

IMPACT OF DECREASED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE in Northern Syria



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1- Executive Summary

Northern Syria is grappling with a humanitarian crisis worsened by a sharp drop in international aid. This survey by the Information Management Unit (IMU) at the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU), involving 2,851 participants account for 566 key stakeholders and 2,285 community respondents, underscores the severe impact of this funding decline across food security, healthcare, education, protection, and other key sectors. Vulnerable groups, including orphans, widows, IDPs, and people with disabilities, are particularly affected. Political dynamics, especially the Syrian regime's attempts to limit cross-border aid, exacerbate the situation, with the potential closure of the Bab Al Hawa crossing heightening risks. Urgent action is needed to sustain aid and support the region's most vulnerable.

Key Findings

- 57% of community members and 45% of stakeholders report a funding decline due to global crises.
- 84% of organizations are scaling back projects as a primary coping strategy, though it's only moderately effective.
- 70% observe economic impacts such as unemployment, poverty, and child labor.
- 42% estimate poverty levels at 51-75%, with 31% estimate at 76-100%.
- 39% of community members and 37% of stakeholders believe the Syrian regime restricts aid for political and economic leverage.
- Most organizations report funding cuts of 26-75%, severely affecting sectors like WASH, health, food security, education, and non-profit media. These reductions have led to diminished services, rising malnutrition, school dropouts, and more.
- Households increasingly rely on debt (19%), reduce food intake (14%), and withdraw children from school (12%) as coping strategies.
- The Bab Al Hawa closure could further displacement, drive commodity price hikes (23%), job losses (21%), increased poverty (23%), and a rise in black-market activity (16%).
- For a comprehensive list of sector-specific humanitarian priorities, please refer to Chapter 7 below.

Recommendations include empowering community-led solutions, adopting flexible funding models and partnering with non-traditional donors to ensure continuity, investing in local skills and sustainable livelihoods to reduce aid dependency, and strengthening collaborations for effective, long-term development. Targeting vulnerable groups, engaging communities in planning, and implementing phased exit strategies will foster resilience and support independent growth.

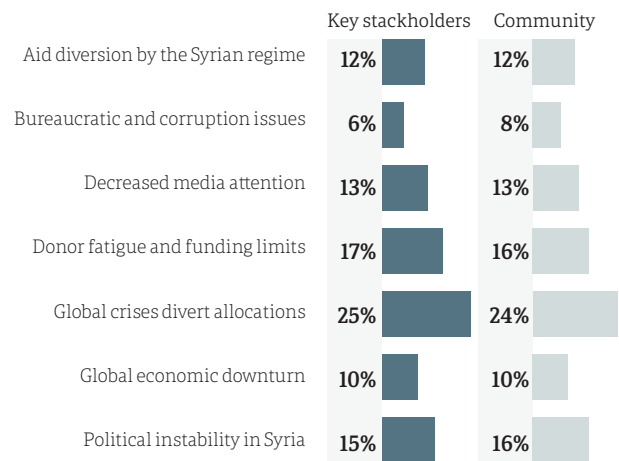


3- Impact of Global Crises

Reasons and Influence of Decrease in Humanitarian Assistance to Northern Syria

Both the community members and the key stakeholders indicated that recent global crises, such as conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine, along with changing donor priorities, have had a substantial impact on funding for operations in Northern Syria. Among the community members surveyed, 57% reported a significant reduction in funding (over 75%), while 35% noted a moderate decrease (around 50%). Similarly, key stakeholders reported that 45% experienced a significant reduction (over 75%) and 48% saw a moderate decrease (50%).

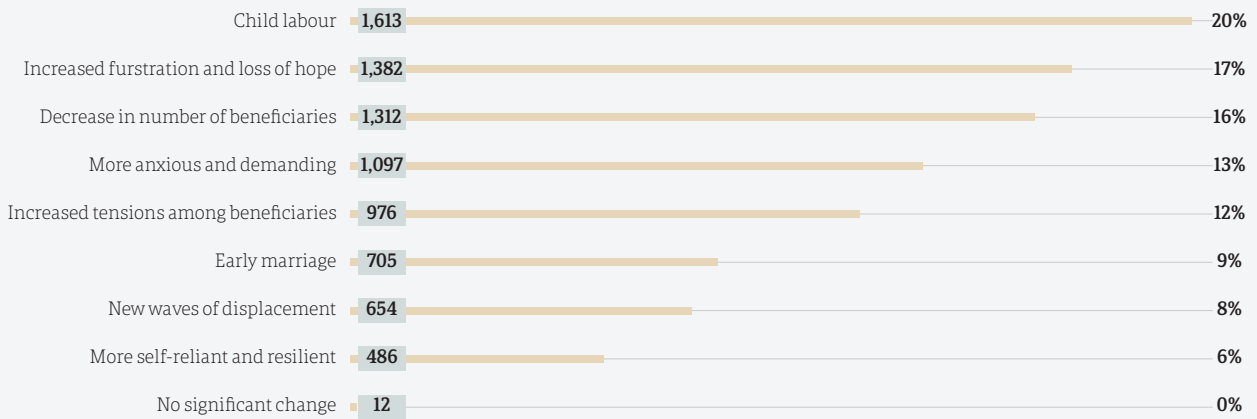
Figure 2: Reasons for the decrease in assistance to NS



Community Survey: Impact of the Reduction of Humanitarian Assistance on Beneficiaries

The community survey shows that reduced humanitarian aid has led to increased child labor (20%), frustration (17%), and fewer beneficiaries (16%), with only 6% reporting improved self-reliance.

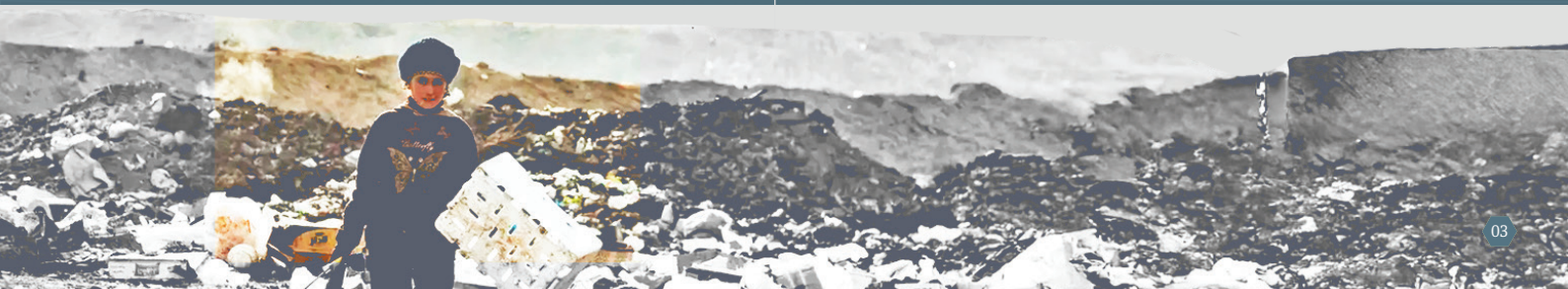
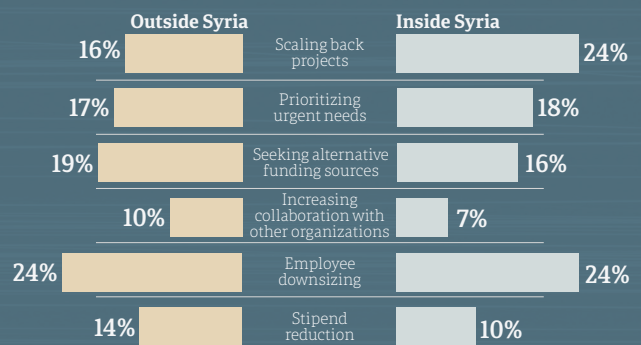
Figure 03: Impact of the Reduction of Humanitarian Assistance on Beneficiaries



Key Stakeholder Survey: Strategies Used by Organizations to Deal With/Mitigate the Funding Shortfall

The study shows that the strategy, Scaling Back Projects, is the most common, seen as moderately effective by 84% and very effective by 16%. Prioritizing urgent needs is also widely used, with 83% finding it moderately effective and 17% very effective. Seeking alternative funding sources is critical, with 22% rating it as very effective. Increased collaboration with other organizations stands out, with 30% finding it very effective. In contrast, downsizing (88% moderately effective) and stipend reduction (87% moderately effective) are seen as necessary but less impactful long-term.

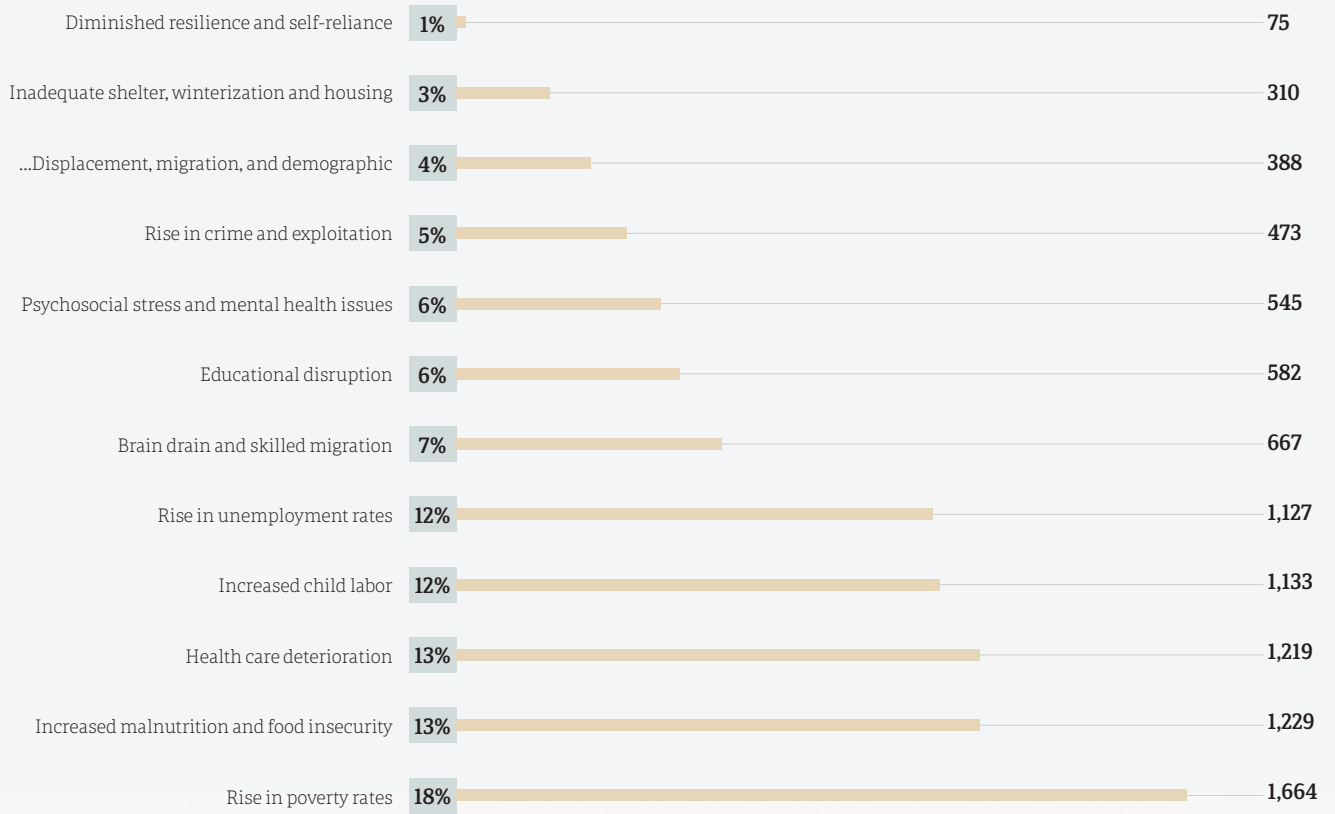
Figure 04: Strategies Used by Organizations to Deal With/Mitigate the Funding Shortfall



Community Survey: Key Concerns Arising from the Decrease in Humanitarian Assistance

The community survey highlights key concerns from reduced humanitarian aid, with the highest impacts on poverty (18%), food insecurity (13%), and healthcare deterioration (13%). Lower effects were seen in areas like resilience (1%) and shelter (3%).

