



Syrian Workers Research Study

Work, Education, Skills, and Entrepreneurship

July 2018



Copyright © 2018 Bareeq Education Company (non-profit), LLC. All Rights Reserved.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any manner without the express written consent of Bareeq Education. Please contact compliance@bareeqeducation.org.



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
About Bareeq	3
About VIP Fund	3
The Syrian Workers Research Study	4
Methods.....	4
Demographics	5
Gender and Age Groups.....	5
Education Levels	6
Location and Origin.....	7
Area of Study or Vocational Expertise	8
Main Findings.....	9
The Decision to Migrate.....	9
Did you ever work in Syria?	10
Do you or did you ever have your own business in Syria?	11
Where did you migrate to?.....	12
Do you work now?	13
Dependents and Income.....	16
What is the biggest impediment to finding appropriate work?	21
Entrepreneurship Section	26
Are you a business owner?	26
Whom do you employ?.....	29
The Minors' Situation.....	31
Registration of Businesses and Impediments to Success	31
What is the One Thing Authorities Can Do to Help You Succeed?	32
Summary and Recommendations.....	36



Introduction

About Bareeq

Bareeq Education and Development is an educational non-profit organization headquartered in Amman, Jordan, with the mission of providing refugee and other marginalized youths and their parents with the education, opportunities, skill set, guidance, and experiences that promote positive social impact, and to help them be effective members of their communities.

Bareeq established a remedial education center in Amman in 2016, where all programs are completely free. Bareeq Center welcomes all nationalities, religions, and ethnicities into its programs. The Bareeq Center has served as a lifeline and a beacon of hope and has impacted thousands of people since its inception.

In May 2017 Bareeq published a Women Empowerment study and a series of infographics based on a survey of more than 1000 Syrian women, titled: Syrian Women's Perceptions of Women's Rights, Work, Education, and Vocational Skills, available in the Studies section of the bareeqeducation.org website.

For further reading and center highlights:

Bareeq Center has 350+ students, with a staff of 9. Current programs at the center include:

1. 2nd to 12th grade remedial education (girls and boys) covering main subjects such as Arabic, Math, English (all levels), Art (Elementary) and Science (Intermediary and High School)
2. Literacy classes (Arabic) for children left behind scholastically, ages 8-13 years old
3. Literacy classes (Arabic) for adults—mainly mothers of children enrolled in Bareeq's center
4. Math programs for children: Icon Math (using tablets)
5. English as second language for Adults (in collaboration with the British Council in Amman)
6. Activities such as reading events, art, sewing, lectures (for adults on social or psychological issues), fun events for children (including field trips)
7. Many partners including the British Council, the UN, Danish Refugee Council, and more (see www.bareeqeducation.org/partners)
8. University scholarships with the support of our partners, including Karam Foundation
9. A computer lab with capacity for 18 students providing basic computer courses for children and adults
10. Planning an education program initiative for children and young adults with physical disabilities which includes specially fitted transportation

About VIP Fund

The Very Important Projects fund (VIP.fund) is a youth-focused venture philanthropy fund, established in 2015 as a USA 501c(3) non-profit organization. VIP Fund invests in youth programs and startups; promoting education and innovation in disruptive technologies. The goal is youth empowerment and employment. For more information, please visit www.vip.fund.



The Syrian Workers Research Study

As of 2018, half of Syria's entire population has been displaced internally or have undergone forced migration to other countries ^{1,2}. Many of these had business or were employed before having to migrate.

Bareeq Education & Development Organization set out to understand the status of these Syrian professionals in the locations they now find themselves in, and their view on challenges they may have. In addition, Bareeq believes that understanding the impact of the level of education and foreign language proficiency on their current status can help shape future projects and campaign priorities.

The aim of the study was to understand the respondents' work experiences before and after 2011, and to understand the differences between those who remained in Syria, including those who were internally displaced and those who remained in the same location, versus those who migrated, the countries they migrated to, the type of work and income they obtained, and their financial load as far as dependents are concerned. Particular emphasis was given to respondents who have had their own businesses in the past or currently wherever they are, and the challenges they face. Additionally, a question was asked about whether minors (defined as children under the age of 16) worked at all, either as dependents contributing financially to the household or as employees at their business.

Methods

The survey was written in the Arabic language to gain a maximum response rate and contained both qualitative and quantitative data. Inclusion criteria for this study included: identifying as being of Syrian origin and above the age of 18. Participants could live anywhere, inside or outside of Syria.

The survey was published and distributed on the 6th of March, 2018 and remained open for almost two months. A request to fill out the survey was distributed using social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. A total of 283 individuals filled out the survey.

¹ Pew Research Center. (2016). *About six-in-ten Syrians are now displaced from their homes*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/13/about-six-in-ten-syrians-are-now-displaced-from-their-homes>

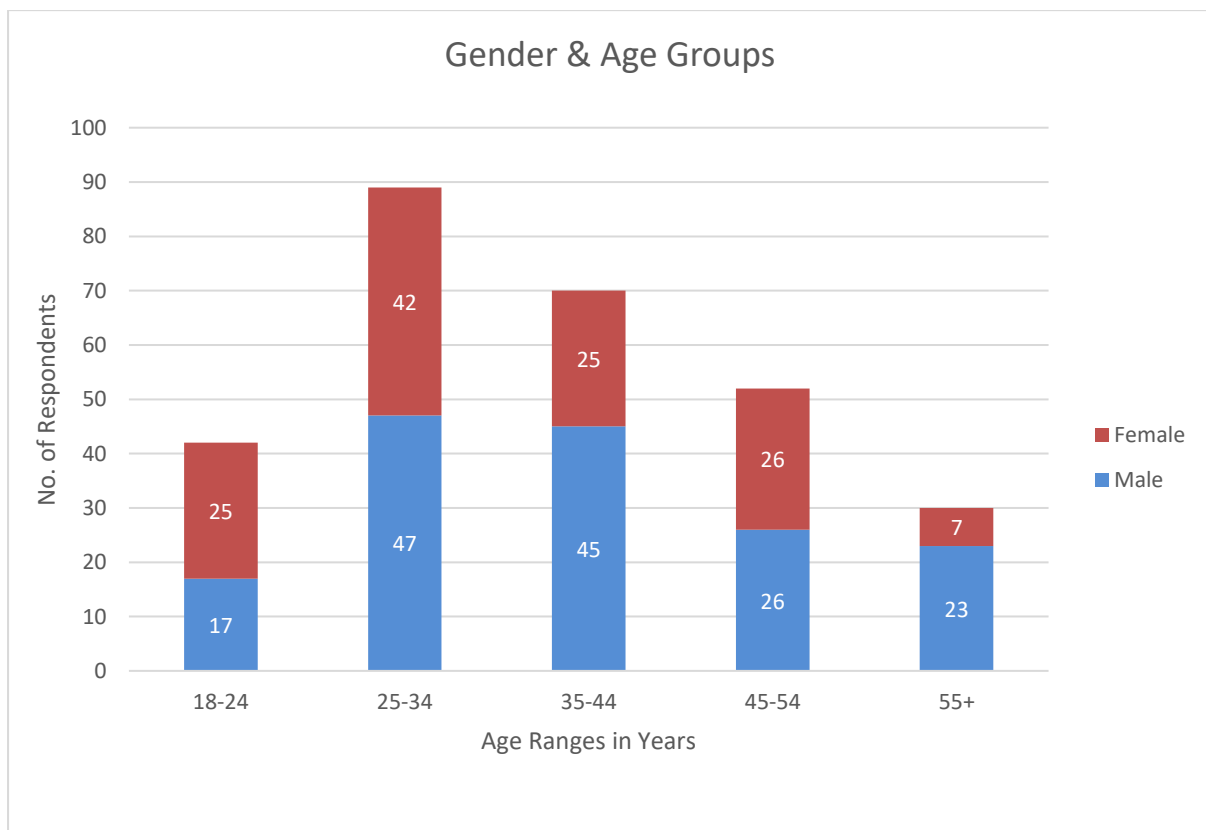
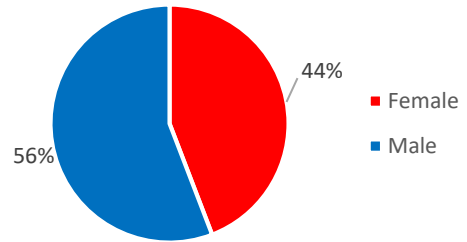
² United Nations. (2017). *The UN humanitarian response*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=146>

Demographics

Gender and Age Groups

Respondents' ages range from 18 to 72 years old, with the average being 37. The average age of female respondents is 35-years-old and the average age of male respondents is 39.

Gender Distribution



The 283 respondents have a slight majority of males at 158, dominating the higher age group, with females at 125 respondents being a majority only in the 18-24 age group.

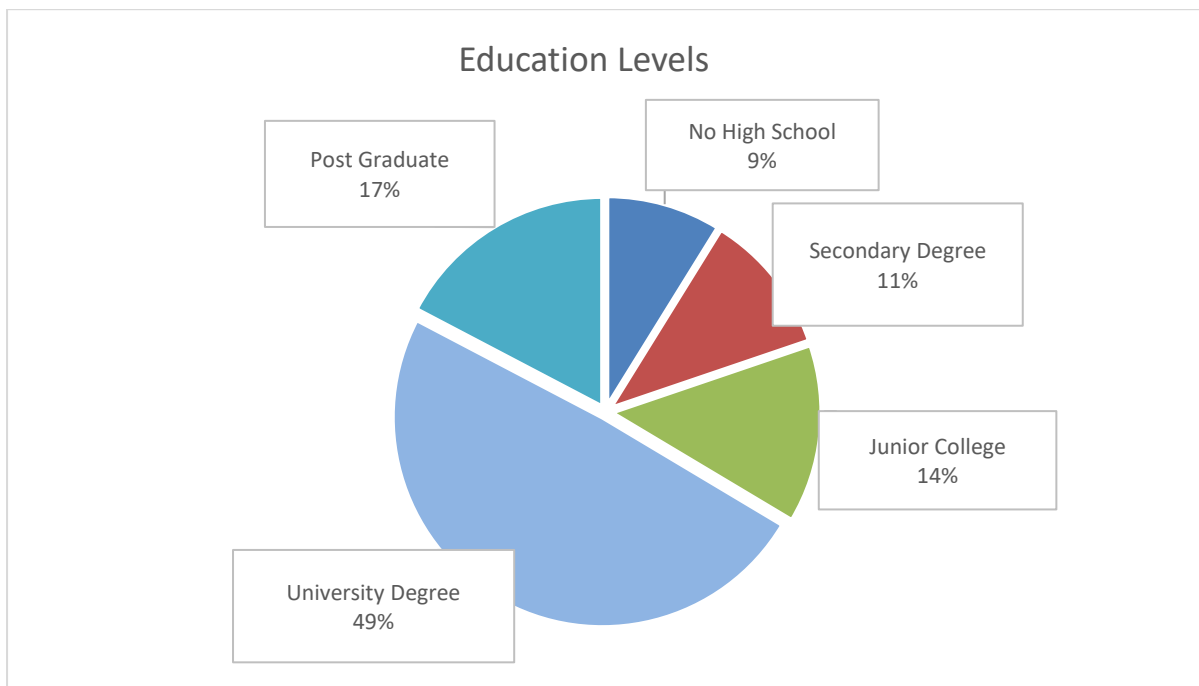
We categorized the respondents into four broad migrant categories based on their status: the first being those who remained in Syria and in the same location since 2011; the second are those who migrated internally within Syria since 2011; the third are those who migrated outside Syria since 2011; and the fourth being those who migrated before 2011, we call Expat category. It is interesting to note that the Expat category respondents have the oldest average age of 44, 8 years more than

the average age of the ones who left Syria since 2011 and 11 years older than the average of those who remained in Syria at 33-years-old.

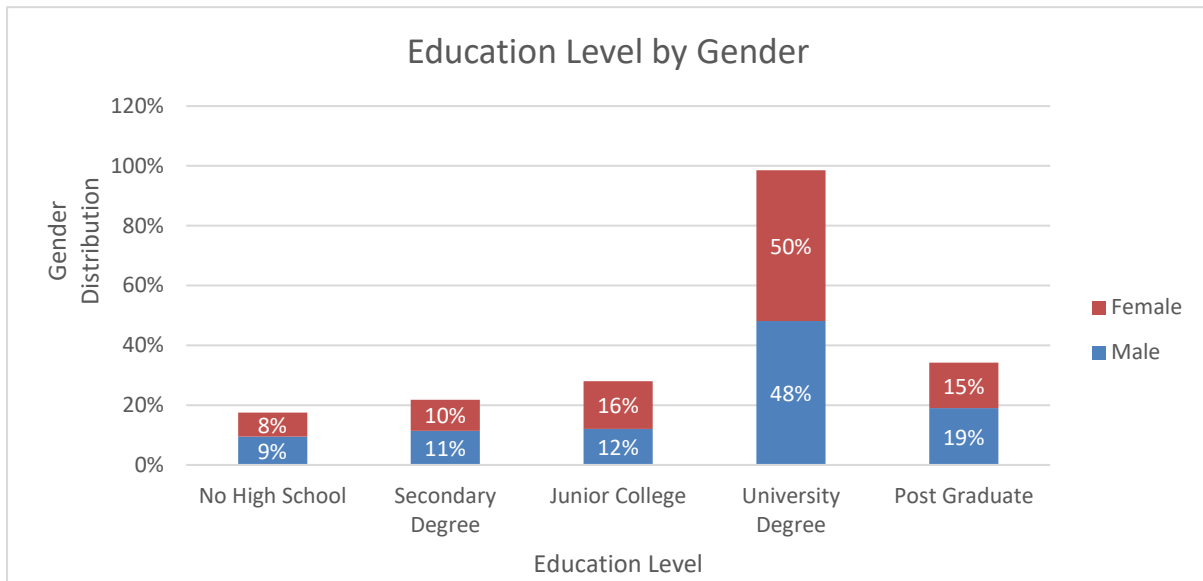
Migration Categories	No. of Respondents	Average Age
Remained in same location within Syria	41	33
Moved within Syria since 2011	25	33
Expat/left before 2011	81	44
Left since 2011	136	36
Total	283	38

Education Levels

The participants' education level is fairly high. 66%, or 2 out of 3 people, hold a university or post-graduate degree, 25%, or 1 out of 4 respondents, have completed high school or hold a 2-year vocational or technical degree (junior college), and 9%, or less than 1 in 10, have not completed high school.



