ASSISTANCE COORDIANTION UNIT

NEED ASSESSMENT

FOR DEVELOPING CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS

To Support Economic Empowerment And Social Cohesion In Syria

November 2025

imu@acu-sy.org Tel: +90 (342) 220 1099

Quotation:
This report can be referenced when quoting the following image: "NEED ASSESSMENT Need assessment for developing crowdfunding platforms" ACU/IMU.

You can also view and obtain an electronic copy of this report through ACU's website at the following website:

Funded by MEAE

MINISTÈRE
DE L'EUROPE
ET DES AFFAIRES
ÉTRANGÈRES
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

Contents

Table of Figures

1. Introduction

The ongoing crisis in Syria has disrupted economic systems, strained community relations, and limited access to traditional forms of financial and social support. In this context, crowdfunding has emerged globally as an alternative mechanism for financing development and entrepreneurial initiatives. This report aims to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing a Syrian-led crowdfunding platform that can enhance local economic resilience and social cohesion.

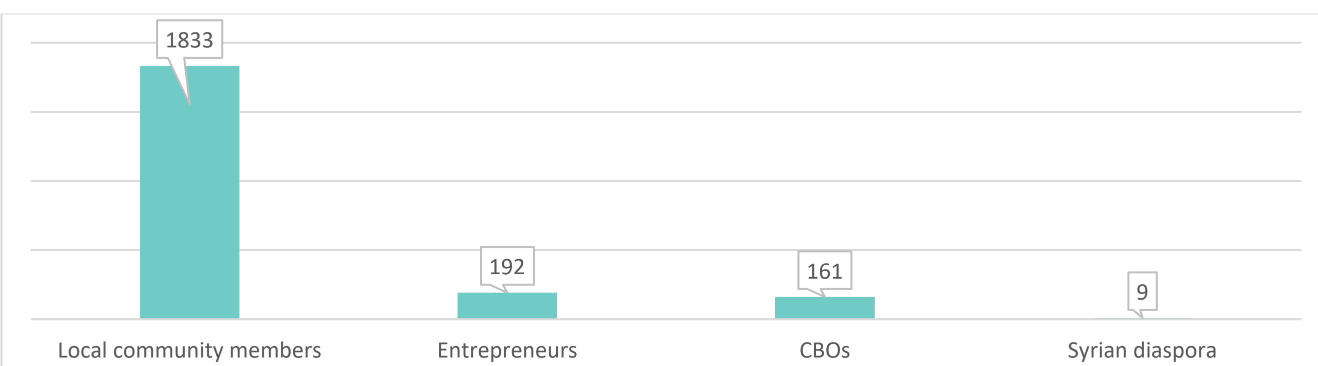
The assessment was designed to capture diverse perspectives from within Syria and the diaspora. By engaging directly with local entrepreneurs, community members, and organizations, as well as Syrians living abroad, the study seeks to understand the challenges, opportunities, and motivations associated with crowdfunding in the Syrian context.

2. Methodology

This needs assessment employed a quantitative data collection approach using structured surveys tailored to four target groups: entrepreneurs, local community members, community-based organizations (CBOs), and members of the Syrian diaspora. Data was collected through direct, face-to-face interviews conducted by trained enumerators. Prior to field deployment, all enumerators received comprehensive training from the central team to ensure consistency in data collection, accurate understanding of survey tools, and adherence to ethical standards.

A random sampling method was applied to ensure the representativeness of the data across a range of accessible districts in Syria, reflecting geographic, socio-economic, and demographic diversity. Due to logistical and security limitations, some areas could not be reached; nevertheless, the sample reflects a broad and credible cross-section of the Syrian context. The final sample included 192 entrepreneurs, 1,833 local community members, 161 representatives of CBOs, and 9 individuals from the Syrian diaspora. This sample enabled the assessment team to capture a broad range of perspectives regarding crowdfunding, economic empowerment, and social cohesion.

Figure 1: Sample's target groups



Data collection was successfully implemented in all accessible districts. The methodology was designed to ensure credibility, inclusiveness, and data validity, forming a reliable foundation for analysis and evidence-based recommendations.

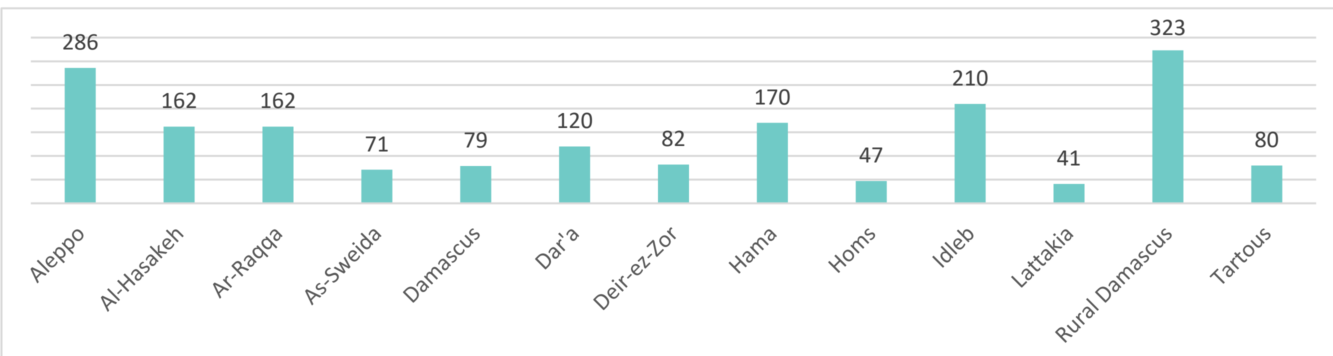
3. Findings

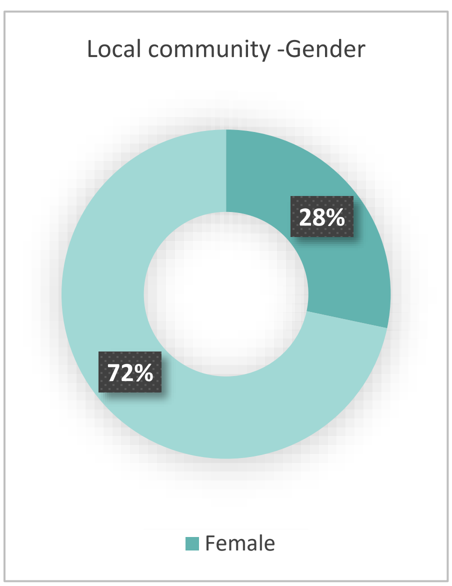
3.1 Demographic overview of participants

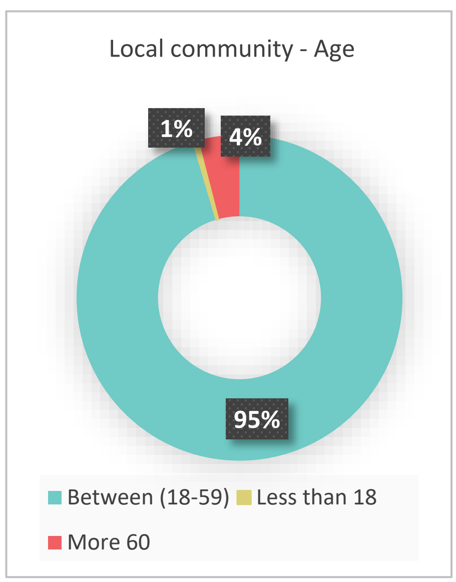
This study included four distinct respondent groups: local community members, entrepreneurs, representatives from community-based organizations (CBOs), and members of the Syrian diaspora. Each group brought a unique perspective shaped by their demographic backgrounds.

The demographic characteristics of local community respondents—specifically age, gender, education level, disability status, and geographic distribution—provide context for assessing the representativeness of the data, as illustrated in the charts below.

Figure 2: Local Community – Respondents distribution







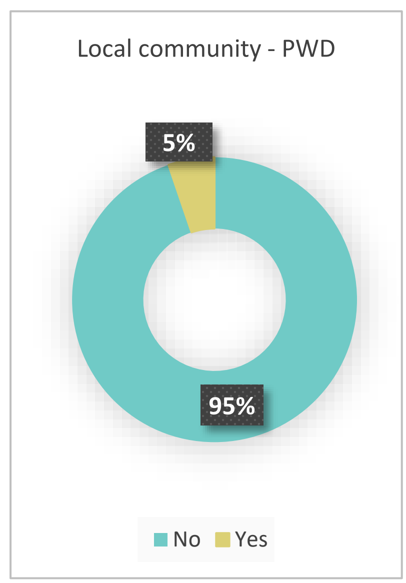
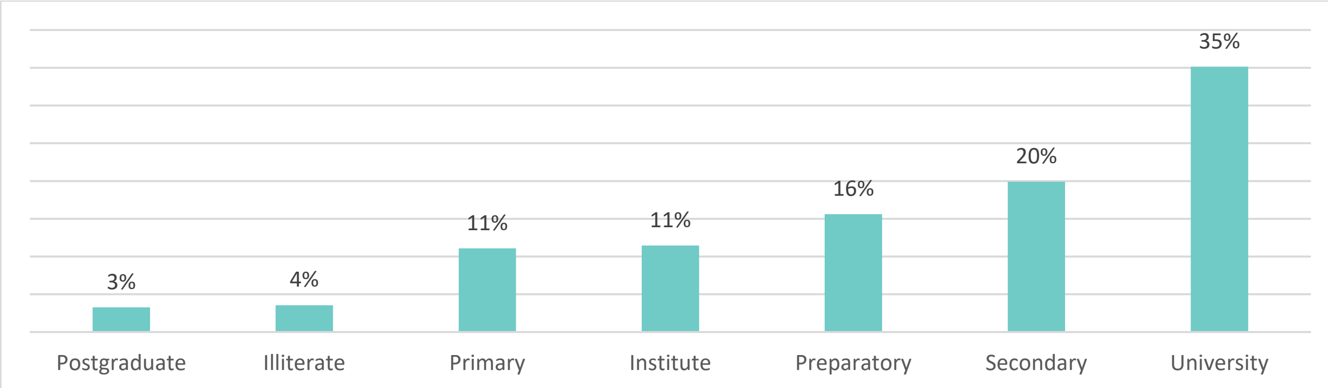
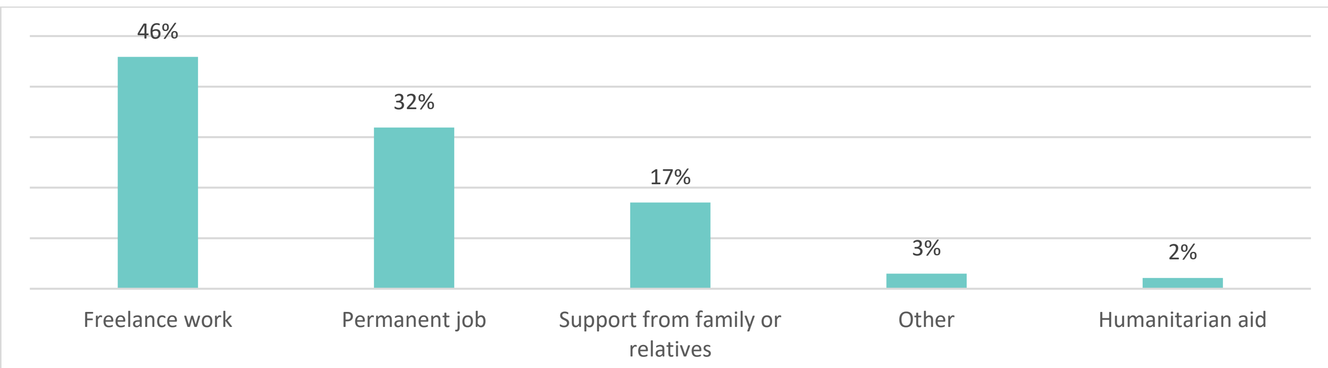


Figure 3: Local community – Educational level



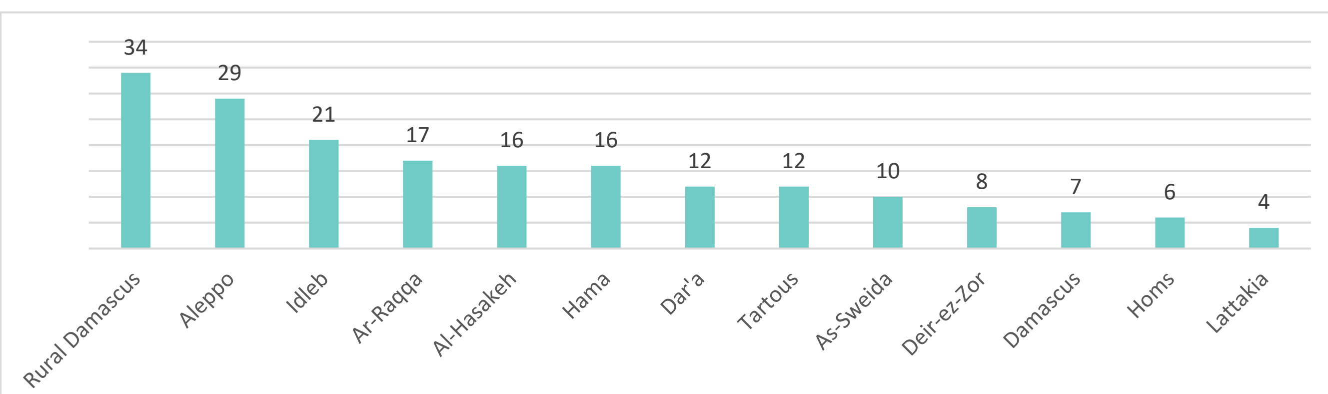
The average monthly income reported by local community respondents was $132, highlighting the limited economic capacity and potential relevance of alternative financing mechanisms such as crowdfunding.

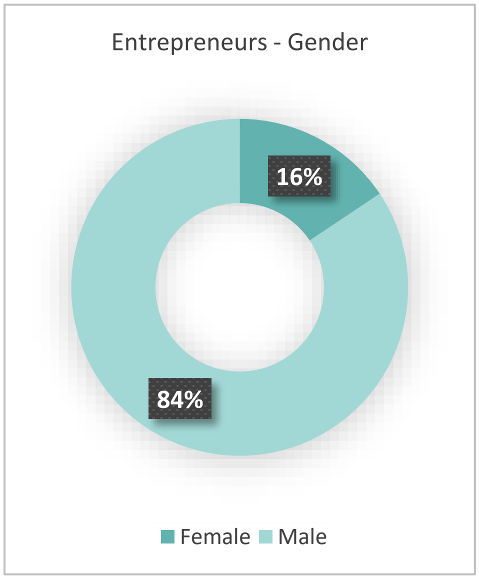
Figure 4: Local community – Main source of income

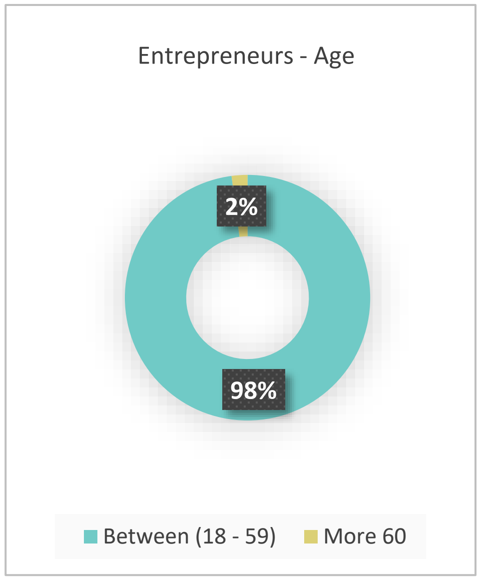


Entrepreneurs shared similar demographic traits, with a high proportion of males and individuals in the working-age category. Educational attainment was also relatively high among this group, as charts below:

Figure 5: Entrepreneurs – Respondents distribution







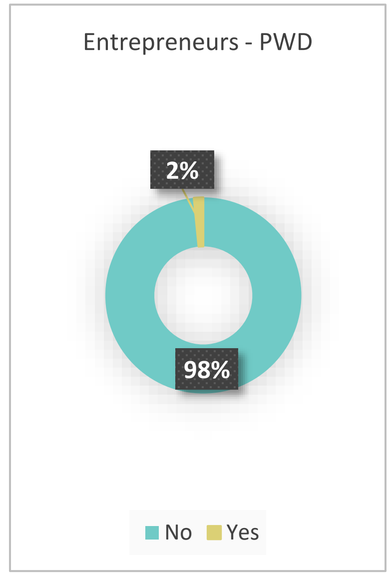


Figure 6: Entrepreneurs – Educational level

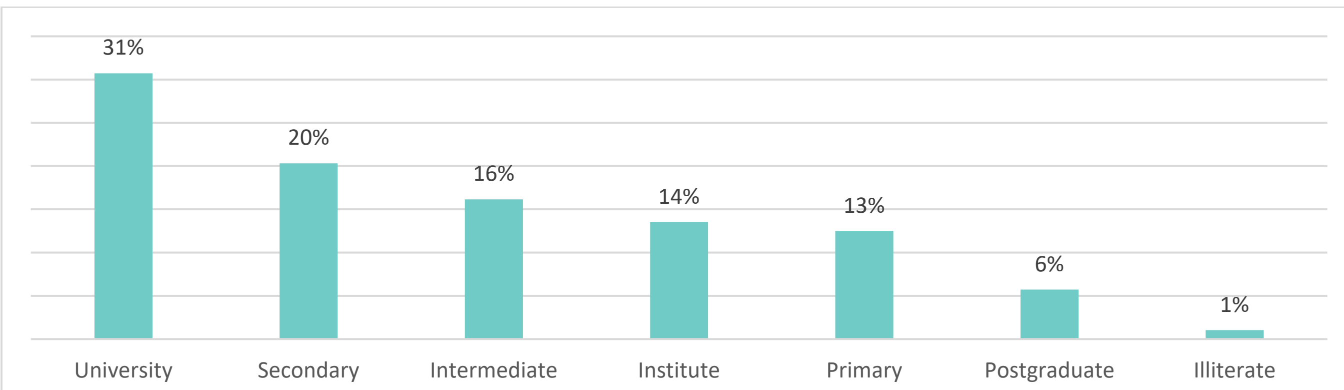
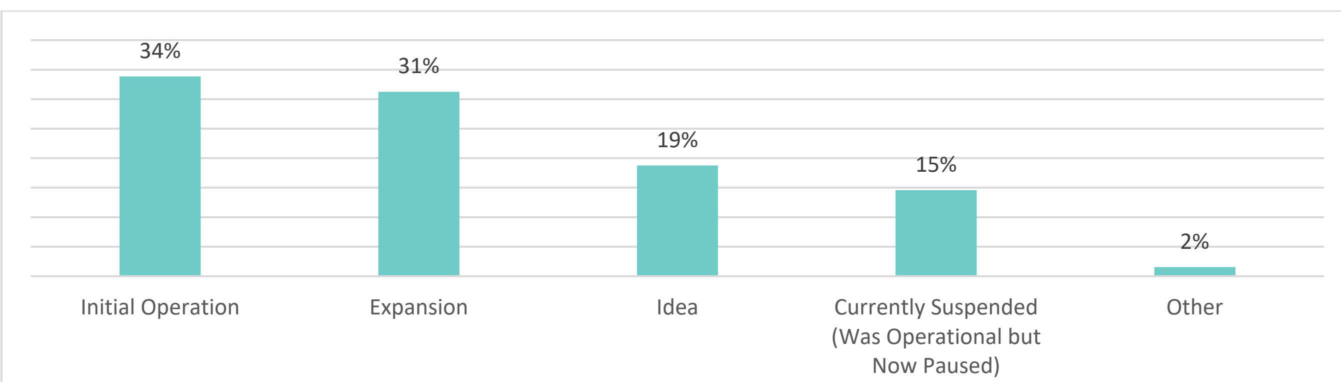
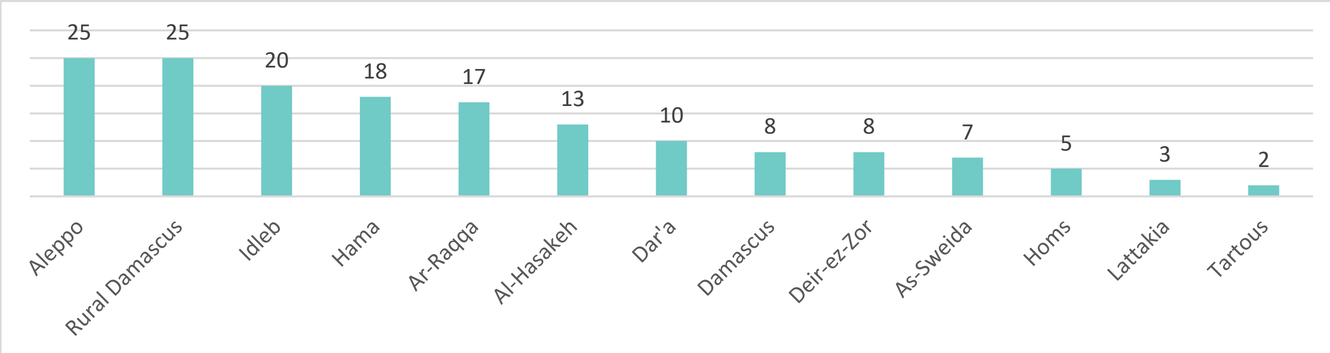


Figure 7: Current stage of entrepenurs projects



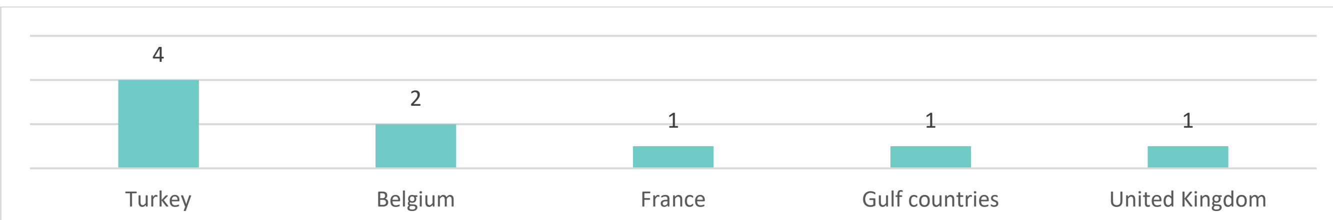
CBO representatives were predominantly experienced professionals, many of whom held leadership positions within their organizations. Most were actively involved in their local communities, the chart shows location distribution:

Figure 8: CBOs – Respondents distribution



Diaspora participants the majority of them were male (89%), with only 11% female. Most participants (89%) were between the ages of 18 and 59, while 11% were over 60. Regarding education, 67% held postgraduate degrees and 33% had a university degree. None of the respondents reported having a disability. The geographic distribution of participants is shown in the chart

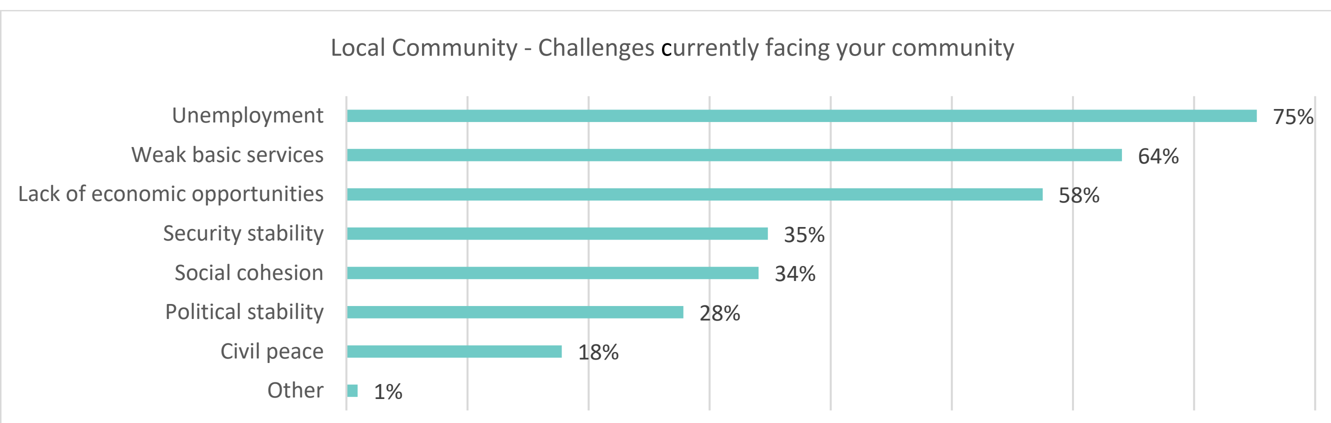
Figure 9: Diaspora – Country of residence



3.2 Challenges and priorities across stakeholders

Members of the local community were asked about the challenges currently facing their communities, as well as critical issues related to social cohesion, in addition to main barriers that preventing participation, as charts:

Figure 10: Local Community – Challenges currently facing your community



Other challenges include the most critical issue, widespread drug abuse, then soaring prices, declining interest in education, poor parenting, lawlessness, and lack of agricultural support.