Figure 05: Key Concerns Arising from the Decrease in Humanitarian Assistance

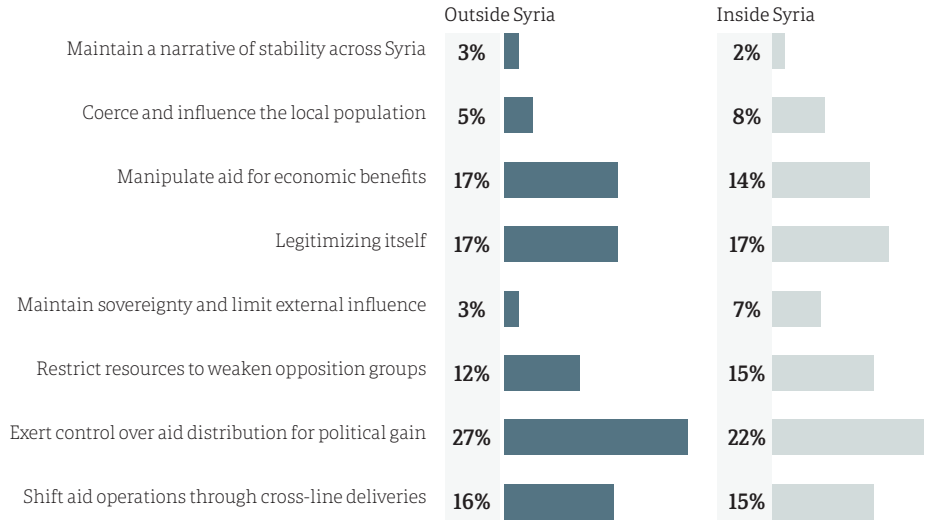


4- Political Dynamics

Key Stakeholder Survey: Motivations Behind the Syrian Regime's Attempts to Reduce Cross-Border Humanitarian Assistance

Both key stakeholder and community surveys revealed a similar perception of the Syrian regime's role in reducing humanitarian aid. The largest share of respondents—37% of key stakeholders and 39% of community members—believe the regime significantly contributed, while 30% of stakeholders and 28% of community members rated the impact as moderate. Overall, the consensus is that the regime plays a major role in the reduction, though some view its influence as less severe. The chart below shows the motivations of the Syrian Regime to do so.

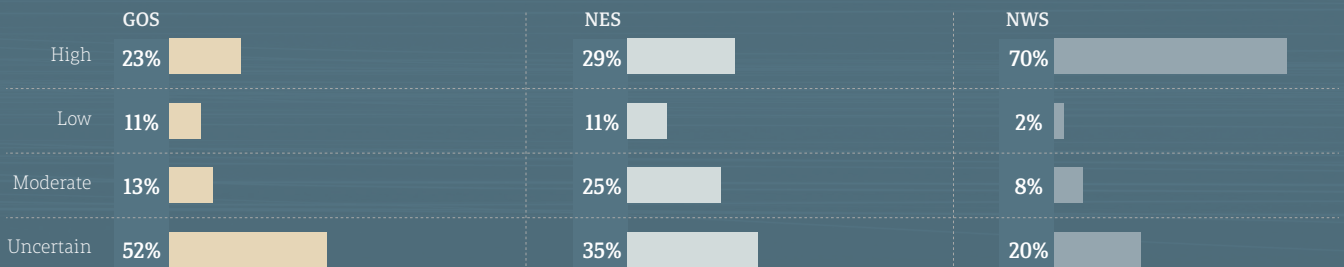
Figure 06: Motivations Behind the Syrian Regime's Attempts to Reduce Cross-Border Humanitarian Assistance



Key Stakeholder Survey: Consequences of Reducing Humanitarian Assistance by Control Areas

The study indicates that the reduction in assistance will have a significantly greater impact on NWS compared to NES and areas under GoS control.

Figure 07: Consequences of Reducing Humanitarian Assistance by Control Areas

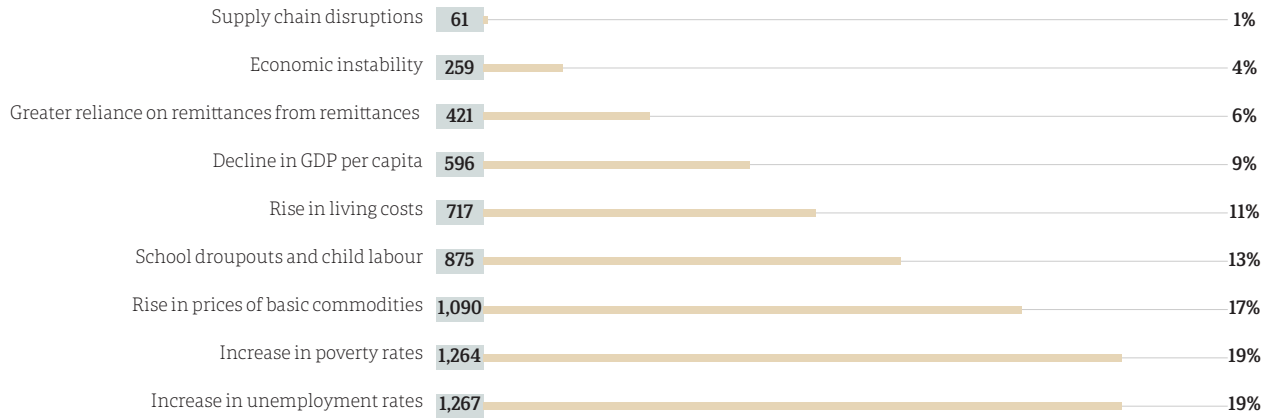


5- Economic Impact

Community Survey: Economic Impact of Reduced Humanitarian Assistance in North Syria

The study shows that reduced aid has heightened poverty (19%), unemployment (19%), and commodity costs (17%).

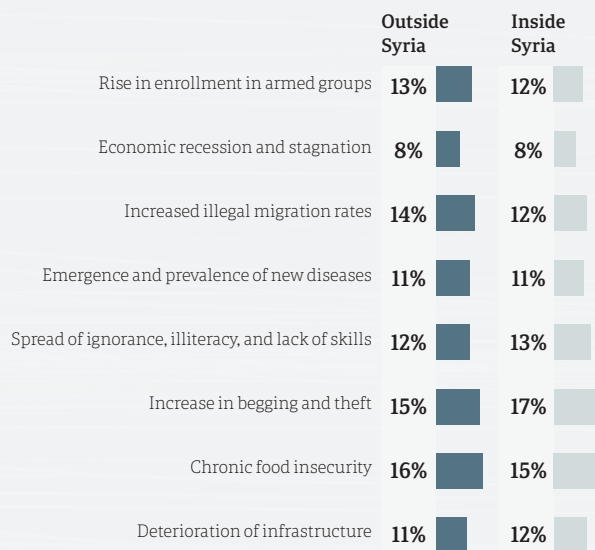
Figure 08: Economic Impact of Reduced Humanitarian Assistance in North Syria



Key Stakeholder Survey: Long-Term Economic Consequences of Reduced Humanitarian Assistance in North Syria

The survey shows long-term impacts of reduced aid, including increased begging (16%), food insecurity (16%), and illegal migration (13%).

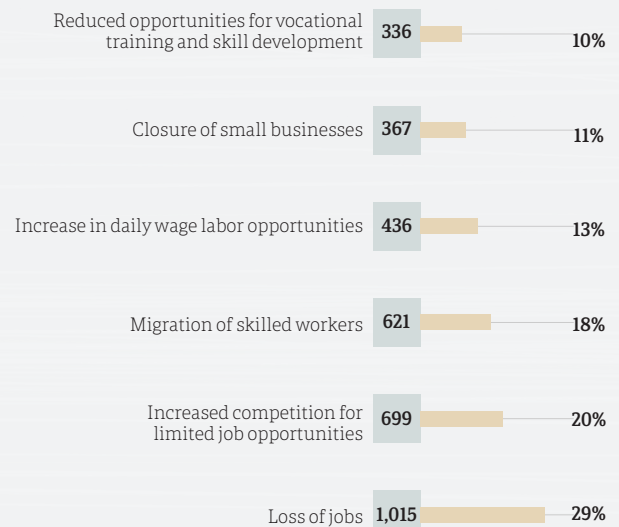
Figure 09: Long-Term Economic Consequences of Reduced Humanitarian Assistance in North Syria



Community Survey: Impact of Reduced Humanitarian Assistance on Employment and Job Opportunities in North Syria

The survey shows reduced aid led to job loss (29%), job competition (20%), and skilled worker migration (18%), with smaller impacts on training (10%) and business closures (11%).

Figure 10: Impact of Reduced Humanitarian Assistance on Employment and Job Opportunities in North Syria



6- Impact by Humanitarian Domains

Key Stakeholder Survey: Percentage and Impact of Decrease in Humanitarian Funding by Sector



WASH

55% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in WASH funding compared to the previous year, while 19% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased aid in WASH has led to increased water trucking (14%), limited hygiene supplies (14%), poor infrastructure (16%), and fewer sanitation facilities (14%).

Figure 12: Impact of decreased assistance on WASH

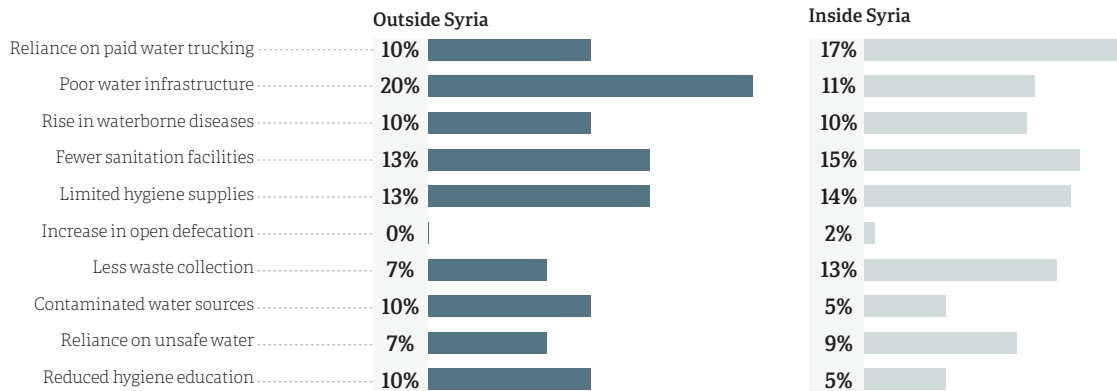
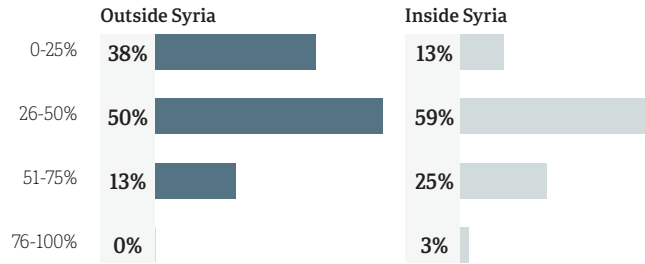


Figure 11: Percentage decrease in WASH funding compared to former year



Health

45% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in Health funding compared to the previous year, while 34% experienced a 0-25% decrease. Notably, there is an interesting difference in opinions between key stakeholders inside and outside Syria.

