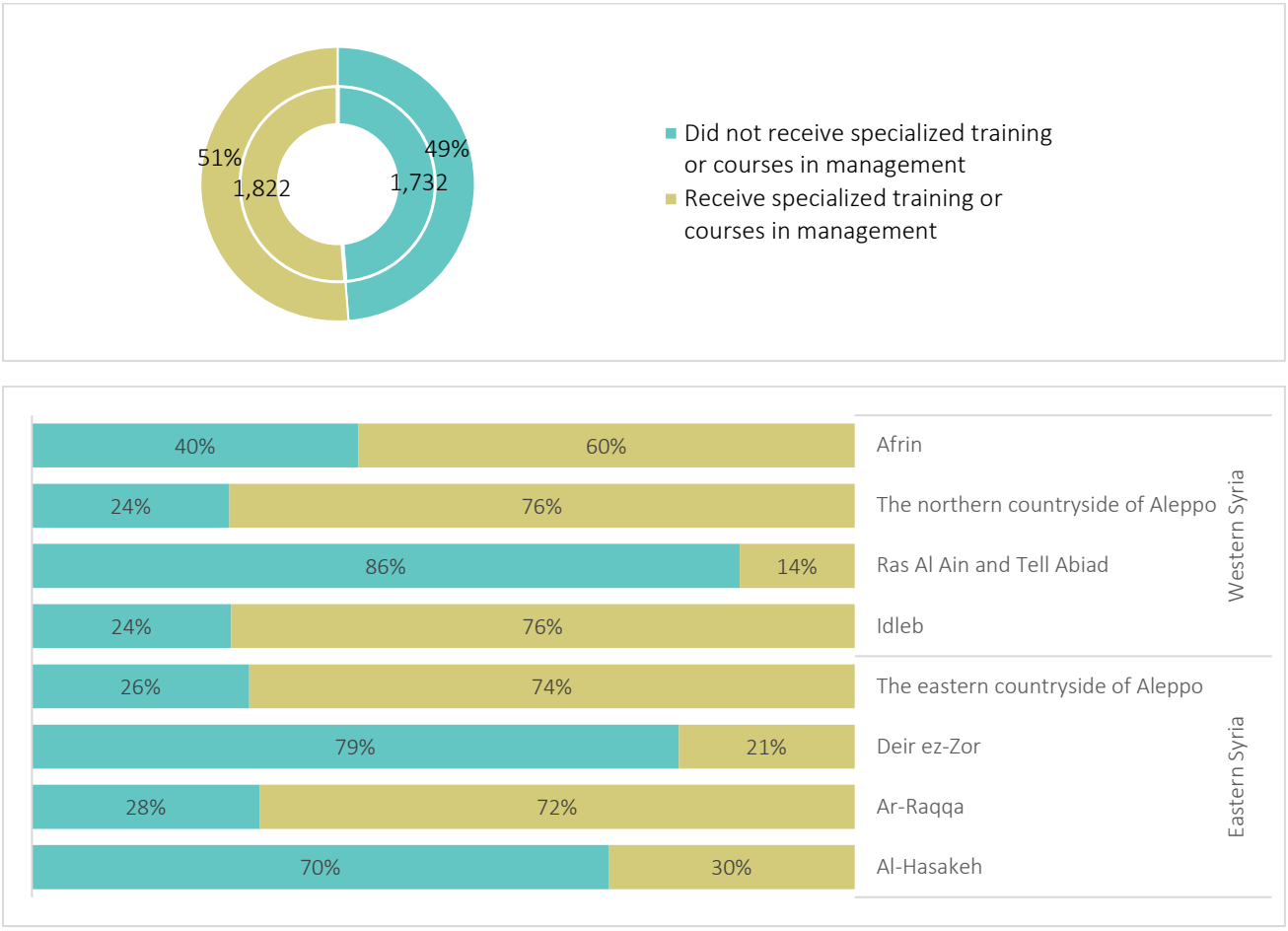


Within the administrative framework of a conventional educational institution, the principal occupies the apex position, who might serve as the sole administrator in small (non-formal) schools. In more expansive schools, a deputy principal commonly collaborates with the principal in executing administrative responsibilities. Additionally, these institutions typically appoint mentors tasked with student oversight and maintaining classroom decorum during teachers' absences. Moreover, secretarial personnel are customary, tasked with the accurate organization of scholastic archives, encompassing student and faculty records.

2. Principal Survey: Training Courses in School Administration

Before the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, the selection of school principals typically involved experienced teachers who had completed various training programs qualifying them for administrative roles within the educational institution. These training initiatives encompassed instruction in school administration tasks and the effective implementation of policies and procedures. However, the conditions brought about by the war in Syria necessitated the appointment of new administrative personnel within schools. In a perception survey[42] conducted among school principals, they were queried regarding their participation in courses related to school administration, both before and after assuming their roles as principals. Results revealed that 51% (1,822 principals) reported having undergone training in school administration, whereas 49% (1,732 principals) indicated that they had not received such training.

Figure 96 Number/Percentage of surveyed principals based on their participation in school administration courses



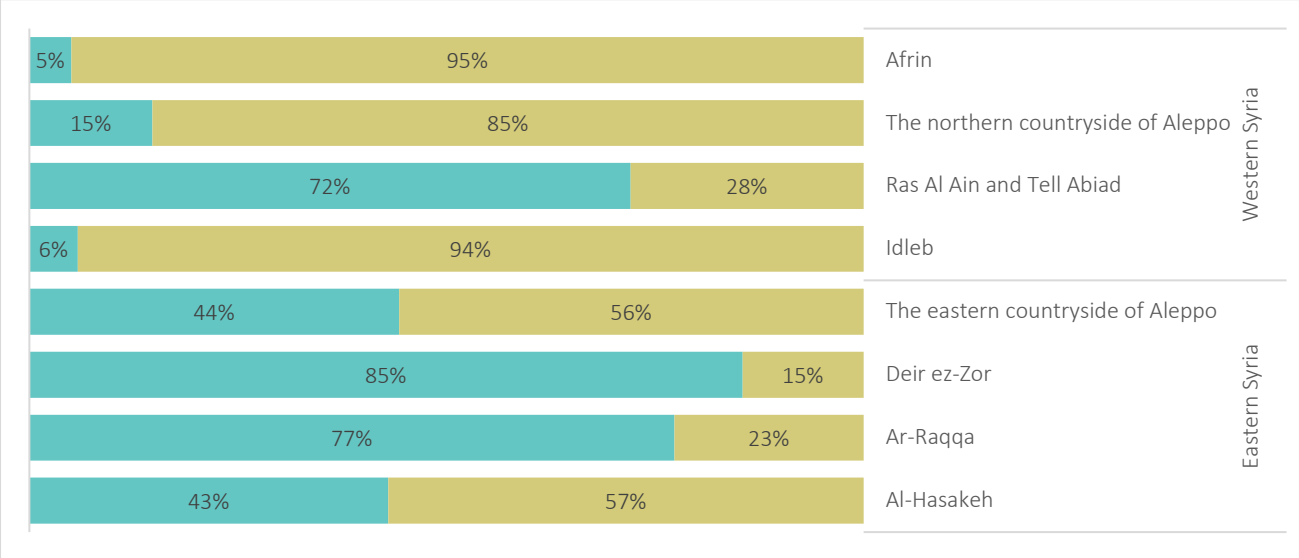
[42]Questionnaire interviews were conducted with 3,554 principals or vice principals in the assessed schools. Among the principals/ vice principals surveyed, 25% were female, while 75% were male.

3. Teacher Survey: Signing the Code of Conduct

Before the ongoing conflict in Syria, it was not customary for teachers to sign a Code of Conduct as part of the teacher appointment procedures. Instead, teachers typically underwent a competitive examination administered by the Ministry of Education under government auspices. Subsequently, the ministry would publicize the names of successful candidates following procedures overseen by education directorates. Conversely, teachers' unions were established with the purported aim of safeguarding teachers' rights. Education directorates and educational clusters disseminated the delineation of teachers' responsibilities. However, in the aftermath of the Syrian conflict, many schools situated in areas beyond government control rely on support from external donors, often necessitating all staff members, including educators, to endorse a Code of Conduct outlining their rights and obligations.

According to the surveys conducted by the enumerators with the teachers[43], 62% (2,208 teachers) of the teachers reported that they had signed a Code of Conduct. In comparison, 38% (1,346 teachers) stated that they had not signed any document that defined their rights and responsibilities.