All are proportionally split among the genders with no significant difference across all education levels, except for a slight bias towards females in the Junior College category and slight male bias in the Post Graduate category.



Location and Origin

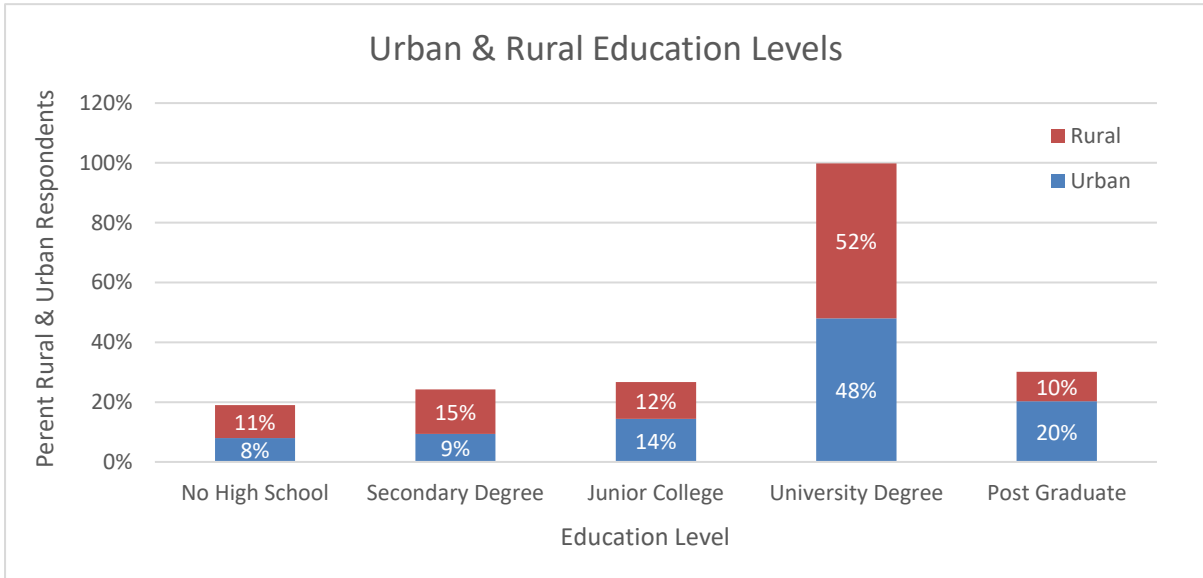
The respondents are from all of the provinces of Syria (as can be seen in the Table 1).

Over 70% of respondents come from urban areas within these provinces. Considering that, on average, people from rural areas have less resources than individuals from urban areas³, our findings may support the assumption that people with means are better equipped to migrate than the lesser equipped rural inhabitants. For example, in this study, 53% of all the respondents report being from the capital, Damascus city and its' mostly urban suburbs, while 71% report being from the larger cities within each province. There was no material bias in gender, however, Post Graduate respondents had Urban bias, and No High School and Secondary Degree only holders had a rural bias.

Governorate	Respondents
<i>Damascus City</i>	115
<i>Damascus Countryside</i>	36
<i>Homs</i>	36
<i>Aleppo</i>	31
<i>Daraa</i>	25
<i>Idlib</i>	11
<i>Hama</i>	11
<i>Latakia</i>	9
<i>Deir Al-Zour</i>	4
<i>Tartous</i>	2
<i>Swaida</i>	1
<i>Quneitra</i>	1
<i>Hasaka</i>	1
Total	283

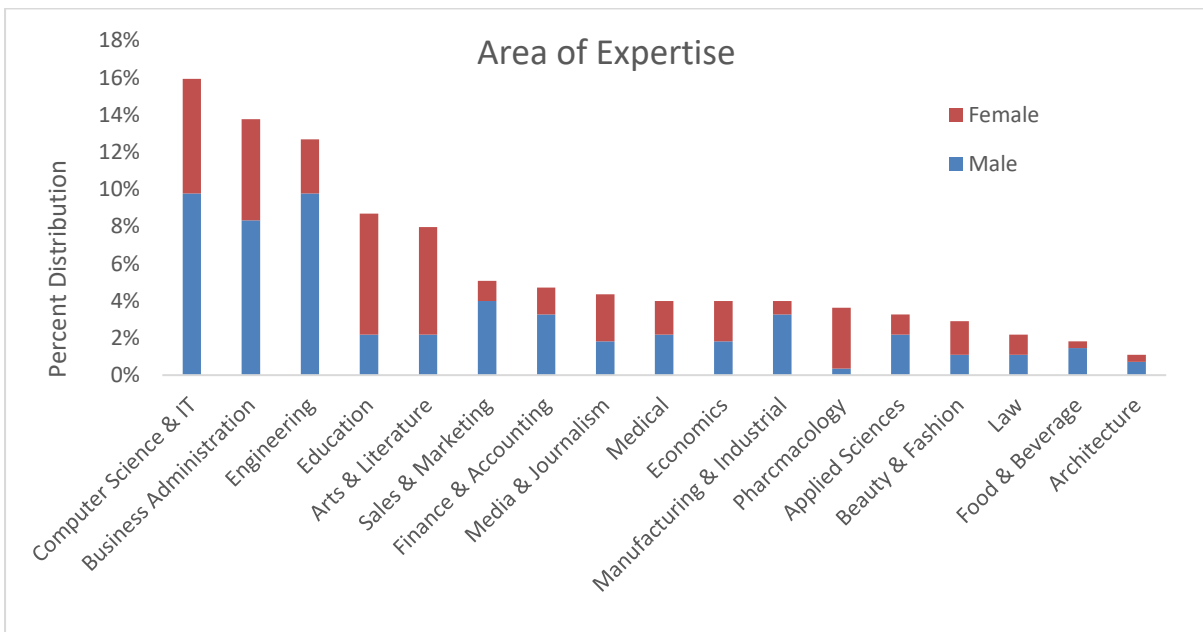
Table 1. Respondents' location of origin

³ United Nations and Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (2013). *Needs Assessment Review of the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Jordan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/Jordan%20Needs%20Assessment%20-%20November%202013.pdf>



Area of Study or Vocational Expertise

We asked respondents to identify their respective fields of study or expertise as an open-ended question since we wanted to see how respondents define themselves. We then grouped their responses into their major industries as in the graph below.



Many have gone into computer science and information technology, which includes application software development. Education, Arts & Literatures, Pharmacology, and Beauty & Fashion were the fields where there is a strong female bias in contrast with other fields. Having said that, their description of their profession was rich and here are some of their job proficiencies include in order of occurrence: English Teacher Journalist, Telecoms Engineer, Lab Technician, Architect, Physical Education Teacher, Electrical Engineer, Fashion Designer, Chef, Medical Doctor, Interior Designer, Tourism Guide, A/C Repair Technician, Tailor, Public Relations Specialist, Project Manager,

Petroleum Engineer, Learning Disabilities Educator, SAP Consultant, Handicrafts, Children Education, Automotive Sales, and Dentist.

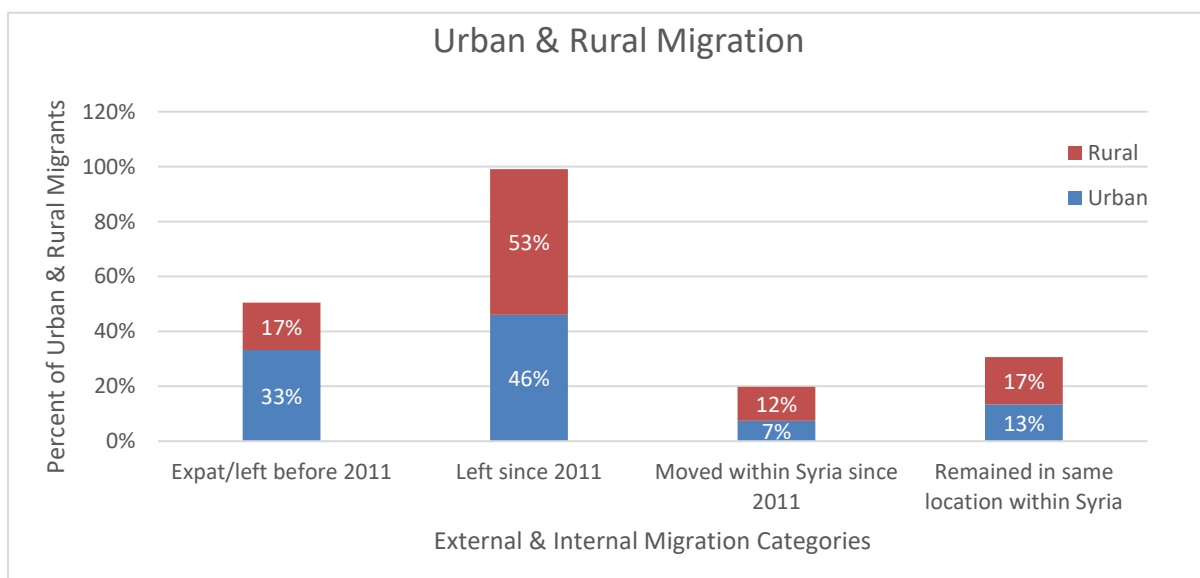
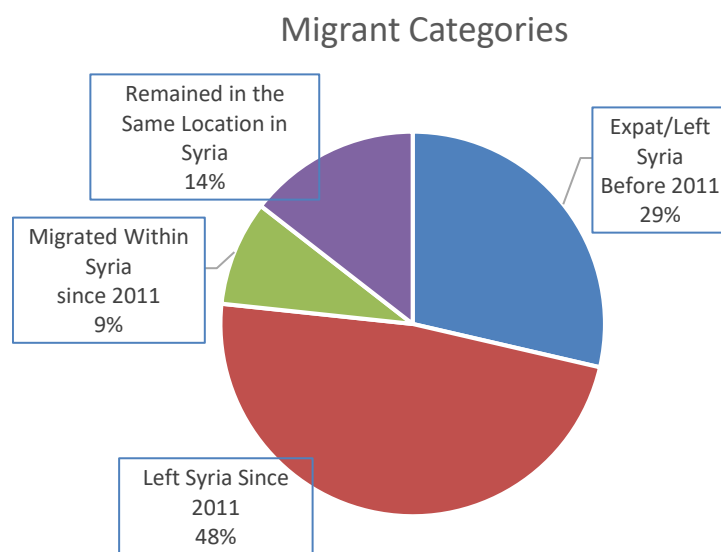
Main Findings

There were clearly many factors for Syrians to consider when they migrated internally and externally after 2011, and we tried to capture the state of affairs today of respondents based on such a decision taken before and after 2011.

The Decision to Migrate

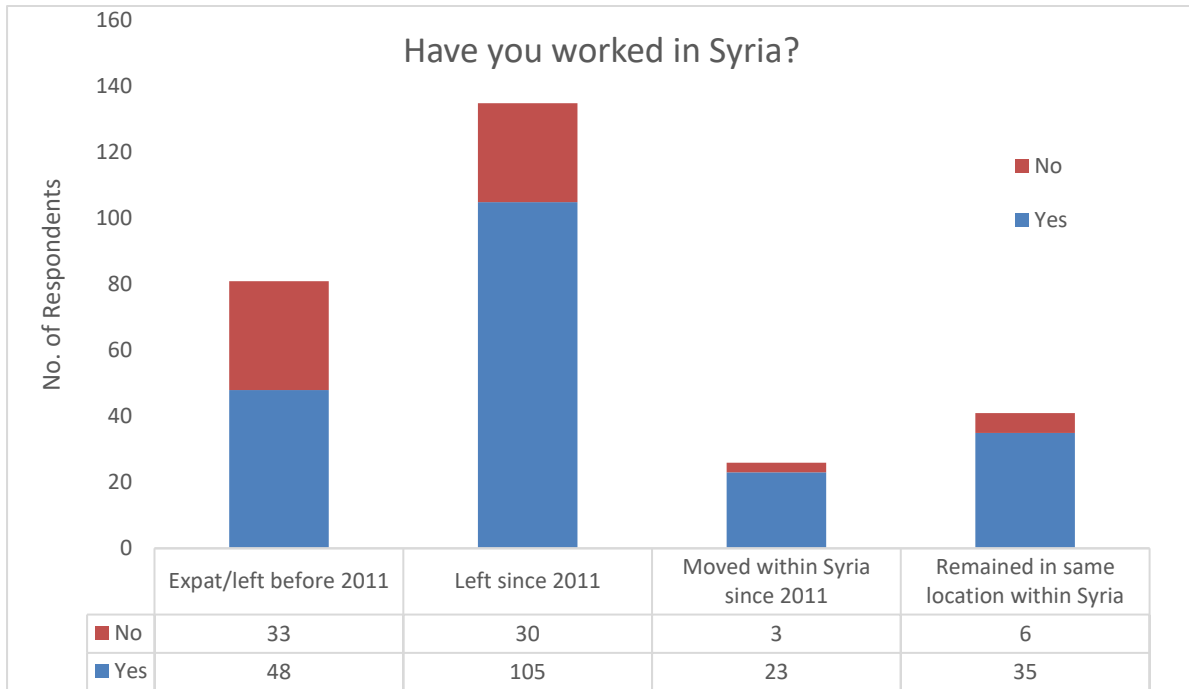
More than three quarters (77%) of the respondents are currently living outside Syria, most of whom left Syria after 2011, and 29% left before 2011, a category we referred to as Expats. The remaining quarter (23%) that remained in Syria mostly stayed in the same location with more than a third of them being internally displaced within Syria.

Urban respondents were the majority by a large margin of the Expat group who migrated out of Syria before 2011, whereas the events since then affected everyone equally.