The study shows decreased aid in health led to facility closures (16%), medicine shortages (18%), and fewer staff (15%).

Figure 13: Percentage decrease in health funding compared to former year

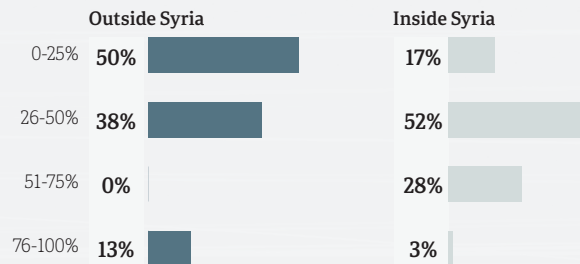
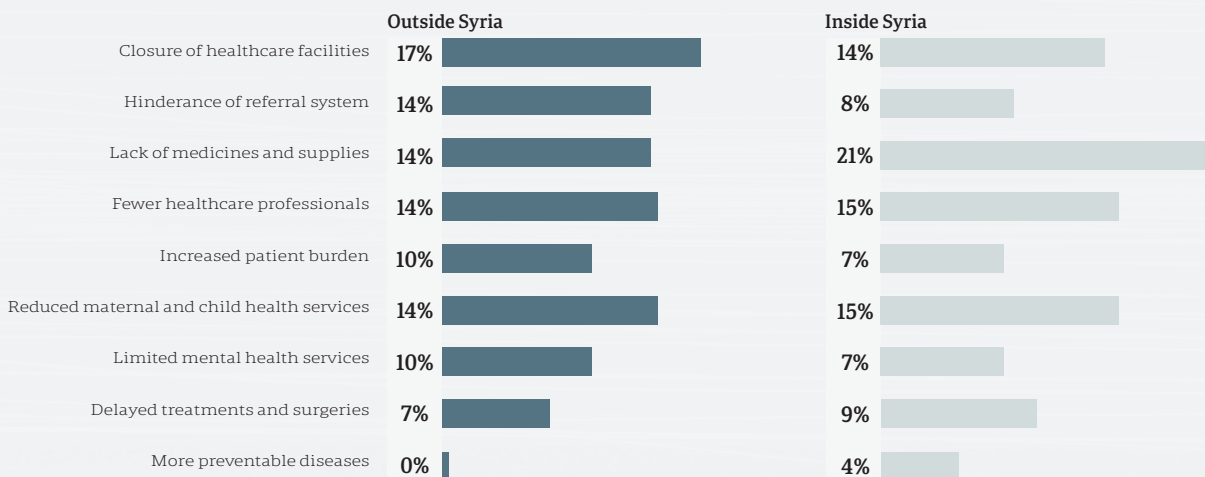


Figure 14: Impact of decreased assistance on Health



FSL

54% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in FSL funding compared to the previous year, while 35% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased aid in FSL led to reduced food aid (21%), higher prices (12%), and loss of agricultural support (14%).

Figure 15: Percentage decrease in FSL funding compared to former year

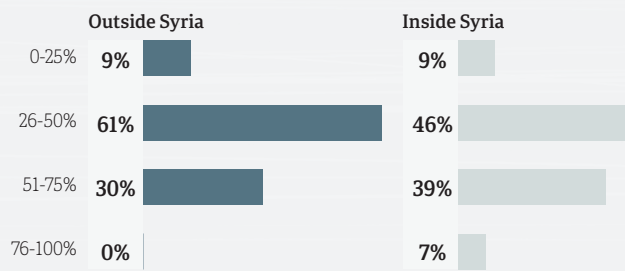
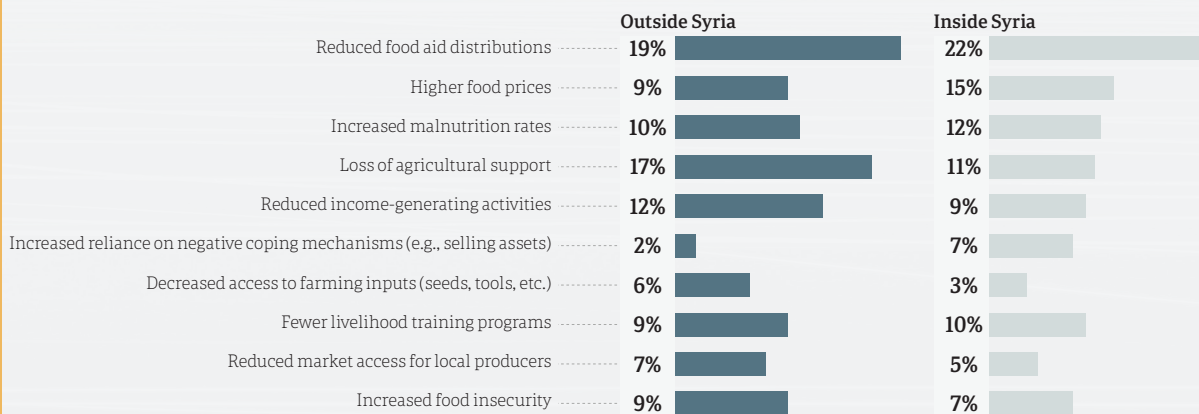


Figure 16: Impact of decreased assistance on FSL



Education

46% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in Education funding compared to the previous year, while 33% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased aid in education led to staff loss (13%), salary cuts (11%), and fewer scholarships (13%).

Figure 17: Percentage decrease in education funding compared to former year

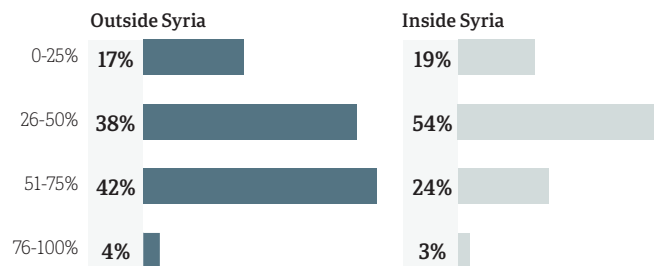
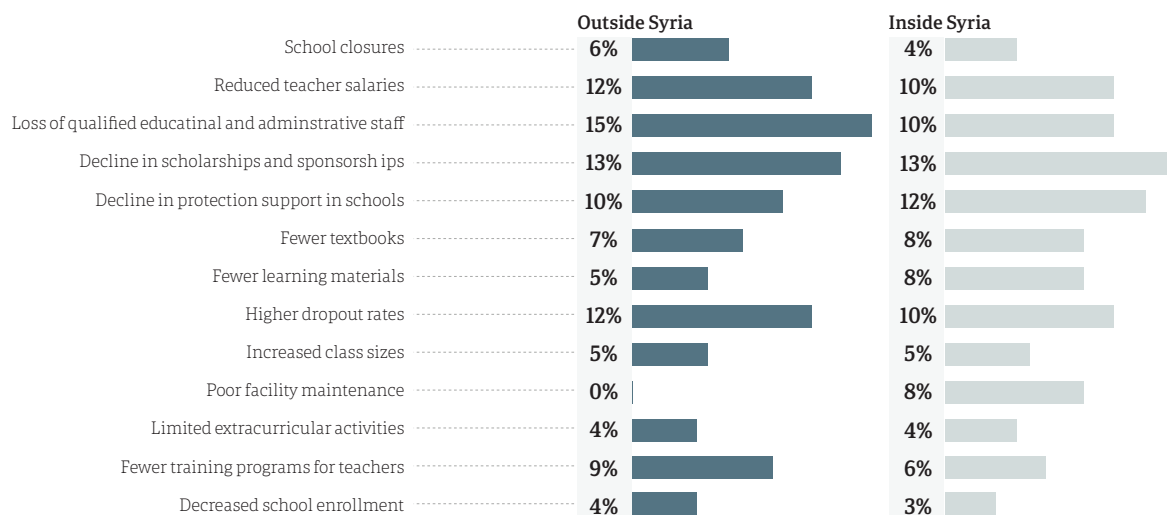


Figure 18: Impact of decreased assistance on education



Protection

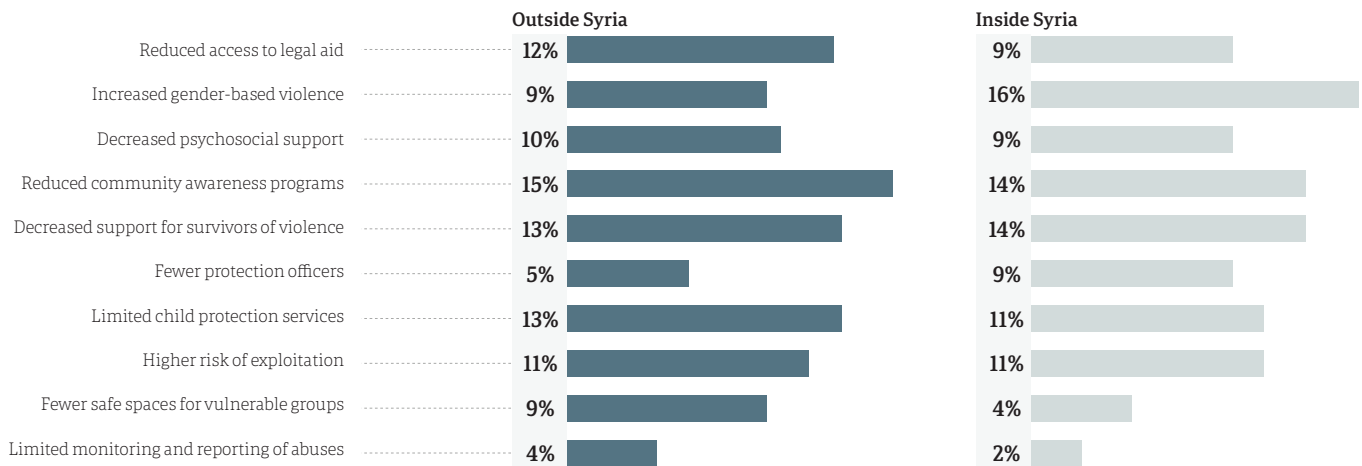
55% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in protection funding compared to the previous year, while 19% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased aid in protection led to limited child services (15%), fewer protection officers (13%), reduced awareness programs (12%), and decreased PSS (14%)

Figure 19: Percentage decrease in protection funding compared to former year



Figure 20: Impact of decreased assistance on protection



SNFI

35% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in SNFI funding compared to the previous year, while 32% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased SNFI aid led to reduced shelter materials (23%) and limited winterization kits (16%).

