

Introduction

The Greater Idleb area is an area of influence in the northwest of Syria, including a large section of Idleb governorate, and small areas in Aleppo, Hama, and Lattakia governorates. Despite this being a relatively small area, an estimated 3 million people reside here, of which around 1.9 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs).¹ The population faces large challenges, including a strongly deteriorating economy. This is not only a result of the conflict, but is also an outcome of COVID-19,² the rapid currency depreciation,^{3,4} and now the Ukraine crisis.⁵ Furthermore, the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution that has kept the last humanitarian crossing into North-Western Syria open is due to expire on the 10th of July 2022;⁶ a possible vote against the renewal may have serious impacts on the local economy.

The aim of this report is to look at the factors that have affected the economy of Greater Idleb between November 2021 and May 2022 (in the report referred to as the *study period*) and how this impacted households. November 2021 was chosen in order to capture the large currency fluctuations in December of that year.⁷ Since then, the most significant impact on markets resulted from the Ukraine crisis.⁵ In order to analyse the impacts these events have had on the households' economic situation, this report combines information on prices, employment, and wages. This analysis includes data from a rapid needs assessment that REACH conducted in June 2022 in order to support the current report. The decreasing purchasing power of the household is one of the key drivers of humanitarian needs. This is used as a starting point to discuss food security, health and protection, and education and child labour.

This report uses multiple sources, including data from REACH and others, secondary reports, and informal conversations with sector experts. The population of interest are host communities and out-of-camp IDPs, which comprise around 65% of the population. Data used include those collected from the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) with the Cash Working Group (CWG). JMMI collects information on prices of key goods each month (1,824 vendors in May-22); it is indicative of the price situation during that period. REACH's Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) provides indicative monthly data on the household situation in around 370 communities, collected from 1,353 key informants (KIs) in May 2022. Analysis in this report drew from both JMMI and HSOS data from November 2021 through May 2022. Representative household data from the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) (95% confidence, 10% error) was available for January 2022, including information on the socio-economic situation. Lastly, a rapid needs assessment (RNA) was conducted in June 2022, providing indicative KI information on the purchasing power and child labour situation from 301 communities. For more information, [please see endnotes](#).

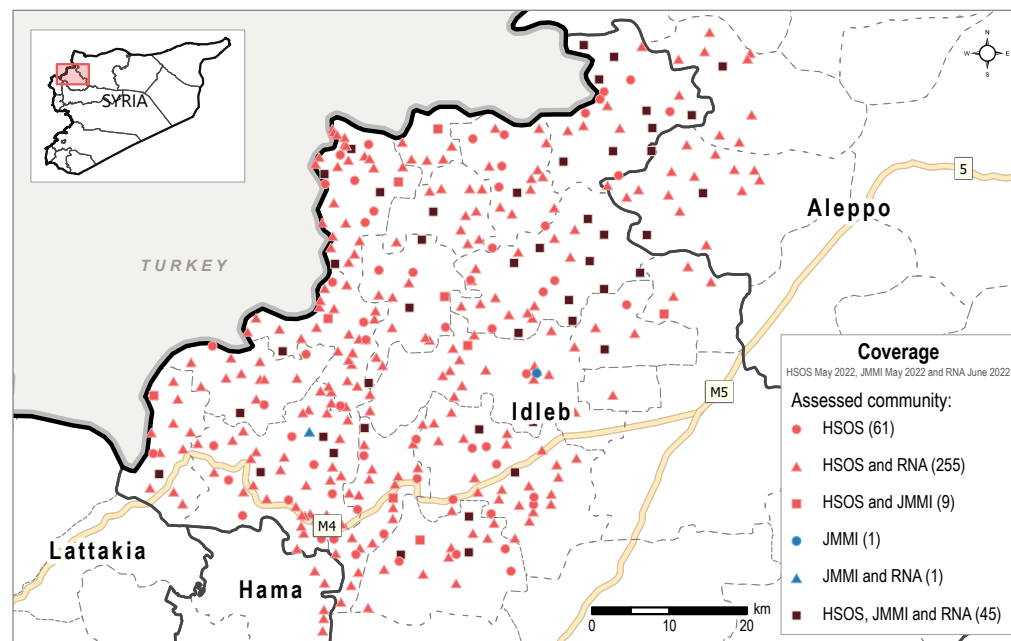
REACH sources used

HSOS KI ■ – Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) key informant (KI) assessment conducted monthly by REACH in 370 communities in Greater Idleb, Northwest Syria.

RNA ■ – Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) conducted by REACH in June of 2022 to assess the economic impacts on the purchasing power and child labour situation in Greater Idleb, Northwest Syria, conducted in 301 communities.

JMMI ■ – Joint Market Monitoring Exercise (JMMI) conducted monthly by Cash Working Group and REACH in Greater Idleb, Northwest Syria, interviewing over 1,800 vendors.