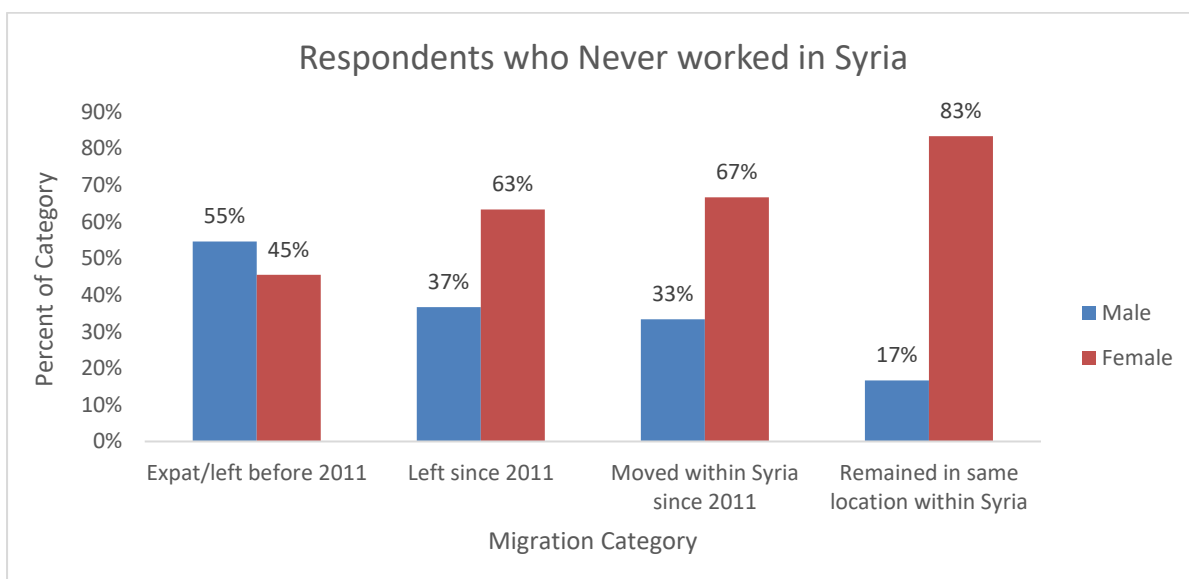


Did you ever work in Syria?

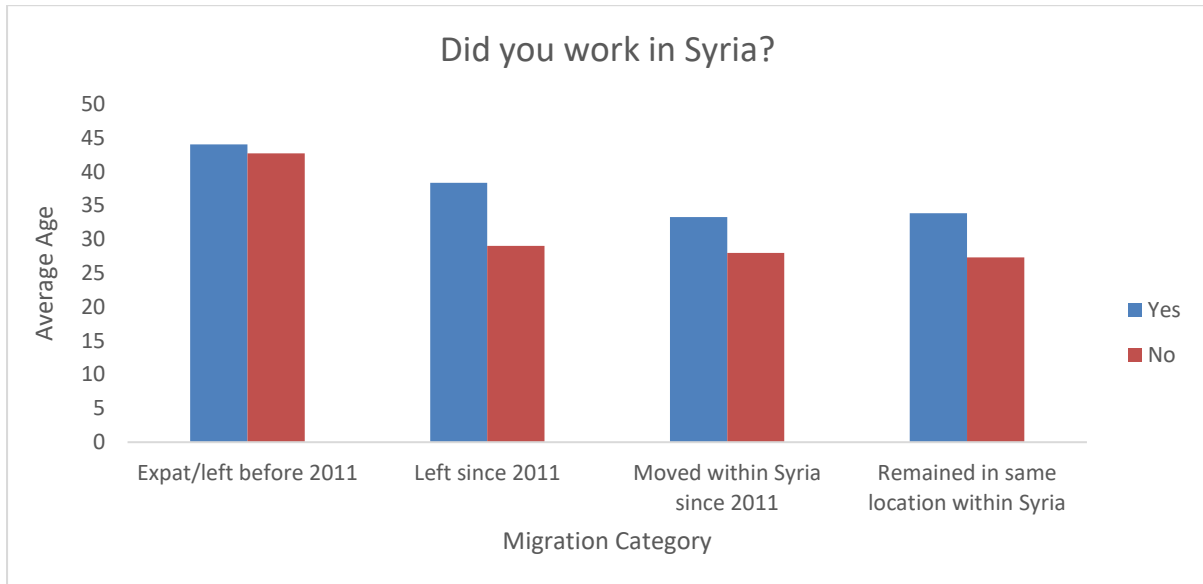
For all four migrant categories, 75% of respondents (211 respondents out of 283) worked in Syria at some point, half of whom (105 respondents) left Syria after 2011.



Only 23% of total respondents now outside Syria never worked there. Other than Expats category with equal male and female split, the vast majority of those who never worked in Syria are female ranging from roughly 2:1 for those who left Syria since 2011 and who moved within Syria, to 4:1 for those that remained in Syria in the same location.



Their average age distribution is as follows, with those who have worked in Syria being consistently older (three years older on average) than those who did not.



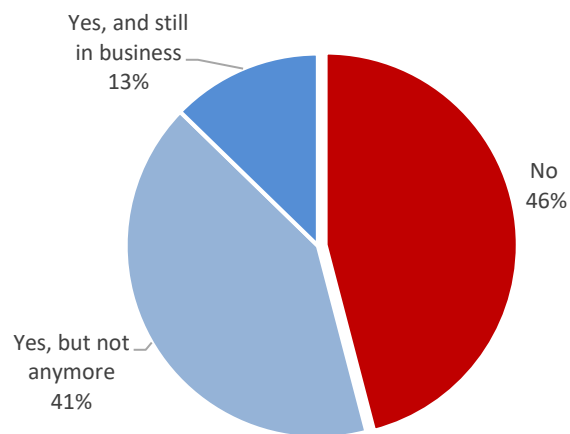
Do you or did you ever have your own business in Syria?

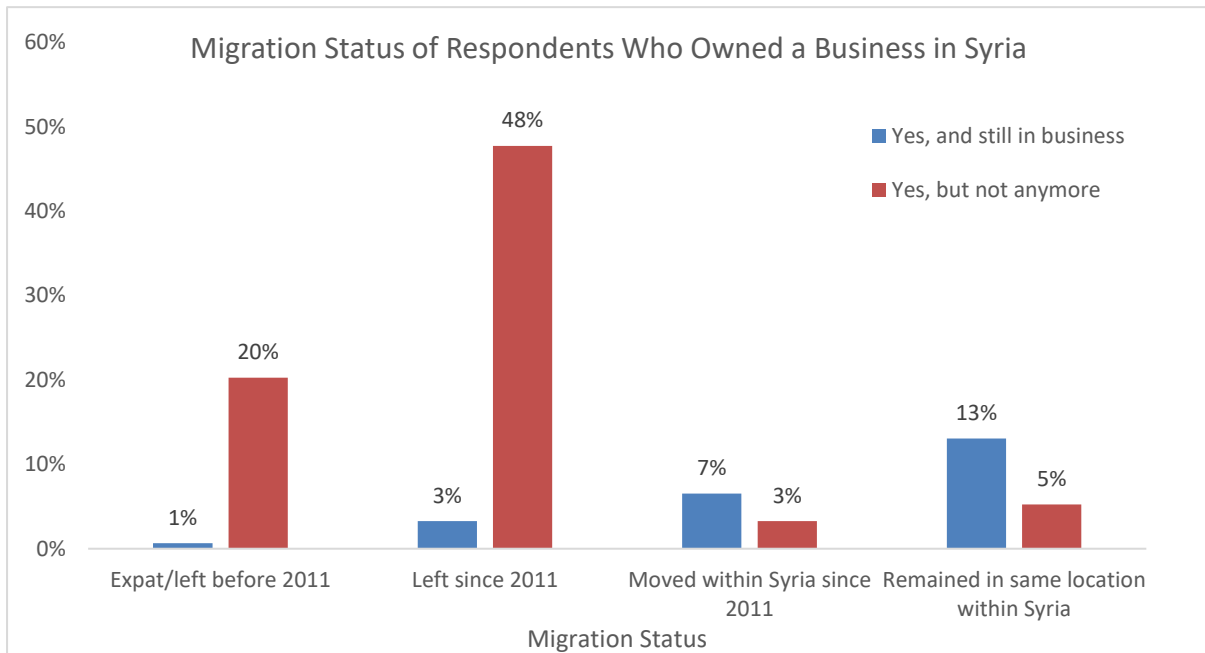
This goal of this question was to understand the relationship between entrepreneurship and migration. This includes any business, including small businesses, sole proprietorships, and self-employed/freelancing.

Location stability has a major impact on entrepreneurship; more than half, or 54% of respondents, said they either have or had their own business in Syria, and 46% said they never had their own business there.

Of those that did have a business and left after 2011, almost half, or 48% said they don't have that business anymore. Only 3% of them still have a running business in Syria. Even a substantial portion (38%) of the expat respondents who left before 2011 also had a business at one time, but none of them do today. The greatest proportion of respondents of those with a currently running business within Syria of more than half (54%) was among people who remained in the same location versus those who had migrated internally (29%), or those who are currently outside Syria (15%).

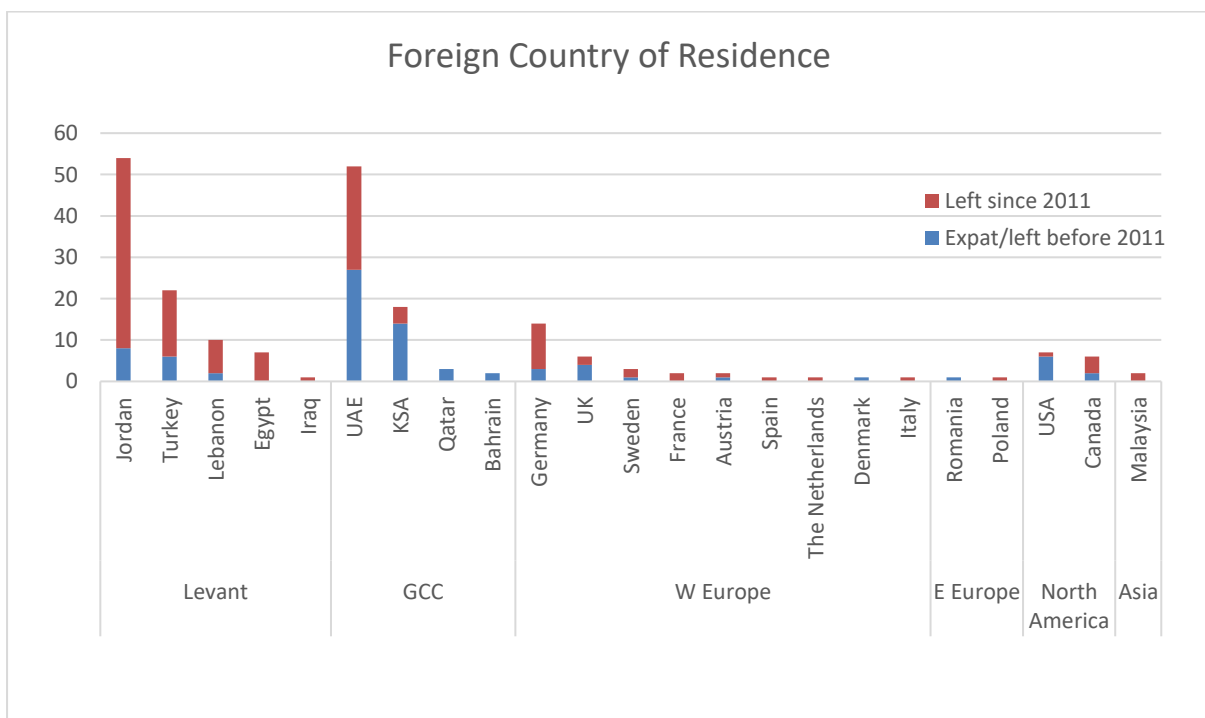
Did You Ever Own a Business in Syria?



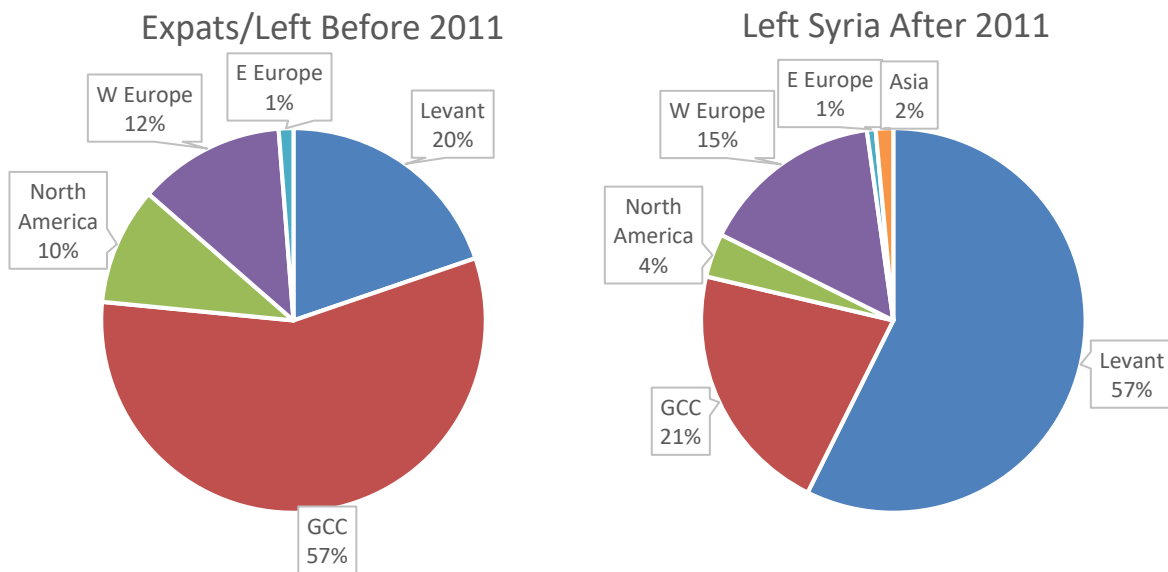


Where did you migrate to?