Figure 21: Percentage decrease in SNFI funding compared to former year

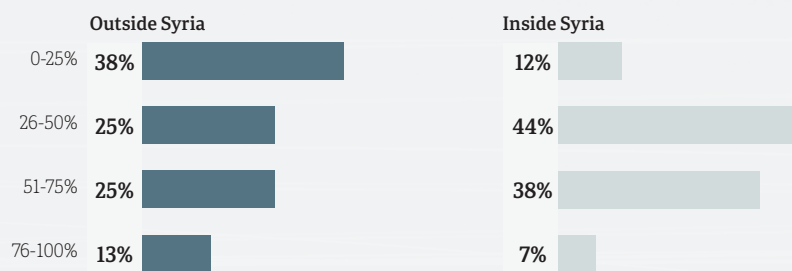
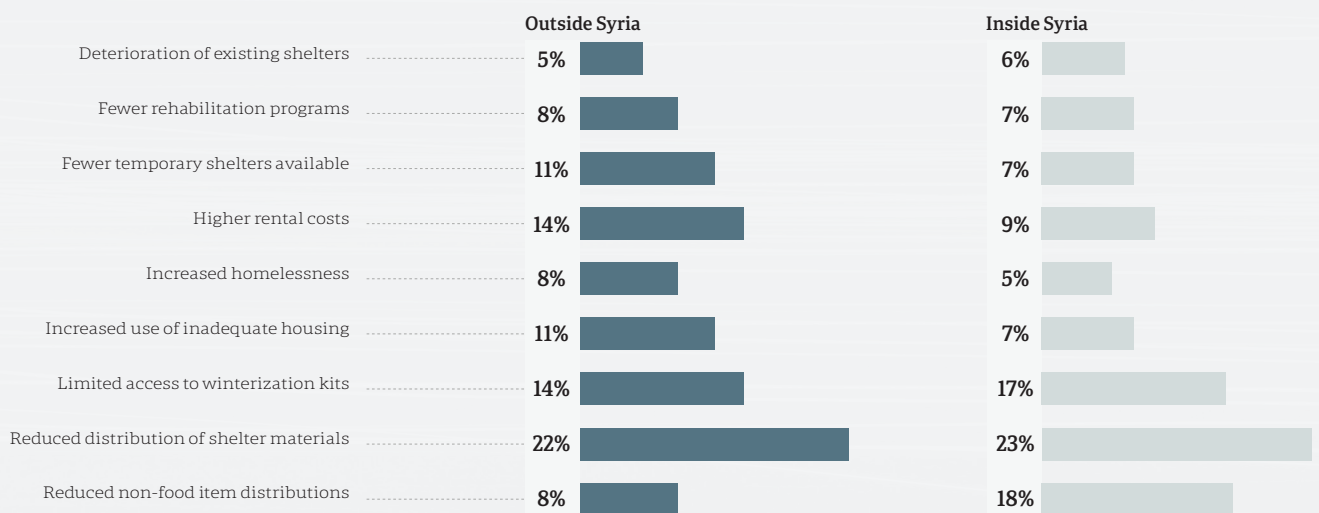


Figure 22: Impact of decreased assistance on SNFI





Nutrition

51% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in Nutrition funding compared to the previous year, while 26% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased aid mainly affected breastfeeding and nutrition programs (19%), food security (12%), and therapeutic foods (13%).

Figure 23: Percentage decrease in nutrition funding compared to former year

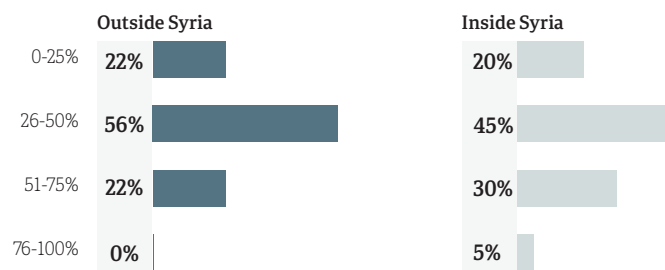
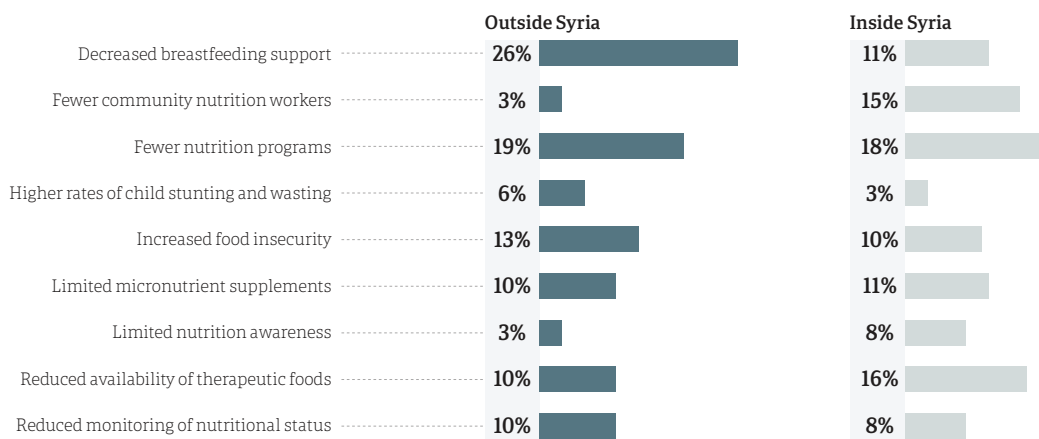


Figure 24: Impact of decreased assistance on nutrition



CCCM

60% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in CCCM funding compared to the previous year, while 18% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased aid in CCCM led to reduced camp maintenance (17%), support for arrivals (14%), and fewer staff (13%).

Figure 25: Percentage decrease in CCCM funding compared to former year

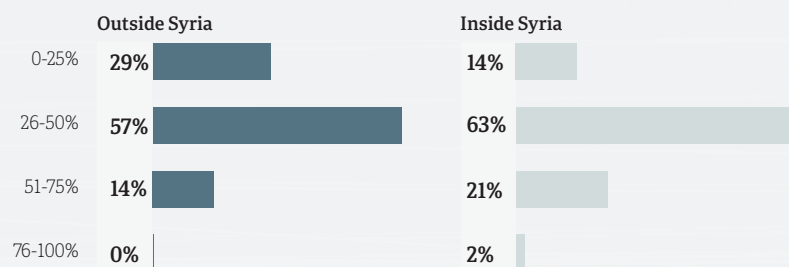
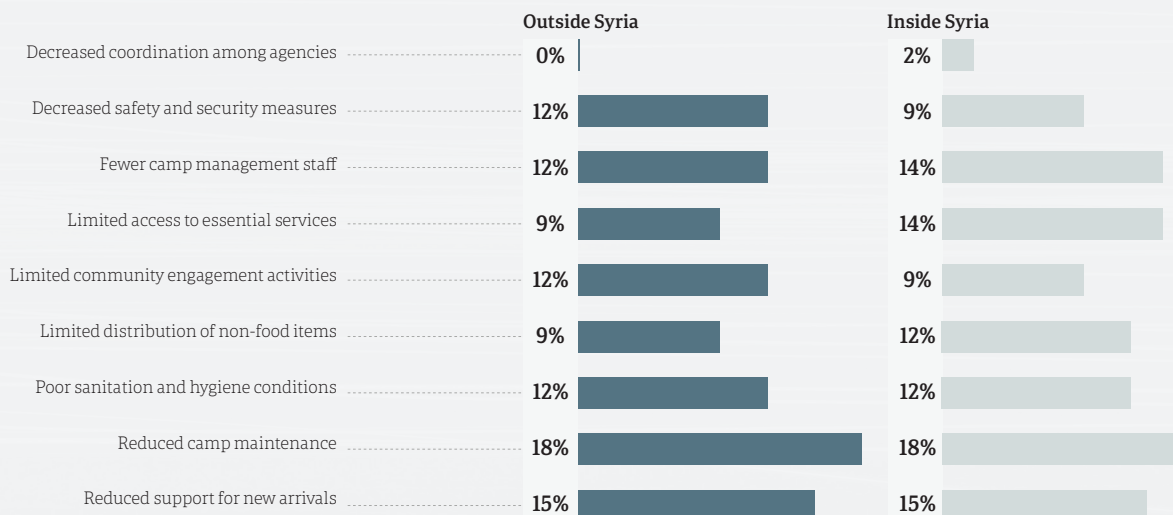


Figure 26: Impact of decreased assistance on CCCM





Logistics

73% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in Logistics funding compared to the previous year, while 14% experienced a 0-25% decrease. Notably, there is an interesting difference in opinions between key stakeholders inside and outside Syria.

The study shows decreased aid in logistics led to reduced aid transport (17%) and delivery delays (14%).

Figure 27: Percentage decrease in logistics funding compared to former year

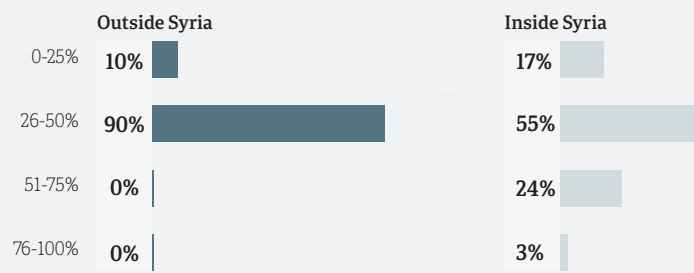
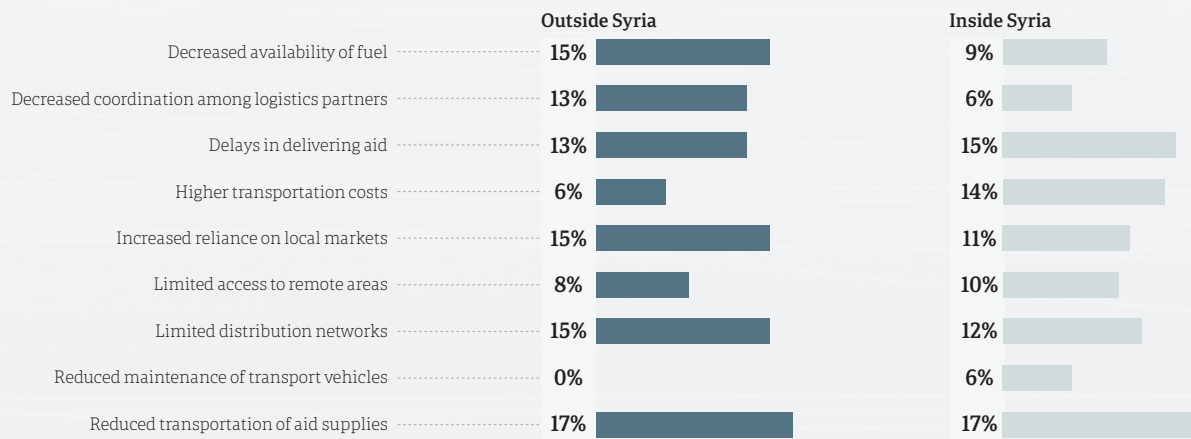


Figure 28: Impact of decreased assistance on logistics



Emergency

38% of organizations reported a 26-50% reduction in Emergency funding compared to the previous year, while 26% experienced a 51-75% decrease.