Figure 11: Local Community – Critical issues related to social cohesion in community

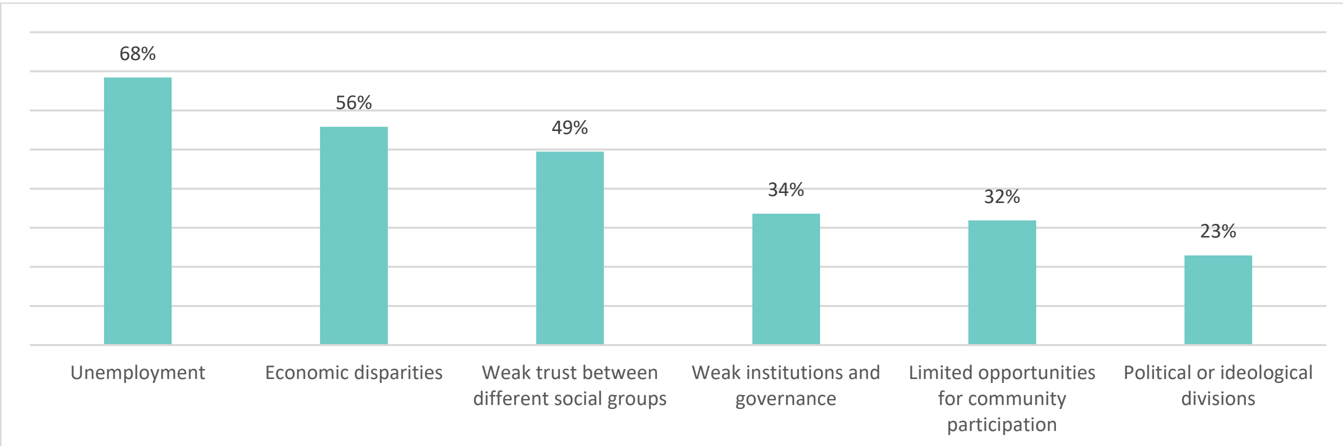
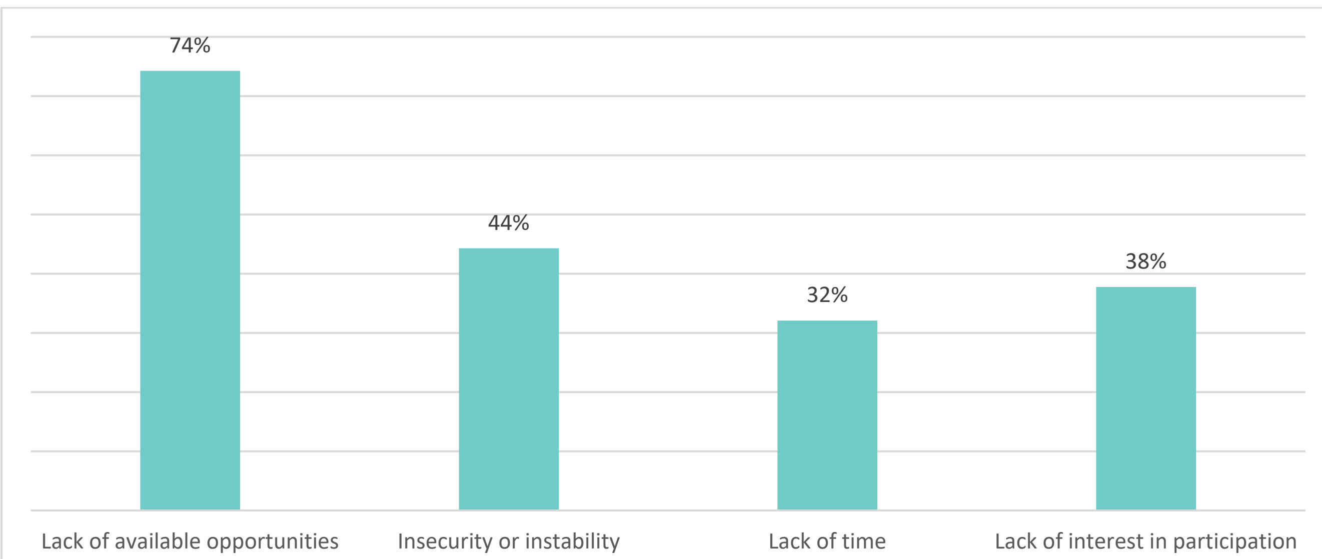
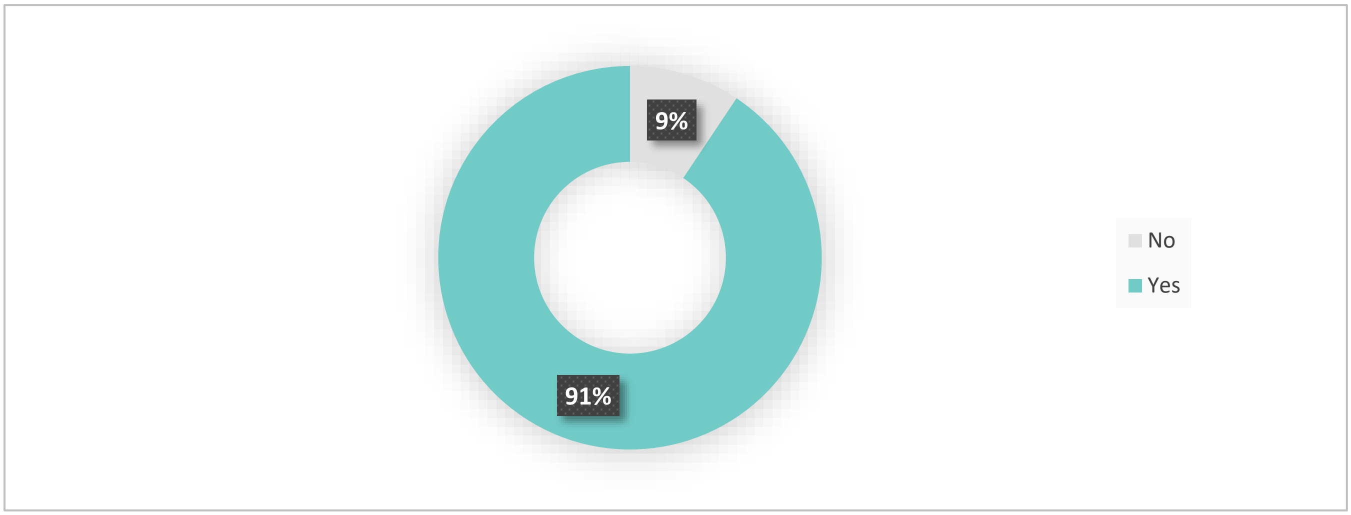


Figure 12: Local Community – Main barriers preventing community participation



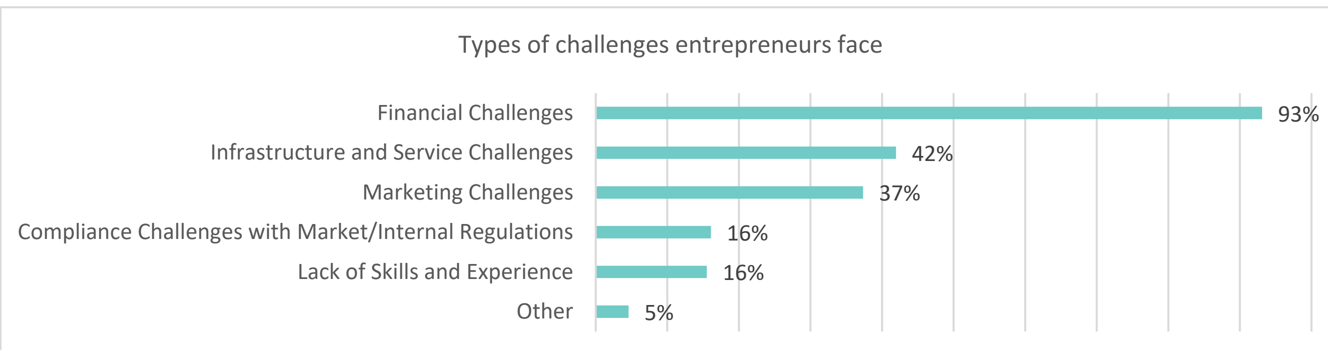
Meanwhile, entrepreneurs were invited to share whether they are experiencing any challenges in their projects and to specify the types of difficulties they face, such as financial, operational, or regulatory obstacles.

Figure 13:Entrepreneurs – Are you facing any challenges in your project?



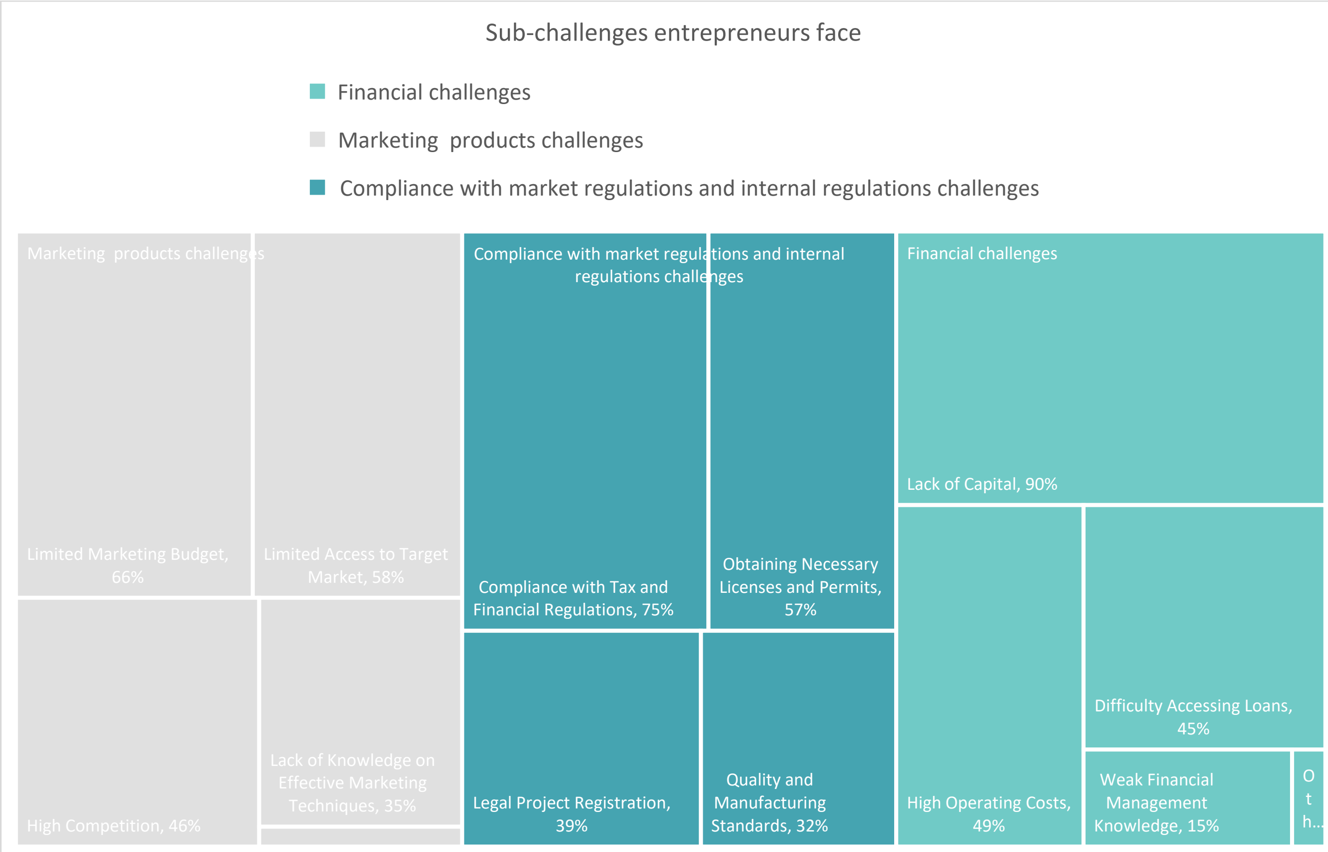
Among those who responded affirmatively, the main challenges identified were:

Figure 14: Types of challenges entrepreneurs face



Participants highlighted other key challenges, including disruptions in supply chains, security issues, difficulty finding suitable locations, rising costs of feed and medicine, limited access to essential equipment and spare parts, struggles to secure operational resources, and constraints on time.

Figure 15: Sub-challenges entrepreneurs face

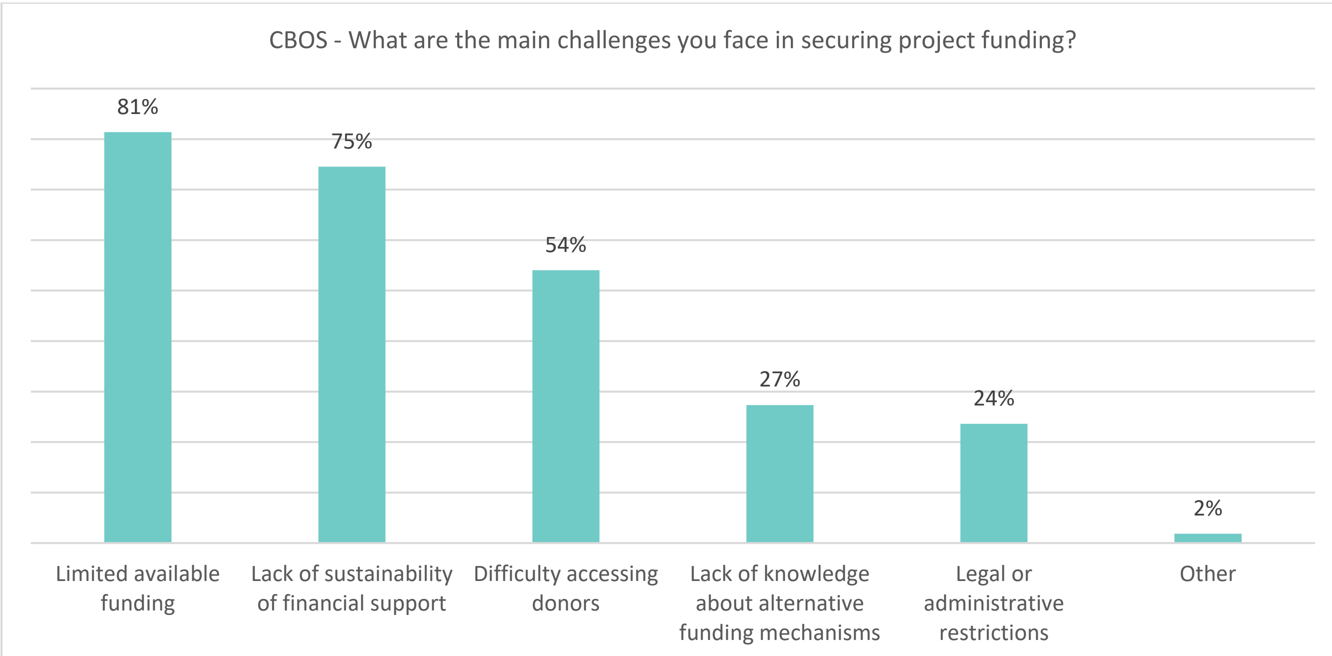


As observed in the chart above, some respondents mentioned other detailed challenges. The table below outlines these other challenges categorized by each main challenge:

Main challenge	Other sub- challenge
Financial Challenges	The lack of basic supplies such as generators, increased reliance on borrowing among consumers, and the impact of unstable currency exchange rates.
Marketing Challenges	Low consumer purchasing power.

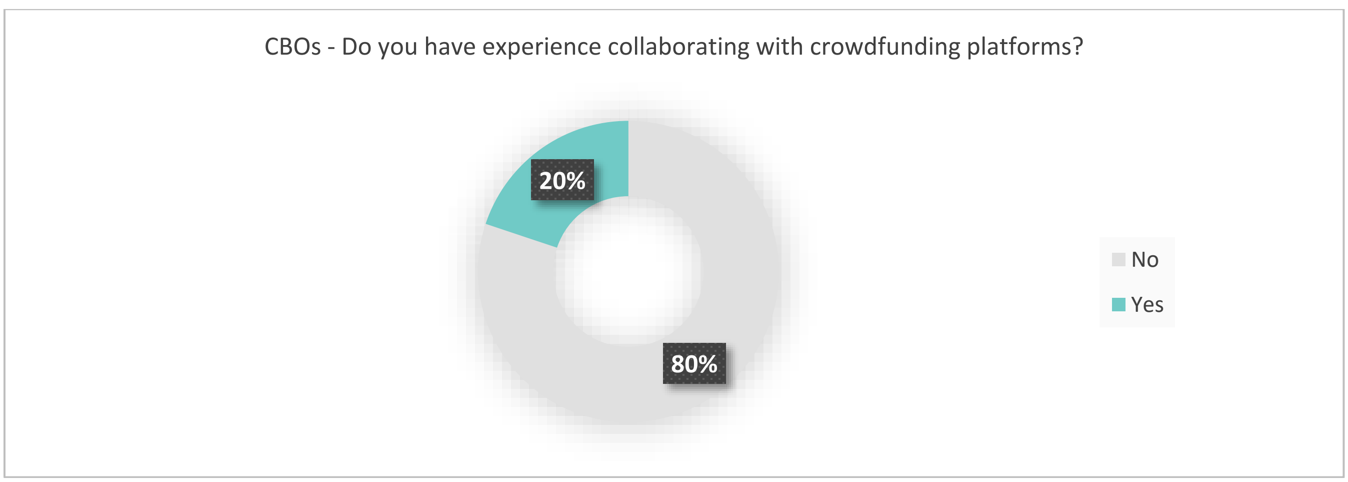
Additionally, CBOs were asked about the main challenges they encounter in securing funding for their projects, highlighting common issues like limited access to donors, complex application procedures, and lack of long-term support. The insights are illustrated in the following charts:

Figure 16: CBOS – What are the main challenges you face in securing project funding?



Participants also reported difficulties withdrawing funds from government banks and the impact of economic sanctions as significant challenges.

Figure 17: CBOs – Do you have experience collaborating with crowdfunding platforms?



Among the 20% of CBOs with experience collaborating with crowdfunding platforms, some CBOs faced significant obstacles, including administrative and legal restrictions, difficulties in sustaining funding, and a lack of compatibility between platform requirements and local realities. Key issues included limited financial resources, the need for banking operations, and difficulty in transferring or accessing funds due to banking restrictions and sanctions (e.g., Caesar Act). Additional challenges involved a lack of continuity in support, high competition for limited funding, poor communication with platforms, and the pressure of meeting full funding goals to receive any funds.

3.3 Crowdfunding role in enhancing social cohesion and economic development

To explore the potential of a Syrian-led crowdfunding platform, participants from various stakeholder groups—local community members, entrepreneurs, CBOs, and diaspora—were consulted through tailored questions assessing their expectations, priorities, and willingness to engage.