Figure 97 Number/Percentages of the surveyed teachers according to their signing on the Code of Conduct

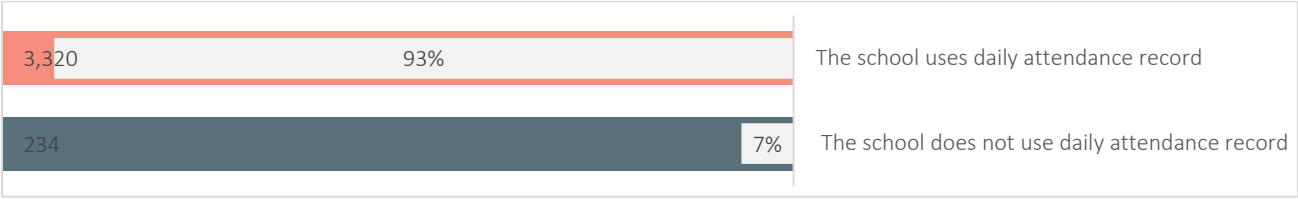


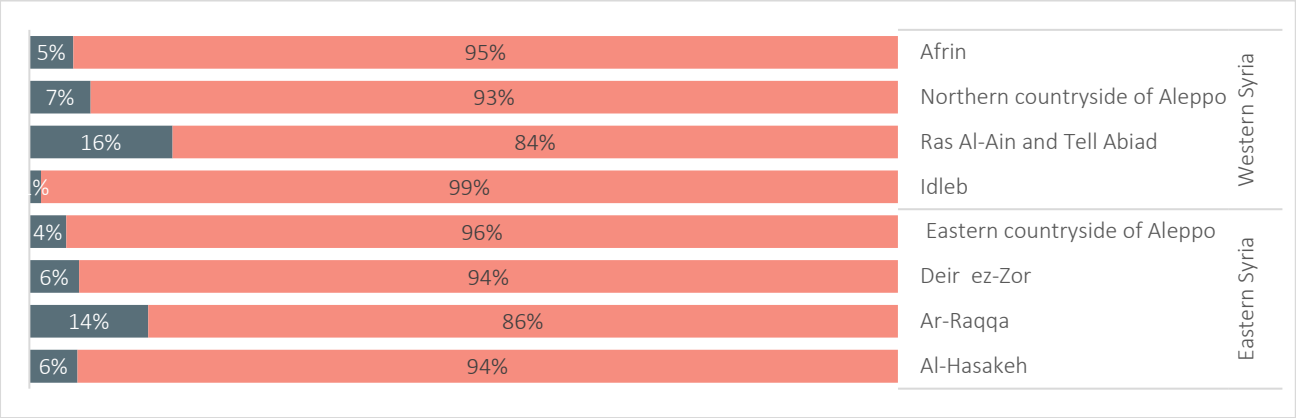
[43] IMU enumerators conducted surveys with 3,878 in-school and out-of-school teachers in 6 governorates, 44% of surveyed teachers were female, and 56% were male.

4. Principal Survey: Daily Student Attendance Record Availability

The study results indicated that 93% (3,320 school principals) of the surveyed principals utilize a daily student attendance record to monitor attendance, while 7% (234 school principals) do not employ this method.

Figure 98 Number/Percentage of surveyed principals according to their use of the daily student attendance record





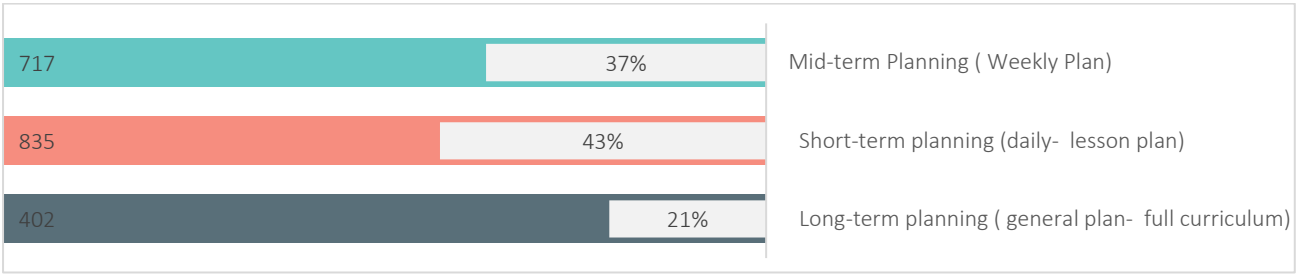
In accordance with Syrian education laws, students must attend a specified number of school days during the academic year and pass their exams to advance to the next grade level. Specifically, students are required to maintain attendance exceeding 80% of the total school days for the year. A student attendance record is essential to monitor attendance. This record includes both justified and unjustified absences, which are added to the student's record at the end of the year. Teachers and class mentors are responsible for monitoring student absences and tardiness daily.

5. Teacher Survey: Availability of Teachers' Lesson Plan Notebooks

Before the ongoing war, Syrian schools had policies and procedures requiring teachers to use lesson plan notebooks. Teachers were expected to prepare their lessons at home and develop plans to optimize classroom time. These notebooks included a yearly plan teachers followed to cover the entire curriculum throughout the academic year. School principals signed the teachers' lesson plan notebooks daily to ensure compliance. Additionally, educational supervisors regularly visited schools to assess teachers' adherence to the yearly curriculum plan.

According to the study, different planning approaches are utilized for educational instruction. Long-term planning, encompassing general plans or entire curricula, is employed by 21% of the surveyed teachers, accounting for 402 teachers. Short-term planning involving daily lesson plans is the most common method utilized by 43% of the respondents, amounting to 835 teachers. Meanwhile, medium-term planning, which typically consists of weekly plans, is used by 37% of the respondents, representing 717 teachers. These figures highlight a preference for shorter planning cycles among educators, with a significant portion also adopting medium and long-term strategies to structure their teaching.

Figure 99 Number/Percentage of surveyed teachers based on teachers' use of lesson plan notebooks

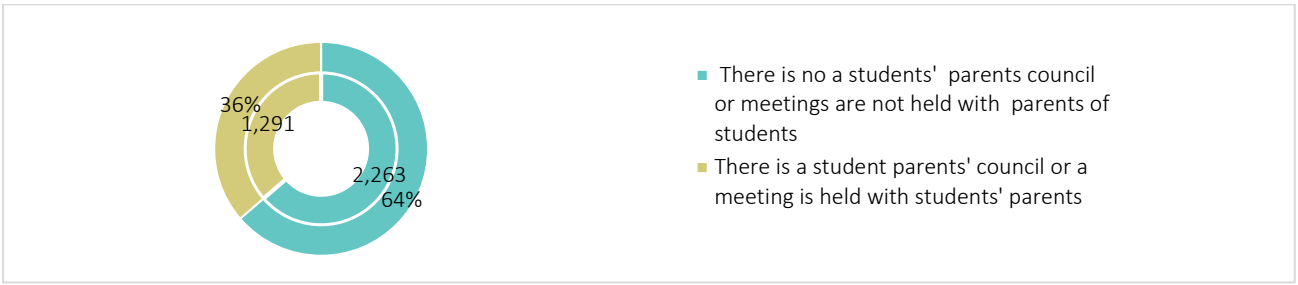


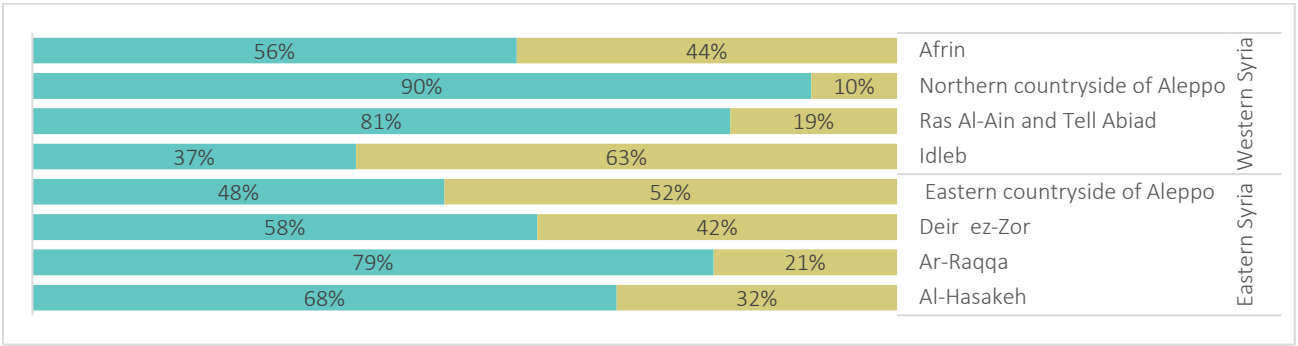
6. Principal Survey: Presence of a Parent Council or Regular Meetings with Parents

Before the war in Syria, there was no parent council in schools. Instead, school administrations would meet with parents on a semester basis (twice during the academic year, once per semester). There is a need to move towards establishing parent councils and holding regular meetings with them to involve them in educational planning and find effective solutions that align with the current circumstances and available resources.