The study shows decreased aid in emergency response reduced food, water (18%), and shelter, healthcare, and protection support (15%).

Figure 29: Percentage decrease in emergency funding compared to former year

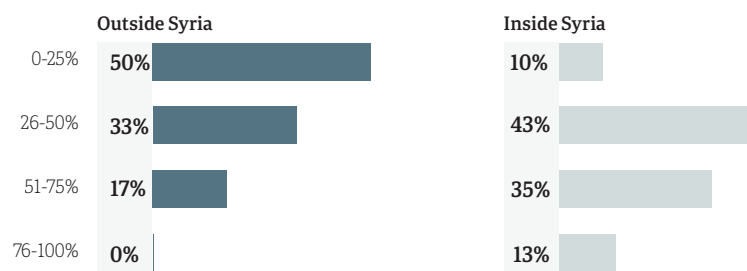
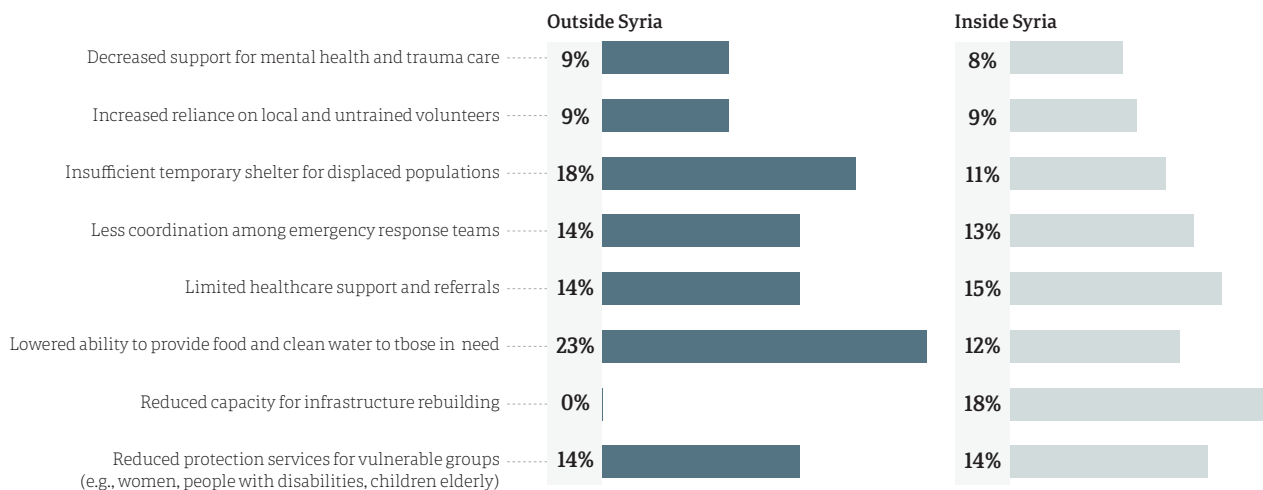


Figure 30: Impact of decreased assistance on emergency





Media

Notably, there is a significant difference in opinions between key stakeholders inside and outside Syria. The majority of organizations reported a 76-100% decrease in media funding, leading them to rely on crowdfunding campaigns or partnerships with private companies as alternative funding sources.

Figure 31: Percentage decrease in media funding compared to former year

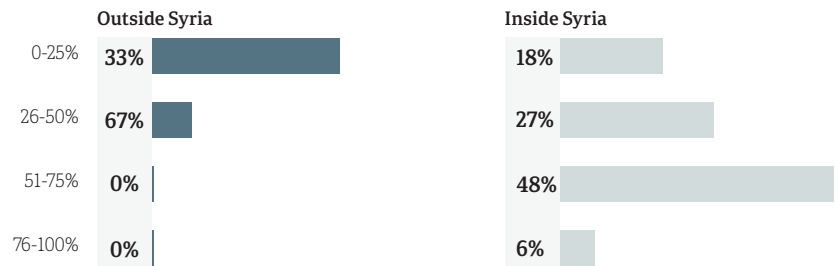
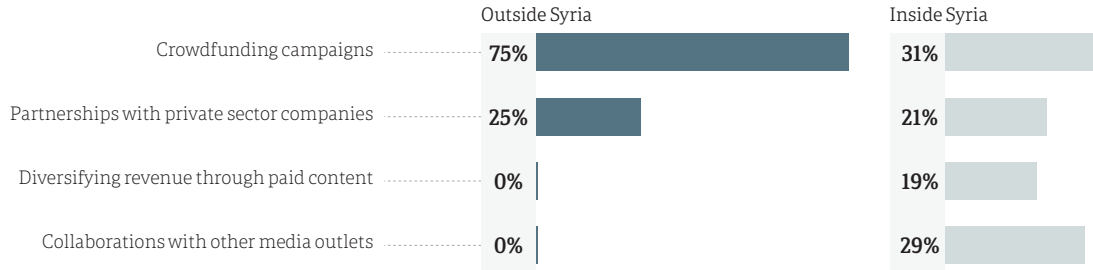
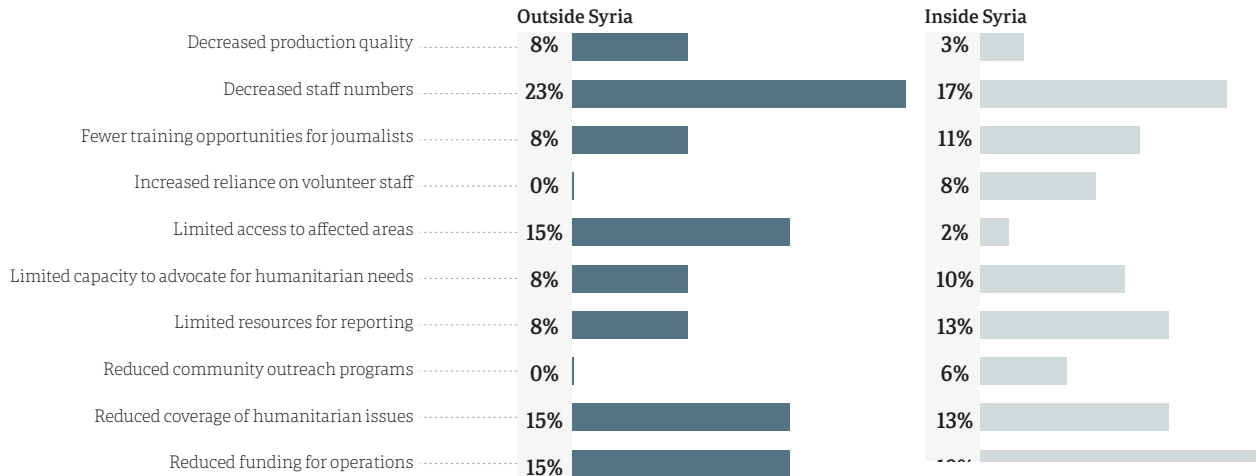


Figure 32: Alternative funding sources and strategies explored by Media agencies



The study shows decreased aid in media led to staff cuts (20%) and reduced funding (17%), limiting coverage (14%) and training (10%).

Figure 33: Impact of decreased assistance on media



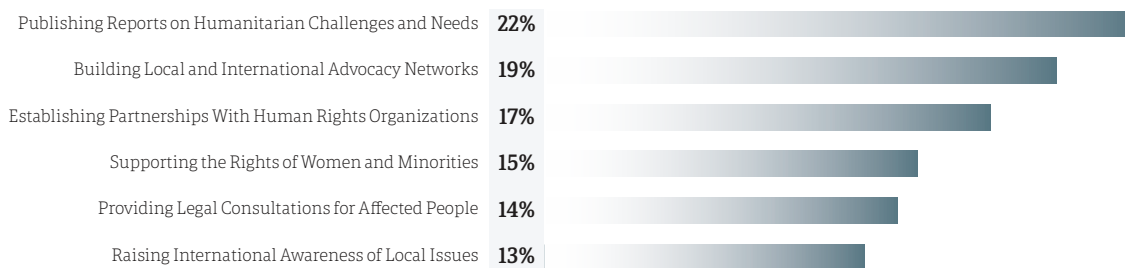
7- Sector-Specific Humanitarian Priorities

Priorities by Sector

The IMU team consulted key stakeholder informants to identify priority areas across various sectors. The data focused on the following sectors:

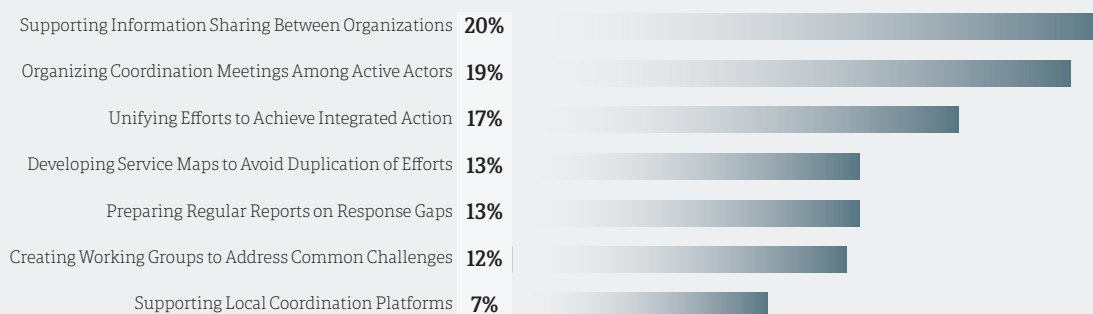
Publishing reports on humanitarian challenges (22%) and building advocacy networks (19%) are top priorities in **advocacy and legal support**.

 Figure 34: advocacy and legal support.



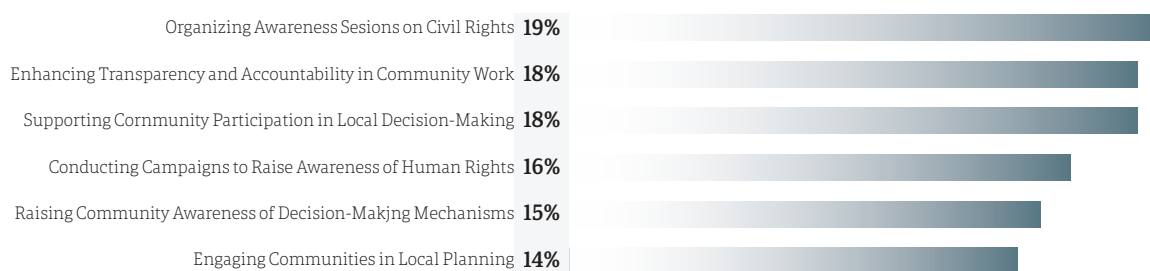
The top **coordination priorities** are supporting information sharing (20%) and organizing coordination meetings (19%) among organizations.