Local community members were asked whether they believe that social cohesion and economic development projects could address local needs. They were also invited to prioritize thematic areas that a crowdfunding platform should focus on to strengthen social cohesion and promote economic growth. Furthermore, participants were asked whether the platform should primarily target social, economic, or both types of projects, as the charts below:

Figure 18: Local Community – Do you believe that social cohesion and economic development projects can be a solution to meet local needs?

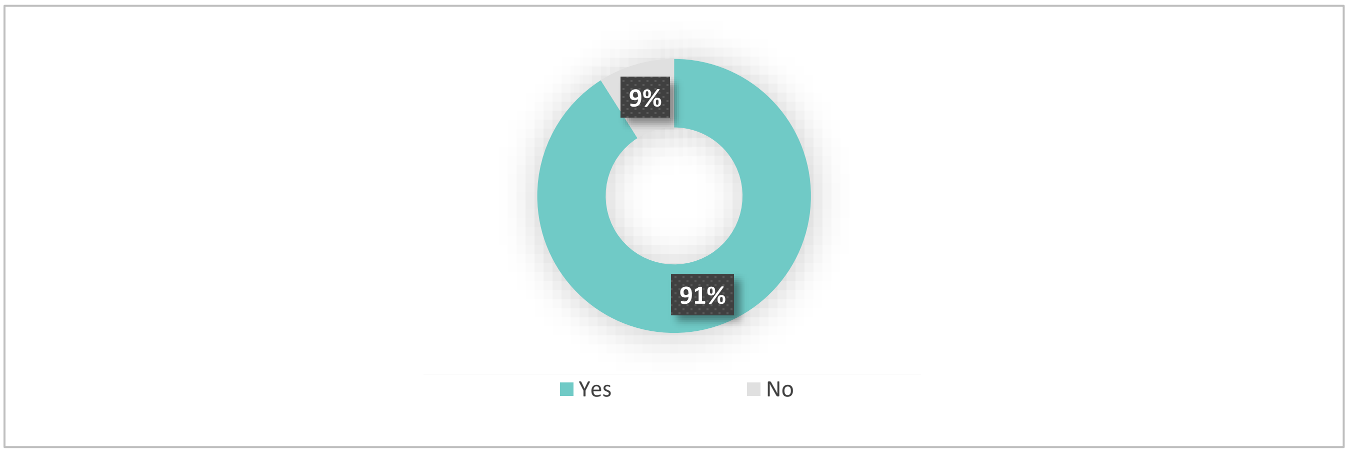


Figure 19: Local Community – Priorities should crowdfunding platform focus on to enhance social cohesion

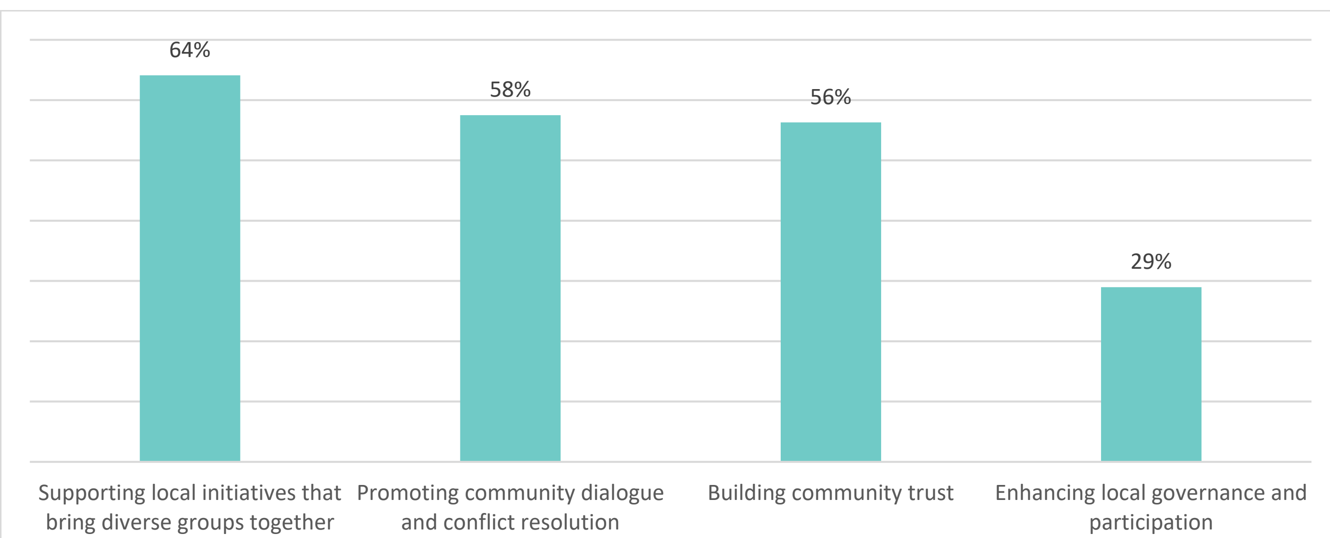


Figure 20 :Local Community – Priorities crowdfunding platform focus on to promote economic development

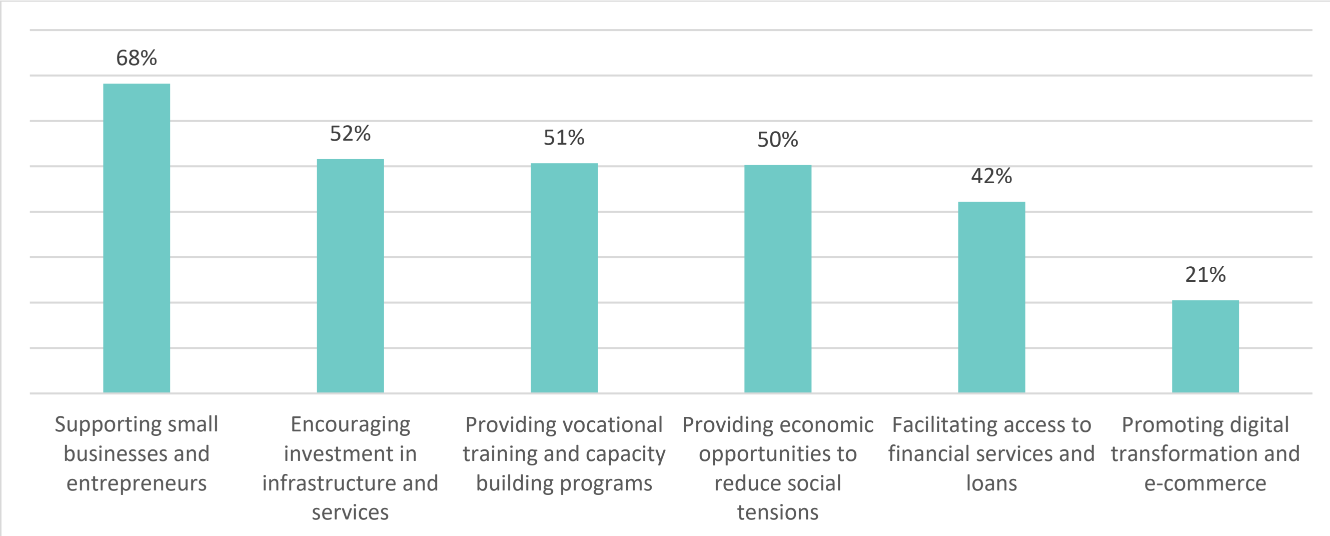
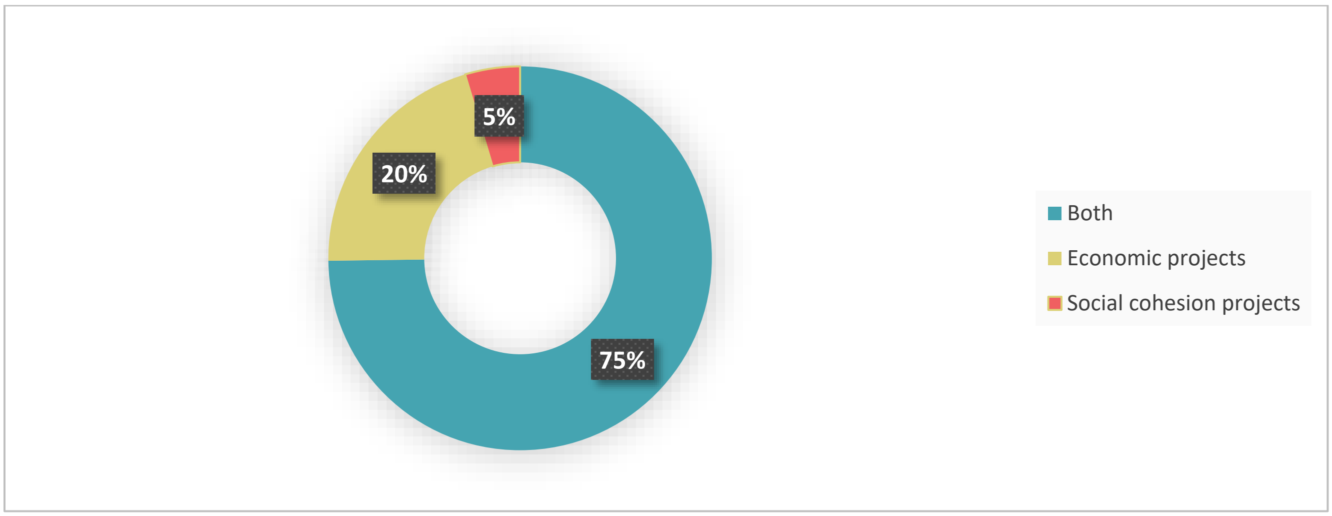


Figure 21 :Local Community – Should the crowdfunding platform focus more on social cohesion projects economic projects or both?



Entrepreneurs were surveyed about the expected impact of crowdfunding on their business and the surrounding community. They were also asked whether they believe that such a platform could contribute to enhanced social cohesion.

Figure 22 :Entrepreneurs – What impact do you expect crowdfunding to have on your business and local community?

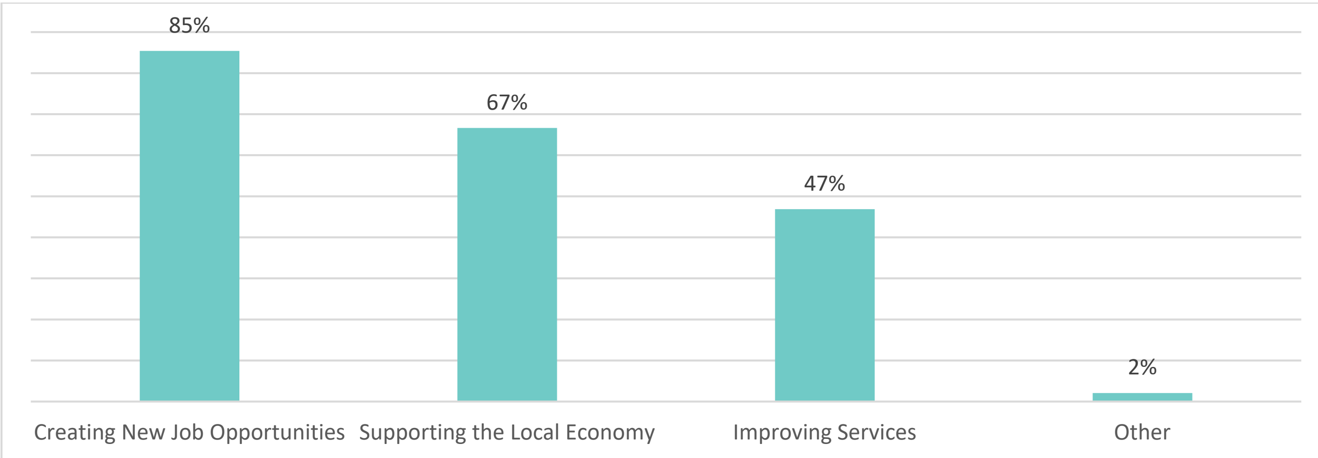
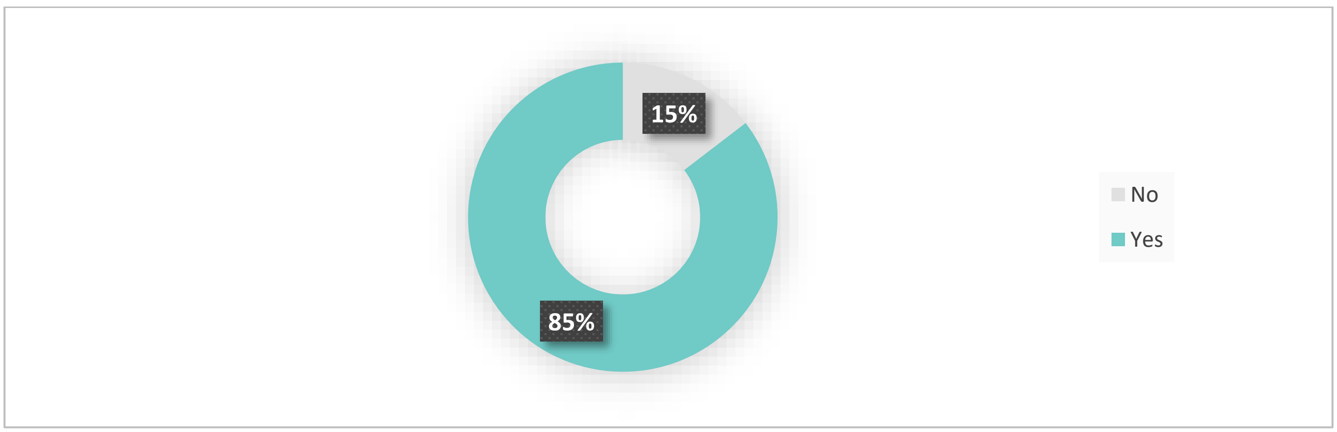


Figure 23 :Entrepreneurs – Do you believe that establishing a crowdfunding platform can enhance social cohesion?



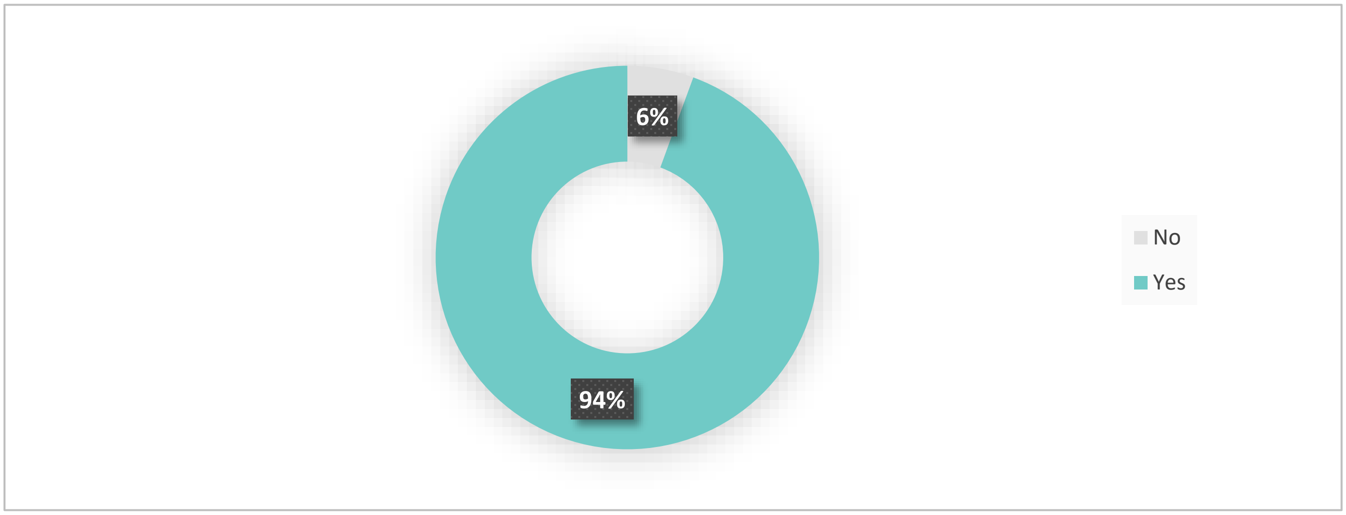
Based on entrepreneurs' responses who supported the idea, a crowdfunding platform could play a key role in enhancing social cohesion in Syria. It offers a way to address economic challenges by supporting small businesses and reducing unemployment, particularly among youth and marginalized groups. This economic empowerment would help ease social tensions and improve community stability.

Entrepreneurs also emphasized that transparent and accountable funding could rebuild trust among Syrians, while collaborative projects between local communities and the diaspora could strengthen social bonds. Psychologically, the platform was seen as a means to restore hope and national pride by enabling Syrians to take part in rebuilding their own communities.

For the platform to succeed, respondents stressed the importance of strong oversight, inclusive participation, and active diaspora engagement. If implemented effectively, it could shift societal dynamics from fragmentation toward cooperation and shared recovery.

Moreover, CBOs provided insights into their interest in participating in a crowdfunding platform. They also shared their views on how this platform could potentially increase diaspora contributions and improve the sustainability of local projects.

Figure 24 :CBOs – Would your organization or team like to participate in a crowdfunding platform?



CBOs are eager to join a diaspora-linked crowdfunding platform for several reasons. Many seek transparent, fair alternatives to traditional aid, which they view as slow or politicized. Crowdfunding is seen as a way to support income-generating projects, reduce unemployment, and promote economic resilience. It also offers a valuable bridge to the diaspora for both funding and expertise. Additionally, the platform is viewed as a means to strengthen social cohesion, provide flexible support for urgent needs, and amplify the voices of marginalized communities.

Figure 25 :CBOs – Do you believe that a crowdfunding platform could increase diaspora contributions to projects related to social cohesion and economic development?

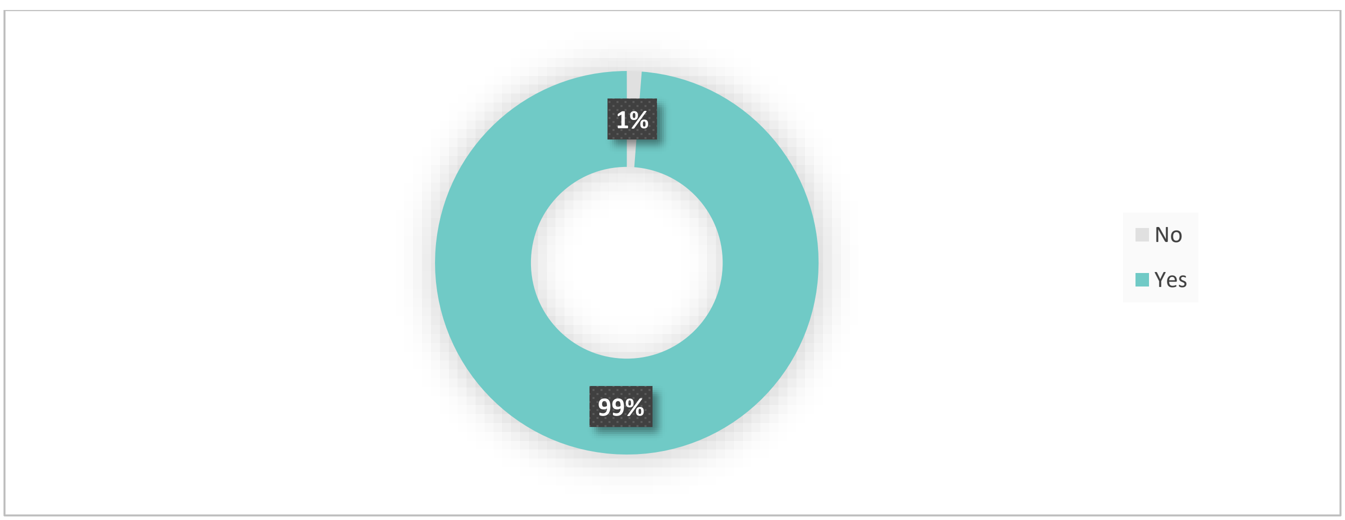


Figure 26 :CBOs – What kind of support or features would you expect from such a platform?