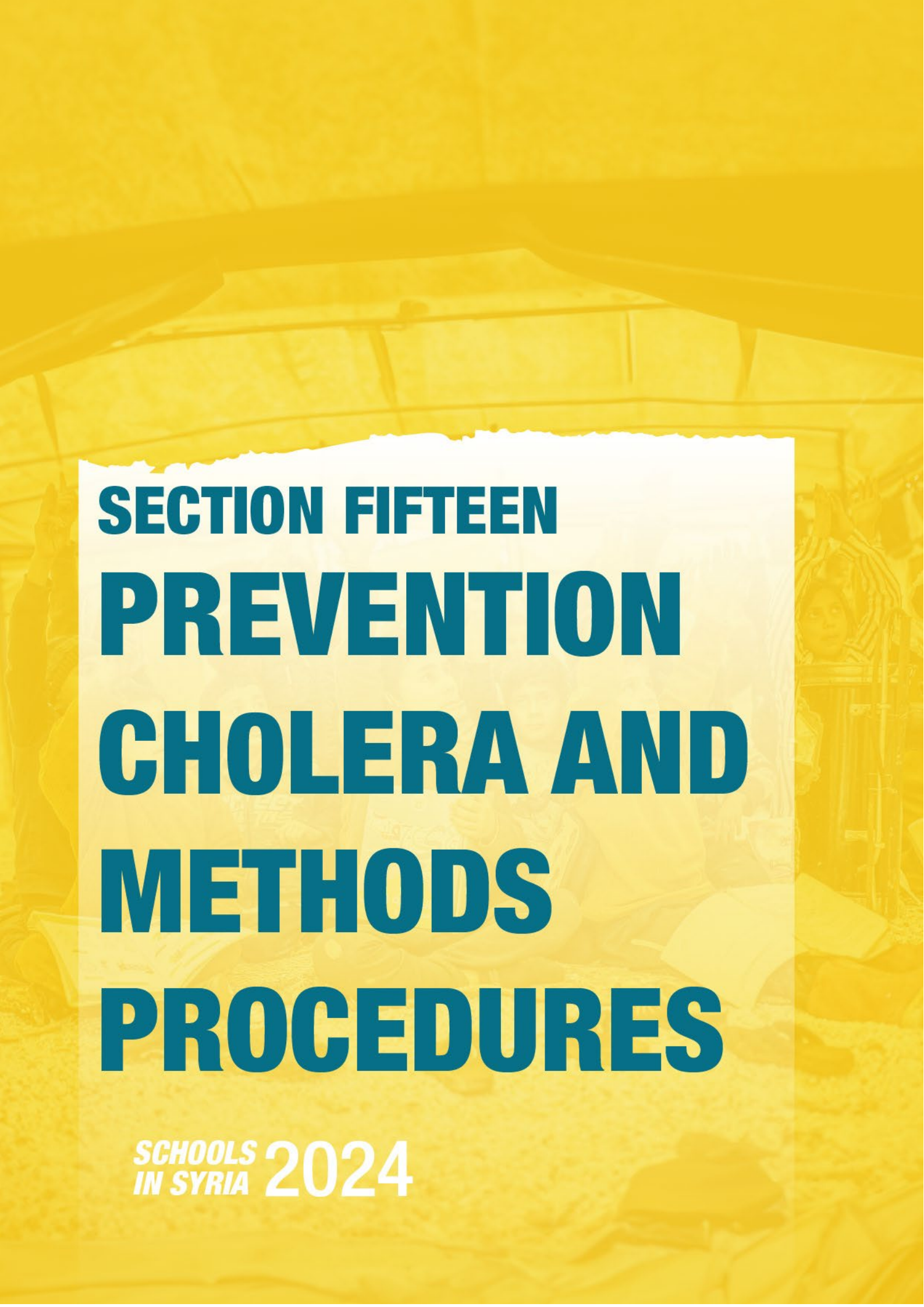
Based on the survey conducted with[44] school principals, they were asked whether parent councils were formed or regular meetings were held with parents. The findings indicated that 36% (1,291 principals) reported the presence of parent councils and regular meetings, while 64% (2,263 principals) stated the absence of parent councils and periodic meetings with parents.

Figure 100 Number/Percentages of surveyed principals based on the presence of a parent council





[44]Questionnaire interviews were conducted with 3,554 principals or vice principals in the assessed schools. Among the principals/ vice principals surveyed, 25% were female, while 75% were male.



SECTION FIFTEEN

PREVENTION CHOLERA AND METHODS PROCEDURES

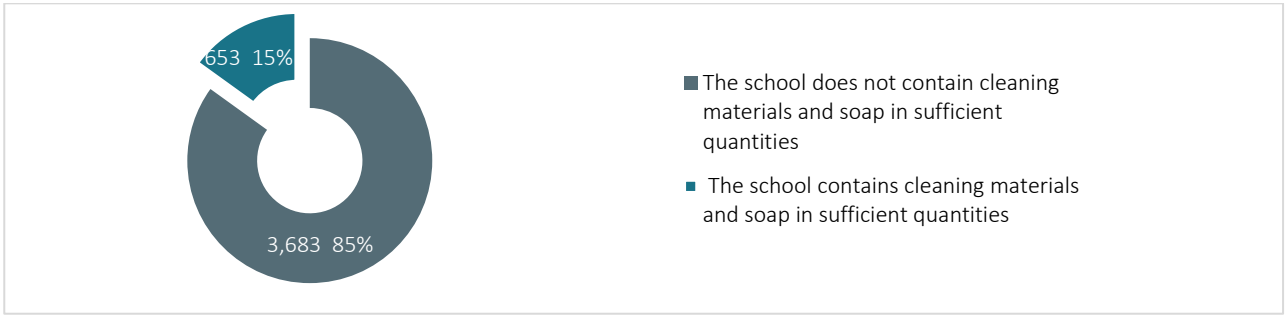
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

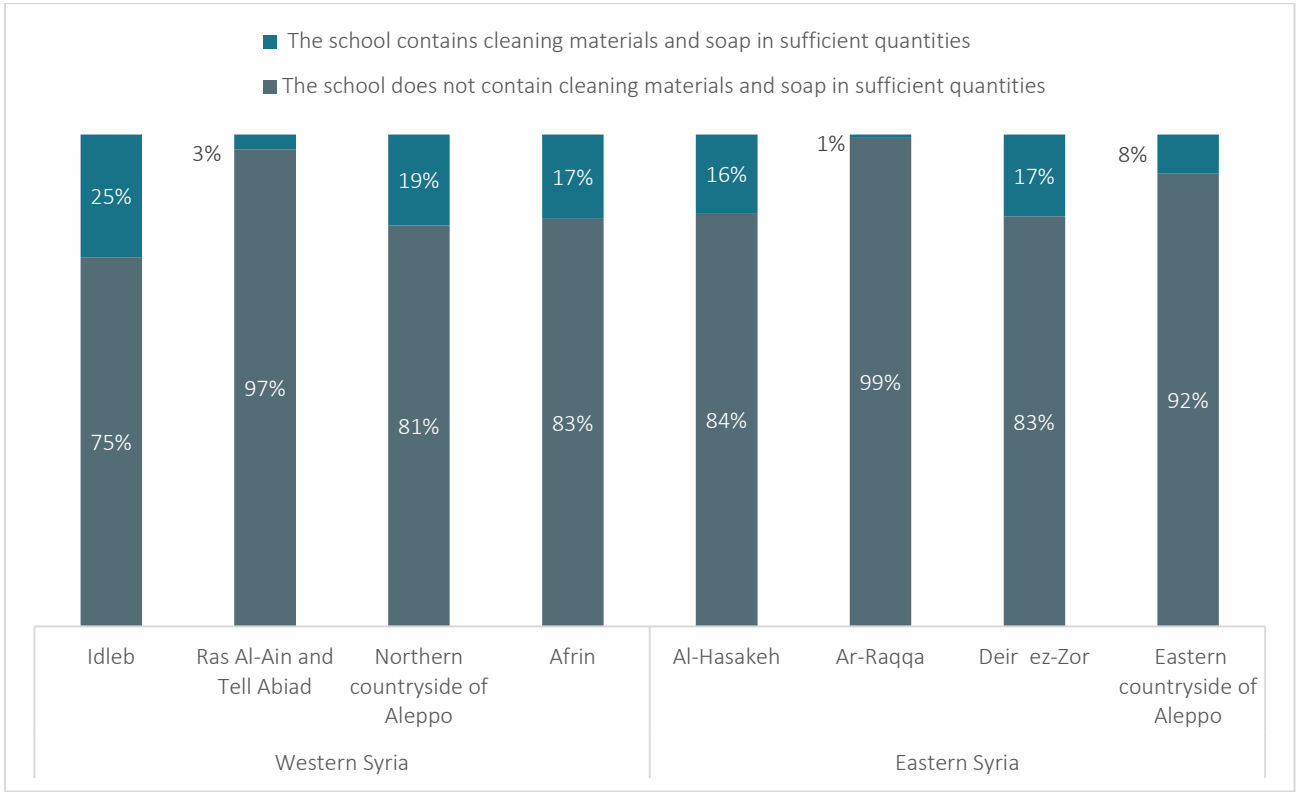
Section 15: Cholera Prevention Methods and Procedures

1. Availability of Soap and Sanitizing Materials within Schools

The implementation of preventive measures to mitigate the spread of cholera necessitates the availability of ample cleaning supplies and soap within educational institutions. Nevertheless, the study unveiled that merely 15% (653) of schools possessed adequate quantities of cleaning supplies and soap, whereas the remaining 85% (3,683) of schools experienced an insufficiency of these essential materials.

Figure 101 Number/Percentage of schools based on adequate availability of cleaning supplies and soap