 Figure 35: Coordination for Humanitarian and Development Organizations



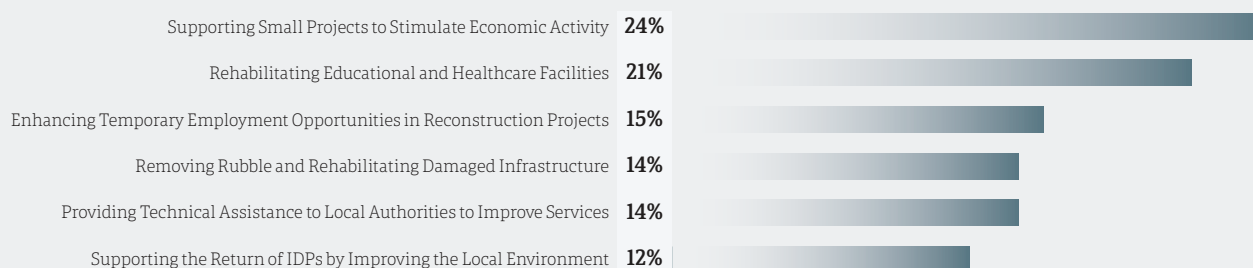
The main **priorities for civil awareness** are organizing civil rights awareness sessions (19%) and enhancing transparency in community work (18%).

 Figure 36: Civil Awareness and Community Engagement Promotion



Top **priorities in early recovery and rehabilitation** include supporting small projects to stimulate economic activity (24%) and rehabilitating educational and healthcare facilities (21%).

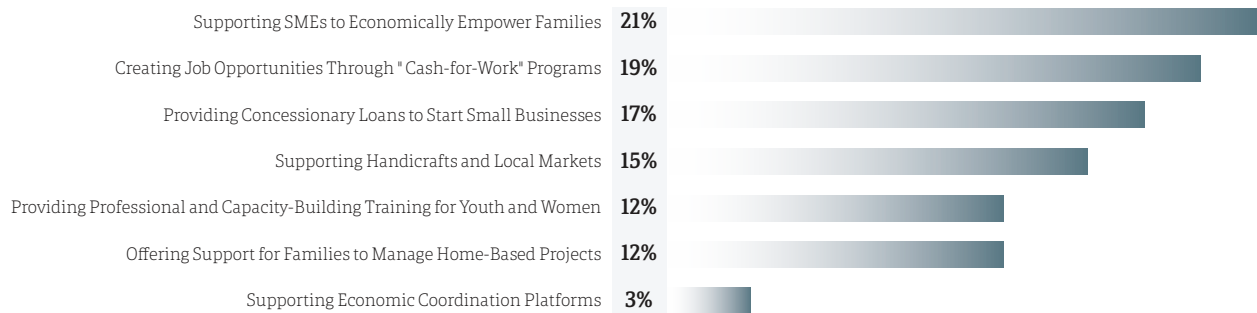
 Figure 37: Early Recovery and Rehabilitation



Top priorities in **livelihood and economic empowerment** include supporting SMEs to empower families economically (21%) and creating job opportunities through cash-for-work programs (19%).



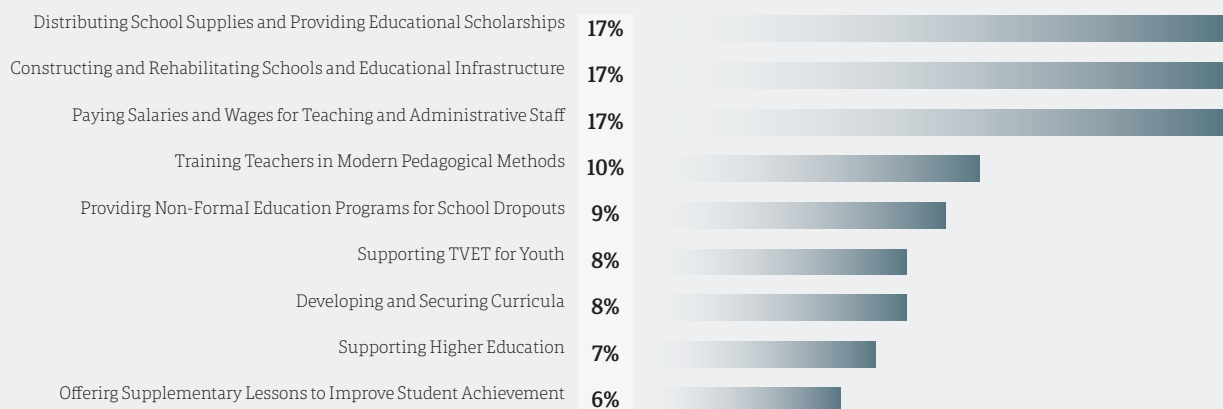
Figure 38: Livelihood and Economic Empowerment



The top **priorities in education** include distributing school supplies, constructing and rehabilitating schools, and paying teacher salaries, each at 17%.



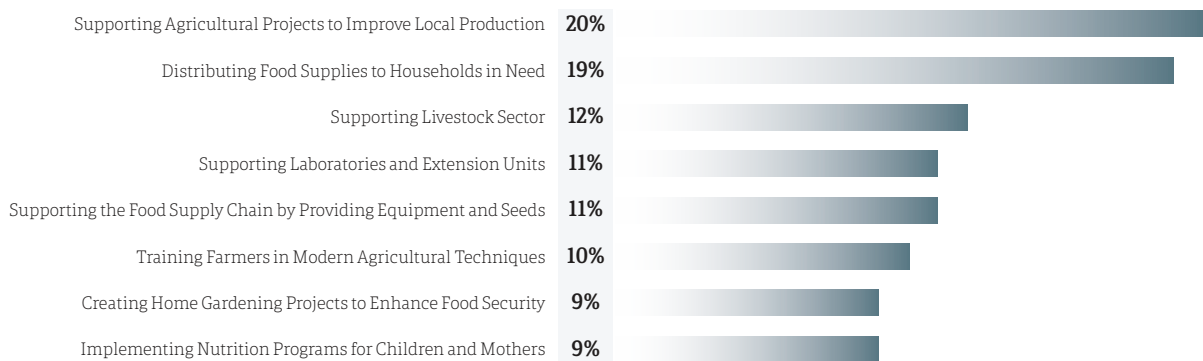
Figure 39: Education Priorities



Top **priorities in FSL** include supporting agricultural projects (20%) and distributing food supplies to households in need (19%).



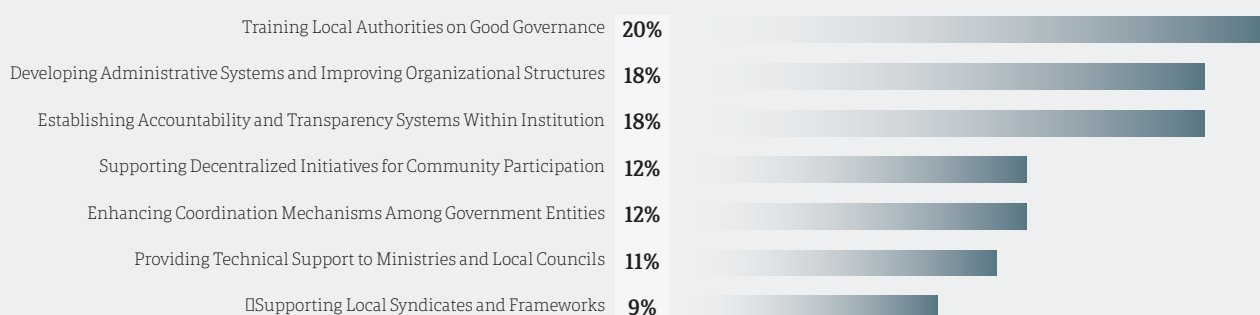
Figure 40: FSL Priorities



Top **priorities in governance and institutional capacity building** include training local authorities on good governance (20%) and developing administrative systems (18%).

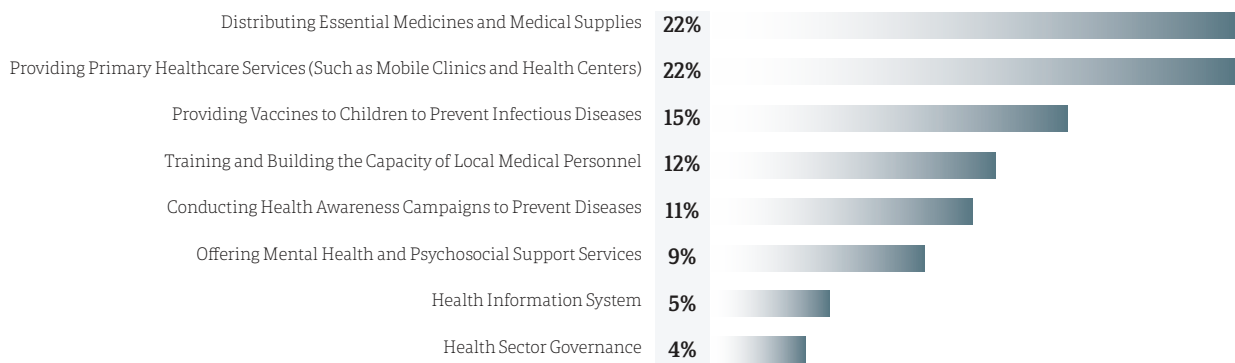


Figure 41: Governance and Institutional Capacity Building




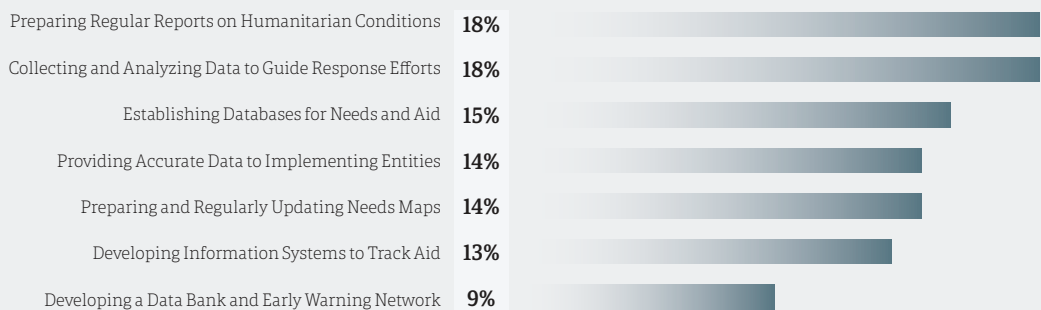
Top **health priorities** include distributing essential medicines and providing primary healthcare services, each at 22%.

 **Figure 42: Health Priorities**



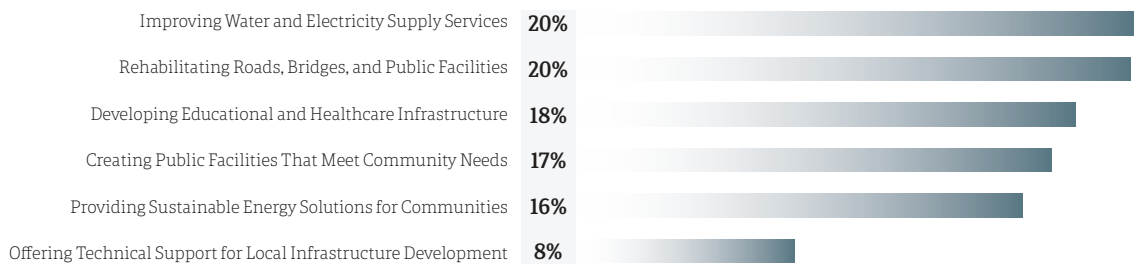
Top **priorities in information and data management** are preparing regular reports on humanitarian conditions and collecting data to guide response efforts, both at 18%.

 **Figure 43: Information and Data Management**




Top **priorities in community infrastructure development** are improving water and electricity supply services and rehabilitating roads, bridges, and public facilities, both at 20%.