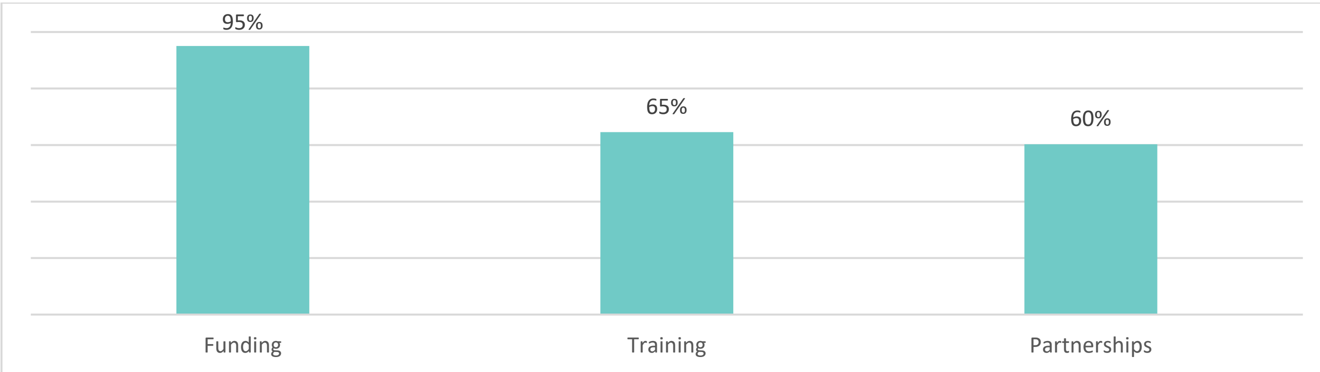
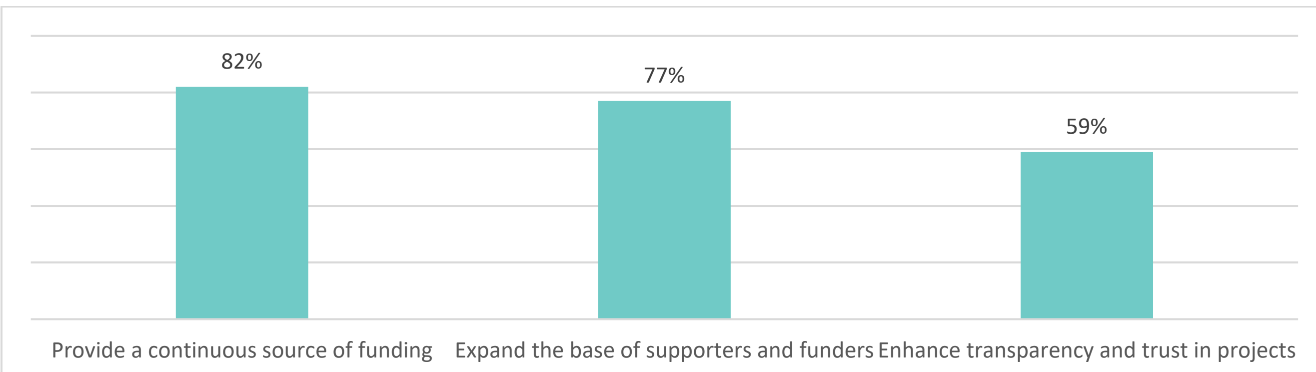
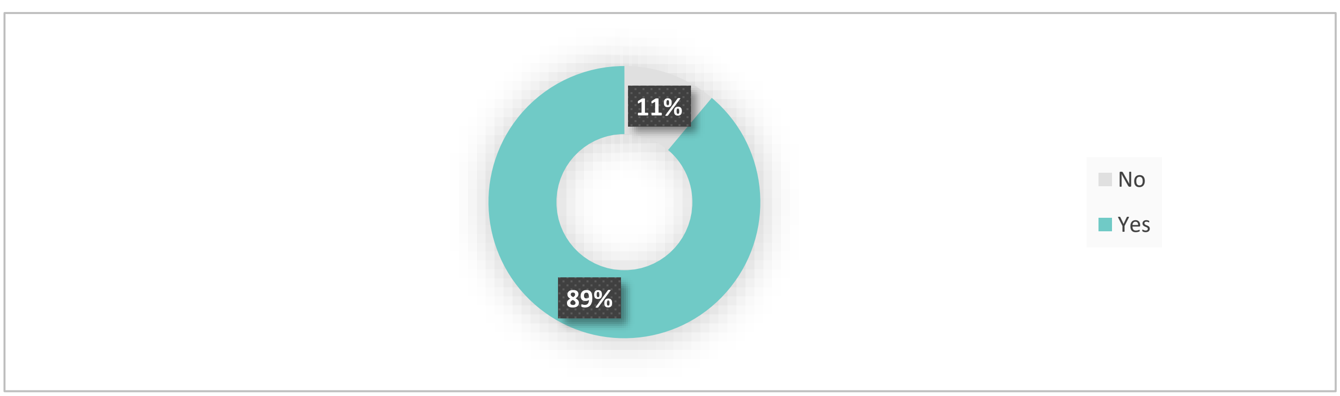


Figure 27 :CBOs – How can a crowdfunding platform enhance the sustainability of your projects?



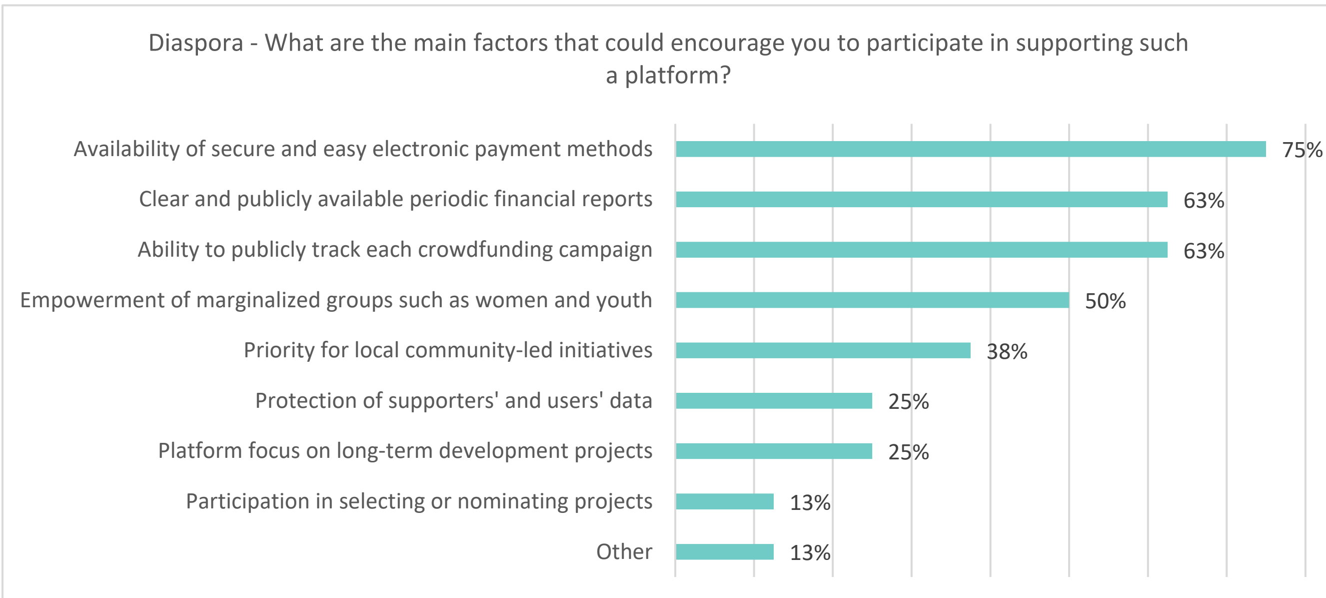
Syrian diaspora participants were asked if a crowdfunding platform would encourage them to support social and economic projects in Syria. Additional questions assessed the factors that would motivate their participation, their views on the importance of locally managed platforms, and whether such initiatives could improve project ownership and long-term sustainability. Lastly, they were invited to indicate their willingness to take an active role in promoting and advocating for the platform.

Figure 28 :Disapora – Do you believe that a crowdfunding platform would increase participation in supporting social cohesion and economic development?



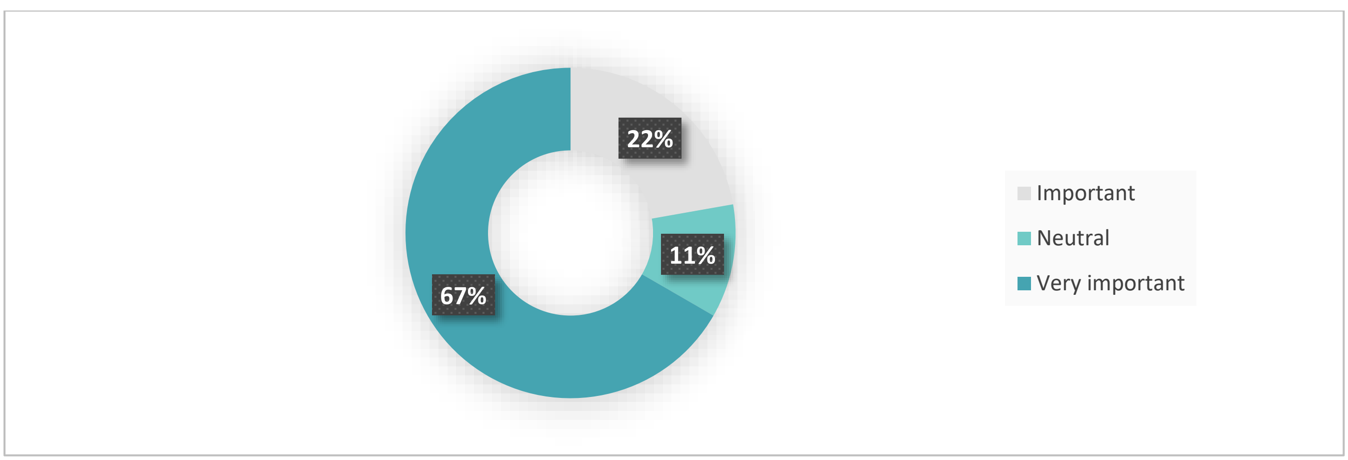
For those who disagreed, the main reasons were a lack of transparency and the belief that Syrians cannot work effectively together. In contrast, participants who supported the idea highlighted several enabling factors that encourage their participation in such platforms, including their willingness to contribute amounts ranging from $200 to $100,000 to support a project.

Figure 29 :Diaspora – What are the main factors that could encourage you to participate in supporting such a platform?



Other factors include that the projects are deserving of charity.

Figure 30 :Diaspora – How important is it for Syrians to fund projects in Syria through a locally managed crowdfunding platform?



Diaspora highlighted the importance of locally managed crowdfunding platforms as a more effective and responsive alternative to traditional funding, which often follows external agendas. They believe such platforms can better address real community needs, support small projects, and boost local economies. This approach also encourages self-reliance, community engagement, and offers a trusted channel for Syrians abroad to contribute meaningfully to their country’s recovery.

Figure 31 :Diaspora – Do you think a Syrian-led crowdfunding platform would enhance local ownership and project sustainability?

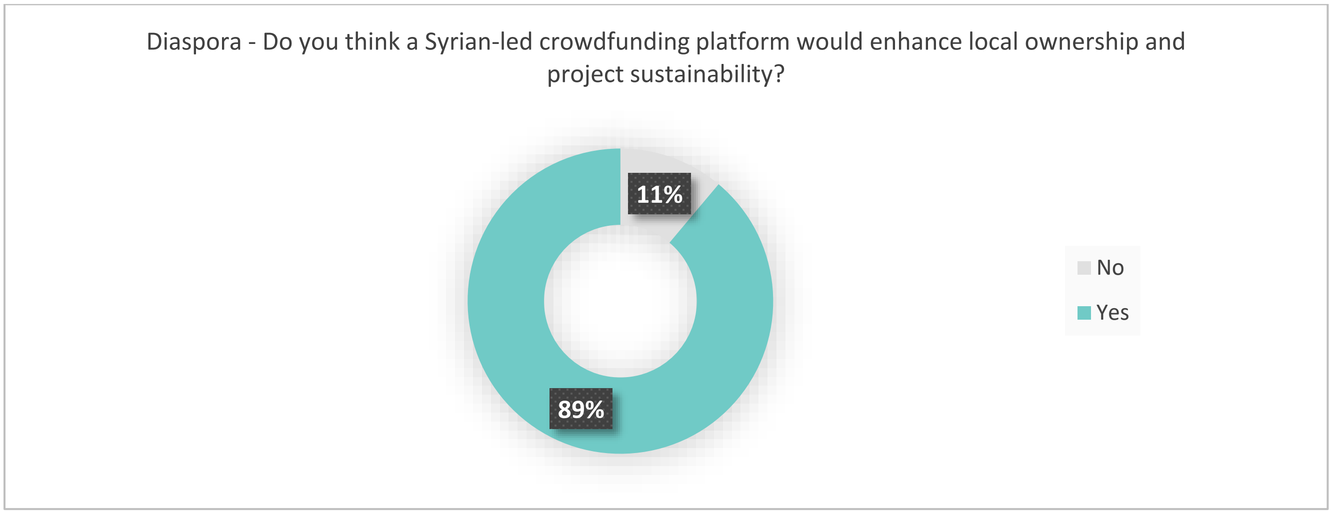
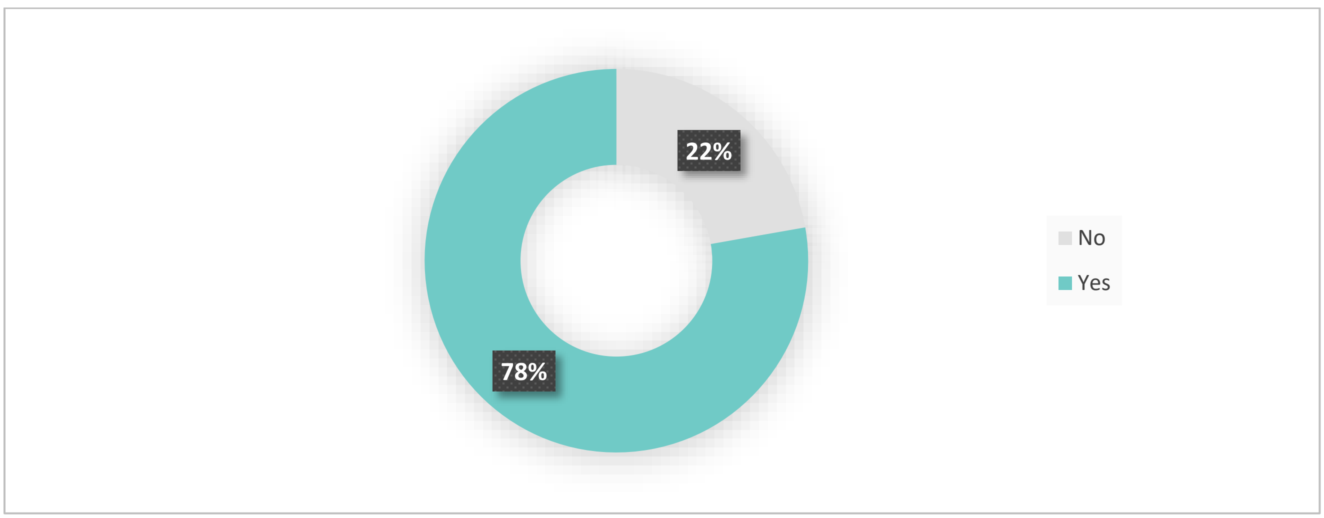


Figure 32 :Diaspora – Would you like to play a role in promoting and advocating for the crowdfunding platform's activities?



3.4 The role of the Syrian diaspora in supporting development

This study explores key perspectives from different stakeholders on the role of the Syrian diaspora in supporting projects and rebuilding Syria. For the local community, the main obstacles the diaspora faces when trying to support projects or businesses in Syria were explored, ways to overcome these challenges were explored, and how the diaspora and local communities can collaborate to restore Syria's economy and social cohesion, the charts below show the insights:

Figure 33 :Local Community – What are the main obstacles the Syrian diaspora faces when trying to support projects or businesses in Syria?

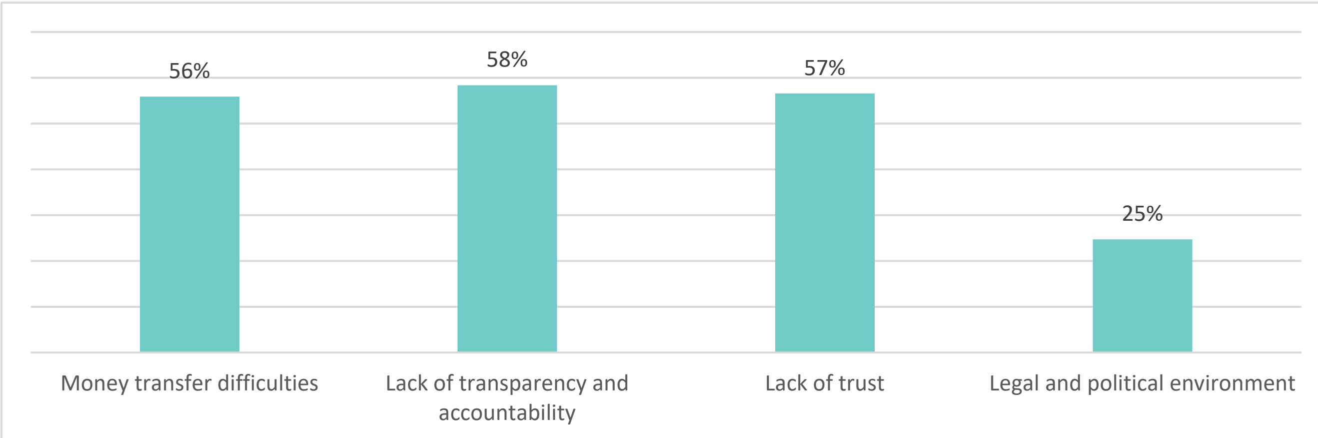


Figure 34 :Local Community – How can these obstacles be overcome?

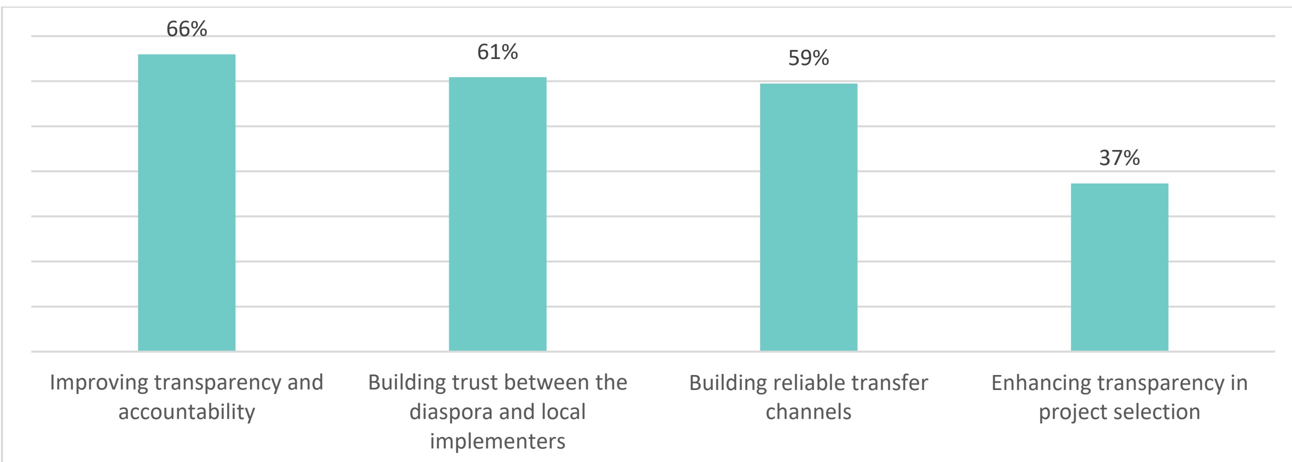
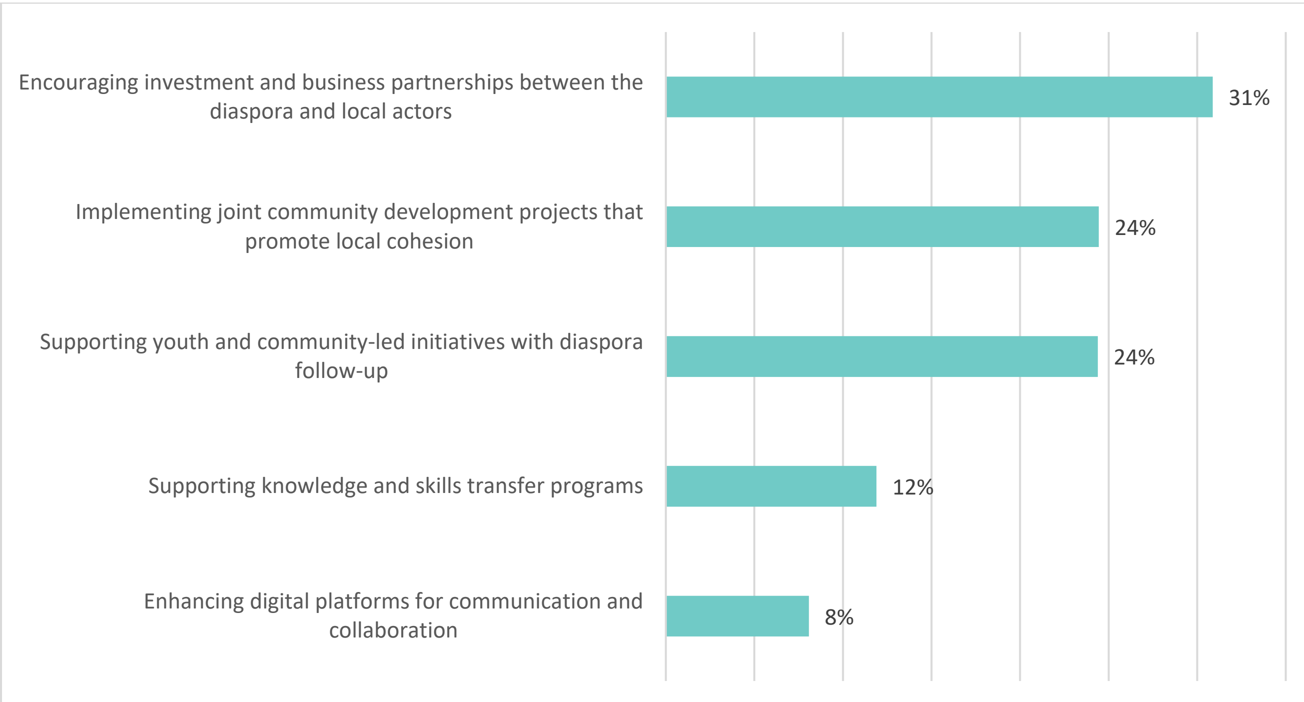


Figure 35 :How can the diaspora and local communities work together to rebuild Syria's economy and social cohesion?



Moreover, entrepreneurs shared insights on how Syrians in the diaspora can assist their businesses or projects, and whether they have acquaintances or relatives abroad who might support their development.

Figure 36 :Entrepreneurs – How can Syrians in the diaspora help support your business or project?