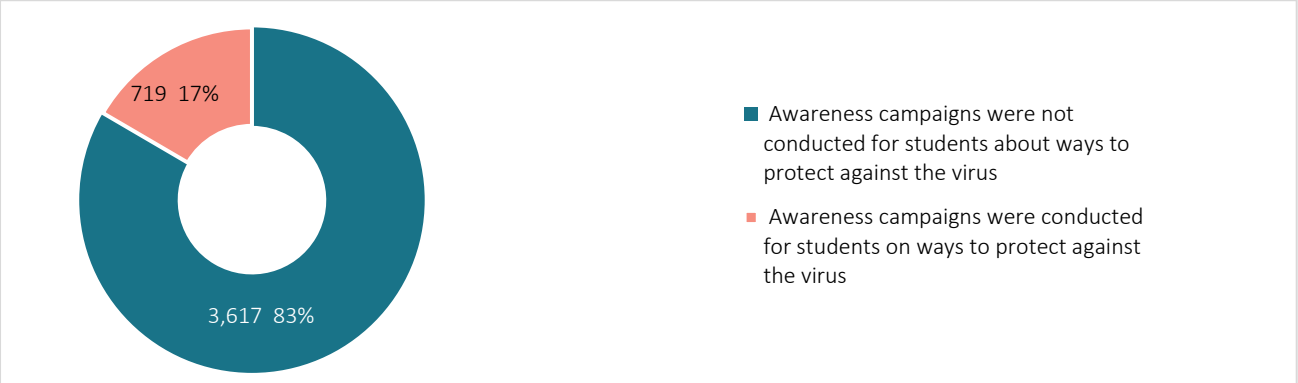


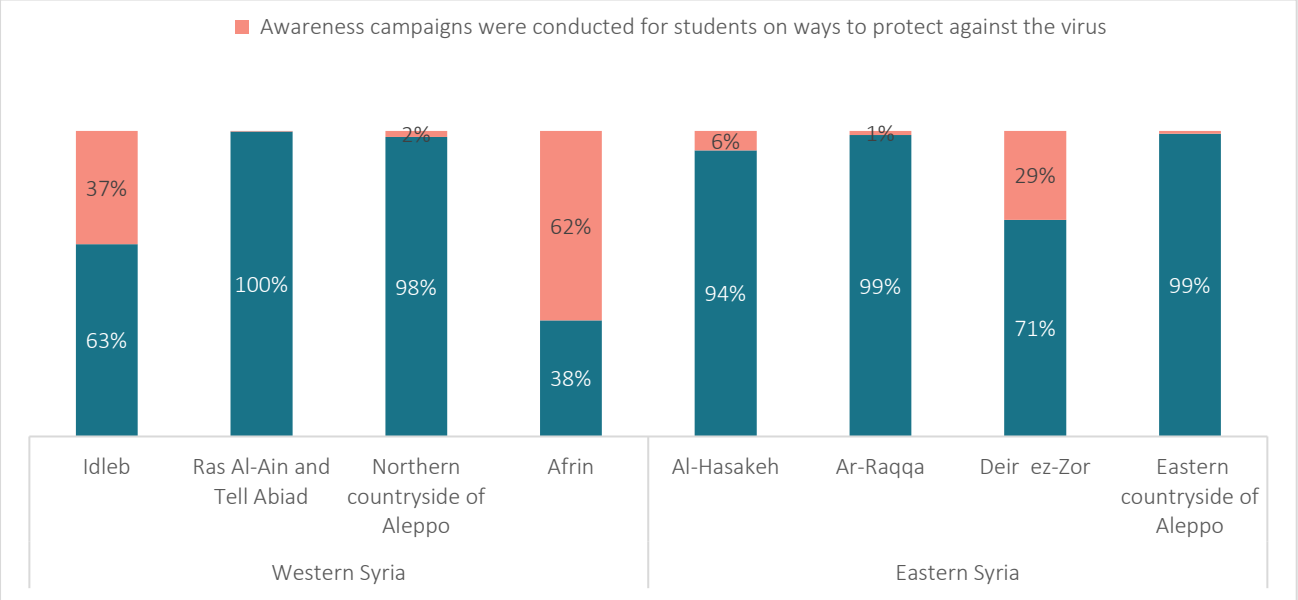


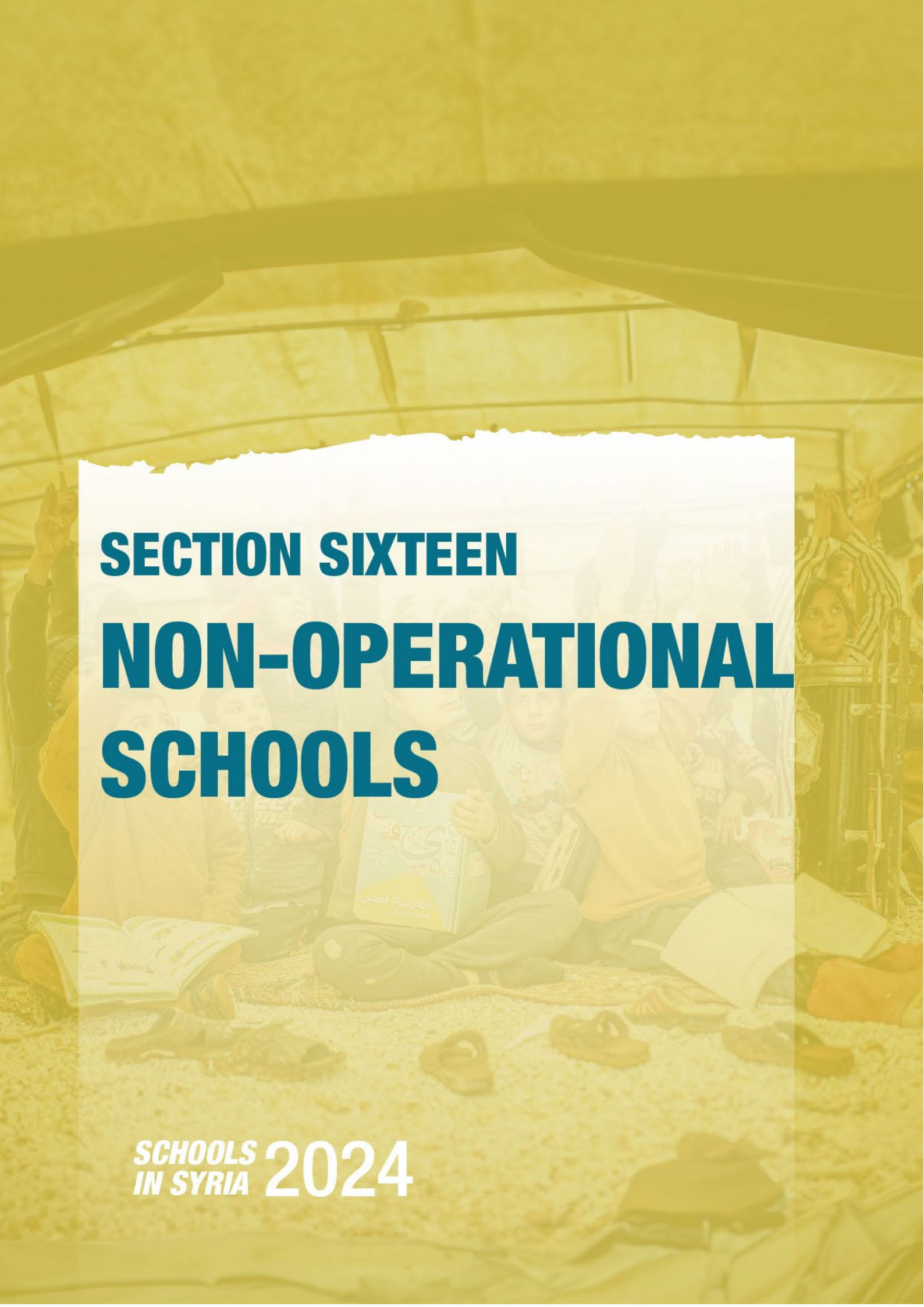
2. Awareness of Cholera Prevention Measures

Enforcing proactive strategies to control the transmission of cholera requires initiating educational initiatives to enlighten students about preventive measures against the disease. However, findings from the study indicate that a mere 17% (719) of schools conducted educational initiatives specifically targeting students on cholera prevention strategies. Conversely, the vast majority, 83% (3,617) of schools, did not engage in awareness campaigns tailored for students regarding cholera prevention measures.

Figure 102 Number/Percentage of schools conducting awareness campaigns on preventive measures against cholera







SECTION SIXTEEN

NON-OPERATIONAL SCHOOLS

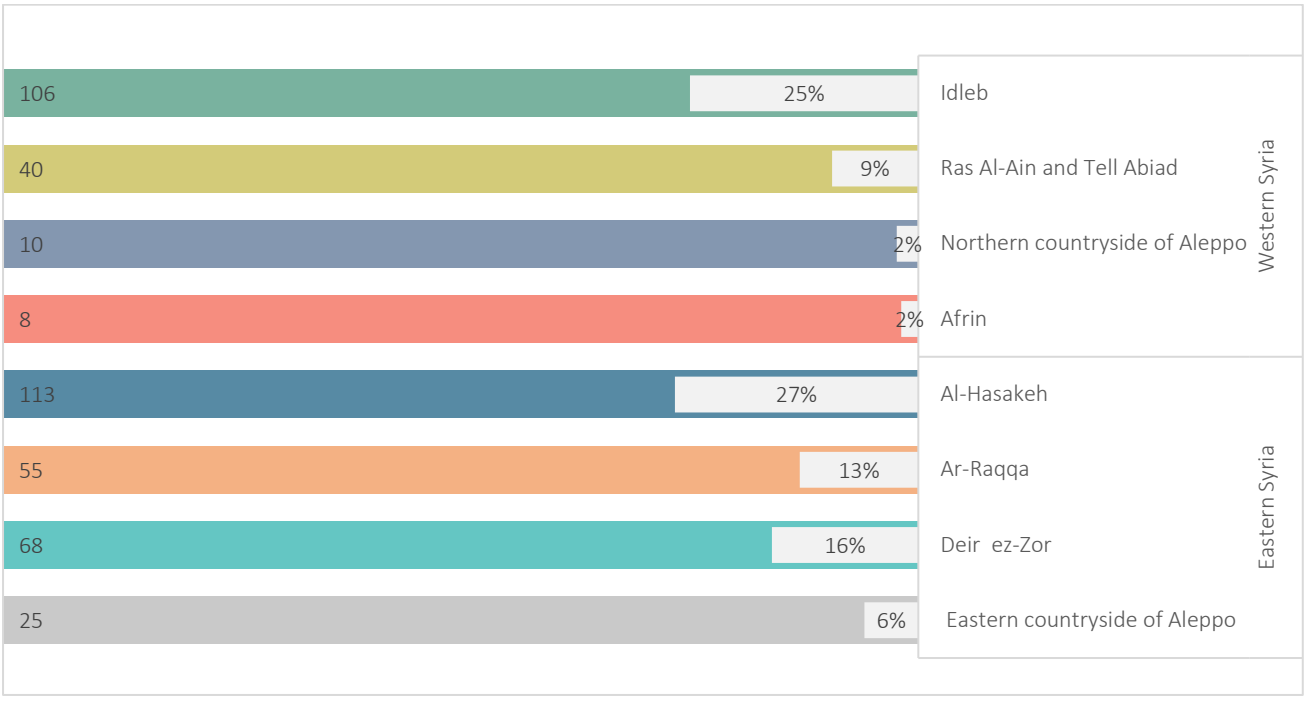
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 16: Non-Operational Schools