 **Figure 44: Community Infrastructure Development**



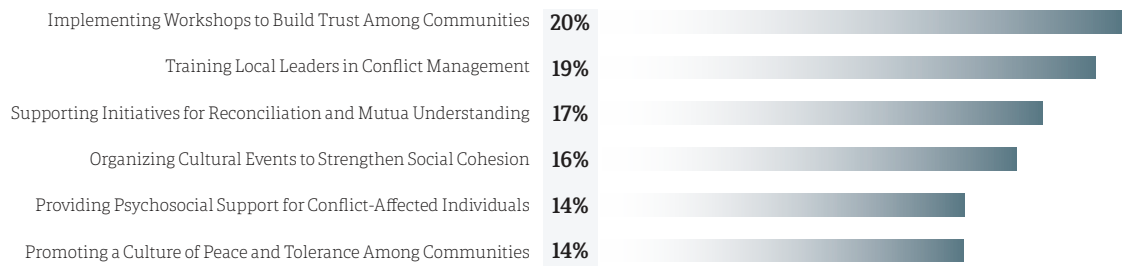
Top **priorities in media and community awareness** include conducting media campaigns on humanitarian and social issues (20%) and creating communication channels between the community and organizations (19%).

 **Figure 45: Awareness Community and Media**



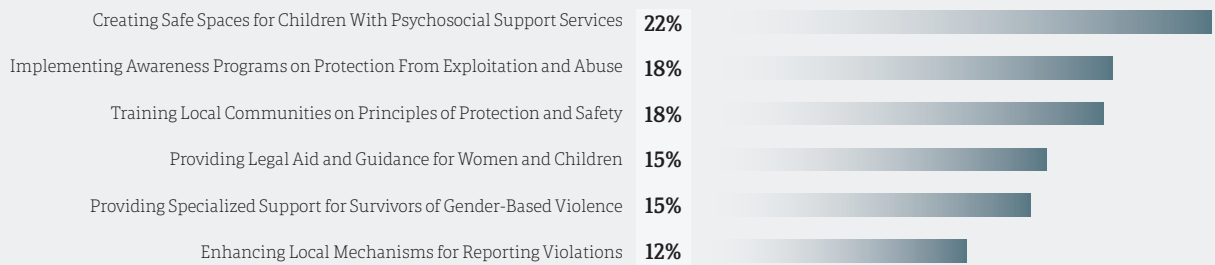
Top **priorities in peacebuilding and community reconciliation** are implementing trust-building workshops among communities (20%) and training local leaders in conflict management (19%).

 **Figure 46: Reconciliation Community and Peacebuilding**



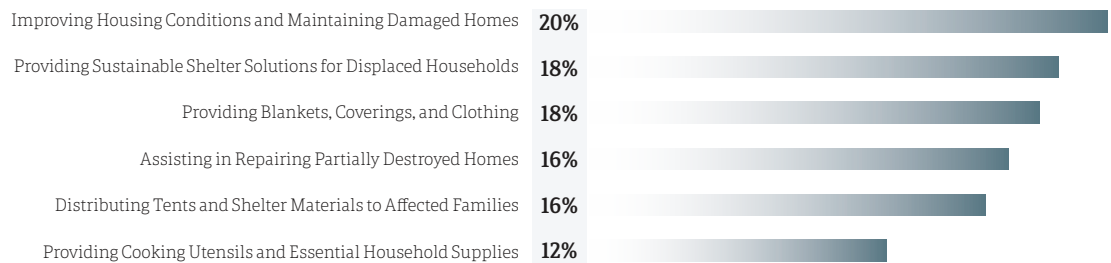
Top **priorities in protection** are creating safe spaces for children with psychosocial support (22%) and implementing awareness programs on protection from exploitation and abuse (18%).

 **Figure 47: Protection Priorities**




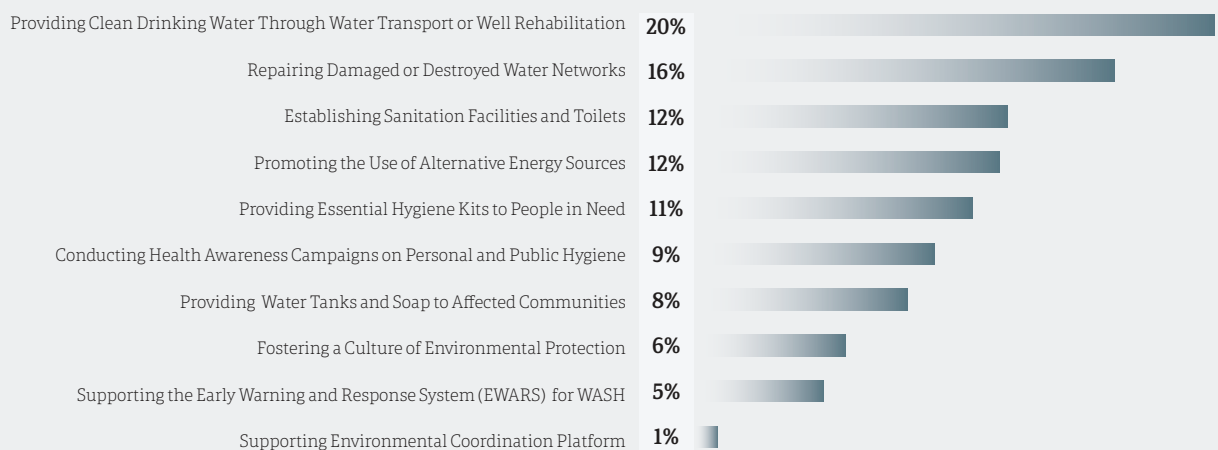
Top **priorities in SNFI** are improving housing conditions and maintaining damaged homes (20%) and providing sustainable shelter solutions for displaced households (18%).

 **Figure 48: SNFI Priorities**



Top **priorities in WASH** are providing clean drinking water (20%) and repairing damaged or destroyed water networks (16%).

 **Figure 49: WASH Priorities**



8- Community Resilience

Estimated Poverty Levels Inside Syria

The community survey reveals that 42% of respondents reported a 51-75% decrease in humanitarian assistance, while 36% noted a 26-50% reduction, with significant cuts affecting both Eastern and Western Syria.

Both key stakeholder and community surveys show similar views on poverty in Syria, with 42% estimating 51-75% of households below the poverty line and 31% estimating 76-100%. Most respondents see widespread poverty, affecting over 50% of households.

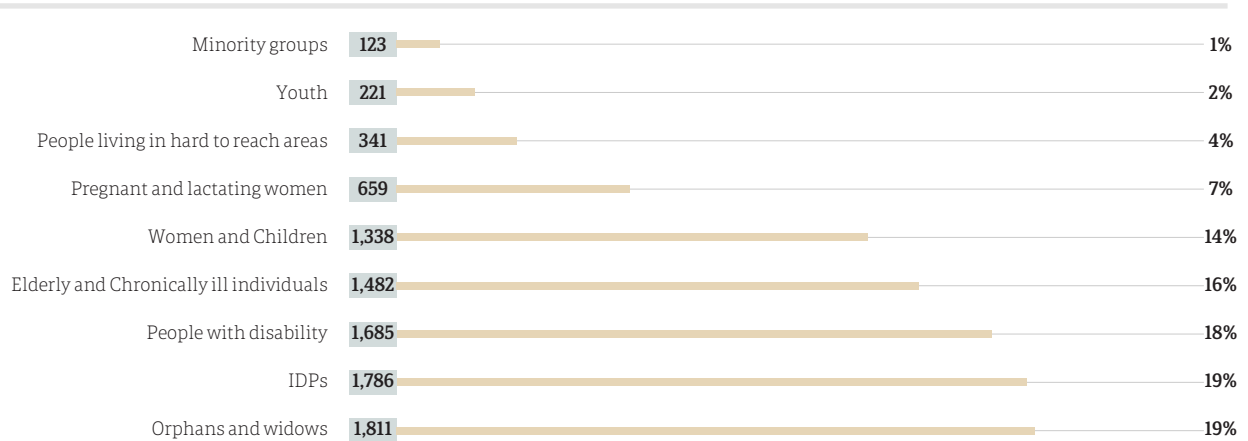


Percentage of the Community Dependent on Humanitarian Assistance

The results show 36% of respondents reporting 51-75% of their community relies on aid, and 30% reporting 26-50% dependency. Eastern Syria sees 43% indicating 26-50% reliance, while 44% in Western Syria report 51-75% dependency.

The study identifies orphans & widows, and IDPs (19% each) as the most vulnerable to aid reduction, followed by PWDs (18%), the elderly and chronically ill (16%), and women and children (14%).

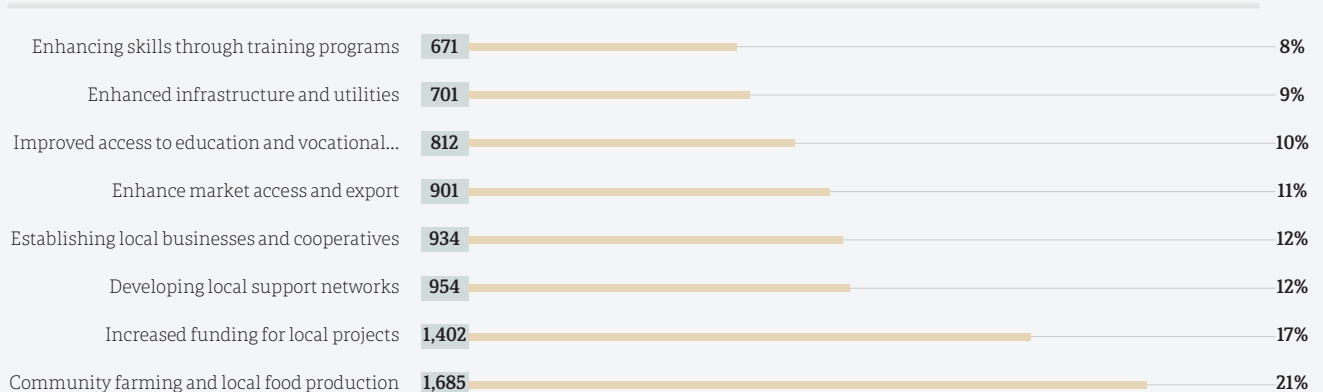
Figure 50: Most Vulnerable Groups Affected



Measures for Building Community Resilience and Self-Reliance in Response to Reduced Humanitarian Assistance

Top measures for building resilience and self-reliance include community farming, increased local project funding, and developing support networks and businesses.