Respondents were asked about their current location. However, the distribution is not a proper reflection of the combined statistics of the general population of Syrian migrants, since we used convenience sampling and this result is based on the immediate network of Bareeq’s personnel, which is strong in Jordan and UAE. However, there were some useful findings nevertheless.



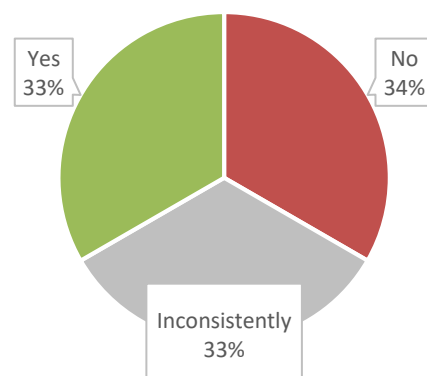
It is interesting to note the discrepancy between the country of residence of the Expat population (those who left Syria prior to 2011) and those who subsequently fled the country after the conflict began. Our findings demonstrate that the majority (57%) of the group who left Syria before 2011 went to GCC countries, whereas the same percentage of those who left after 2011 went to the neighboring Levant countries (Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon), many as refugees.

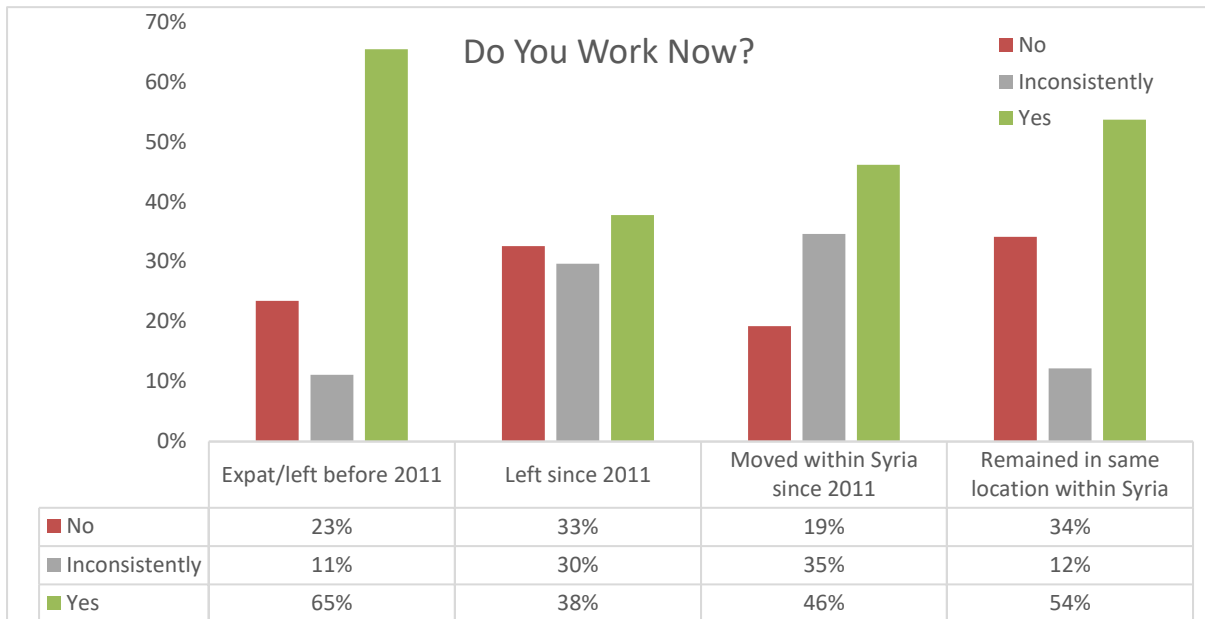


Do you work now?

This question was asked to understand the respondents' employment status. The response options were *Yes*, *No*, and *Inconsistently or part-time*. The split between all three categories was almost evenly split on aggregate. Our findings show that the circumstances are worst for migrants who left Syria after 2011, where only 38% of respondents have full-time work, 30% have inconsistent work, and 33% are not working at all.

Do You Work Now?

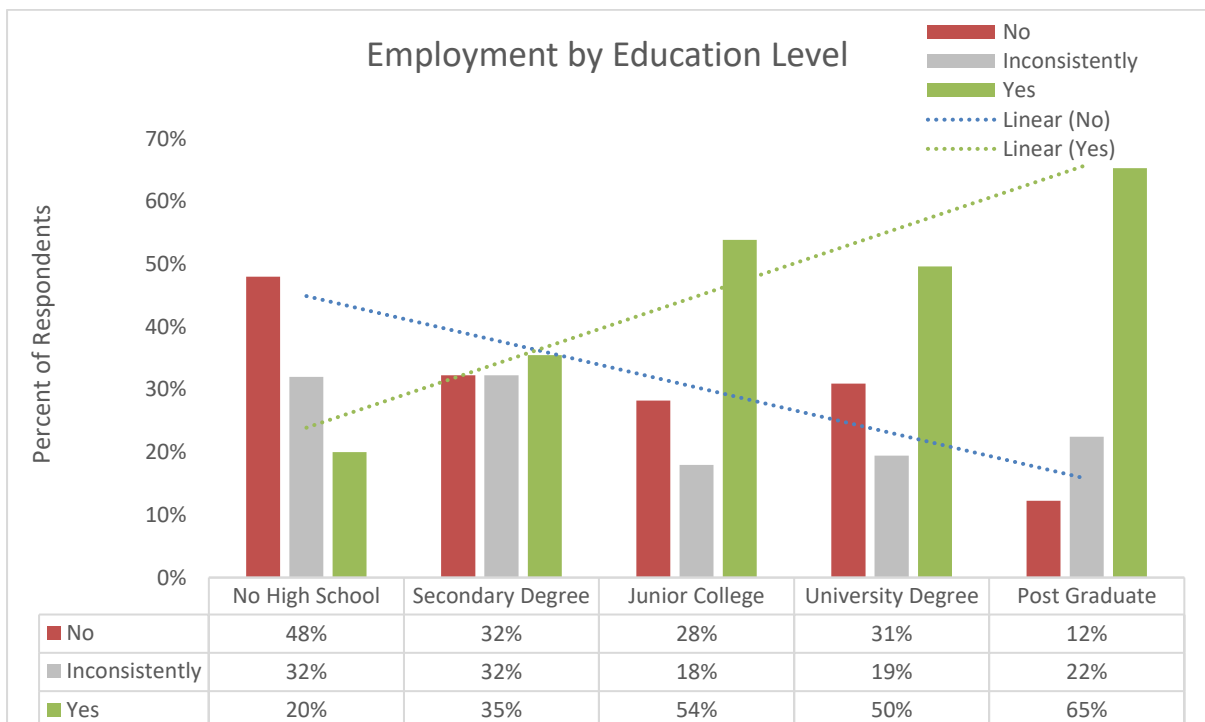




The highest full-time employment level at 65%, is with the Expat category who left Syria before 2011. Similarly, those who moved within Syria had the lowest rate of unemployment at 19%. Ability to migrate internally provided for increased ability to work, even if part-time; this same group has the highest level of part-time work as well, at 35%.

Effect of Education Level on Employment

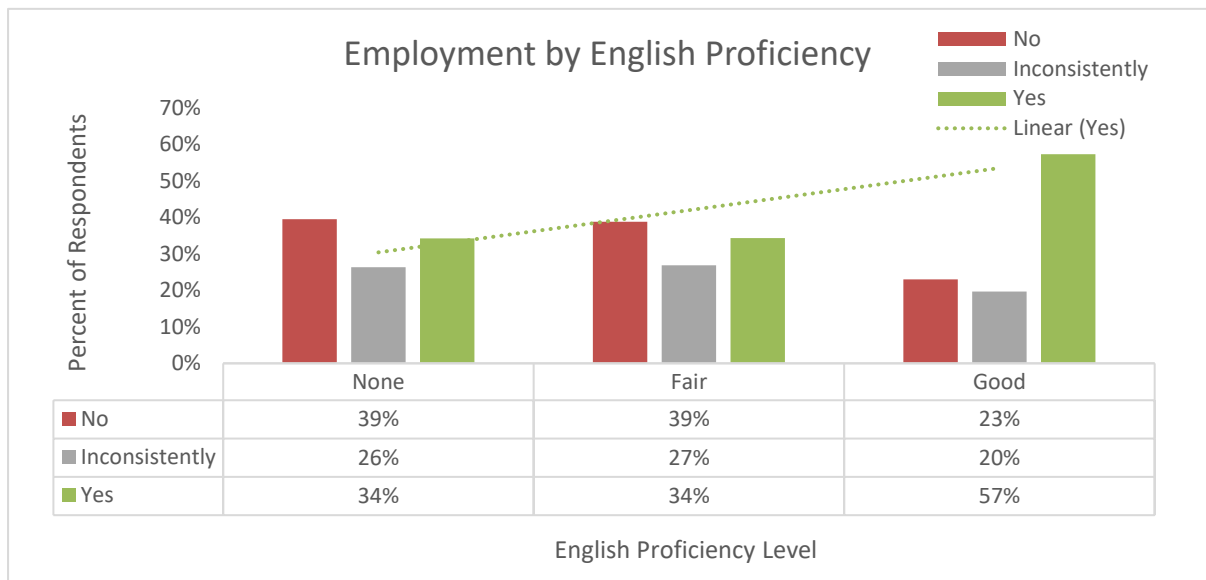
As expected, when asked if they work now, the individuals' education level has a significant impact on the employment status of respondents, as can be seen below.



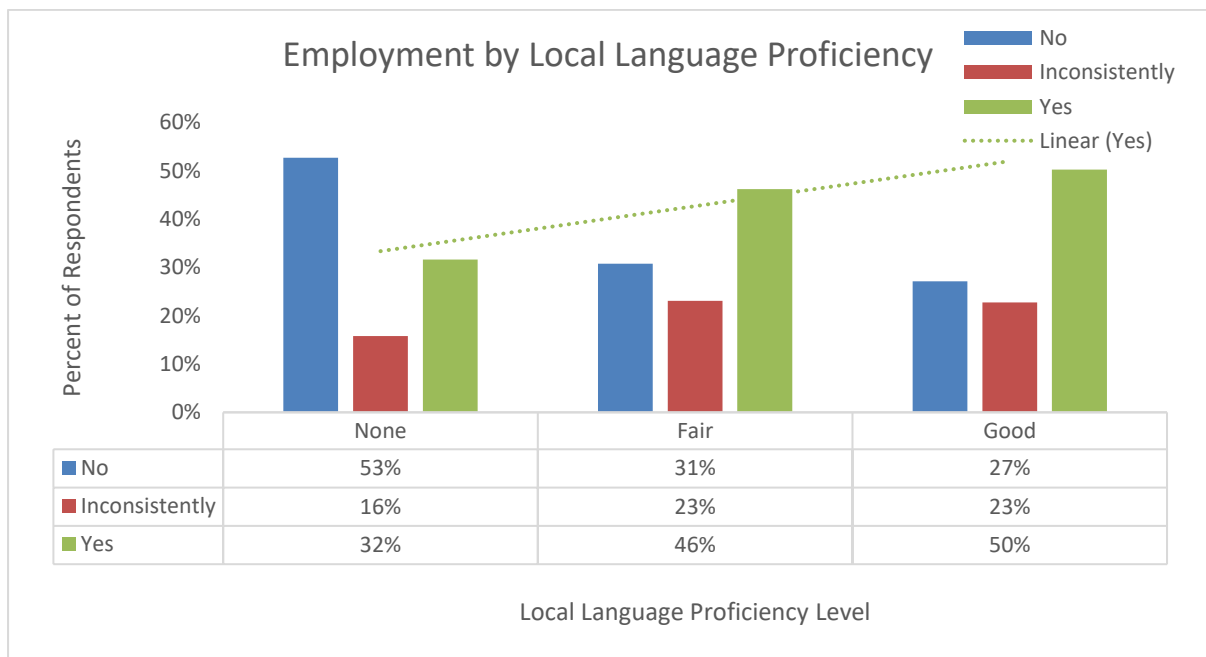
The graph above demonstrates a close association between education level and employment status, where individuals with less education have higher rates of unemployment and individuals with more education having higher rates of full-time employment.

Effect of English Proficiency on Employment

Similarly, an individual’s proficiency in the English language and the local language (if different from Arabic), also has a major impact on their employment status.



Effect of Local Language Proficiency on Employment



Dependents and Income

Even though the sample was based on responses from 283 people, they report having additional family dependents that add up to 958 people. In other words, the income from this sample supports a total of 1,241 individuals. Our findings show that, on average, each individual in this sample supports and average of 3.4 more people who live with them.