1. Geographic Distribution of Non-Operating Schools

9% of the total evaluated schools, which amounts to 425 are non-operational. Among these, 164 schools are situated in northwestern Syria under opposition forces' control, and 261 are in northeastern Syria under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Figure 103 Number/Percentage of non-operational schools based on their geographical distribution

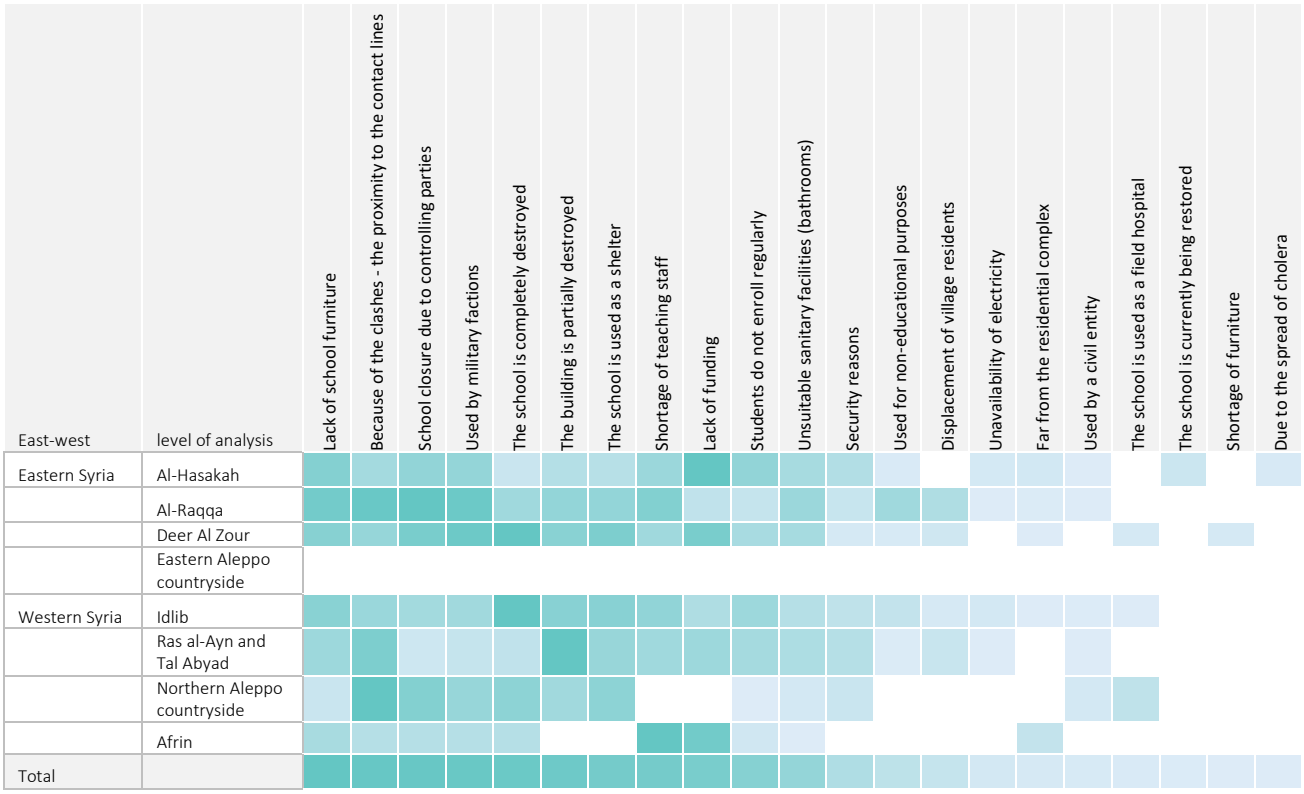


2. Reasons for Suspension of Schools

This segment addresses the factors contributing to the total cessation of school operations. The study elucidates that the predominant cause for most school closures is the deficiency in school furniture, notably widespread in Ar-Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor. The second most prevalent reason is the proximity of schools to conflict zones or frontlines, particularly notable in the Northern countryside of Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor. Furthermore, numerous schools have suffered complete or partial destruction, resulting in their cessation in Idleb and Deir ez-Zor governorates and Ras Al Ain and Tell Abiad regions. Moreover, a notable portion of schools in Afrin and Al-Hasakeh regions have been suspended due to funding shortages. Similarly, some educational institutions have been used as military bases or shelters. Additionally, a shortage of teaching staff exists, as observed in Afrin.

Figure 104 Reasons for School Suspension

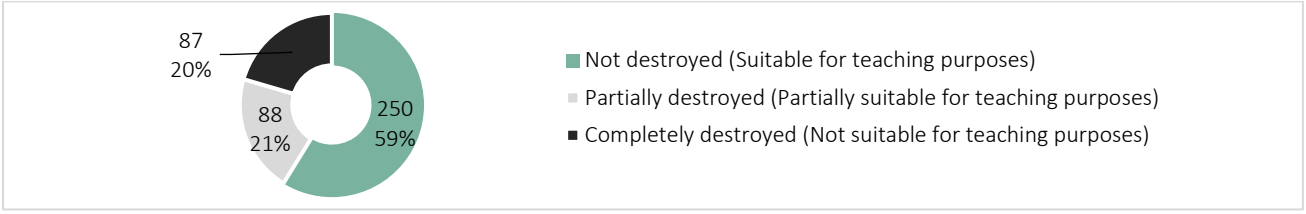
No impact – Significant impact

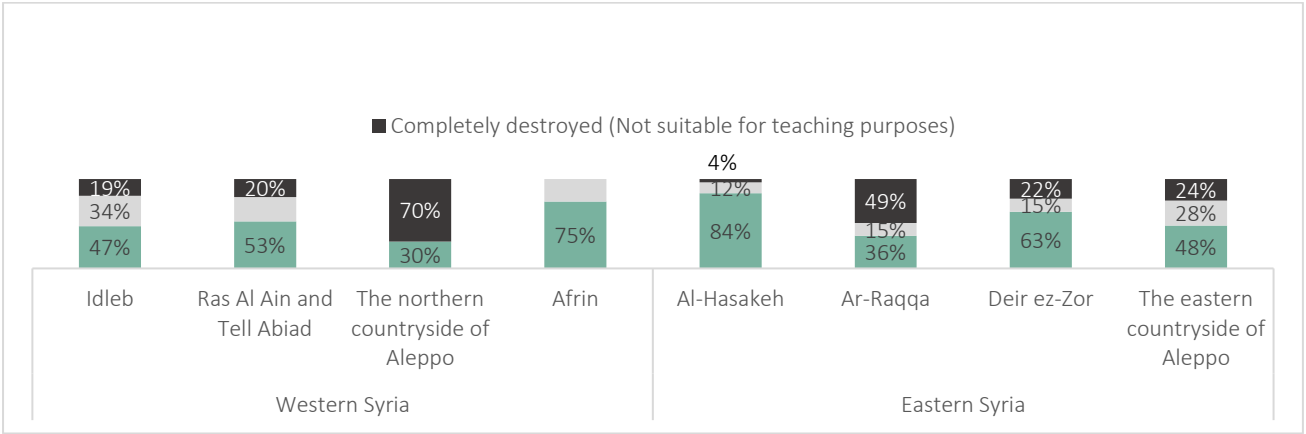


3. Condition of Non-Operational School Buildings

According to the study findings, it is revealed that out of the evaluated non-operational schools, 59% (250 schools) are deemed suitable for educational purposes, as their buildings remain intact. Conversely, 21% (88 schools) are partially destroyed, while 20% (87) have been completely demolished.

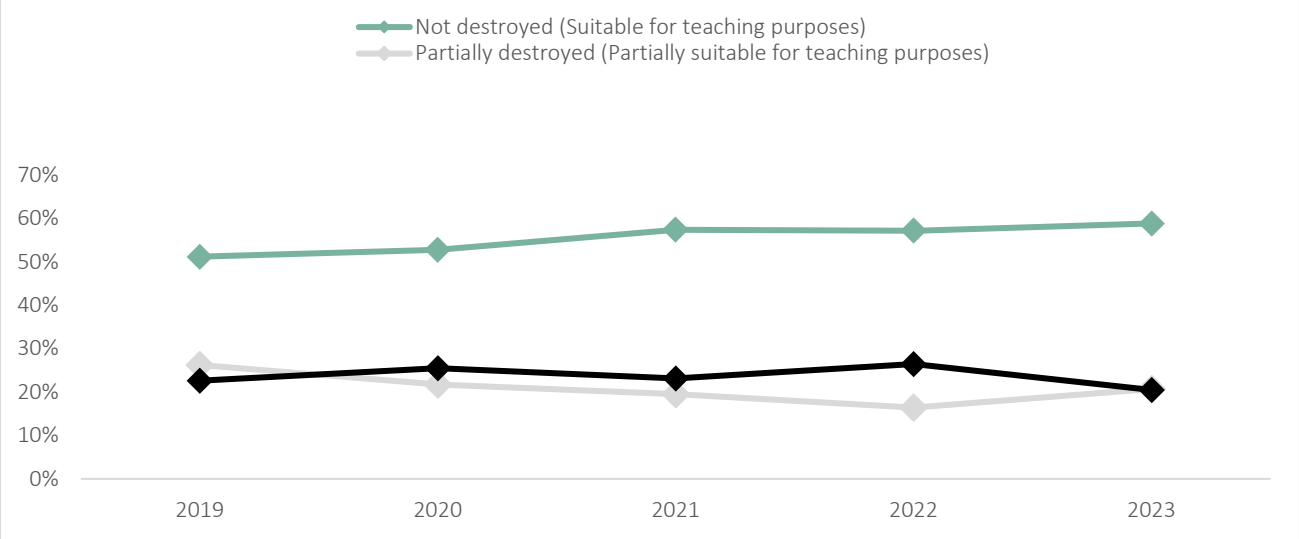
Figure 105 Number/Percentages of non-operational schools according to the condition of their buildings





The chart shows an increase in the number of non-operational schools with intact buildings compared to the eighth edition of the report (2022-2023), which can be attributed to the inclusion of a larger number of schools in this report. Conversely, there is an increase in the percentage of non-operational schools that sustained partial damage compared to last year's edition, possibly due to the earthquake that occurred in February 2023. We also see a decrease in the percentage of non-operational schools that suffered total severe damage. Notably, the overall percentage of non-operational schools in the current edition (20%) is lower than that reported in the eighth edition (27%).