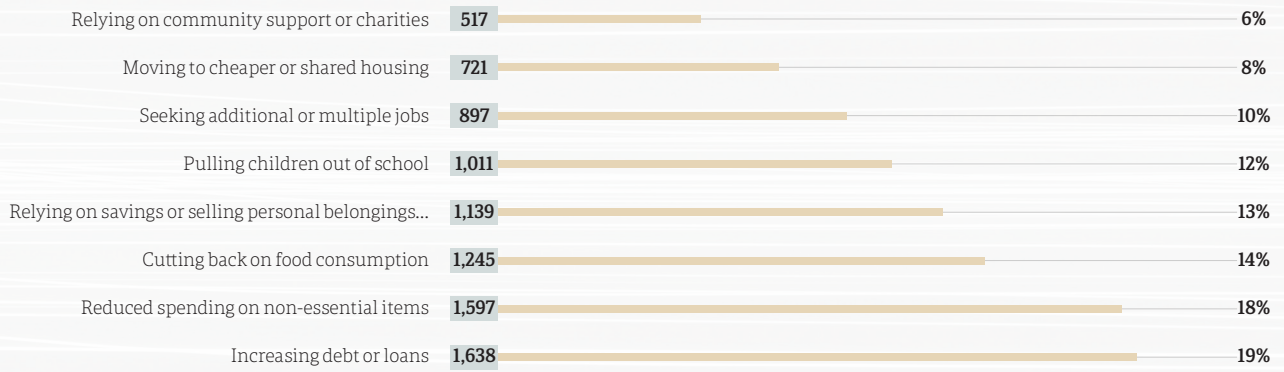
Figure 51: Measures for Building Community Resilience and Self-Reliance in Response to Reduced Humanitarian Assistance



Coping Strategies Adopted by Households in Response to Decreased Humanitarian Aid

Top coping strategies among households include increasing debt, reducing non-essential spending, and cutting back on food consumption.

Figure 52: Coping Strategies Adopted by Households in Response to Decreased Humanitarian Aid



8- Impact of Bab Al Hawa Closure

The study surveyed key stakeholders on their perceptions regarding the future of the Bab Al Hawa crossing following the extension set to expire on January 13, 2025.

Future of Humanitarian Aid Entry Through the Bab Al Hawa Border Crossing After the Latest Extension

The overall data suggests that while there is some uncertainty about the future of aid through the Bab Al Hawa crossing, the majority of key stakeholders, especially those inside Syria, do not believe that the aid will cease after the current extension.

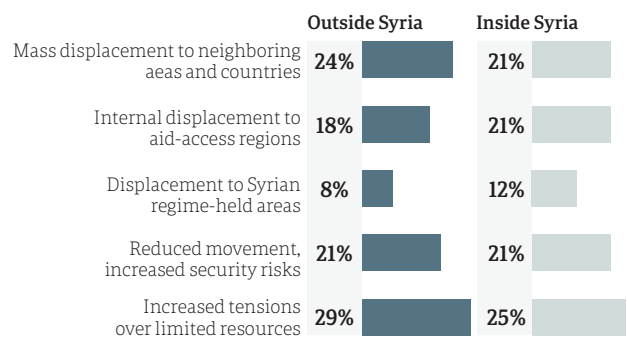
Figure 53: Future of Humanitarian Aid Entry



Potential Impact of Bab Al Hawa Closure on Movement and Displacement of People in the Region

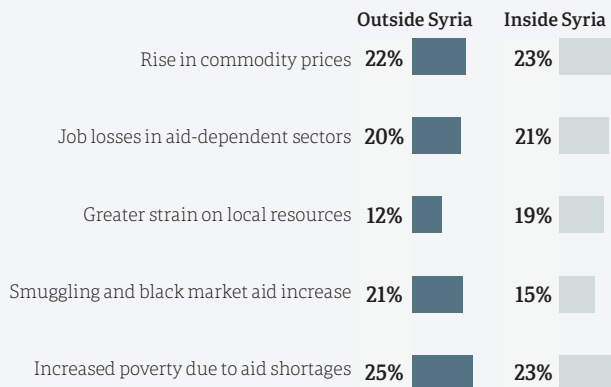
The top potential impacts of the closure include increased tensions over limited resources and reduced routine movement with heightened security risks. Additionally, both internal displacement to aid-access regions and mass displacement to neighboring areas and countries are significant concerns.

Figure 55: Potential Impact of Bab Al Hawa Closure



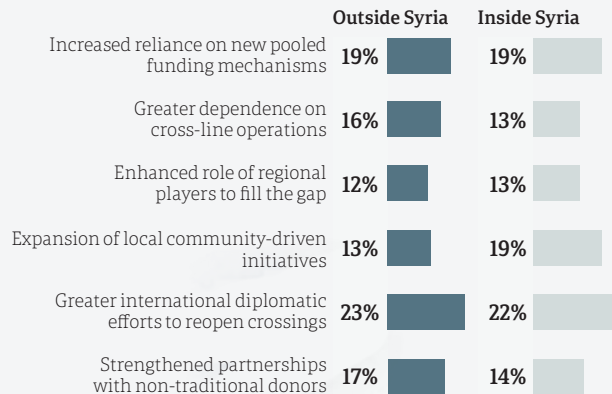
Anticipated Economic Effects of the Permanent Closure of the Bab Al Hawa Border Crossing

Figure 54: Anticipated Economic Effects of the Permanent Closure of the Bab Al Hawa



Potential Outcomes of Further Decreases in Humanitarian Assistance and the Blocking of Bab Al Hawa

Figure 56: Potential Outcomes of Further Decreases



9- Further Outlook and Strategic Solutions

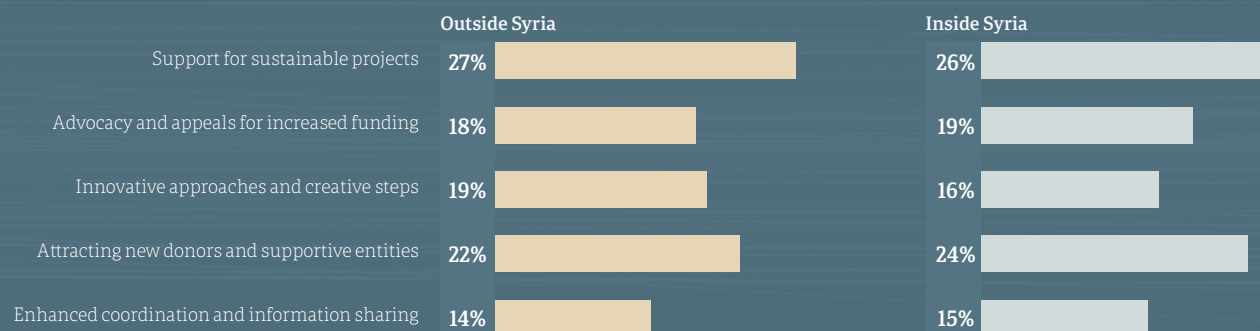
Efforts by Organizations to Plan Alternatives for Overcoming Reduced Funding

The study surveyed key stakeholders and the community on whether local and international NGOs and grassroots organizations have implemented plans to address reduced funding. 47% of key stakeholders and 37% of the community believe steps have been taken “to some extent,” while 13% of stakeholders and 15% of the community fully agree that adequate measures have been implemented. In contrast, 23% of stakeholders and 28% of the community feel no actions have been taken, with 17% and 20% expressing uncertainty.

Key Stakeholder Survey: Measures to Increase Humanitarian Aid Allocated for Syria

The top measures to increase aid allocated for Syria include supporting sustainable projects and attracting new donors, followed closely by strengthening advocacy efforts and improving coordination.

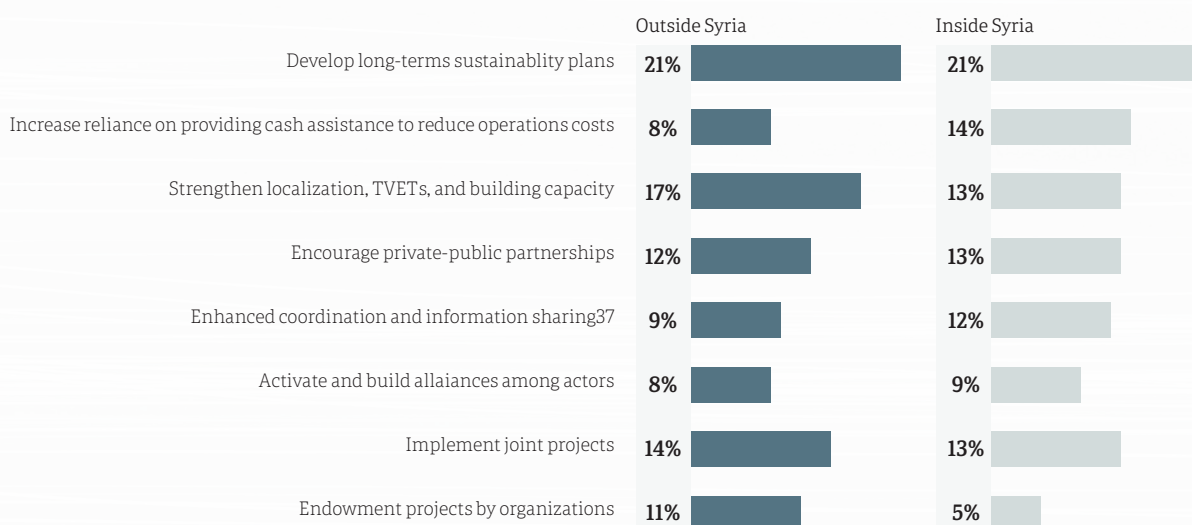
Figure 57: Measures to Increase Humanitarian Aid Allocated for Syria



Key Stakeholder Survey: Strategies for NGOs to Optimize Fund Usage and Reduce Reliance on Humanitarian Aid

The top strategies to optimize fund usage and reduce reliance on aid include developing long-term sustainability plans, strengthening localization and capacity building, and fostering public-private partnerships.

Figure 58: Strategies for NGOs to Optimize Fund Usage and Reduce Reliance on Humanitarian Aid



10- Recommendations

- 1 Empower Community-Led Solutions:** Local communities possess deep understanding of their unique challenges. Supporting grassroots initiatives such as community farming, vocational training, and local cooperatives will foster self-reliance and ensure more sustainable outcomes.
- 2 Adopt Flexible and Adaptive Funding Models:** NGOs should establish flexible funding mechanisms that respond to evolving needs. This includes exploring pooled funds and building partnerships with non-traditional donors to ensure continuity even when external funding decreases.
- 3 Enhance Local Capacity and Skills:** Investing in local vocational and technical training will provide communities with the tools needed for sustainable livelihoods. Strengthening local entrepreneurship and access to markets can help break dependency on humanitarian aid.
- 4 Strengthen Partnerships for Sustainability:** Deepen collaborations with local governments, the private sector, and other NGOs to pool resources and expertise. Stronger partnerships will ensure that aid reaches vulnerable populations effectively and foster long-term regional development.
- 5 Focus on Vulnerable Populations:** Target interventions for the most vulnerable—IDPs, women, children, PWDs, and the elderly. Tailored support ensures inclusivity and accessibility for those most affected by the crisis.
- 6 Promote Sustainable Development:** Encourage NGOs to adopt long-term sustainability strategies that reduce dependency on aid. This includes investing in infrastructure, local agriculture, and economic development to help communities transition towards self-sufficiency.
- 7 Increase Community Involvement and Transparency:** Involve communities in decision-making processes to enhance transparency and trust. Local engagement ensures that aid is aligned with actual needs, improving effectiveness and accountability.
- 8 Expand Advocacy for Humanitarian Support:** Advocate for sustained international support, particularly in maintaining cross-border operations. This ensures continuous access to vital supplies, while also raising awareness of the ongoing humanitarian crisis.
- 9 Develop Clear Exit Strategies:** Aid organizations must implement phased exit strategies that leave a lasting impact. Transitioning from emergency aid to development initiatives will foster resilience and ensure that communities can thrive independently in the long term.



IMPACT OF DECREASED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE in Northern Syria

October 2024 **Thematic Report**



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