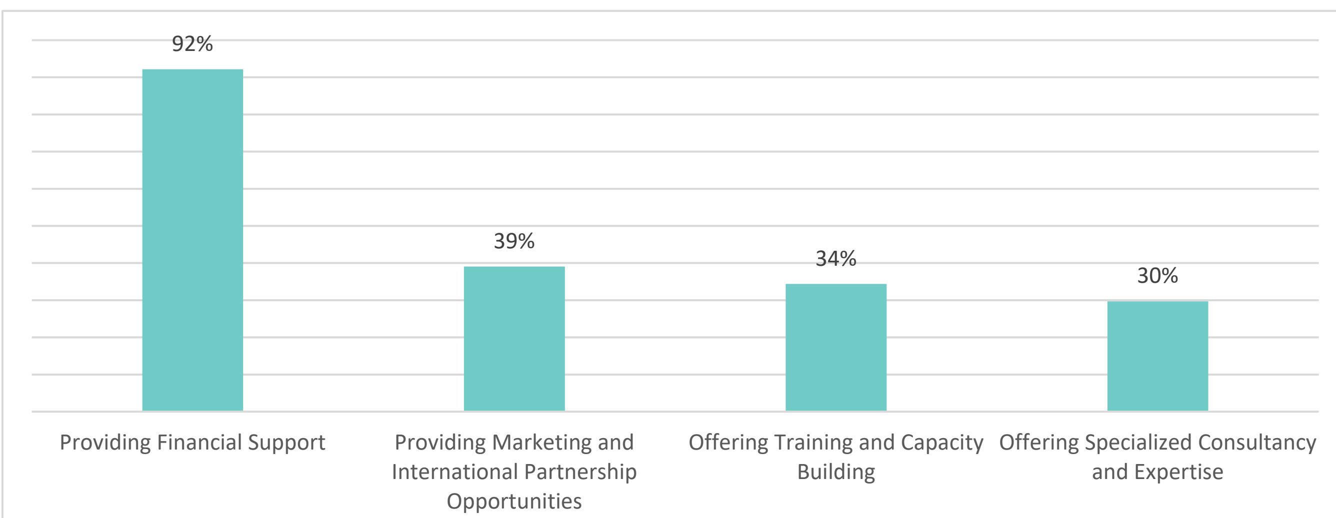
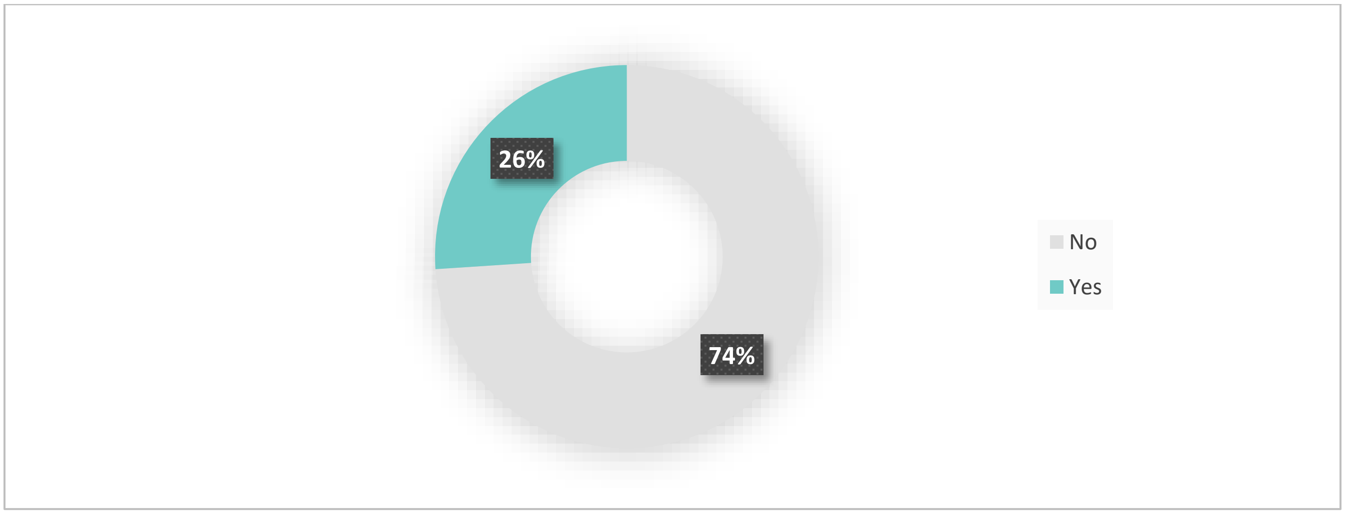
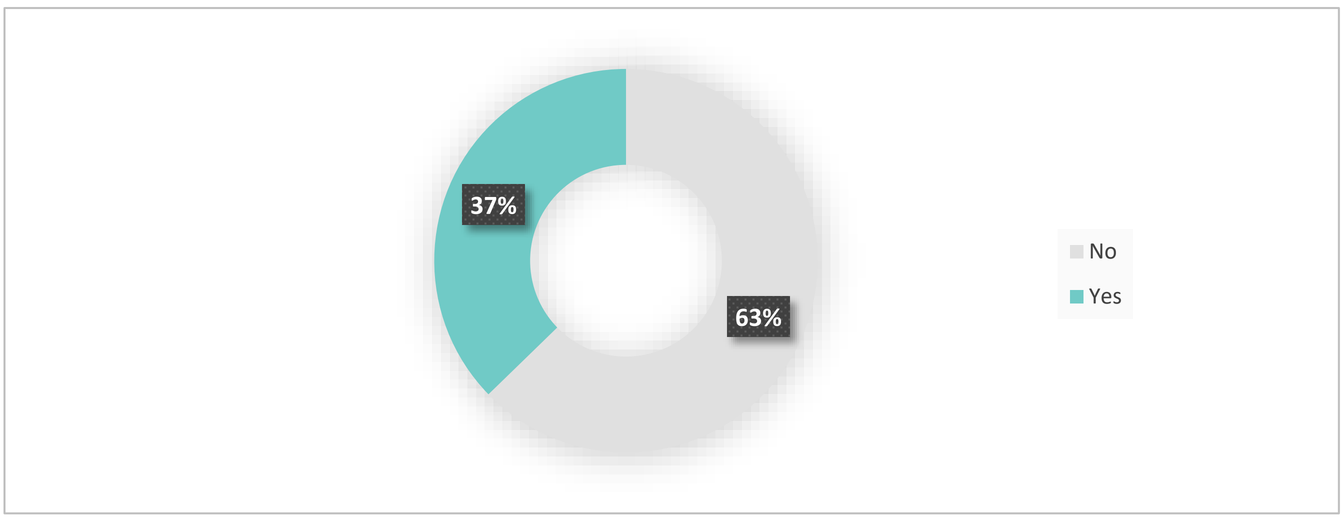


Figure 37: Entrepreneurs – Do you have any acquaintances or relatives in the diaspora who might helping you develop your project?



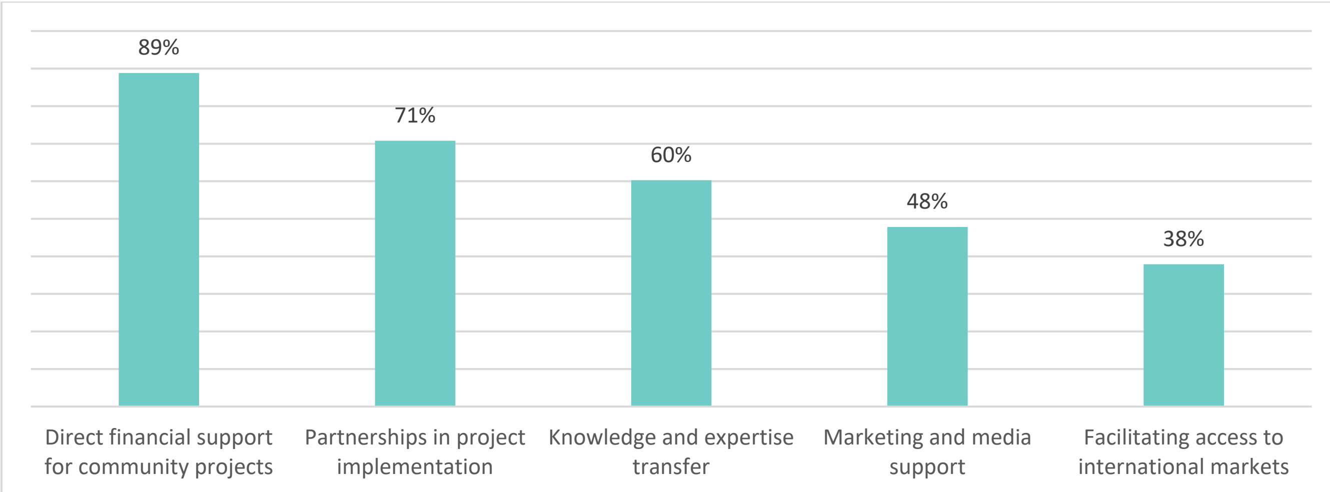
CBOs provided information on whether they have implemented projects funded fully or partially by the diaspora and how the diaspora can further contribute to economic and social recovery:

Figure 38: CBOs – Has your organization implemented any projects in recent years that were fully or partially funded by the Syrian diaspora?



Among CBOs that implemented projects fully or partially funded by the Syrian diaspora, contributions have enabled a wide range of community initiatives across Syria. These included food and winter relief, healthcare services (such as surgeries, medications, and physiotherapy), and support for small businesses. Projects also focused on school rehabilitation, vocational training, women's empowerment, child protection, and basic infrastructure like roads and water wells. Many of these efforts aimed to improve living conditions and promote self-reliance, particularly for vulnerable groups. Following the earthquake, diaspora-funded interventions included the distribution of emergency food, clothing, diesel, and tents, as well as the construction of latrines and support to medical facilities in the most affected areas.

Figure 39: CBOs – How can the diaspora, in collaboration with CBOs, contribute to rebuilding Syria's economy and social cohesion?



Finally, diaspora members expressed the factors that encourage or prevent them from supporting projects in Syria. The results are summarized and visualized through charts:

Figure 40: Diaspora – What type of projects are you interested in supporting?

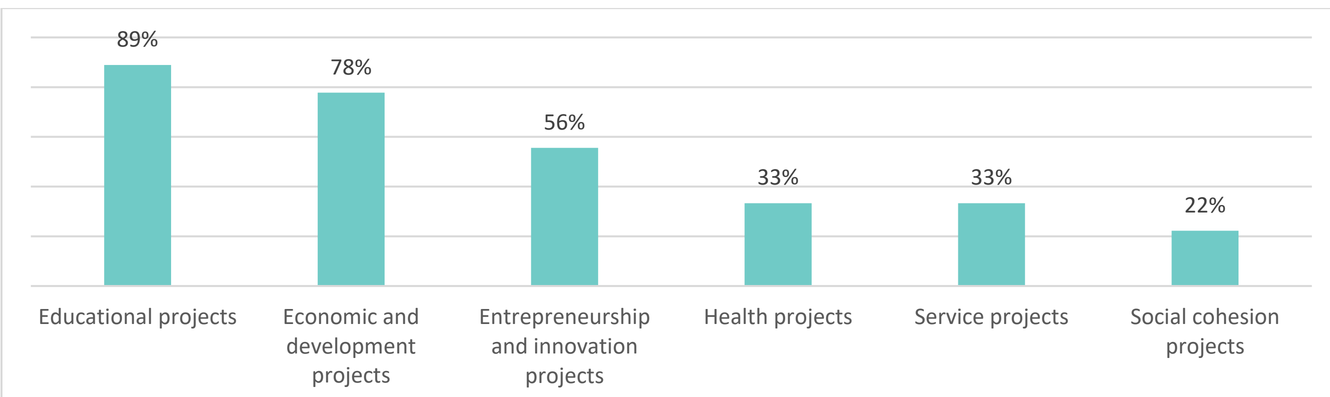
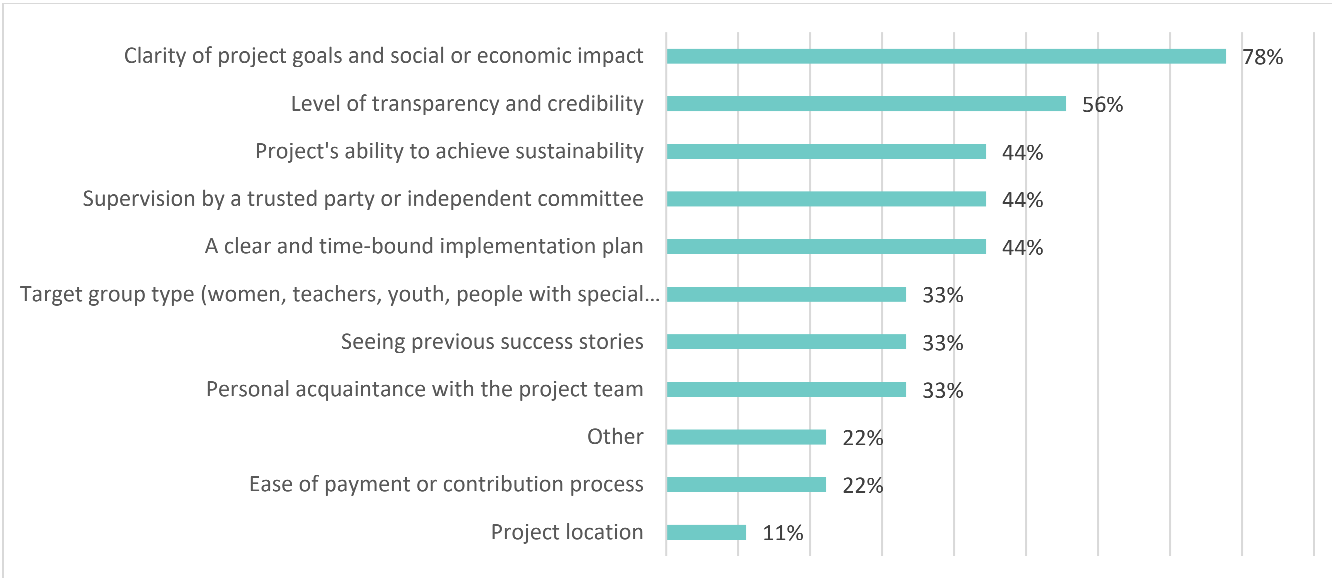
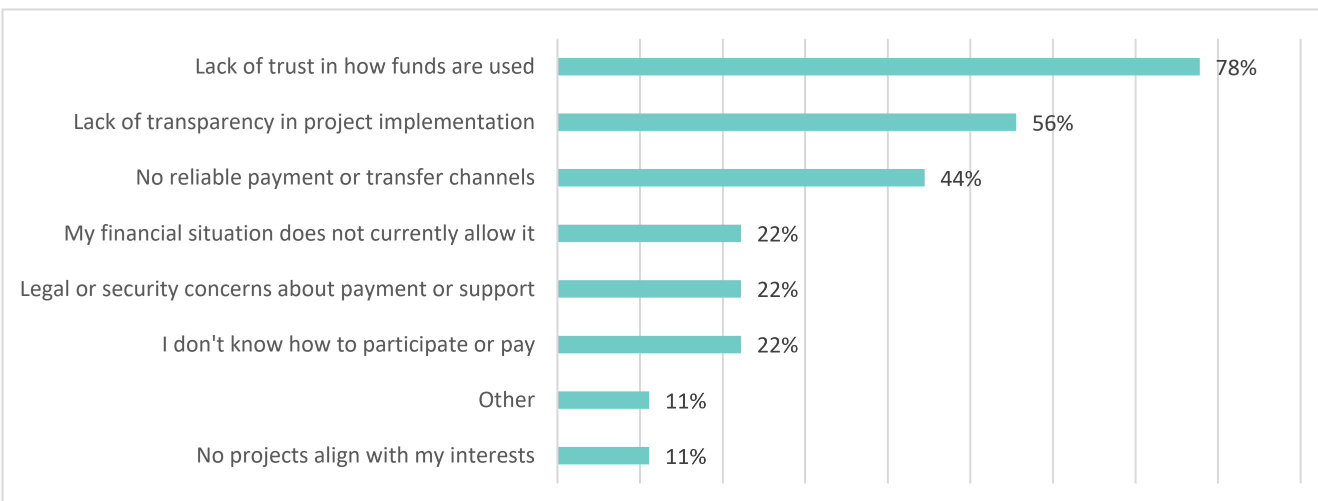


Figure 41: Diaspora – What factors encourage you to support a project?



The other factors include individual eligibility and relevant experience, as well as the presence of a qualified and experienced team.

Figure 42: Diaspora – What factors prevent you from supporting a project?



The other factors include a lack of qualified and experienced team.

3.5 Inclusion and accessibility in crowdfunding platforms

Understanding how crowdfunding platforms can serve as inclusive tools for economic and social empowerment is essential, especially for women, youth, and vulnerable groups in local Syrian communities. Respondents from the local community were asked to share their views on these points in addition to ways to improve access to crowdfunding platforms for small and medium enterprises and youth, as charts show:

Figure 43: Local Community – How can crowdfunding platforms increase women's participation in your community?

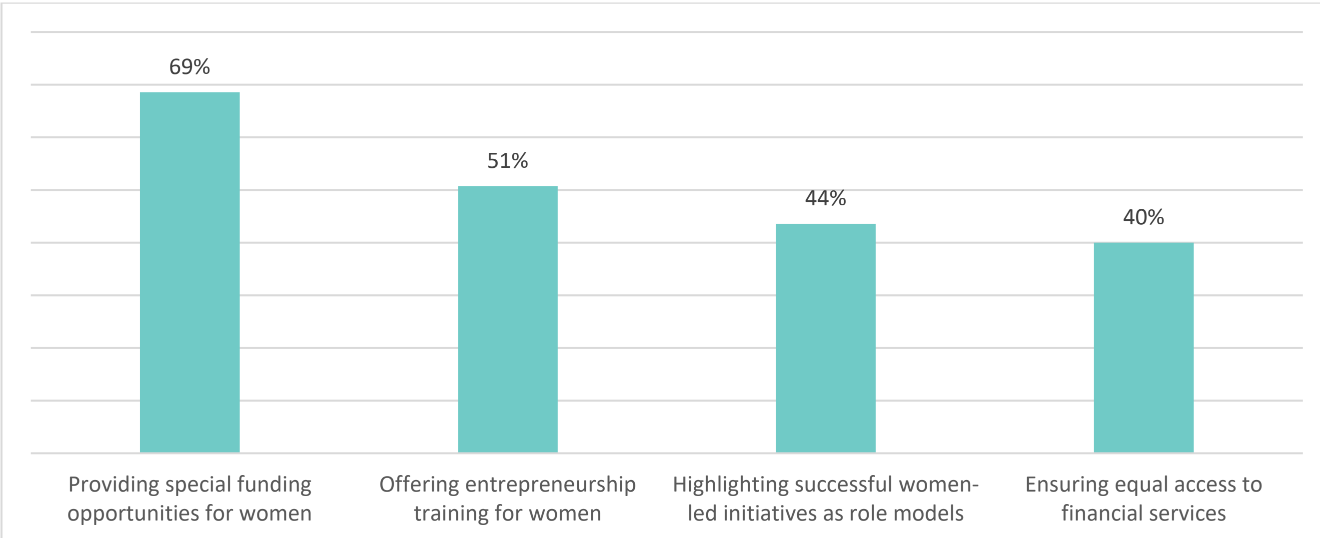


Figure 44: Local Community – Are there any entities provide services or funding specifically for women youth or other vulnerable groups in your community?

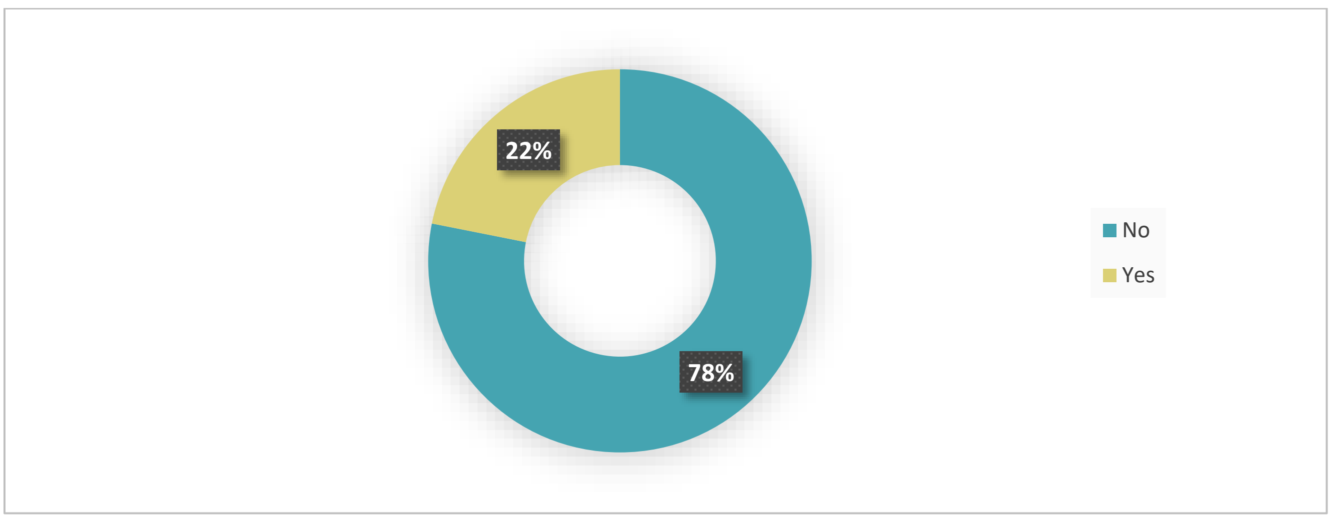
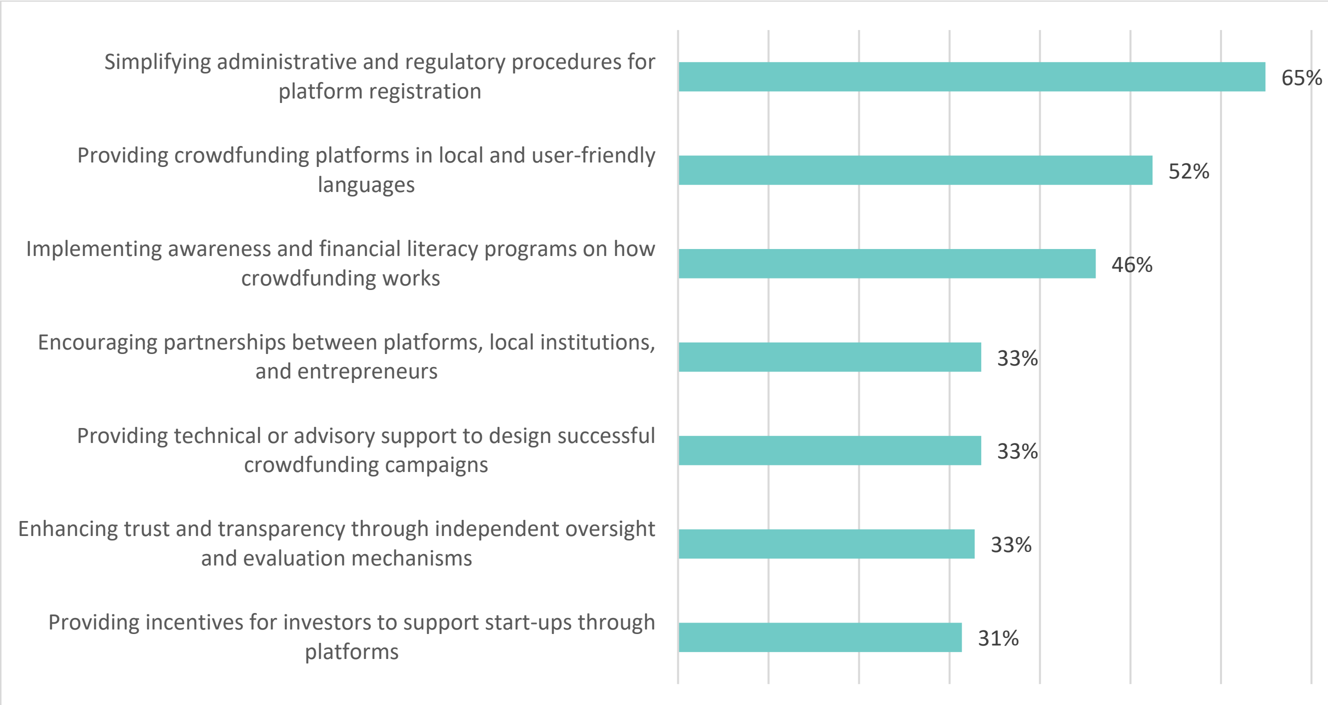


Figure 45: Local Community – How can access to crowdfunding platforms be improved for small and medium enterprises and youth?