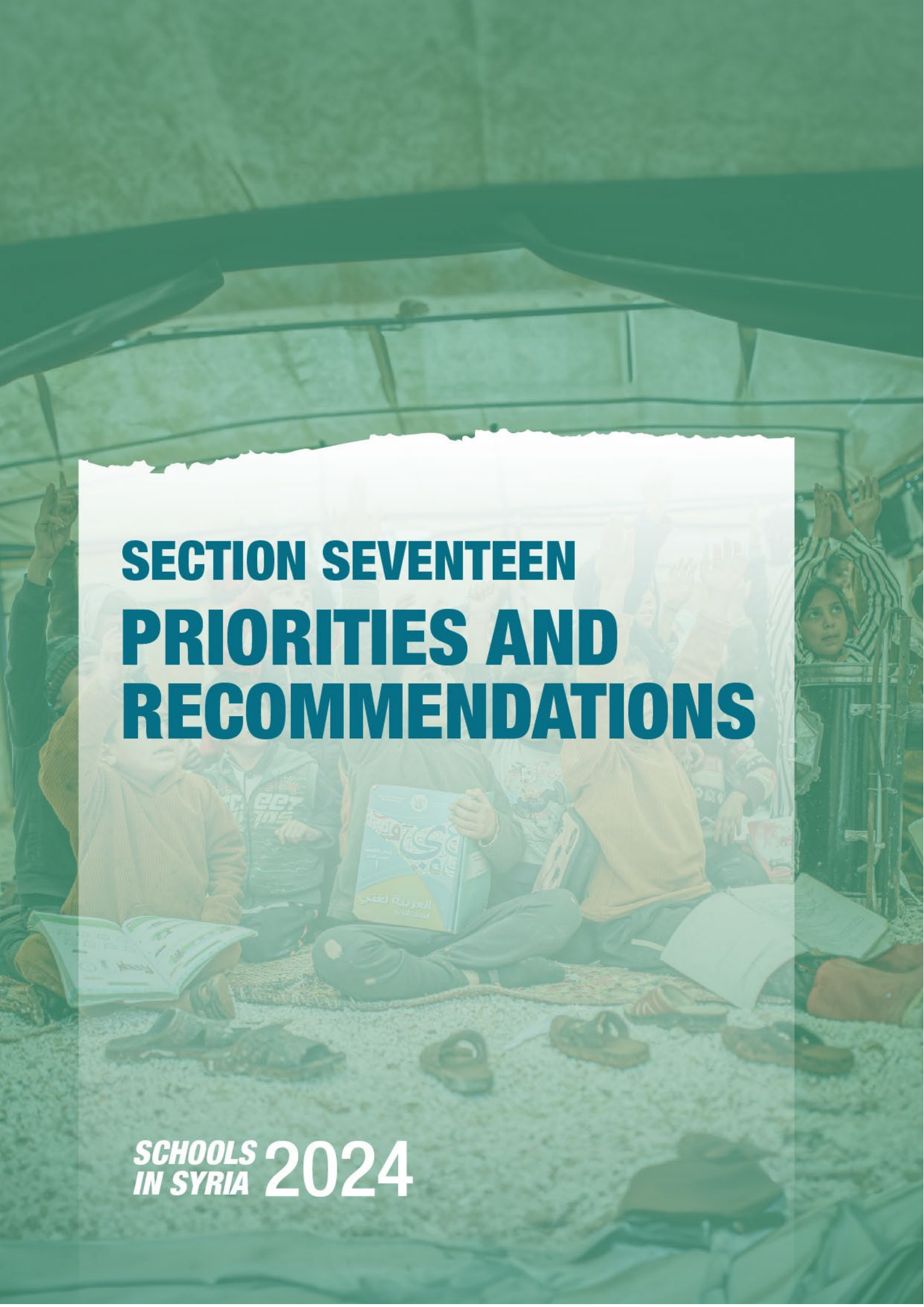
Figure 106 Comparison of the condition of non-operational schools' buildings in the last three report editions



4. The Educational Progress of Students in Non-Operational Schools

- In certain non-operational schools, students and teaching/administrative staff have transitioned to alternative venues to ensure continuity in the educational process. These alternative education sites encompass residential buildings or tents, which have been minimally equipped to facilitate learning. Additionally, in some instances, students are being instructed in nearby school buildings during evening hours, utilizing another school's premises during this time slot. However, the study revealed that only a small fraction, comprising 9% (22 schools) of non-operational schools, are actively providing education to their students in such alternative locations. This highlights the challenges faced in ensuring uninterrupted access to education amidst the disruption caused by the conflict and the resourcefulness and adaptability of educational stakeholders in overcoming these obstacles to support continued learning opportunities for students.

- In certain non-operational schools, the educational process has a ground to reach a complete standstill. Consequently, students from these schools are compelled to seek alternative educational institutions to pursue their studies. Alternatively, they may discontinue schooling altogether, a phenomenon commonly called student dropout. The study findings indicate that the educational process is suspended in the vast majority, accounting for 91% (229) of non-operational schools.



SECTION SEVENTEEN

PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

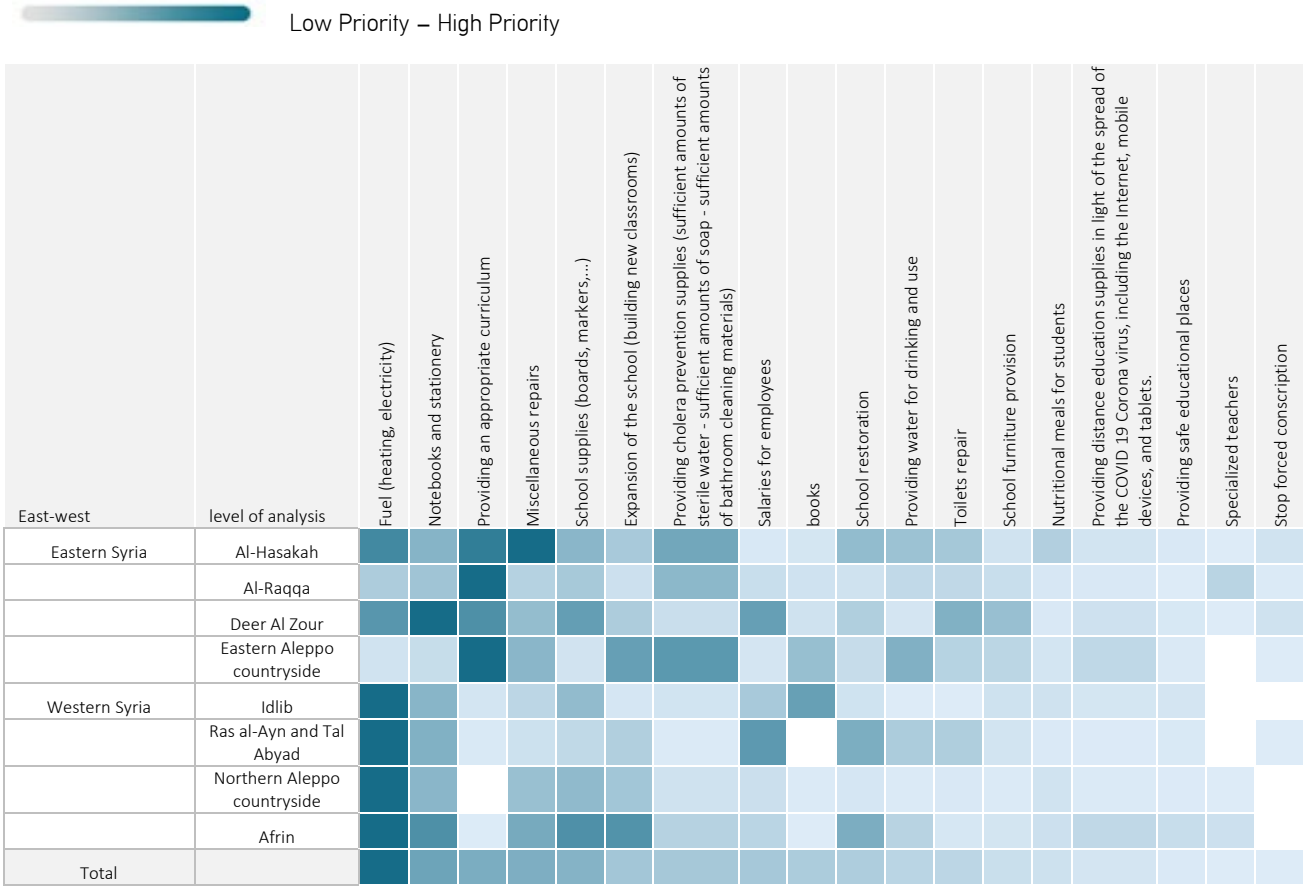
SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