Regional Distribution	Heads of Household	Additional Dependents	Average of Additional Dependents	Average Monthly Income in USD
Syria	66	186	2.8	\$374
Levant				
Egypt	7	22	3.1	\$163
Iraq	1	5	5.0	\$400
Jordan	54	258	4.8	\$504
Lebanon	10	49	4.9	\$517
Turkey	22	81	3.7	\$459
GCC				
Bahrain	2	11	5.5	
KSA	18	60	3.3	\$2,095
Qatar	3	4	1.3	\$5,000
UAE	52	153	2.9	\$2,800
North America				
Canada	6	11	2.2	\$3,010
USA	7	16	2.3	\$10,542
W Europe				
Austria	2	12	6.0	
Denmark	1	0	0.0	\$1,920
France	2	5	2.5	
Germany	14	35	2.5	\$2,198
Italy	1	2	2.0	
Spain	1	2	2.0	
Sweden	3	6	2.0	\$3,550
The Netherlands	1	2	2.0	
UK	6	19	3.2	\$2,820
E Europe				
Poland	1	5	5.0	\$1,150
Romania	1	3	3.0	\$750
Asia				
Malaysia	2	11	5.5	\$255
Total	283	958	3.4	\$1,530

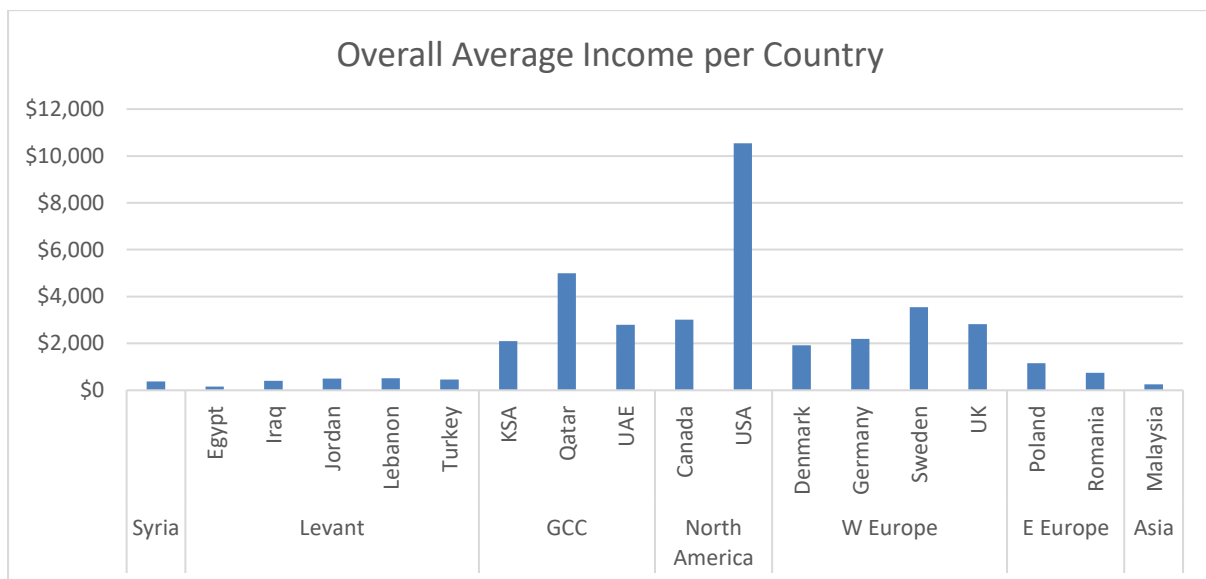
To help motivate respondents to submit to the survey, not all questions were mandatory, so some respondents didn't answer certain questions such as monthly income, among others. For example,

only 53% of respondents provided their current level of income. Nevertheless, this provided some useful insight. It is interesting to note the high average number of dependents of Syrians who migrated to Levant countries at 4.4 dependents, and the lower average is 3.1 dependents.

If we look only at respondents who left Syria, we find a marked contrast between those who left prior to 2011, with an average of 3.4 dependents and an average monthly income of \$3,262, whereas those who left after 2011 have an average of 3.7 dependents and an average monthly income of \$1,311. In other words, individuals who left after 2011 make less than half the monthly income than those who left prior to 2011 and on average have slightly more dependents.

Financial Load for Migrant Groups	Average of Additional Dependents	Average of Monthly Income USD
Expat/left before 2011	3.4	\$3,262
Left since 2011	3.7	\$1,311
Moved within Syria since 2011	3.5	\$627
Remained in same location within Syria	2.4	\$209
Total	3.4	\$1,530

Average incomes per country regardless of the source of income (being from work or support), vary from a low of \$163 in Egypt to a high of \$10,542 in the US, and an average of \$1,530 for the whole respondent population.



Migrant Groups Average Monthly Income	Do You Work Now?			Monthly Income USD
	Yes	Inconsistently	No	
Remained in same location within Syria	\$199	\$139	\$315	\$209
Moved within Syria since 2011	\$994	\$79	\$60	\$627
Expat/left before 2011				
Levant	\$665	\$280		\$588
GCC	\$3,411	\$1,075	\$2,148	\$3,008
North America	\$15,417	\$5,700	\$3,000	\$9,883
W Europe	\$1,945			\$1,945
E Europe		\$750		\$750
Left since 2011				
Levant	\$682	\$309	\$292	\$444
GCC	\$2,754	\$2,158	\$28	\$2,413
North America	\$8,334	\$320		\$4,327
W Europe	\$3,170	\$2,230		\$2,857
E Europe		\$1,150		\$1,150
Asia	\$255	\$255		\$255
Grand Total	\$2,068	\$889	\$667	\$1,530

There is a large discrepancy between the income levels of those who migrated out of Syria before and after 2011, especially if they don't work today. This could be due to career stability, pensions and better retirement planning.

Looking at migrants who left Syria before and after 2011 we see that generally, the Expats who left before 2011 have on average a higher monthly income, with the exception of Europe where it seems this is reversed. This could be due to social programs and also to entrepreneurship of Syrian migrants, which we will look at in more detail.

For the most marginalized of the groups, those who migrated internally or externally since 2011, and either don't currently work or have inconsistent work, the picture is as follows:

Average monthly income for respondents without a steady job who migrated since 2011

Regional Distribution	Heads of Household	Additional Dependents	Average of Additional Dependents	Average of Monthly Income
Syria	13	47	3.6	\$75
Levant				
Egypt	4	10	2.5	\$172
Jordan	38	194	5.1	\$306
Lebanon	4	28	7.0	\$500
Turkey	9	38	4.2	\$283
GCC				
KSA	1	0	0.0	
UAE	12	42	3.5	\$1,921
North America				
Canada	2	4	2.0	\$320
W Europe				
Austria	1	5	5.0	
France	1	0	0.0	
Germany	7	11	1.6	\$910
Italy	1	2	2.0	
Sweden	2	6	3.0	\$3,550
The Netherlands	1	2	2.0	
Asia				
Malaysia	1	9	9.0	\$255
E Europe				
Poland	1	5	5.0	\$1,150
Total	98	403	4.1	\$683

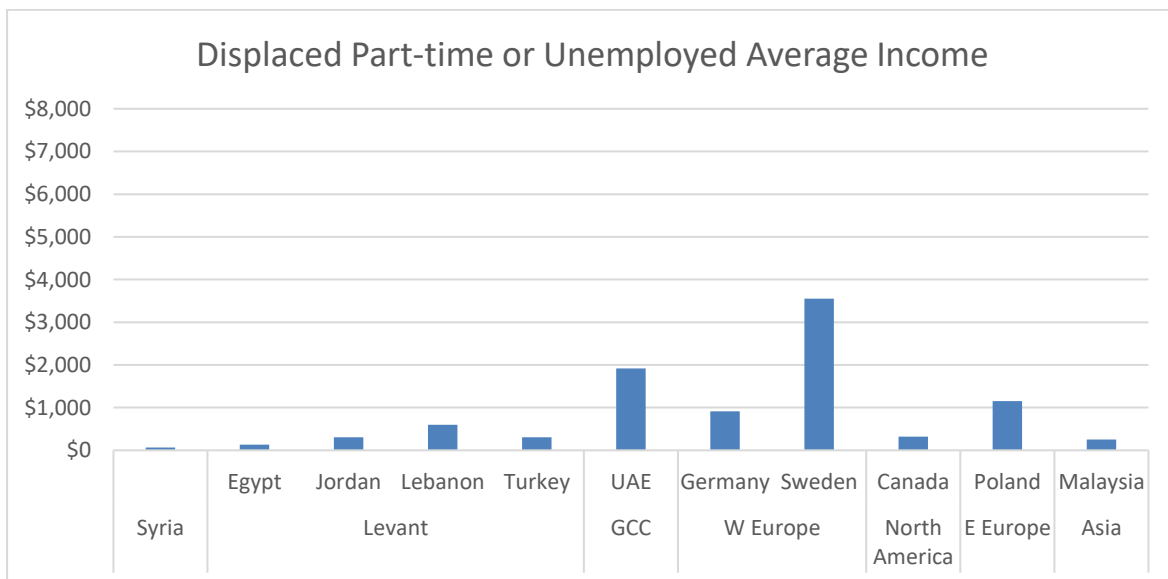
We also found that this group (i.e., individuals who migrated since 2011 and do not have a steady job), has an average of 4.1 additional dependents.

If we compare that with the people who haven't migrated at all since 2011, and have a steady job – the segment that was least affected by the conflict – we find the following:

Average monthly income for respondents with a steady job who never migrated since 2011

Regional Distribution	Heads of Household	Additional Dependents	Average of Additional Dependents	Average of Monthly Income
Syria	22	53	2.4	\$199
Levant				
Jordan	2	6	3.0	\$1,260
Lebanon	2	12	6.0	\$450
Turkey	4	20	5.0	\$500
GCC				
Bahrain	2	11	5.5	
KSA	10	36	3.6	\$2,326
Qatar	2	4	2.0	\$5,000
UAE	18	58	3.2	\$3,958
North America				
Canada	1			
USA	5	13	2.6	\$15,417
W Europe				
Austria	1	7	7.0	
Denmark	1	0	0.0	\$1,920
Germany	1	3	3.0	\$1,599
UK	4	16	4.0	\$2,130
Total	75	239	3.2	\$2,411

The contrast between these two groups is clear; the monthly income of the non-displaced group is 3.5 times more on average, with Sweden being the only anomaly in this comparison. In addition, this group has an average of 3.2 dependents, almost one full dependent less than the displaced group.





Working Dependents

With regards to additional dependents, some may be working. Therefore, especially in view of Bareeq’s mission with children’s wellbeing, we wanted to know how many, if any, were minors up to 16 years who need to work to make ends meet.

Levant Regional Distribution	Heads of Household	Additional Dependents	How many up to age 16 working?	Percent of Dependents
Syria	66	186	40	22%
Jordan	54	258	86	33%
Turkey	22	81	21	26%
Lebanon	10	49	4	8%
Egypt	7	22	2	9%
Total	159	596	153	26%

In aggregate, 26%, or more than a quarter of dependents, are minors age 16 or below who are working to help their households obtain additional income. It is interesting to note that Jordan has the biggest percentage of minors working, then Turkey ahead of Syria. However, this may be a skewed figure, as we did not ask follow-up questions referring to their exact working status (age, family business, full or part-time, etc.), so we hope that this figure may be less in actuality.

What is the biggest impediment to finding appropriate work?

We asked respondents to identify the biggest impediment to finding appropriate work as an open-ended question, since we wanted to see how respondents articulate the challenge they may be facing. We then grouped these areas into major categories listed below (presented in alphabetical order):

Age Discrimination: These respondents believed that their age is the biggest impediment to finding appropriate work, even though several voiced other concerns, such as Syrian nationality, along with age discrimination.

Compulsory Military Service: This applies to Syrian young men who have to spend five years conscripted into the Syrian army full time. Even though an only son is relieved from this duty, there is no relief if the other siblings are traveling, incarcerated, or missing.

Cronyism: This is rough translation to the Arabic term “wasta” where employers prefer hiring people from their own network or to curry favor with people they seek to influence or placate.

Lack of Daycare Service: This concern is voiced by women who are not able to work while nursing or raising toddlers.



Discrimination: This is a broad category that has several reasons given but most are because of having the Syrian nationality in countries where foreigners are not allowed to work. This also applies to respondents voicing perceived ethnic discrimination, and others cite uneven opportunities. Some women cited sex discrimination where males are given better opportunities and pay than females.

Funding: This includes both inability to raise adequate funding for entrepreneurship and also for lack of adequate banking and fund transfer services to facilitate commerce.

Lack of Education: Here respondents believe they need additional education to get the opportunities they seek.

Lack of Experience: This refers to the general requirements that employers ask for, such as a minimum number of years of experience to fill a professional position.

Lack of Safety: This applies to respondents who remain in Syria, where the lack of safety can be a detriment to gainful employment or commuting.

Language: This impediment to finding appropriate works is due to lack of language skills, which can be local non-Arabic language or even the necessary English language for certain positions in Arabic speaking countries such as GCC.

Low Wages: This is a general concern reported by many respondents, where the respondents feel there is a discrepancy between effort and financial reward, or that the cost of living is rising faster than wage increases. In Syria this is a substantial issue due to the extremely high inflation due to local currency devaluating tenfold since 2011.

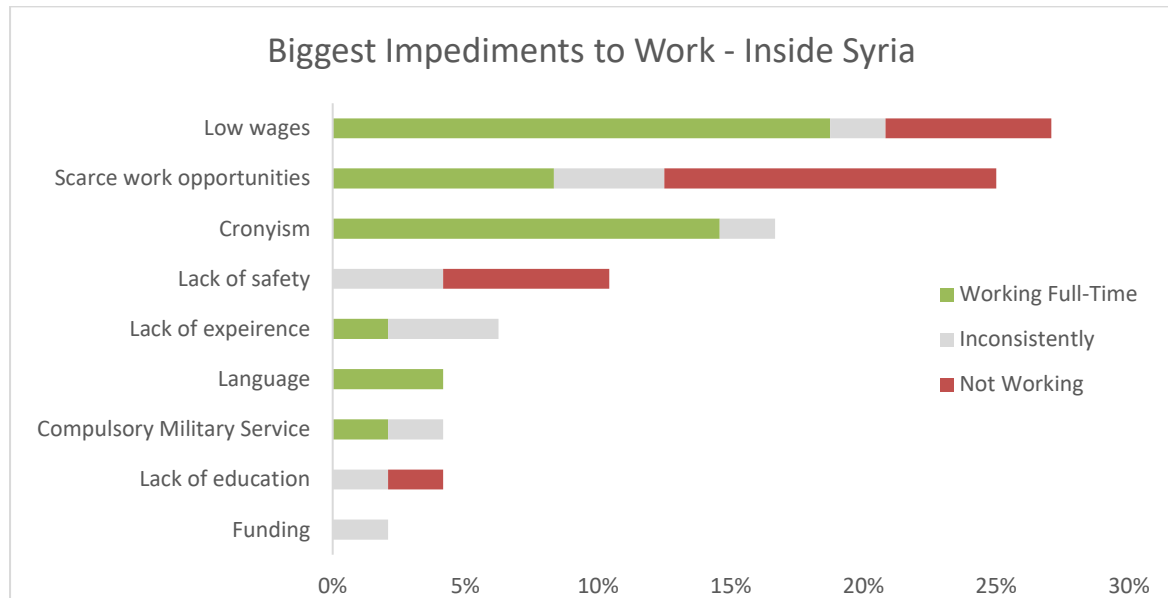
Adjusting to their New Country: Newly migrated respondents feel they aren't yet adequately accustomed to the circumstances in their country of residence, don't have enough of a social or professional network, or are not integrated enough within their societies.