3.6 Trust and transparency

Trust and transparency are fundamental to the success of any crowdfunding platform, particularly in a complex context like Syria. This section brings together insights from the local community, community-based organizations (CBOs), and members of the diaspora to better understand current trust dynamics and expectations around transparency.

From the local community, respondents were asked to assess the level of trust between individuals from diverse social, ethnic, or religious backgrounds in their areas. Their responses help gauge the overall environment for cooperation and joint initiatives.

Figure 46: Local Community – Level of trust between individuals from different social backgrounds ethnic or religious in community

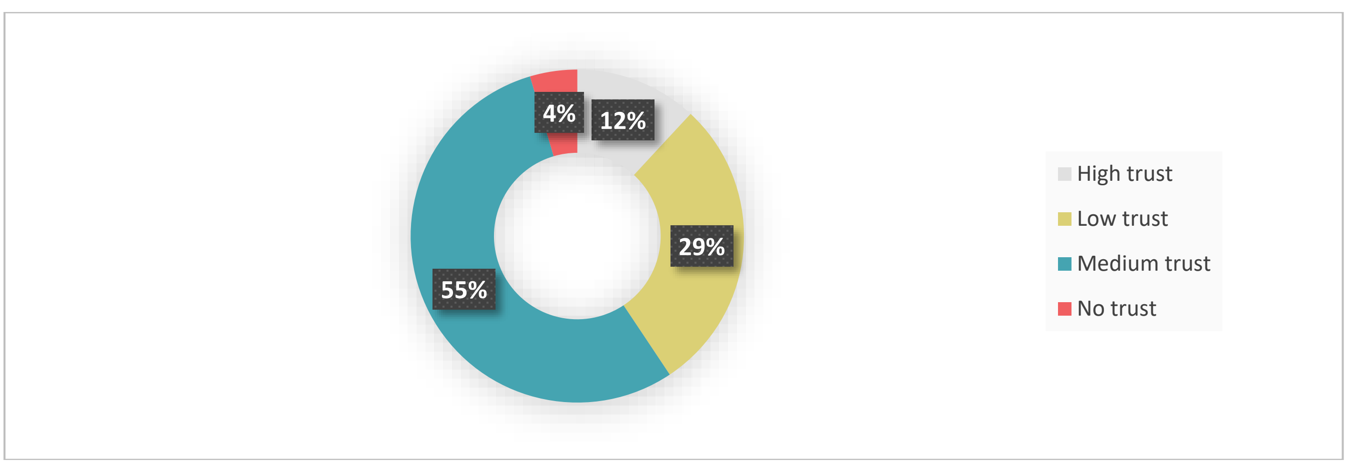
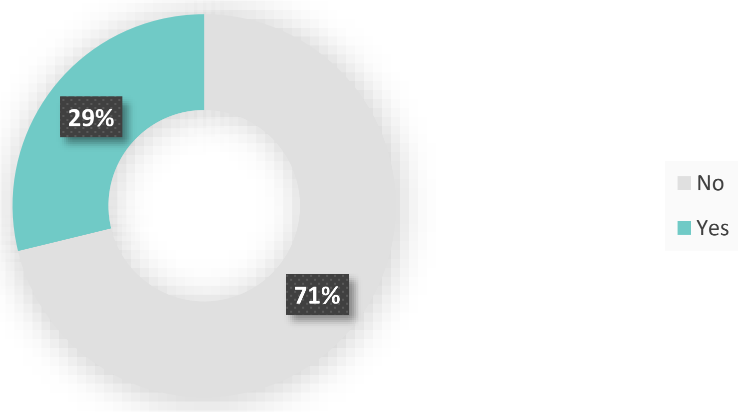
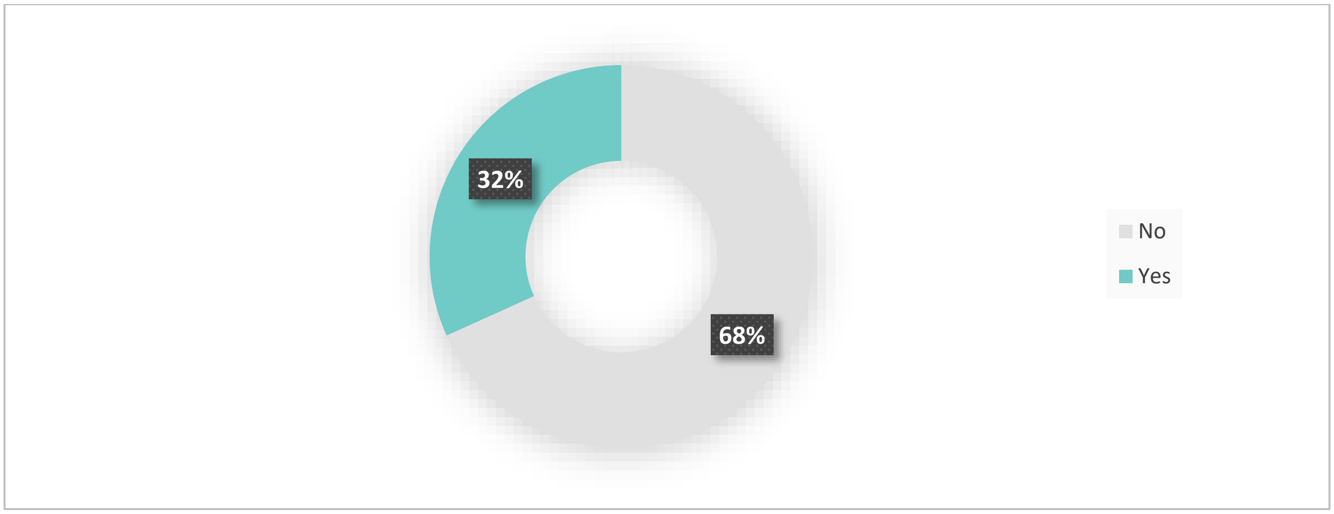


Figure 47: Local Community – Do you participate in community activities aimed at promoting coexistence or dialogue?



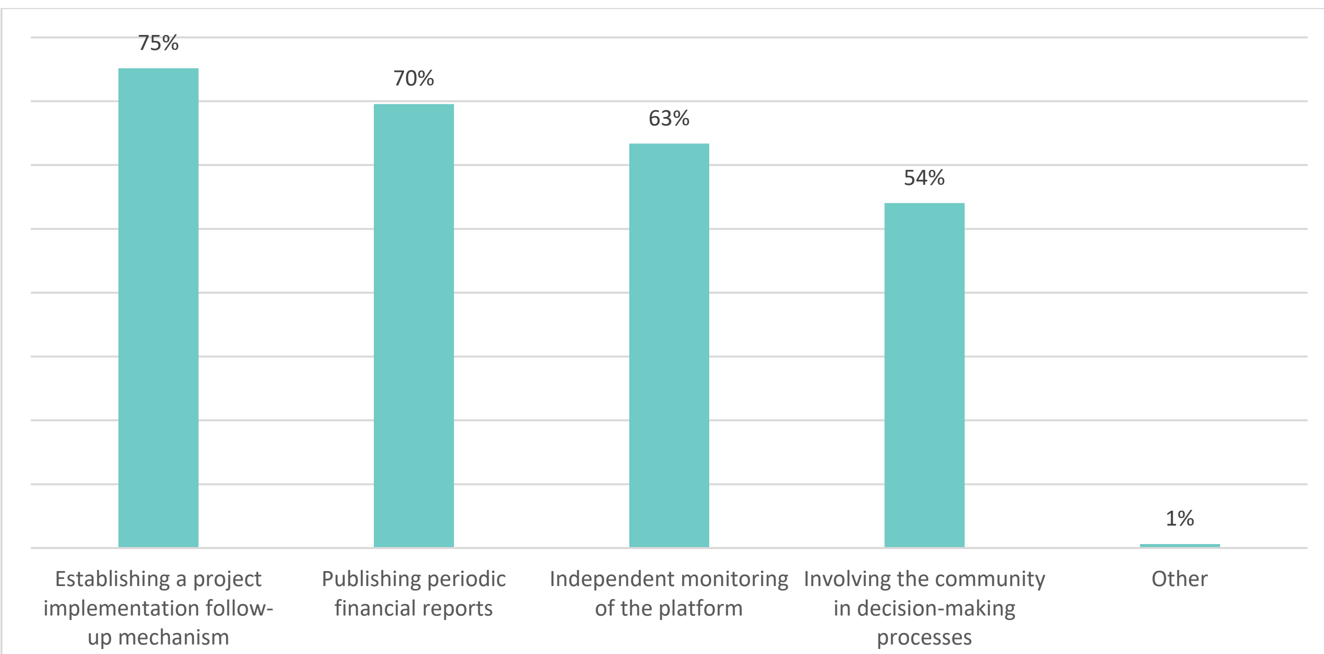
Reasons for Participation	Reasons for Non-Participation
• Promoting Peace and Stability: Many participate to achieve political/economic stability, overcome past conflicts, and ensure peaceful coexistence. • Social Duty & Responsibility: Some see it as a moral or national obligation to contribute to societal harmony. • Building Trust & Unity: Activities help strengthen community bonds, resolve disputes, and bridge divides. • Youth & Women's Empowerment: Some focus on engaging youth and women in dialogue and nation-building. • Economic & Developmental Benefits: A few link coexistence initiatives to improving livelihoods and local development. • Cultural & Religious Values: Some cite traditions, Islamic principles of tolerance, or Syrian identity as motivations.	○ Lack of Time: Work, family, or survival priorities limit availability. ○ Absence of Opportunities: No activities exist in their area, or they're unaware of them. ○ Security Concerns: Fear due to unstable conditions or distrust in organizers. ○ Disinterest or Skepticism: Some see no value or doubt outcomes. ○ Structural Barriers: Women face exclusion; rural areas lack infrastructure. ○ Financial Hardship: Poverty restricts engagement.

Figure 48: Local Community – Do you believe the current conditions allow for the return of refugees and displaced persons?



CBOs shared their perspectives on what mechanisms are necessary to ensure transparency and credibility within a crowdfunding platform.

Figure 49: CBOs – What mechanisms would you suggest to ensure transparency and trust in a crowdfunding platform?



Members of the Syrian diaspora highlighted how transparency in fund management can be improved and emphasized the importance of oversight or supervisory committees in ensuring the proper use and impact of funds.

Figure 50: CBOs – What mechanisms would you suggest to ensure transparency and trust in a crowdfunding platform?

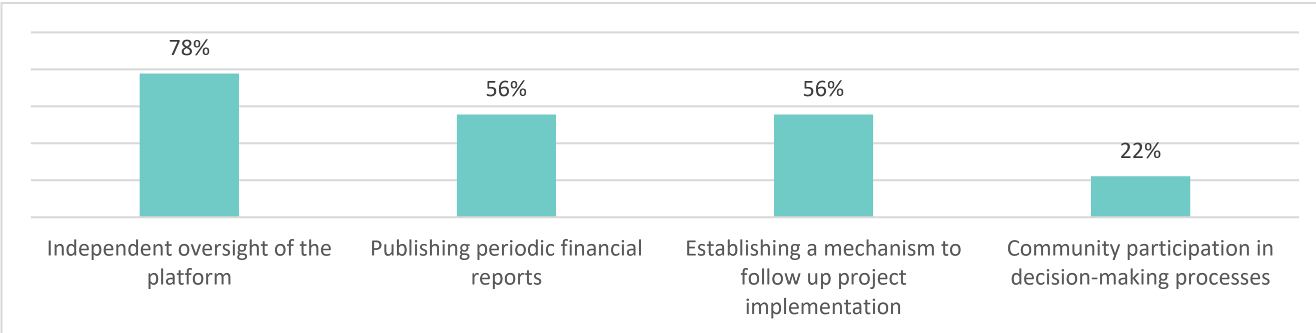
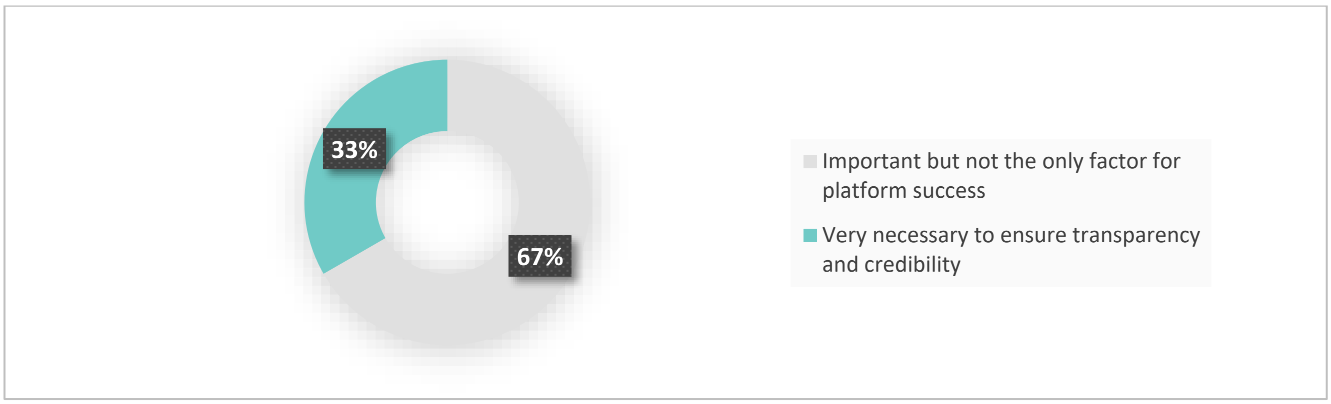


Figure 51: Diaspora – How important are oversight or supervisory committees in ensuring the success of funded projects?

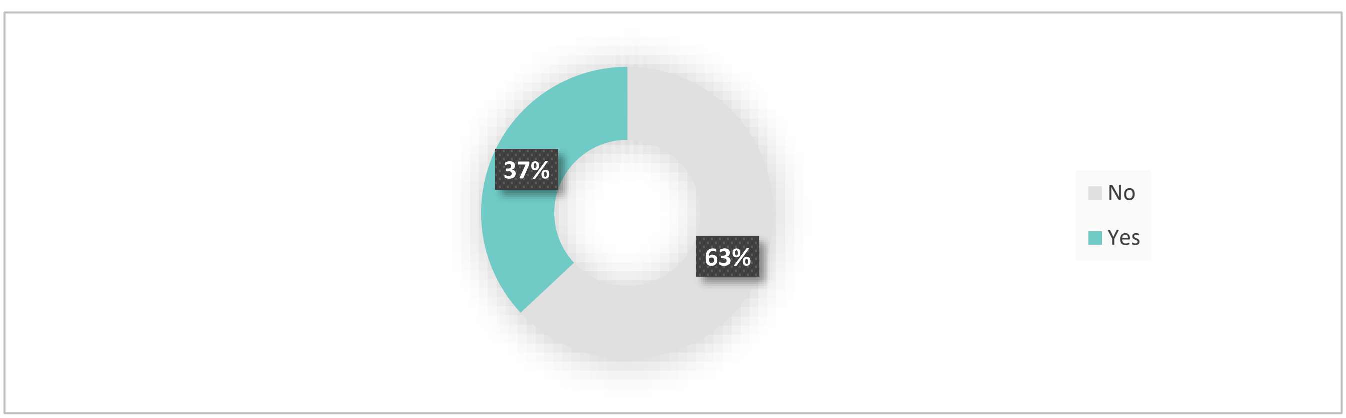


All diaspora participants expressed the belief that individual contributors should not have a role in managing funded projects or a supervisory role in managing the platform.

3.7 Project funding: experiences and preferences

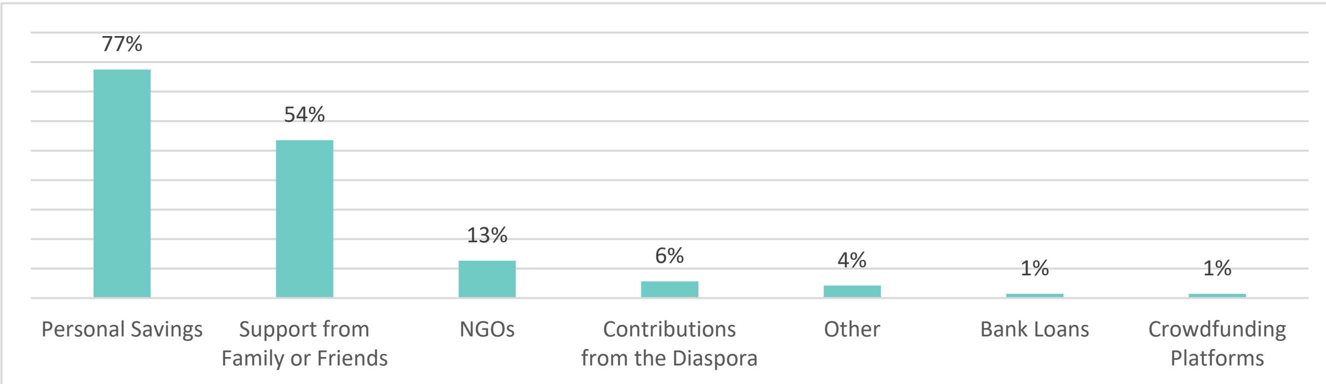
Entrepreneurs shared insights on their ability to fund their projects, identifying key sources such as personal savings, informal networks, and limited access to institutional support.

Figure 52: Entrepreneurs – Have you been able to fund your project?



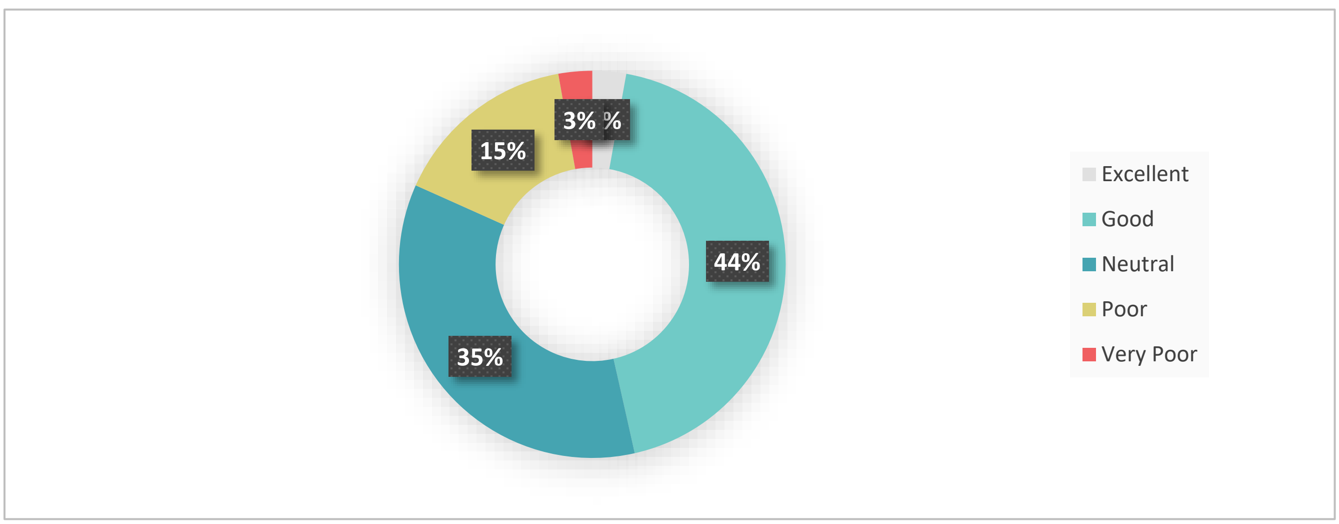
For respondents who were able to secure funding for their projects, the sources of funding are presented in the chart:

Figure 53: Entrepreneurs – Project's funding sources



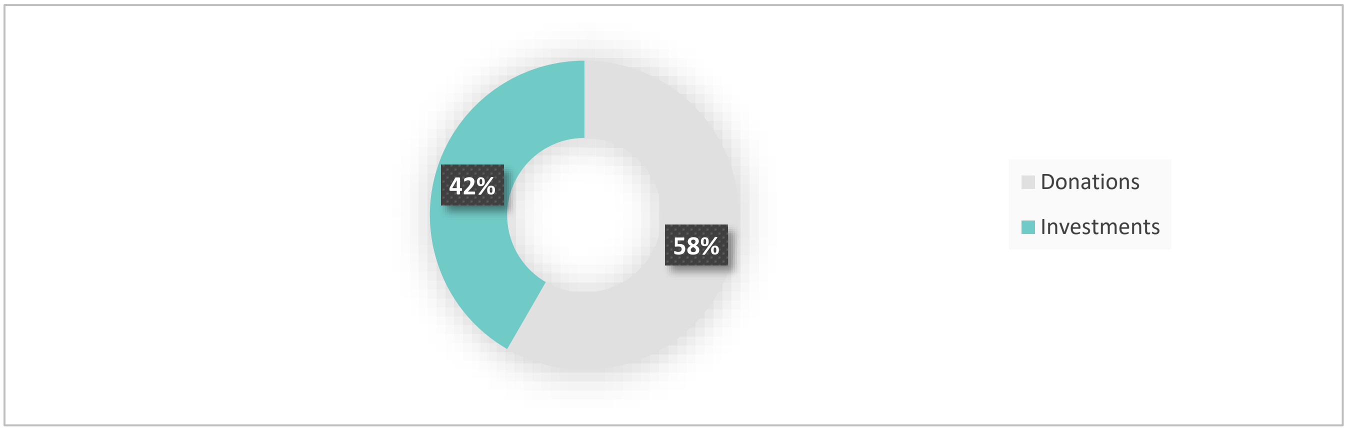
Entrepreneurs' experiences in obtaining funding varied, with many rating it as challenging due to access barriers:

Figure 54: Entrepreneurs – How would you rate your experience in obtaining funding?