Section 17: Priorities and Recommendations

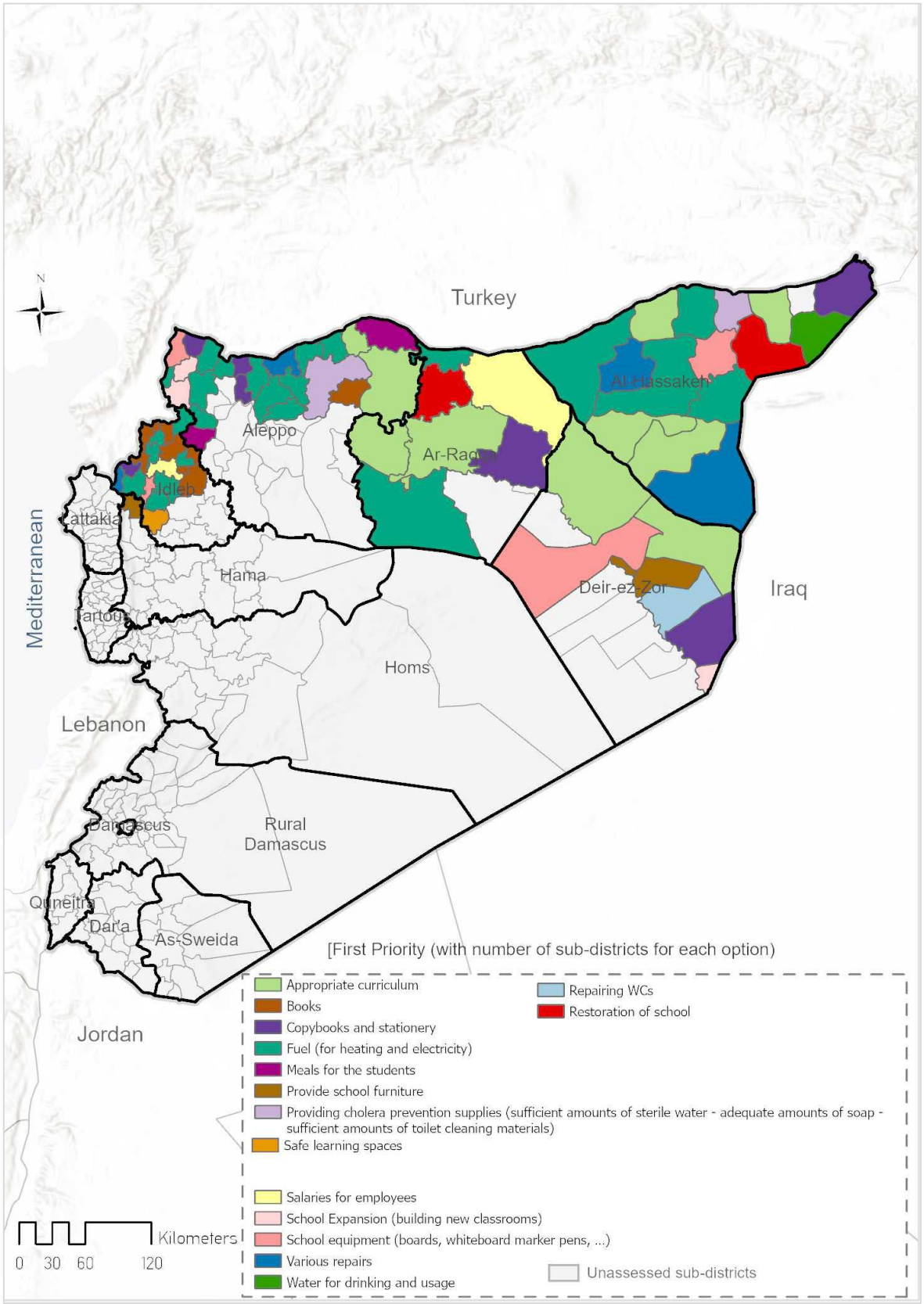
1. Priorities

This section presents the priorities of the evaluated schools in this report, including 4,761 operational and non-operational schools. Regarding priorities, ensuring access to fuel for heating and electricity ranks paramount, given its critical role in maintaining conducive learning environments, particularly highlighted in Idleb, northern Aleppo countryside, Afrin, Ras Al Ain, and Tell Abiad. Equally essential is the provision of school supplies such as notebooks and stationery, which are fundamental for facilitating students' engagement in educational activities, with this need being significant in Al-Hasakah and Deir ez-Zor. Additionally, securing a suitable curriculum is crucial to ensuring students receive quality education aligned with their academic needs and objectives. Lastly, addressing various infrastructure repairs within educational facilities is imperative to guarantee the safety and functionality of school environments, thereby fostering optimal conditions for teaching and learning.

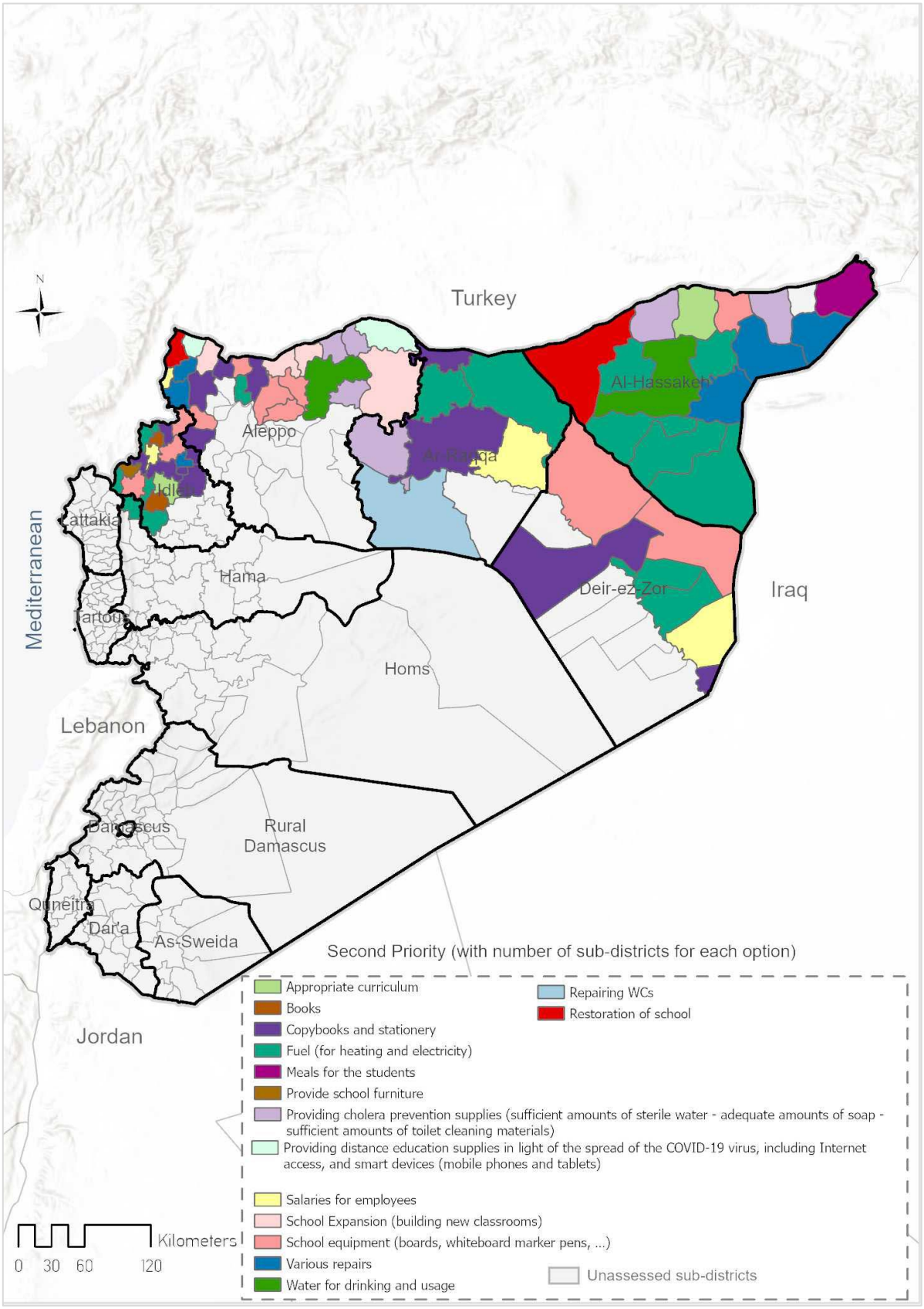
Figure 108 Priorities according to the approved regions