Permits and Red Tape: These respondents feel that the local authorities have incorporated certain obstacles that prevent them from getting the job opportunities they seek. This can include residency permits, work permits, professional licenses, or other business licensing impediments.

Scarce Work Opportunities: This is a general economic view of the location where the respondents reside and include complaints about the current position which would be alleviated once a better one was found. Many feel that they have considerable experience that isn't being leveraged by the currently available jobs.

Inside Syria:

The following chart outlines the experiences of respondents who remain in Syria, including those who have been internally displaced and those who have not.

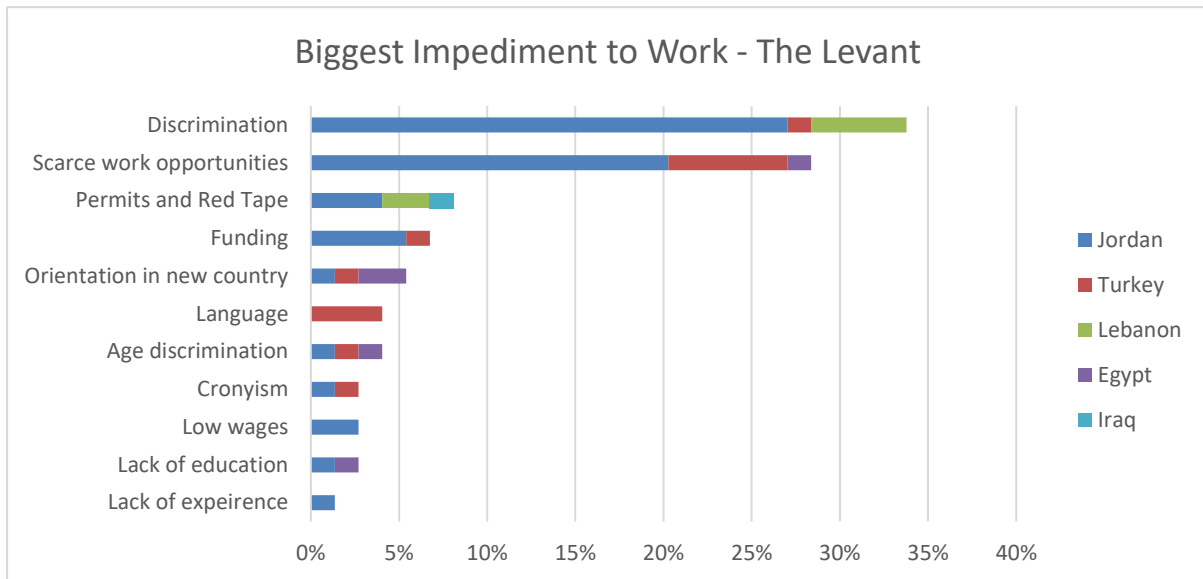


With the substantial adverse conditions that affected the Syrian economy, the biggest concern, reported by 27% of respondents, was related to earning low wages when contrasted with the ever-increasing cost of living. Earlier we saw the low level of average monthly income at \$374 for a household size of 3.8 individuals. 25% reported scarce work opportunities, which was mostly reported by people who don't work or have inconsistent work. Cronyism, or "wasta" was reported by 17% of people, and it is a common complaint in Syria where the opportunities are not necessarily given to the most deserving person. Lack of safety, reported by 10% of people, is voiced by respondents within Syria exclusively in this study. The other more generic concerns related to lack of experience, English language proficiency, compulsory military service, and lack of education were reported by 6% or less of respondents.

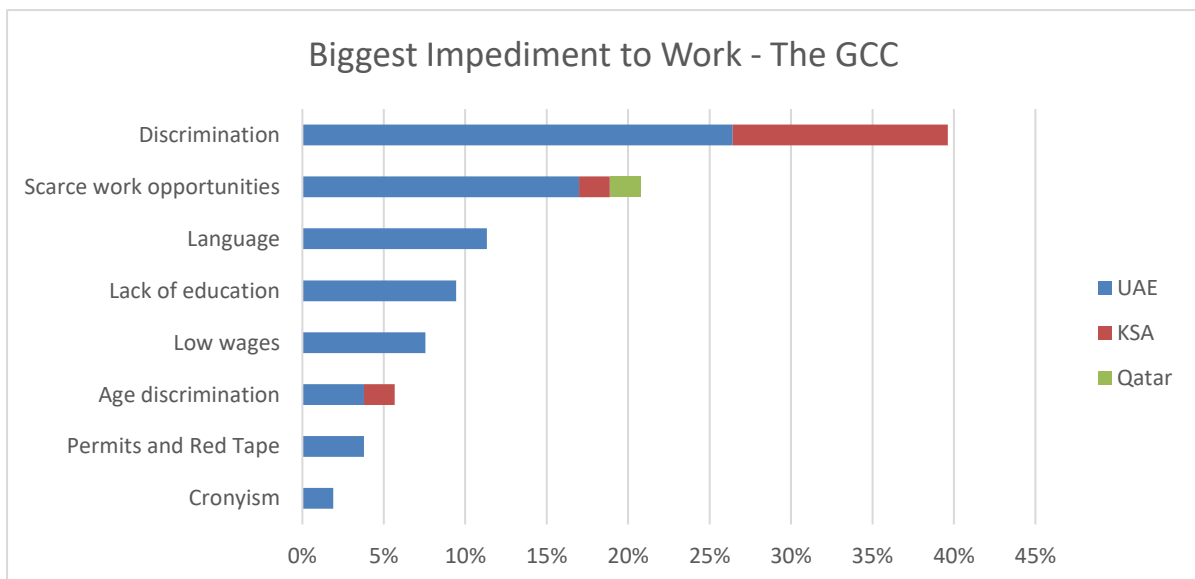
Outside Syria

There is quite a divergence between regions so we present each region separately.

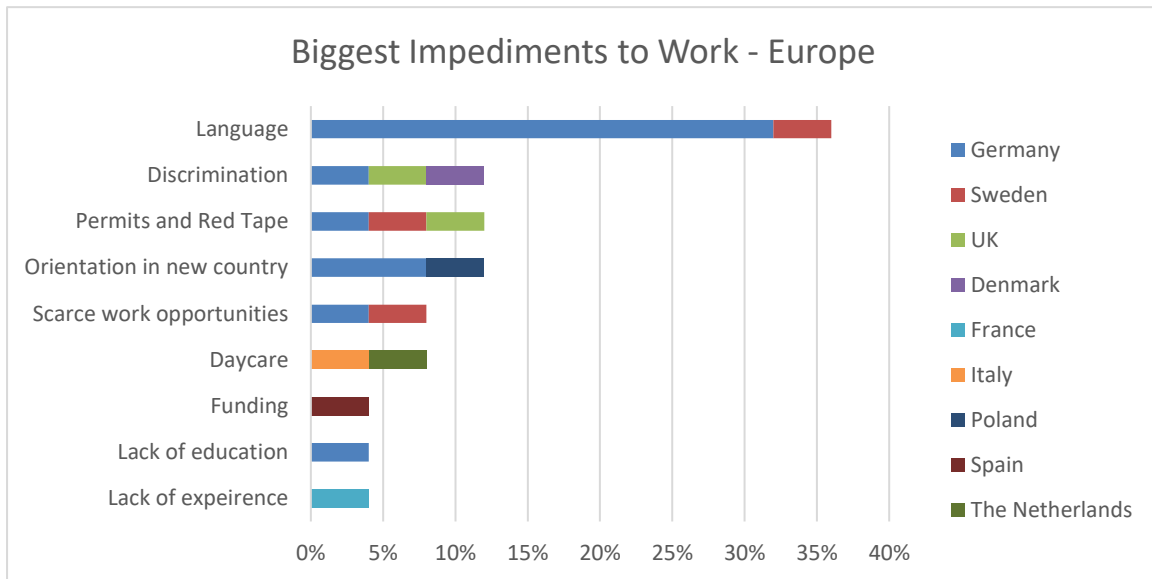
For the Levant, we find discrimination and scarce working conditions as the concerns voiced by most respondents, followed by permits and red tape. Due to the local adverse economic conditions in the countries neighboring Syria, local authorities generally do not allow Syrians to be lawfully employed so as not to crowd out local citizens' opportunities. There, restrictions can also be on movement, transportation (inability to get a driving license), or to own a property or business.



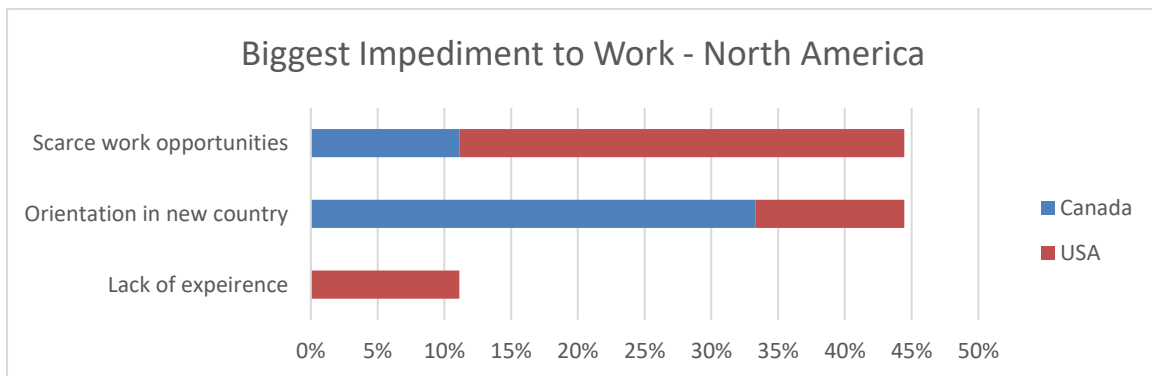
In the GCC, the picture is better than the Levant, with the same two biggest impediments being discrimination and scarce work opportunities (40% of respondents and 21% respectively), but English language proficiency is a close third impediment (reported by 11% of respondents) and lack of education (reported by 9% of respondents), which reflect the high skills needed in finding a good professional opportunity in the GCC.



In Europe, the lack of adequate language skills is by far as the biggest impediment to finding appropriate work (reported by 36% of respondents) with discriminations, permits and red tape, and lack of orientation in a new country a distant second, third, and fourth, respectively (reported by 12% of respondents on each). The condition of respondents in Europe is much better than those in the Levant after the biggest issue, language, is something that can largely be changed with personal effort.



In North America, the concerns are only in finding the appropriate work opportunities and getting settled with 44% of respondents voicing each, and with 11% of respondents reporting that gaining experience was a concern. The last two, getting settled and gaining experience, are not necessarily structural impediments, as they may be potentially alleviated, largely with individual effort.



Finally, we have Malaysia in Asia, where the two respondents there report a lack of appropriate work opportunities.

Entrepreneurship Section

With the next set of questions, we wanted to understand the potential entrepreneurial abilities and impact of the migrant community of Syrians.

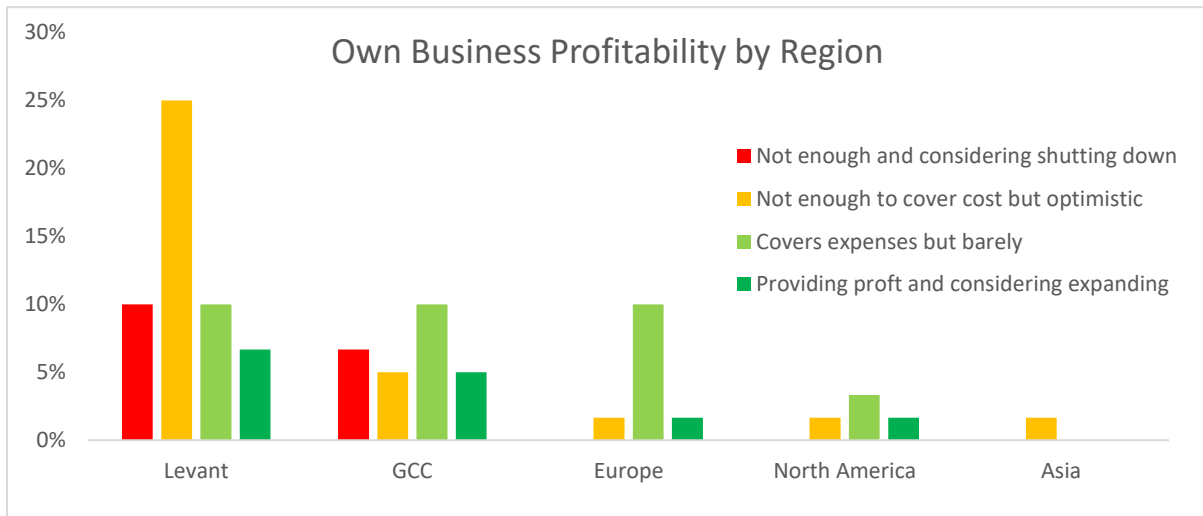
Are you a business owner?

We asked how many of the respondents have running businesses, which includes freelancers, and their status. We were surprised to find that 52 of the respondents, or 22%, have a running business or are self-employed. In aggregate, almost half are profitable (48%) with a third of that considering expanding (15%), and twice as many of the non-profitable businesses are optimistic of the future (35%) with only 17% considering shutting down.

The country and regional distribution is as follows:



Regionally, the Levant is the only significant region where non-profitable businesses outnumber profitable ones. There are only four countries where respondents are considering shutting down their businesses, which are Jordan, KSA, UAE, and Turkey. On the other hand, most of the same countries, in addition to Syria, Egypt, USA, and UK have respondents with businesses that are providing enough profit to consider expansion. It is eye opening to see that, even with the large number of respondents from Jordan, they don't fare as well as those in other Levant countries including Syria. Jordan with only 1 profitable business out of 16, joins Lebanon, KSA, Spain, and Malaysia, for countries where a majority of businesses are not profitable.