The estimated funding needs to develop projects among respondents ranged from $700 to $150,000, reflecting significant variation based on project size, sector, and stage of development.

Figure 55: Entrepreneurs – What form of funding do you prefer?



The preference for donations among 58% of entrepreneurs is largely driven by financial limitations. Many lack sufficient income or savings and are unable to repay loans, making donations a safer and more accessible option. Donations also provide greater autonomy, allowing entrepreneurs to manage their projects independently without the pressure of profit-sharing or external control. This is especially important for small-scale or high-risk projects—such as those in agriculture or education—or in cases where there is an urgent need for quick financial support. Additionally, some entrepreneurs are hesitant to pursue investments due to concerns about economic instability, legal complications, or a lack of trust in potential investors. On the contrary, 42% of entrepreneurs prefer investments, particularly those with ambitions to expand their businesses. Investments offer access to larger amounts of capital needed for growth, such as purchasing equipment or entering new markets. They also provide longer-term financial stability and can support job creation. Entrepreneurs who choose this path often value the expertise and guidance that investors bring and view investment as a sustainable, mutually beneficial approach that contributes to the local economy—rather than relying on one-time financial aid.

Besides, members of the Syrian diaspora reflected on their previous support to local projects, mainly through financial contributions or networking. Their feedback ranged from positive to concerned, especially regarding transparency and impact.

Figure 56: Diaspora – Have you previously supported any projects?

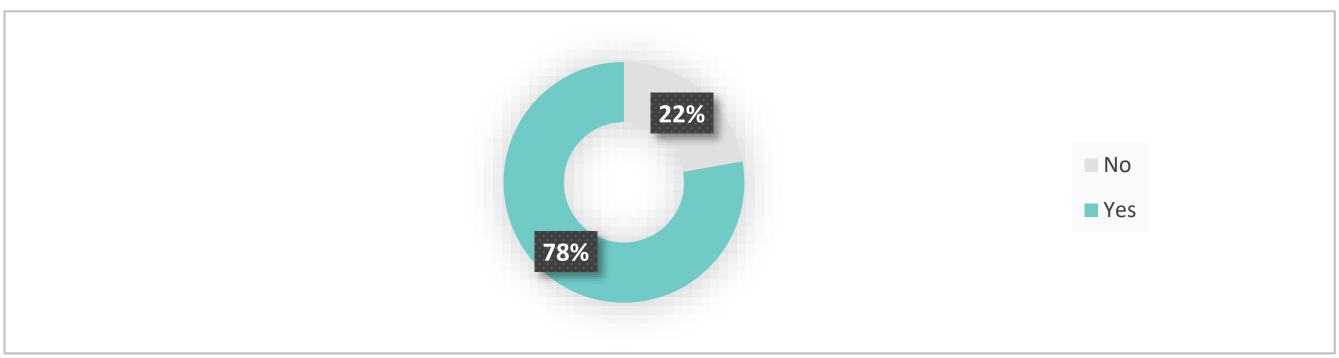
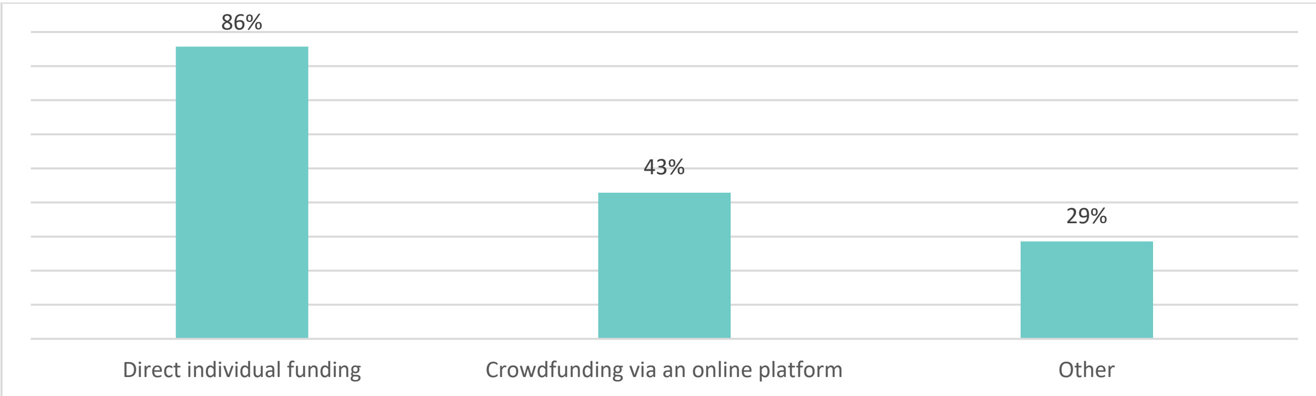
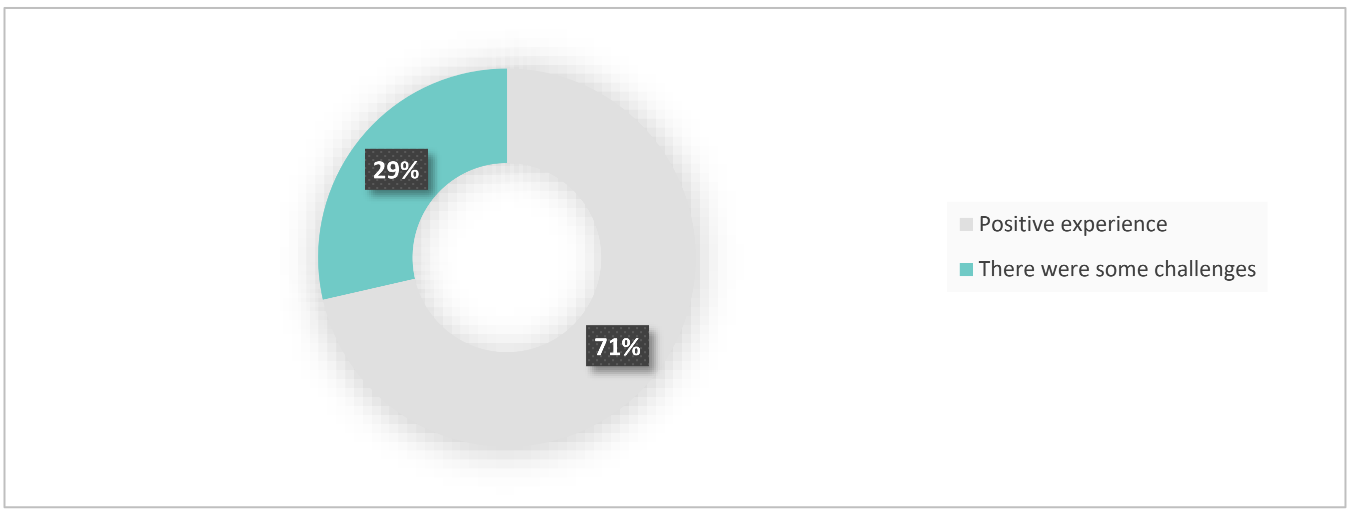


Figure 57: Diaspora – How did you provide this support?



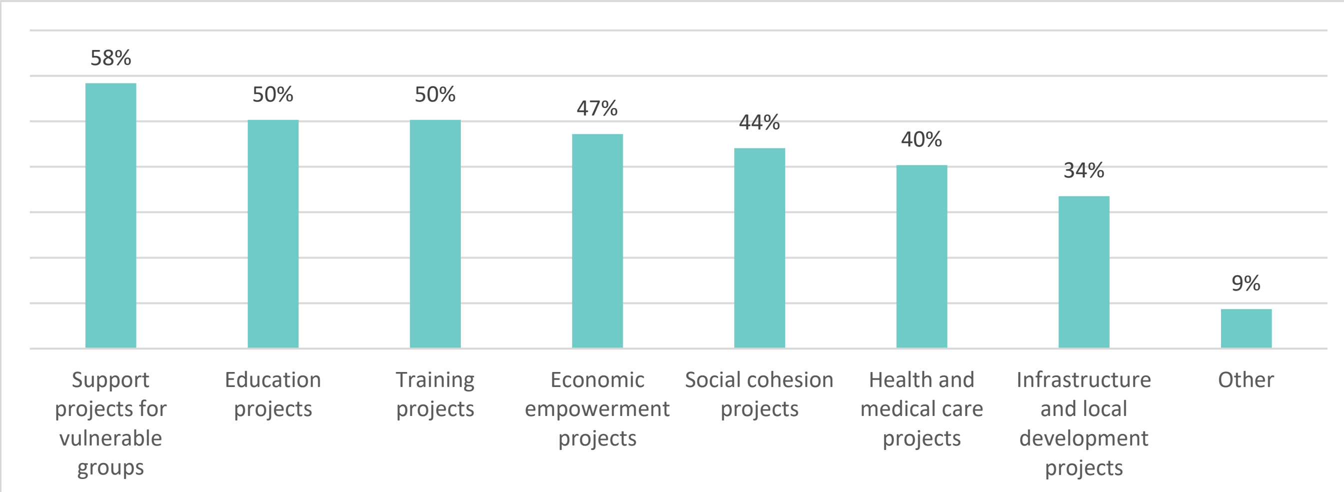
Some participants mentioned providing support through guidance, and consultations or NGOs, in general the funders describe their experiences as the chart:

Figure 58: Diaspora – How was your experience?



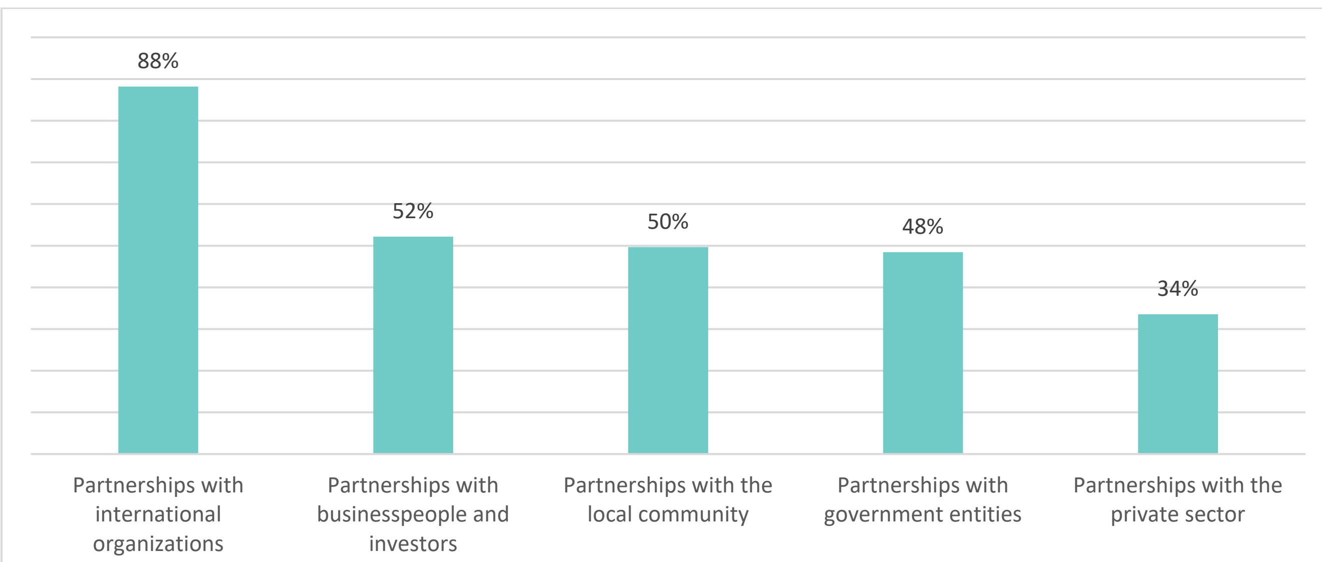
Furthermore, CBOs provided information about the types of projects they manage and the partnerships they seek to strengthen and sustain their initiatives, as charts:

Figure 59: CBOs – What type of projects does your organization manage?



Other projects include relief, development, and youth empowerment. Activities ranged from food distribution, legal aid, and psychosocial support to education, peacebuilding, and community engagement.

Figure 60: CBOs – What kinds of partnerships is your organization looking for to support its initiatives?



3.8 Entrepreneurial readiness and awareness of crowdfunding

The survey explored entrepreneurs' familiarity with crowdfunding platforms and key business concepts such as entrepreneurship and startups. Many respondents expressed varying levels of awareness, highlighting a need for more accessible information about financial services and crowdfunding mechanisms. When asked about their readiness, several participants confirmed their ability to manage a project independently or collaboratively and reported having clear plans for managing potential funding. These insights underline the importance of providing targeted support and capacity-building to enhance entrepreneurial success through crowdfunding initiatives.

Figure 61: Entrepreneurs – Familiarity with crowdfunding platforms

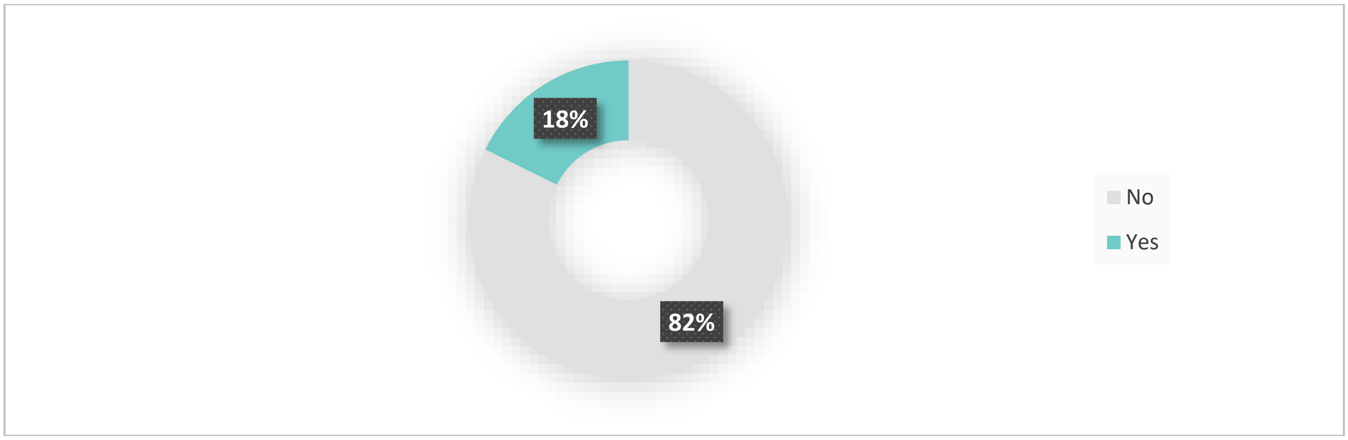


Figure 62: Entrepreneurs – What kind of information about financial services or crowdfunding platforms would you like to access?

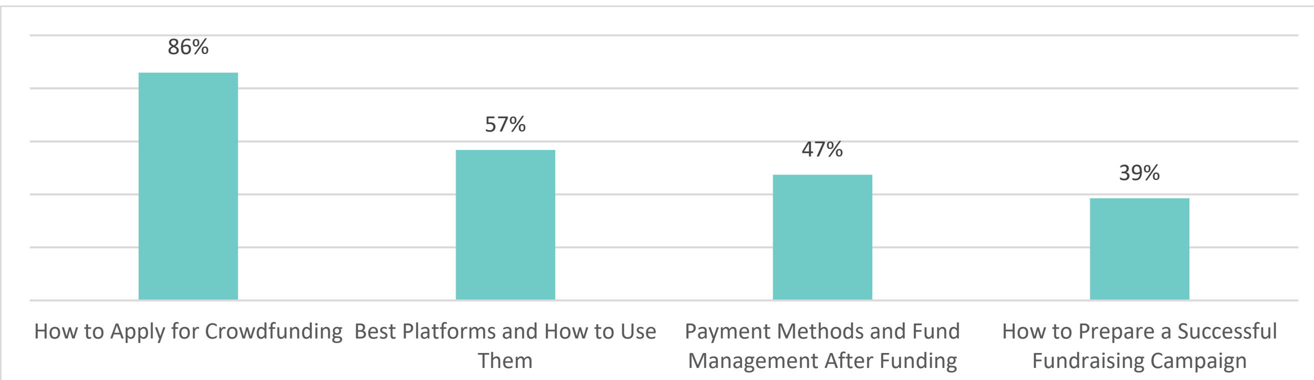


Figure 63: Entrepreneurs – Familiarity with the term entrepreneurship and startups?

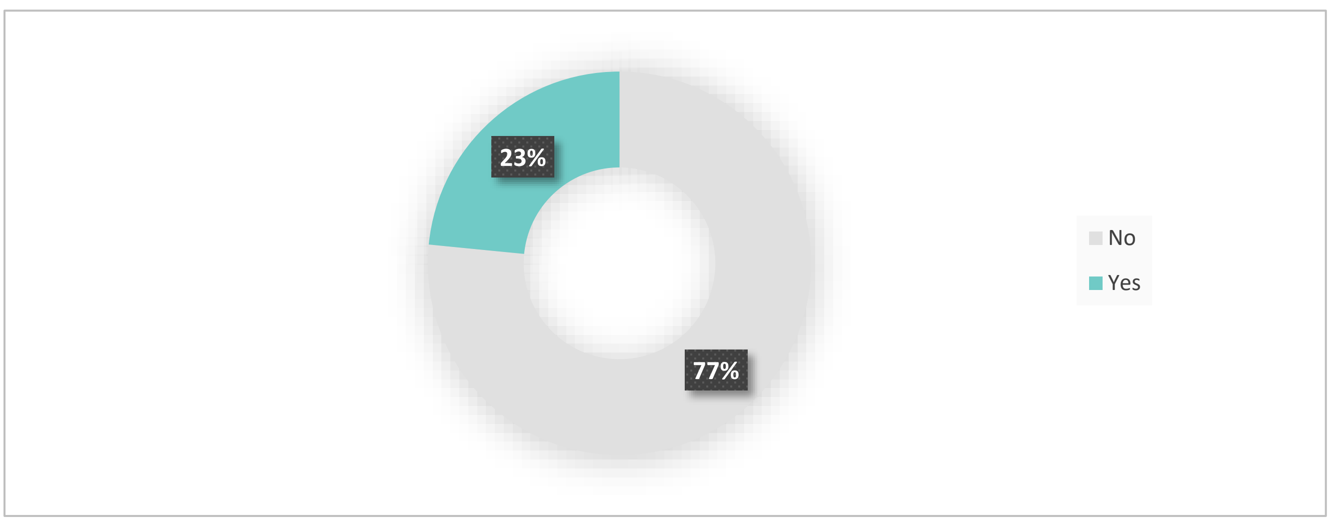


Figure 64: Entrepreneurs – Are you ready to manage the project yourself or with others?