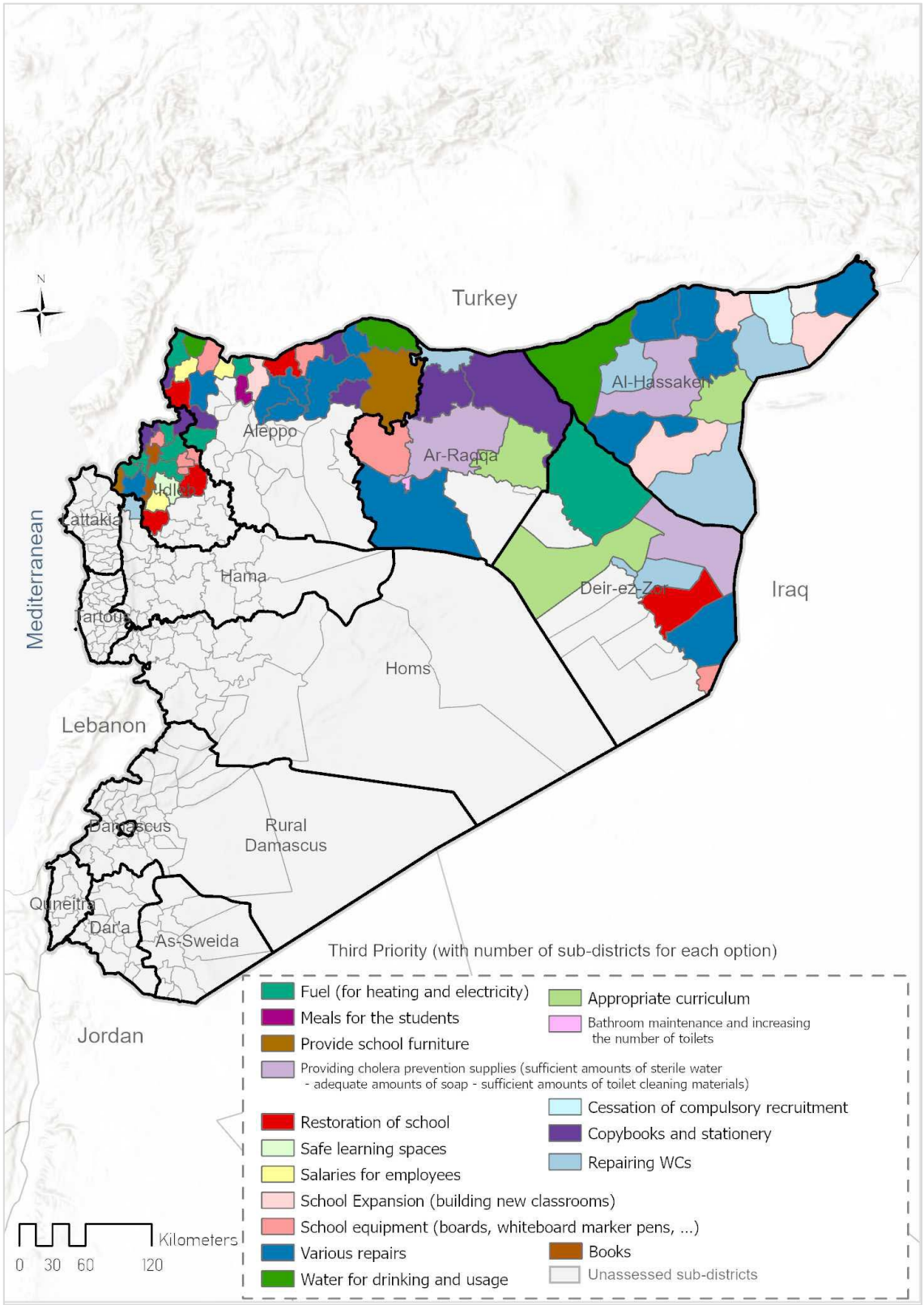
Map 7 First Priority for Assessed Schools



Map 8 Second Priority for Assessed Schools



Map 9 Third Priority for Assessed Schools



2. Recommendations

- The northwestern region of Syria is at risk of earthquakes and aftershocks. Many children lost their lives due to the earthquake that struck northwestern Syria on 06 February 2023. The Assistance Coordination Unit issued a report on the natural and war-related risks threatening northwestern Syria. Among these risks are earthquakes and aftershocks. Therefore, the study recommends training teachers and students in proper practices during earthquakes and other natural disasters and implementing safe evacuation procedures. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of providing psychosocial support to children and teachers to help them overcome the trauma caused by the earthquake.

- The study's finding that 57% (2,475) of operational schools lack separate toilets for educational and service staff, necessitating their use of student facilities, underscores a significant safeguarding concern. This issue not only affects privacy and hygiene but potentially exposes students and staff to inappropriate interactions, compromising the safety and well-being of everyone involved. As such, it is necessary to look for dedicated funds to ensure that the necessary resources are available to implement safeguarding measures effectively. It is also necessary to raise awareness about the importance of separate toilet facilities for safeguarding purposes. Educating the community on safeguarding helps to create a protective environment for children and staff.

- The study found that 7% of teachers in the evaluated schools did not receive their salaries during the 2023-2024 academic year. Surveys conducted with teachers revealed that 97% were dissatisfied with their salaries, stating they were insufficient to meet their daily needs. Additionally, 81% of the surveyed teachers reported having no additional sources of income. The educational process hinges on the presence of qualified teaching staff. Consequently, it is crucial to establish an equitable and sustainable financial system with a clear policy for teacher salary scales that align with both available support and daily living requirements. In displacement scenarios, qualified teachers and other educational personnel may relocate to areas offering higher wages, even if it means crossing borders. Therefore, it is essential to consider market forces, such as the cost of living, teacher demand, and wage levels in comparable skilled professions like healthcare.

- The study disclosed that 57% of enrolled students lacked the required textbooks during the data collection period. Other students previously owned and returned 48% of the textbooks in use. This shortage of textbooks emerged as a significant challenge, as identified by the information sources. The absence of adequate books and stationery contributed significantly to some students dropping out of school. According to the information sources, most students receive their school textbooks only during the second semester of the academic year. Consequently, it becomes imperative to guarantee a sufficient inventory of educational textbooks at the onset of every scholastic term to optimize their pedagogical utility. Given the demographic distribution of school-aged students, these instructional materials should be disseminated via educational institutions. Moreover, it is paramount to delegate authority to pertinent bodies for devising protocols that ensure the annual adequacy of school textbooks well in advance of the commencement of the academic calendar.

- In the surveyed operational schools, there were 5,547 students with disabilities. Shockingly, only a mere 4% (154 schools) of these operational schools were found equipped to cater to the needs of these children. Furthermore, a paltry 6% of these schools boasted specialists trained to assist students with disabilities. The inadequate facilities and services presented a formidable challenge for these students, compelling some to abandon their educational pursuits. The influx of children with disabilities, exacerbated by ongoing military strife and a devastating earthquake in Syria, has intensified the urgency to provide an inclusive learning environment, a fundamental entitlement for these individuals. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all stakeholders within the education domain and donor entities to collaborate earnestly in outfitting all schools with requisite resources and support for children with disabilities. Meaningful engagement with organizations representing these children and their families is indispensable to ensure that available facilities are not only accessible but also conducive to their comfort and well-being.

- The study brought to light a glaring deficiency: a staggering 94% (4,069 schools) of the operational schools assessed lacked the presence of psychological counselors. Alarmingly, 45% of the principals surveyed confessed ignorance regarding any referral pathways, some even unaware of their existence. Given the tumultuous backdrop of conflict in which these children are trapped, schools bear the responsibility of providing a safe space and facilitating the necessary psychosocial sustenance. Hence, there is an urgent imperative to prioritize the psychological welfare of children by imparting requisite training to educational personnel, enabling them to adeptly navigate the intricate landscape of addressing psychological pressures. This training regimen must encompass acquiring knowledge and honing skills requisite for executing referral pathways with utmost safety and efficacy. Moreover, fostering mental and social health initiatives within educational institutions emerges as an indispensable facet of this endeavor.

- Findings from perception surveys conducted by enumerators among students unveiled that 20% of those consistently absent from school attributed their absence to illness, while 15% cited adverse weather conditions. Cold classrooms heighten students' susceptibility to diseases, while the advent of summer exacerbates temperatures. Thus, it is necessary to furnish schools with appropriate heating systems and ensure sufficient fuel to endure the winter months, safeguarding children against ailments. Moreover, adequate ventilation must be guaranteed within classrooms, with the provision of fans to facilitate ventilation during the sweltering summer months.

- The examination uncovered that 16% of the doors require maintenance within the operational schools under evaluation, with a further 6% irreparably damaged and necessitating replacement. Similarly, 17% of the windows necessitate maintenance, while 11% are beyond repair, demanding a replacement. Additionally, 10% of the seats within these schools require maintenance to render them usable, with 5% significantly damaged and requiring replacement. Typically, routine maintenance is funded by the schools through nominal fees collected from students. However, the deteriorating socio-economic conditions students and their families face make them unable to afford these expenses. Hence, a pressing need arises

to provide schools with assistance to undertake maintenance tasks, particularly given the worsening of issues due to the impacts of war, interruptions in schooling, utilization of schools for non-educational purposes, and the devastation wrought by the recent earthquake in Syria.

- As per the study findings, a significant portion of non-operational schools—21% partially and 20% completely—are damaged. Moreover, 3% of schools designated for educational purposes are partially affected. Furthermore, within operational schools, 12% of classrooms require renovations, while 11% grapple with overcrowding. Thus, there is a pressing need to prioritize restoring or reconstructing non-operational schools to render them functional. Similarly, efforts should be directed toward repairing partially damaged operational schools so they can operate at full capacity, thereby alleviating classroom overcrowding. Restoring doors and windows is essential to ensure adequate student warmth, especially during winter.

- The study identified that 12% (535 schools) of the operational schools assessed were in rural areas, whereas 2% (88 educational units) were classified as temporary educational facilities, often known as temporary schools. Furthermore, findings indicated that 11% (484 schools) of operational schools faced overcrowding issues, while 33% (1,429 schools) maintained average levels of crowding. These statistics were juxtaposed against the minimum education standards outlined by INEE, "*Educational facilities should be designed considering who uses the learning spaces and how they are used. Spaces should be appropriate for the gender, age, physical ability, and cultural considerations of all users. A realistic local standard for maximum class size should be established, and sufficient space should be left, if possible, for additional classes in case of increased attendance, to allow for a gradual reduction in the use of multiple shifts.*" Therefore, initiatives must focus on substituting non-formal educational setups with formal institutions. In urban areas grappling with overcrowded schools, new educational facilities should be erected, or student schedules should be staggered into multiple shifts. Additionally, the support should be extended to augment existing schools and erect new classrooms wherever feasible.

- Findings from the study indicated that a staggering 85% of schools suffer from a shortage of cleaning materials and soap, with 83% neglecting to conduct awareness campaigns on cholera prevention. Furthermore, 5% of schools face a deficit in access to adequate water for drinking and handwashing, heightening the risk of cholera transmission. Consequently, prioritizing the provision of sanitation resources and implementing comprehensive disease prevention protocols in all schools emerges as imperative.

SCHOOLS IN SYRIA 2024

A PARTICIPATORY THEMATIC REPORT

ACU ASSISTANCE COORDINATION UNIT

IMU INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

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

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