Of the 110 respondents who had a business in Syria and migrated out of the country, only six maintain a business back home. This shows the magnitude of the devastation for those entrepreneurs who left Syria. However, 35 of these 110 entrepreneurs (32%) now have their own businesses around the world -- almost a third of them were able to build businesses, while employing more than 11 times as many people: 408 individuals, 96 of which are Syrians and 312 non-Syrians.

Entrepreneurship of Migrants Who Had Businesses in Syria and Left				
Business Location	No. of Businesses	Employees Hired	Syrian Employees	Non-Syrian Employees
Levant				
Egypt	2	84	9	75
Jordan	8	88	28	60
Turkey	4	32	27	5
Lebanon	2	8	7	1
Syria	1			
Europe				
UK	2	82	2	80
Romania	1	5		5
France	1			
Poland	1			
GCC				
KSA	4	55	8	47
UAE	6	25	6	19
North America				
Canada	1	20		20
USA	1			
Asia				
Malaysia	1	9	9	
Total	35	408	96	312

The entrepreneurship picture for the aggregate respondents is as follows, with 21% or 60 out of 283 owning a business, and employing 512 people, 175 of whom are Syrian, and 340 non-Syrians.

All Respondents' Entrepreneurship Activity				
Business Location	No. of Businesses	Employees Hired	Syrian Employees	Non-Syrian Employees
Levant				
Syria	5	56	56	
Jordan	16	102	41	61
Turkey	4	32	27	5
Egypt	4	88	9	79
Lebanon	2	8	7	1
Europe				
UK	2	82	2	80
Slovakia	1	1		1
France	1			
Germany	1			
Spain	1	1		1
Poland	1			
Romania	1	5		5
GCC				
UAE	10	32	11	21
KSA	5	60	10	50
Qatar	1	7	1	6
North America				
USA	3	12	2	10
Canada	1	20		20
Asia				
Malaysia	1	9	9	
Total	60	515	175	340

A note on the potentially large percentage of Syrian entrepreneurs in the context of this study is that in certain cases, increased entrepreneurship is not by choice but by necessity. When migrants find themselves in new unfamiliar environments, many see little prospect of gaining employment with decent wages. Later in the study when we ask about barriers to prosperity we find that lack of adequate opportunities is a major concern of respondents.

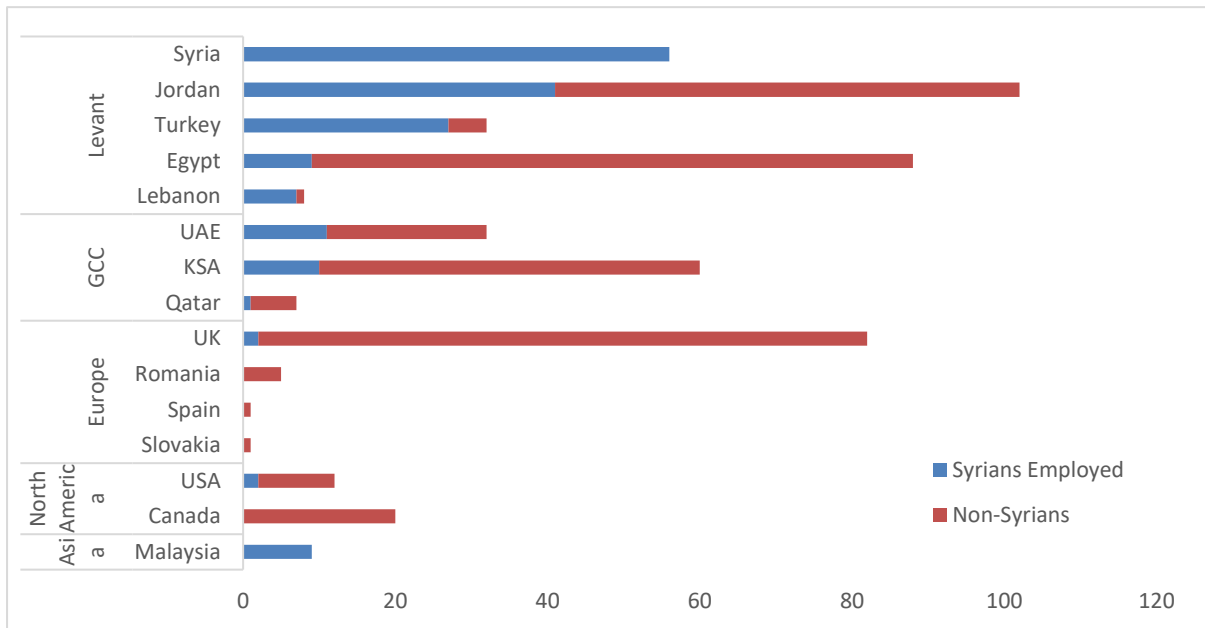
Female Participation in Entrepreneurship

Established new business?			
Current Business Location	Female	Male	Total
Levant			
Jordan	6	10	16
Syria	1	4	5
Turkey	4		4
Egypt		4	4
Lebanon		2	2
Europe			
UK		2	2
Slovakia		1	1
France		1	1
Germany		1	1
Spain	1		1
Poland		1	1
Romania		1	1
GCC			
UAE	7	3	10
KSA		5	5
Qatar		1	1
North America			
USA	3		3
Canada		1	1
Asia			
Malaysia		1	1
Grand Total	22	38	60

It is encouraging to see that the female participation in establishing a business more than a third of respondents, at 37%.

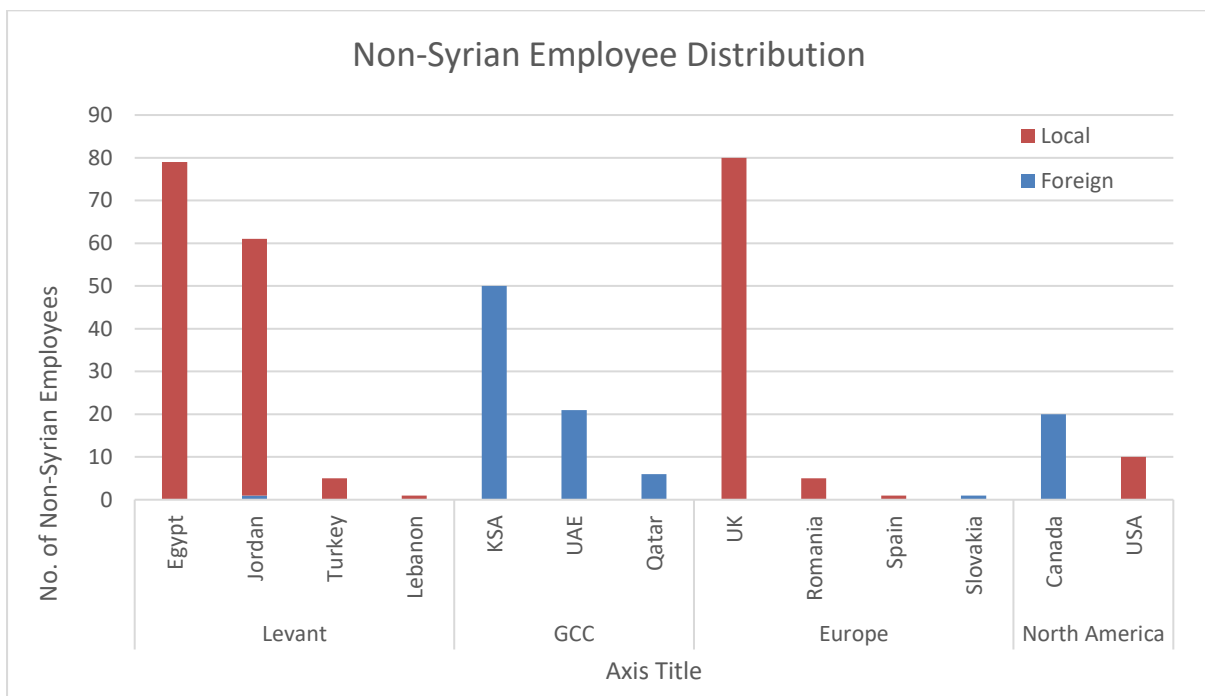
Whom do you employ?

When analyzing all respondents in the study, including those who remained in Syria, we found that the 283 respondents have 60 businesses employing 515 people, 175 of whom are Syrians, and 340 non-Syrians. The distribution of employees in the countries where the respondents have businesses is as follows:



Three countries show Syrians being a majority of the Syrian business employee count, which are Syria, Turkey, and Malaysia. All other countries the majority and sometime exclusively, employees are non-Syrians.

We also asked about the composition of the non-Syrian employees; specifically, we asked whether their employees were local citizens or whether foreign expatriates. In all Levant countries, Europe, and US, the non-Syrian employees were local. With regards to GCC, most of the workforce is expat, most possibly due to the limited local native pool of workers. The high rate of foreign workers for Canada could reflect greater access to other refugee communities, and the small sample size there.



The Minors' Situation

Without delving into the legality of the situation we tried to understand any impact of working conditions on children. Since we found earlier that more than a quarter (26%) of dependents in the Levant are working minors, we also tried here to ascertain how many minors were employed by Syrian business owners, and found the following instances:

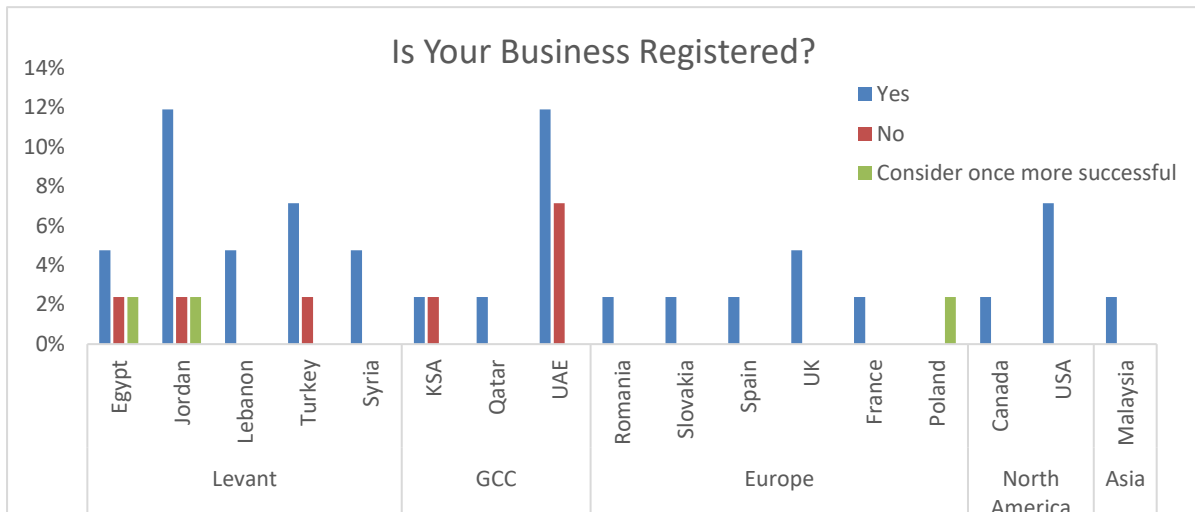
Country	No. of Businesses	Minors 16 or below you employ
Lebanon	2	2
Egypt	1	5
Total	3	7

We found that one of the business owners in Lebanon has declared that one of their dependents was a working minor, and we are assuming that they are working in the family business. For the other business owner in Lebanon they only have one Syrian employee, and they declared that they employ one minor, which most possibly means that this is a case of employing a Syrian minor refugee. With regards to the business owner in Egypt, they employ a large number of people (9 Syrians and 75 Egyptians) and have two of their minor dependents declared as working. Thus, if we follow a similar assumption as the first business owner, it is probably that they hired three minors from the local Egyptian community in addition to their two minor dependents.

Therefore, we could say that from the data submitted we found four instances of a minor being employed out of the 515 employed by Syrian-owned businesses and only in the Levant.

Registration of Businesses and Impediments to Success

We asked a question about business owners having registered their business with local authorities. This question was to try to understand the local regulatory landscape where these businesses are set up and also to provide some sense of scale. The vast majority of respondents (76%) have registered their business with local authorities. 17% of respondents reported that they had not registered because they believe it is not required or not possible (freelancing, moonlighting, working from home, or providing contract work under the radar), and 7% who said they will consider registering their business but only once it picks up sufficiently to justify that.



What is the One Thing Authorities Can Do to Help You Succeed?

We asked the optional question: What is the one thing that authorities where you now live should do to help you succeed? We made this an open-ended text response so that we can get as much information as possible. We received 57 responses, and then grouped the responses based on keywords into the following categories of requests, with aggregate distribution:

Request to Authorities	Respondents	Percent
More working opportunities	10	18%
Work Permit	9	16%
Legal Status	9	16%
Business Funding	8	14%
Not discriminate	7	12%
Tax/Fee holiday	4	7%
East of banking	3	5%
Safety in Syria	2	4%
Education Opportunities/scholarship	2	4%
Internship Programs	2	4%
Accommodation	1	2%

More working opportunities: This is both a general comment on the local economy where there aren't enough opportunities, and also provides a sense of suitability of one's profile and capabilities to becoming gainfully employed or productive where they find themselves.

Work Permit for Syrians: This request was to allow local authorities to permit Syrians to work. In many countries as we will see further below, they are not allowed to work in order not to displace local citizen working opportunities.

Legal Status for Syrians: This is a factor in several countries where Syrians are not allowed a legal status that authorizes them to work legally and function within the local society.



Business Funding: Some respondents expressed the need for raising capital or loans to establish or grow their business.

Tax/Fee holiday: These respondents would like to get some relief on fees or taxes their businesses have to pay.

Ease of Banking Restrictions: Some respondents are frustrated with the restrictions on banking services for being Syrian.

Not Discriminate: This is a general request for authorities to remove obstacles to Syrians, which includes cronyism and perceived intolerance.