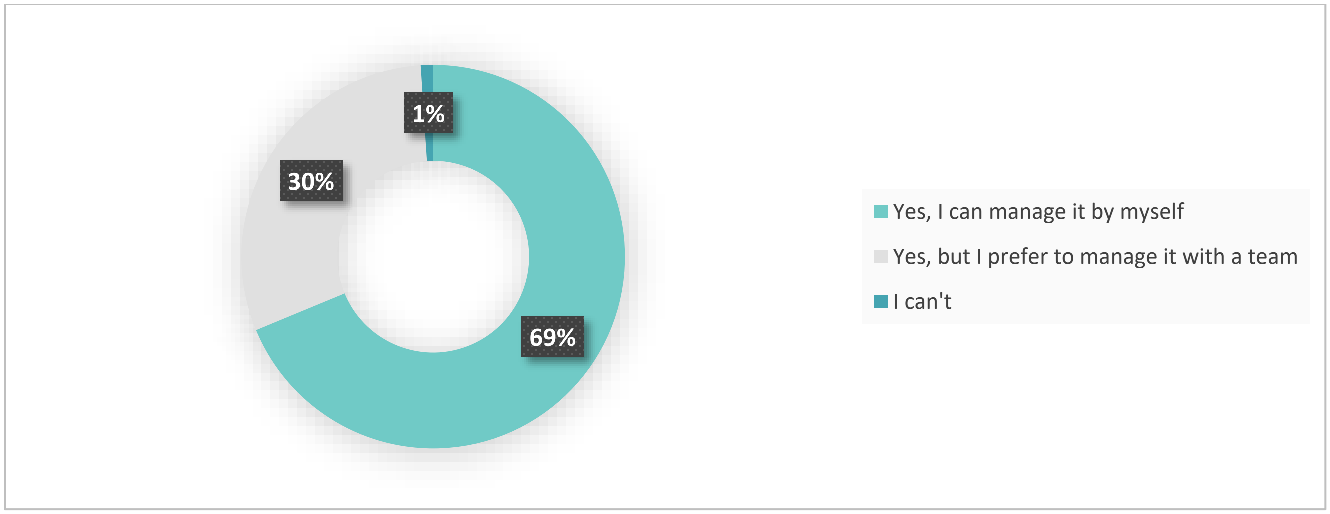
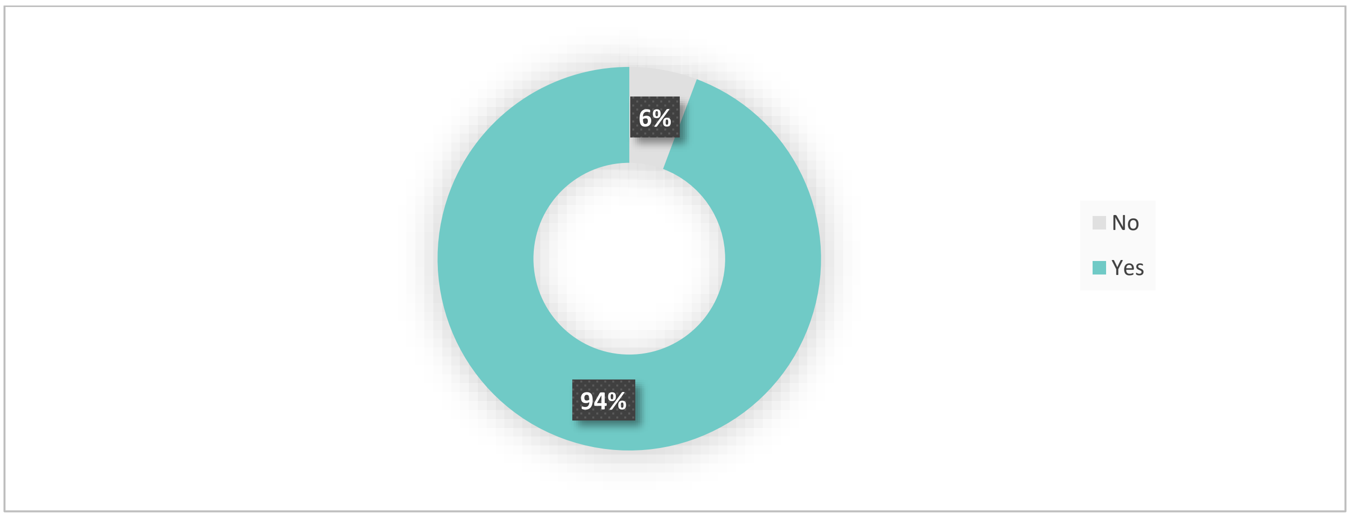


Figure 65: Entrepreneurs – Do you have a clear plan to manage the funds you receive?



3.9 Entrepreneurial needs and support expectations

Entrepreneurs participating in the study identified a variety of training needs essential for the development of their businesses, including financial management, marketing, and project planning. They also emphasized the importance of community support—such as networking opportunities, mentorship, and access to local markets—in overcoming operational challenges. Additionally, expectations from local councils included facilitation of licenses, provision of infrastructure, and easing access to funding and resources.

Figure 66: Entrepreneurs – What types of training do you need to develop your business?

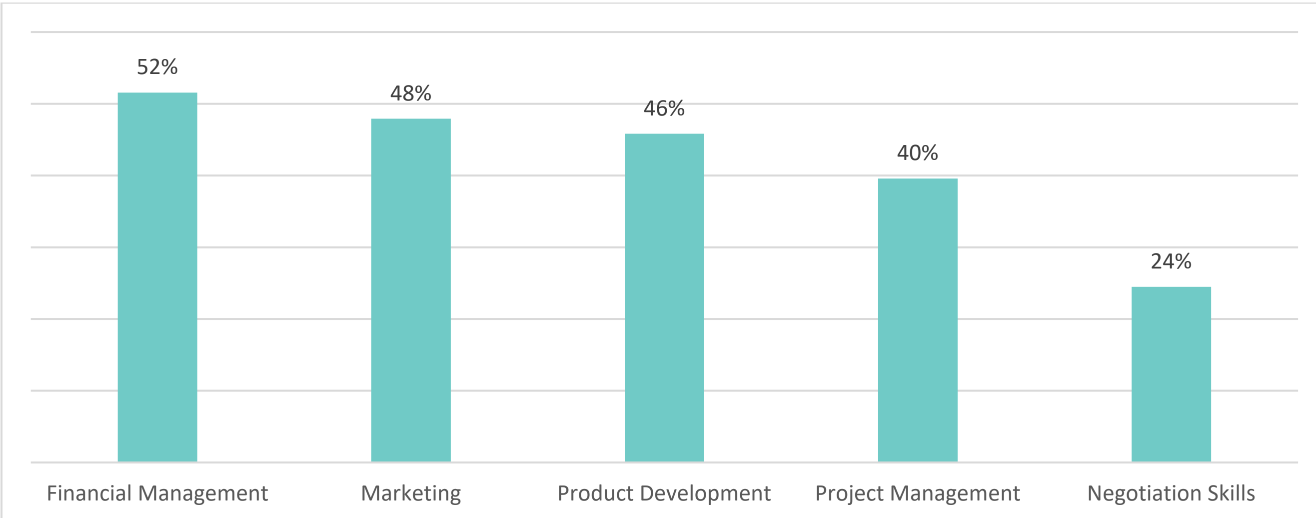


Figure 67: Entrepreneurs – What kind of support do you expect from your community?

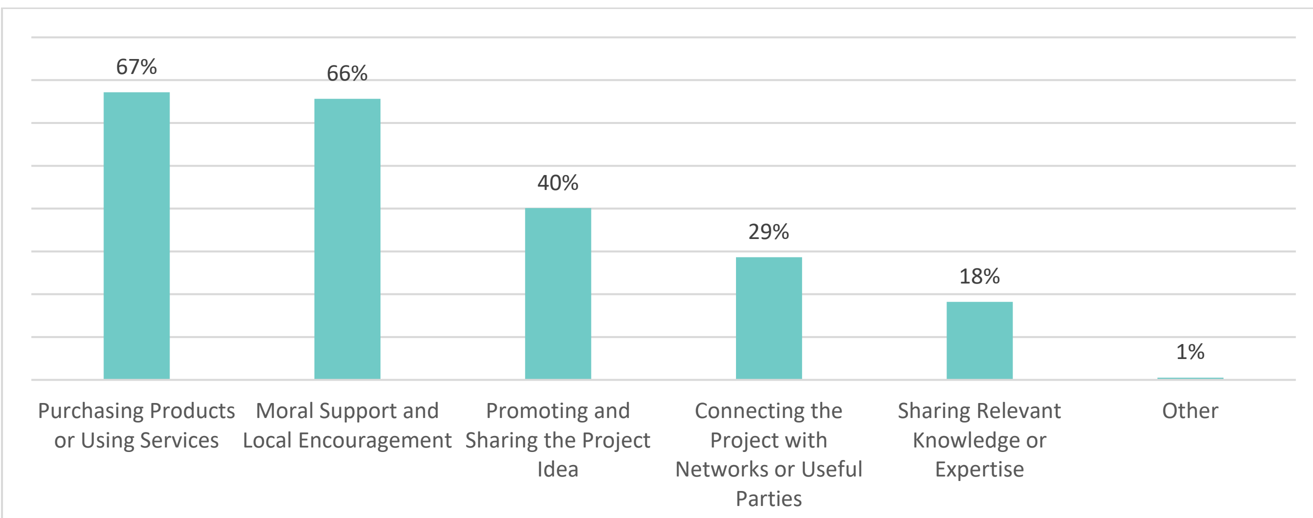
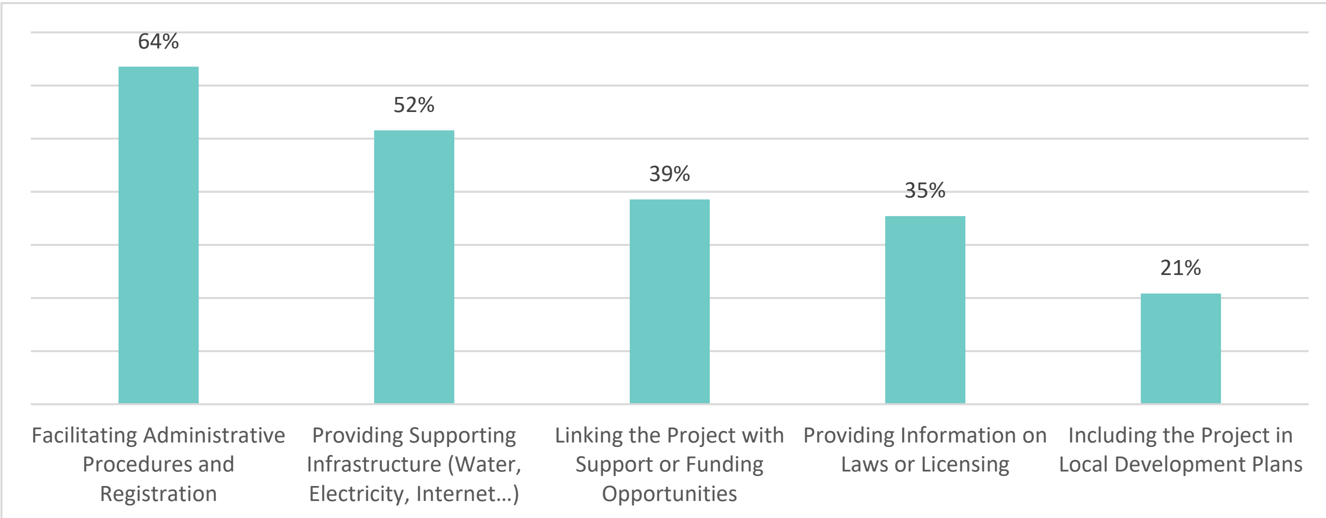


Figure 68: Entrepreneurs – What kind of support do you expect from your local council?



3.10 Strengthening social cohesion

To explore ways to strengthen social cohesion and prevent incidents like those recently experienced in the coastal region, the same question was asked to three groups: the diaspora, the local community, and entrepreneurs. Each group offered distinct perspectives and proposed various actions based on their unique experiences and roles. Their responses emphasize strategies such as enhancing communication, building trust, and promoting collaborative community initiatives. The detailed feedback from each group is shown in the accompanying charts:

Figure 69: Local Community – What measures can be taken to promote social cohesion and prevent events like those that recently occurred in the coastal region?

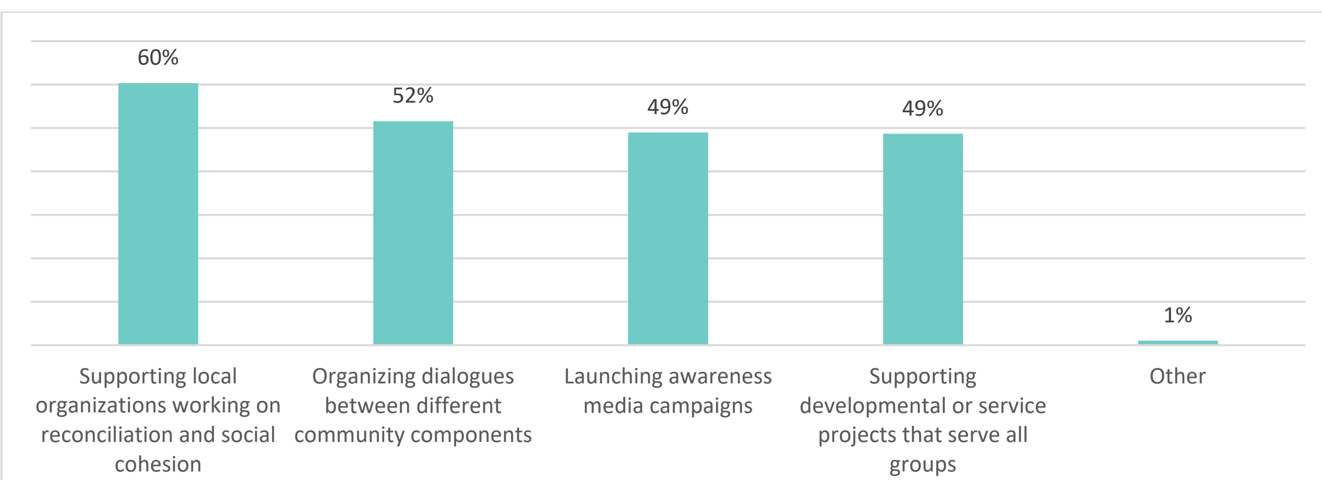
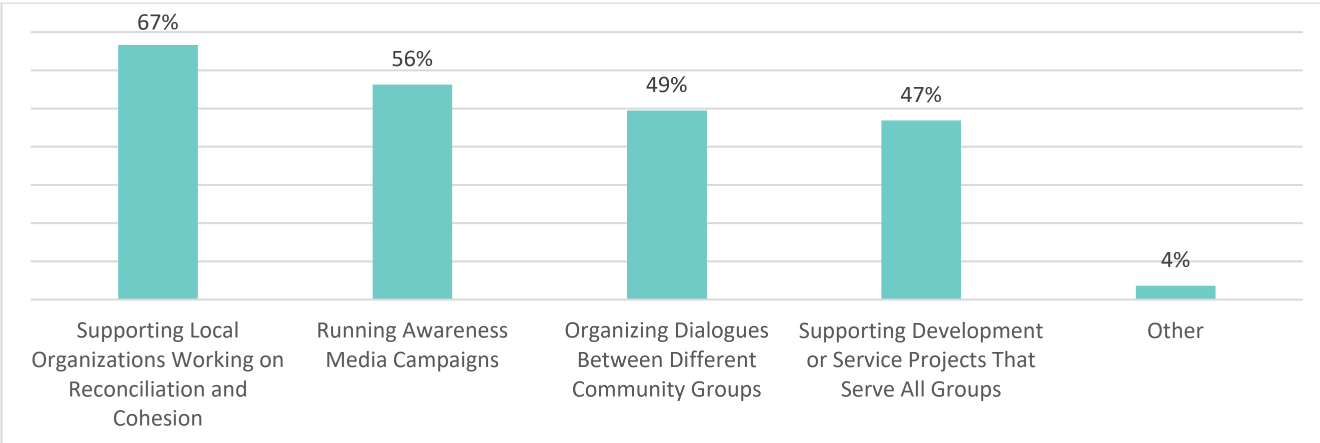
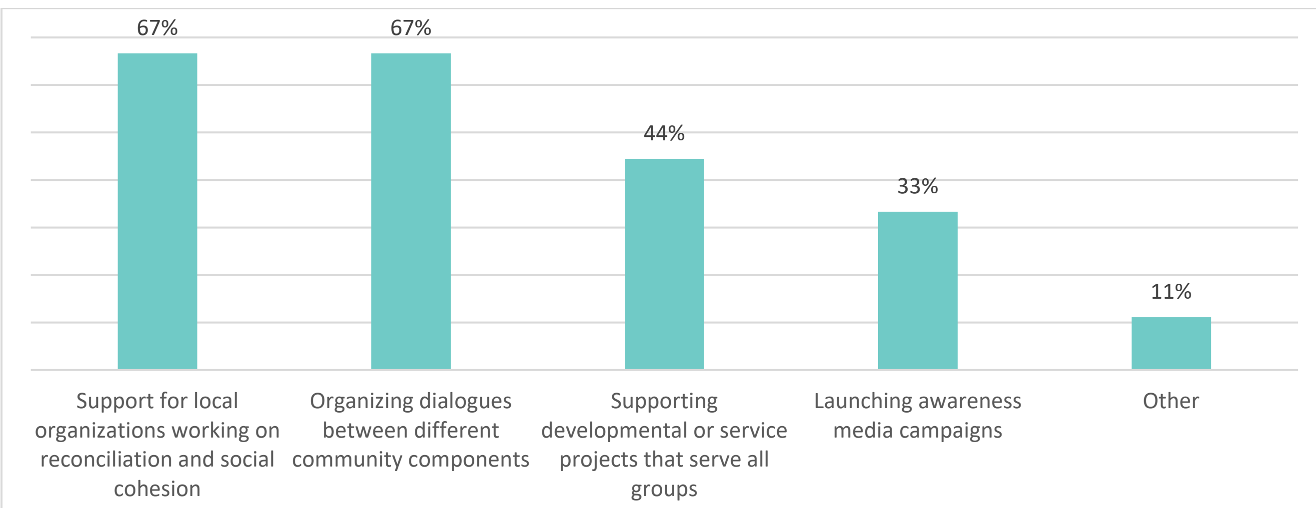


Figure 70: Entrepreneurs – What measures can be taken to strengthen social cohesion to prevent incidents like the recent events on the coast?



Other measures include fostering trust, inclusive dialogue, accountability, and joint efforts to counter former regime disruptors.

Figure 71: Diaspora – What actions can be taken to strengthen social cohesion to avoid incidents like the recent events in the coastal region?



The participants noted that additional measures are needed, including a clear and inclusive discourse from the state to ensure civilian protection and accountability for violators.

4. Key findings summary

This needs assessment highlights critical insights from entrepreneurs, local communities, CBOs, and the Syrian diaspora on crowdfunding's potential in Syria's development.

1. **Strong Interest in Crowdfunding**: All stakeholder groups expressed enthusiasm for a Syrian-led crowdfunding platform to support economic and community initiatives. It is widely viewed as a tool for economic empowerment, job creation, and restoring local trust.
2. **Major Challenges Identified**: Entrepreneurs face funding gaps, legal hurdles, and limited resources. CBOs struggle with donor restrictions and bureaucracy, while diaspora members are concerned about transparency and trust, making fund transfers and project credibility difficult.
3. **Diaspora's Crucial Role**: Diaspora members are willing to contribute financially—some up to $100,000—if transparency and local ownership are ensured. They favor a locally managed platform over foreign intermediaries.
4. **Trust and Accountability Are Essential**: A lack of trust, especially among diaspora participants, is a key barrier. Stakeholders stressed the need for independent oversight, transparent fund management, and regular reporting to build credibility.
5. **Inclusivity Gaps Remain**: Women, youth, and rural groups face structural obstacles to participation. A more inclusive platform design and targeted outreach are needed to ensure equal access.
6. **Limited Awareness and Capacity**: Many entrepreneurs are unfamiliar with crowdfunding and lack basic financial and planning skills. There is a high demand for training to improve funding readiness.
7. **Grants Preferred Over Loans**: Most entrepreneurs favor grants due to low income and economic risks. Those seeking investment tend to have growth strategies and aim for sustainability.
8. **Crowdfunding for Social Cohesion**: Joint local-diaspora initiatives are seen as a path to unity and peacebuilding. Crowdfunding is recognized as a way to bridge divisions and rebuild national pride.

5. Executive recommendations

Based on the findings of this needs assessment, the following strategic recommendations are proposed to guide the development and implementation of a Syrian-led crowdfunding platform aimed at enhancing economic empowerment and social cohesion:

1. **Ensure Transparency and Accountability**: Establish independent oversight committees with civil society and diaspora representation, adopt clear criteria for project selection and fund allocation, and use digital tools to enable real-time tracking of contributions and expenditures.
2. **Promote Local Ownership and Participation**: Involve local entrepreneurs, CBOs, and youth in platform planning and governance, ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups such as women, people with disabilities, and rural communities, and enable co-design between project owners and funders from idea to implementation.

3. **Build Trust Across Stakeholders**: Launch campaigns that highlight transparency and community success stories, facilitate open dialogue between diaspora and local actors, and develop a code of ethics to promote credibility and ethical fundraising.

4. **Strengthen Capacity and Awareness**: Provide training for entrepreneurs in areas like financial literacy and fundraising, raise awareness among communities and the diaspora about the benefits of crowdfunding, and collaborate with educational institutions to position crowdfunding as a tool for development.

5. **Adapt Platform Design to the Syrian Context**: Design a mobile-friendly, bilingual (Arabic-English), and user-accessible platform; integrate flexible payment options suitable under sanctions; and enable both development and emergency funding streams to meet diverse needs.

6. **Leverage Diaspora Support**: Launch targeted outreach campaigns to engage the diaspora based on shared identity and trust, provide clear engagement channels such as mentorship or ambassador roles, and incentivize regular contributions through transparency and recognition.

7. **Institutional and Policy Engagement**: Advocate for supportive legal and institutional frameworks that enable digital fundraising, improve access to banking services, and facilitate cross-border remittances to create a more enabling environment for crowdfunding in Syria, as well as enact laws, policies, and regulations that ensure accountability for hate speech and all forms of discrimination.

8. **Strengthening Investment in Human and Social Capital:** Increase investment in developing individuals' skills and empowerment, while building effective networks at local, national, and international levels. This will contribute to fostering innovation, collaboration, and sustainable development, and ensure that human and social capacities are invested in to achieve long-term community impact.

6. Conclusions

The findings of this assessment reveal that while there are considerable obstacles to implementing a successful crowdfunding platform in Syria, ranging from financial and regulatory barriers to trust deficits, there is also significant potential. Stakeholders across all surveyed groups expressed strong interest in the idea and recognized its value for economic empowerment, social healing, and community-driven recovery.

To harness this potential, any future crowdfunding initiative must prioritize transparency, inclusion, and local ownership. It must also foster strong ties between the diaspora and communities on the ground to mobilize both financial and human resources. With the right mechanisms and safeguards in place, a Syrian-led crowdfunding platform could play a transformative role in rebuilding a more cohesive, resilient, and self-reliant Syrian society.

NEED ASSESSMENT

FOR DEVELOPING CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS

To Support Economic Empowerment And Social Cohesion In Syria

November 2025

وحدة تنسيق الدعم
ASSISTANCE COORDIANTION UNIT