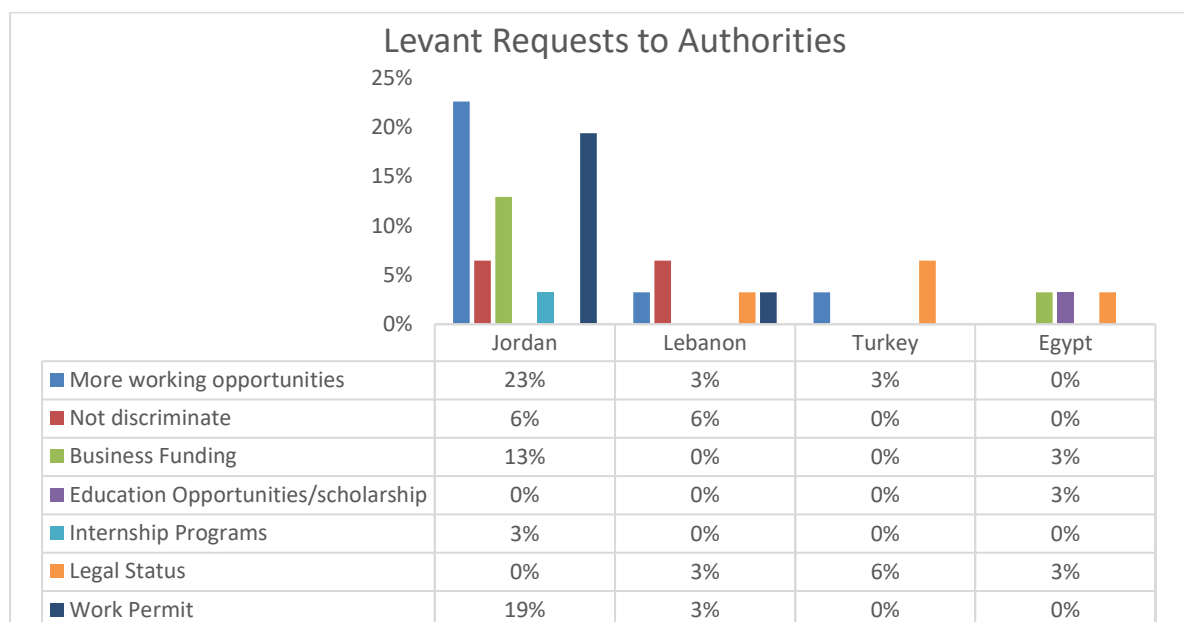
As can be expected, these responses vary considerably by country or region. We received responses from only a few regions, being Syria, Levant, GCC, and Europe. We will start with Syria, where personal safety is a major concern.

Syria

Request to Authorities	Respondents
Better Safety in Syria	50%
More working opportunities	25%
Not discriminate/Cronyism	25%

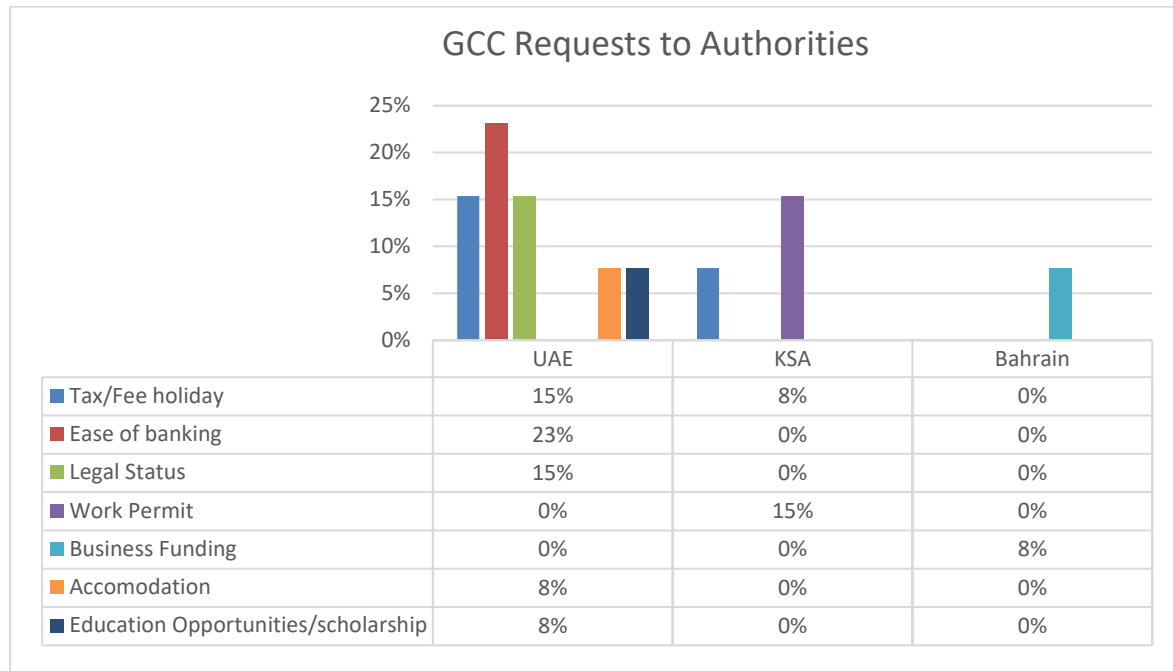
Levant (other than Syria)

With many of the respondents in Levant living in Jordan, it is expected that we would get better resolution on the suggestions coming from Syrian workers there.



Most Syrians in the Levant live in a catch-22 situation where they are not given many of the local citizen rights, such as owning property or cars, nor able to get a driver’s license, much less have the ability to legally become employed. Having said that, many are either working illegally, moonlighting, or found a way to partner locally to create a small business.

GCC

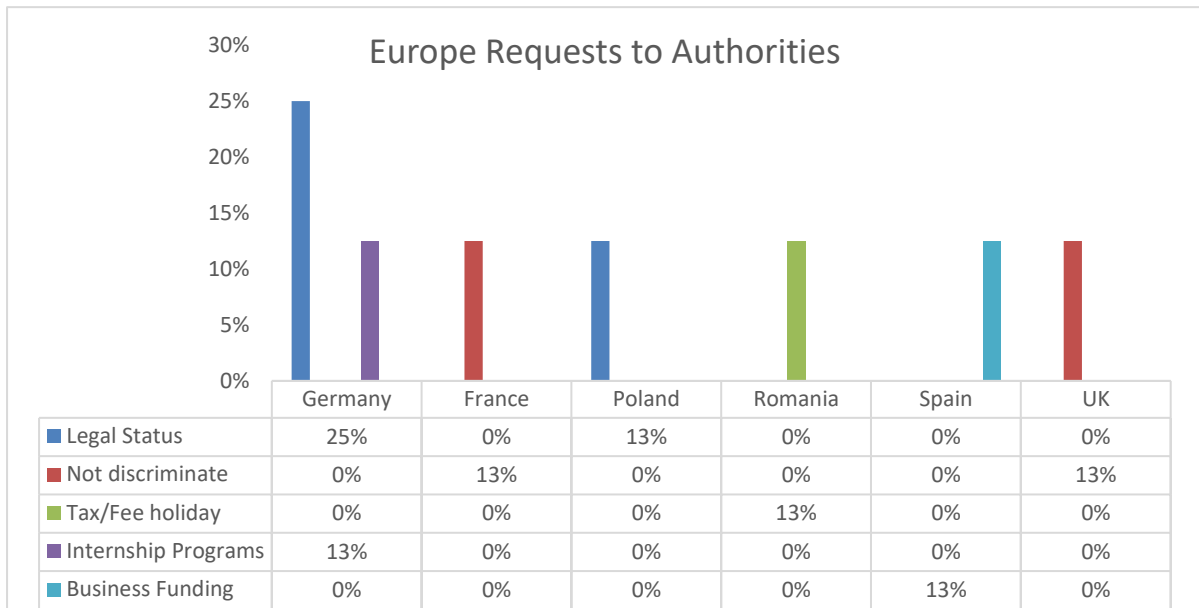


With the GCC being much more regulated for immigration, very few if any Syrians are without sources of income, unless their status lapses due to economic or other reasons. Thus, there requests are for less banking restrictions, and lower fees. There are some that enter the country and are not able to renew their residency, and these as well are asking for legal status and work permits as special recognition of their plight especially that not all Syrians can go back to Syria under current circumstances. The UAE has recently set up a temporary amnesty program for overstaying expacts to legalize their status and avoid penalties to leave the country legally.

Europe

For Europe the picture is as follows:

Two respondents in Germany requested to have their status legalized, and one to have access to internship programs. In France and UK, one respondent each complained about discrimination. In Spain one respondent requires business funding. In Romania one respondent would request some fee and tax relief, and one in Poland asked for legal status there.



Summary and Recommendations

The aim of this study was to understand the respondents' work experiences before and after 2011, and to identify the differences between those who remained in Syria, including those who were internally displaced and those who remained in the same location, versus those who migrated, the countries they migrated to, the type of work and income they obtained, and their financial load as far as dependents are concerned. We were also interested in understanding how migration impacted Syrian entrepreneurs and how this affected revenue and the potential to employ others.

The main findings in this study are that the location where Syrians find themselves has a significant impact on their ability to flourish and contribute to the economy. There is a substantial portion of the Syrian migrant population in dire situations, especially in the Levant. However, since a substantial portion of them are entrepreneurial, some have flourished and are able to contribute to the economies they find themselves in, even if moonlighting or working without authorization. To further support the entrepreneurial spirit in this population, it is imperative to consider implementing programs that can help them change their status from consumers to producers, considering the exponential effect that this can have, both to the economy and to their well-being. It is expected that a large portion of the current Syrian migrant population will be a critical force in rebuilding Syria when the time comes and even if some don't return, they can then bring foreign direct investments back to Syria once the situation stabilizes.

- The war in Syria has significantly impacted the economic conditions for Syrians within and outside Syria; for example, our study found that a significant majority at 75% of all respondents had worked in Syria, but only one-third have a full-time job, and the remaining are equally split between inconsistent part-time work or no work at all.
- More than half of respondents (54%) owned a business in Syria at one time, but more than three quarters of them (76%) lost these businesses, especially those that are outside Syria today (94%).
- Almost one-third (31%) of the Syrian migrants that lost their business in Syria are currently self-employed, employing 11 times as many people constituting a diverse group of people, with 43% being Syrian and 57% being non-Syrian.
- Education level and proficiency in English and the local language (if not Arabic) significantly increases an individuals' employability.
- Employing one Syrian person can support more than four times as many people, since each respondent has 3.4 additional dependents, on average.
- More than a quarter of all dependents in the Levant are minors below the age of 16 who are working to help their households obtain additional income to make ends meet.
- The Levant (including Syria) with its large displaced and refugee population is the only significant region where non-profitable Syrian businesses outnumber profitable ones, with Jordan having the highest percentage.



- In aggregate, scarce work opportunities and work permits/legal status were reported as the greatest barriers for the respondents to be fully productive members of their communities.
- Many Syrians may have turned to entrepreneurship not by choice but because they see little prospect of gaining employment with decent wages, as evidence by citing lack of adequate opportunities as a major concern.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations aim to improve the lives of Syrian workers and enhance their economic contribution to the societies they now live in.

General recommendations include:

- With emphasis on entrepreneurship and leveraging latent skills, developing programs to foster vocational capabilities and increase their educational level as well as increasing proficiency in English and the local language (if non-Arabic) will greatly improve living conditions, employability, and positive economic impact of Syrians around the globe. For migrants, and because many are limited by transportation resources, economic reasons, and concerns around safety, offering these types of programs closer to their neighborhoods and enhancing local institutions will improve engagement and success.
- Developing programs and access to resources to assist individuals in building their businesses can bring widespread change, sustainability, and with its multiplier effect, can impact a large network of people. Local chambers of commerce can reach out to these communities and connect them with local opportunities to increase their chances of having profitable businesses.

Specifically, since the macro economic conditions, laws, and local population profiles vary considerably from one country or region to the next, we have presented more specific suggestions as follows:

- Inside Syria:
 - Improving the security situation to allow safe travel and commute.
 - Work on improving access to work opportunities and provide individuals pathways to get employed including increased foreign language training.
 - Nepotism/cronyism appears to be one of the greatest impediments to work inside Syria. Thus, providing individuals with access to social capital by bridging communities and increasing local collaboration can help remedy some of that.
- The Levant (other than Syria)
 - Discrimination, scarce work opportunities, and permits were the greatest impediments to work in the levant. Lebanon and Jordan are teetering due to the huge influx of migrants, and thus have clamped on many of their rights and work permits to relieve stress on their own citizens. In Jordan, for example, Syrians regardless of their previous status or when they migrated, have instituted many new restrictions on owning or driving a vehicle, and legally working as an employee in

fear of displacing their citizens. Yet, many migrants and refugees have skills and had businesses in Syria.

- Even though there are many successful examples of Syrian entrepreneurs doing well in Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt, many are having to moonlight or work without authorization as contractors, or have their minor dependents work in order to make ends meet. Relaxing certain restrictions for entrepreneurs can go a long way towards adding to the economies of these countries and improving the migrant population's situations.
- An increased emphasis on education for children should be a higher priority in the Levant to help address the risks of a lost generation without adequate education.
- GCC Region:
 - Unlike the Levant, GCC countries generally admit foreign workers and dependents as lawful residents. Having said that, some Syrians who were able to travel to the GCC on visit or work visas ended up overstaying due to their inability to return to Syria at this stage of the conflict. Discrimination, scarce work opportunities, and legal work permits were the greatest impediments to work in the GCC.
 - Developing avenues for overstayers to attain work permits more readily without penalties would be very helpful. The UAE has recently introduced a limited time amnesty program for overstayers of all nationalities.
- Europe:
 - Language proficiency and work permit issues were the greatest impediments to work in Western Europe
 - Enhancing programs for increasing local language proficiency goes a long way to empower migrants to assimilate and contribute.
- North America:
 - Scarce work opportunities and acculturation were the greatest impediments in North America.
 - Migrants are expected to become self-sufficient within a few months of arrival. Even though there are many grassroots Syrian settlement initiatives, enhancing programs that bridge the gap between migrants and the local business community could improve the integration process and economic independence of migrants and increase local employment as well.



Published by Bareeq Education and Development

July 2018

www.bareeqeducation.org

Suite 101, Amman Center Building
Queen Misbah Street, Jabal Amman
P.O. Box 2529
Amman 11181, Jordan

Tel: +962 7 9662 2345

info@bareeqeducation.org