1. Coverage





« **The economy of Greater Idlib has long been in decline**, facing conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic,² currency depreciation,^{3,4} and now the Ukraine crisis.⁵ In analysing the drivers of the economic deterioration since November 2021, the rapid currency decline between November and December 2021 stands out. **The Turkish lira, currently the most commonly used currency in Greater Idlib, lost around 44% of its value against the US dollar.** In countries which rely more on local production, this would have a less immediate impact on local prices. However, considering the extent to which infrastructure was destroyed as a result of the conflict and the limited investments given the risk of renewed destruction, production capacity in Greater Idlib is relatively low.⁸ As a result, **the area strongly depends on imported goods, particularly from Turkey. The change in local prices therefore directly mirror the changes in exchange rates, with the price of monitored food products increasing on average by 34%, hygiene items by 46%, and fuels by 43% between November and December 2021.** The Ukraine crisis further inflated prices, especially of food items (60% increase in the cost of cooking oil February to March 2022),⁹ and increased unaffordability of agricultural inputs (reported by KIs in 61% of communities in May 2022⁹).

Price increases can be mitigated if incomes rise to match them. However, data from a rapid needs assessment conducted in June 2022 strongly suggests that **wage raises did not match the rising costs in assessed communities.** In other words, **households appear to be financially worse off now than they were in November of 2021.** At the same time, there were no indications of decreased employment during the study period, with slightly more key informants (KIs) having

« reported increased employment in agriculture, construction, hospitality, and manufacturing since November 2021, some of the most important employment sectors in Greater Idlib.⁹ With purchasing power being generally low and rates of absolute poverty (<1.90 USD per person per day) being extremely high,⁹ **economic stressors can force households to use negative coping strategies. The most common coping strategy for households is buying essential items on credit** (74% of households in January 2022¹⁰). This can work to bridge short-term gaps in purchasing power, but if household income does not increase in the mid-term, they become additionally burdened by debt repayments. Already, this makes up one of the largest monthly expenditures for households.¹⁰

« For food specifically, **KIs most often reported the unaffordability of essential food items as a barrier to food access** (in 83-90% of assessed communities in the study period⁹). Buying items on credit is again a very important coping strategy. More commonly, though, KIs reported households buying less-preferred and lower-quality food items (reported in 74 to 83% of communities during the study period).⁹ **Considering also skipping meals, which KIs in around half of communities reported to have become more common since January,⁹ there are reasons for concern about households' nutritional status.**

« Pregnant and lactating women are not only particularly affected by malnutrition,¹¹ but also face greater barriers to healthcare access. Specifically, a range of hospitals stopped offering reproductive services over the course of the conflict and specialists became more scarce.¹² **Girls have also more frequently been subjected to child**

« **marriage as as families seek to cope with their weak financial situation**, while economic stress paired with tension over women working to provide for their families have led to increased rates of domestic violence.¹³

« However, it is not only women who are struggling with their health and healthcare access. **A shortage of funding has overall meant that several hospitals have shut down. People in need of healthcare services now have the choice between travelling longer distances to access healthcare centers that provide free services, or to access private healthcare facilities.**¹² With the high cost of transport to healthcare centers being the most often reported barrier to healthcare access by KIs in assessed communities, and the unaffordability of healthcare being amongst the top 5 most frequently reported barriers,⁹ it is evident that both options are limited.

« The use of child labour to cope with the lack of household income⁹ has raised concerns for the wellbeing of children in particular. **KIs reported that the number of children working increased in most assessed communities. This particularly affected adolescent boys** (boys aged 12 to 15), while it seems that households have more inhibitions against sending girls and younger children to work.⁹ KIs frequently reported **child work as a barrier to education, while the high cost of transportation to schools and the unaffordability of services further inhibited education access.**⁹ This shows that any economic deterioration can have an immediate impact on children and their ability to obtain an education, which in turn can reduce their ability to earn an adequate income later in their lives, locking them into poverty.



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Prices have increased substantially since November 2021 due to rapid currency depreciation, especially between November and December 2021, which affected all products. Since then, prices were further increased due to supply chain disruptions caused by the Ukraine crisis since February 2022. This is particularly concerning as a possible vote against the renewal of the cross-border mechanism on the 10th of July would leave the population more vulnerable to market shocks. Key informants suggest that nominal wages rose between November 2021 and May 2022. Further, more KIs reported increased employment in assessed sectors than reported decreases. However, wages increased less than living costs, and correspondingly almost all KIs reported a loss of purchasing power. This suggests that households are worse off now than they were in November 2021.

The Economy of Greater Idlib

The economy of Greater Idlib has long been hampered by multiple crises. Most notably, the ongoing violent conflict has shifted the ways in which business can be done. As infrastructure is at risk of destruction, investments into local production facilities have become riskier and less profitable. Instead, business has shifted towards trade.⁸ The town of Sarmada is a strong example of this. It developed its importance after the Idlib area was cut off from Aleppo city, which previously served as a major centre for trade. Due to its location near the Bab al-Hawa crossing, Sarmada became the

main hub for imports, and this trade now serves as the basis for its business.¹⁴ At the same time, opportunities for export are severely limited as exports to Turkey require special permissions and internal crossings with South-Central Syria have been closed since 2019.² The agricultural sector has been disrupted by the destruction and degradation of arable land (land suitable for crop farming) and trees,^{15,16} and safe access to land is limited by the presence of explosive ordnances.¹⁷ Several food security and livelihoods (FSL) experts also noted that agricultural land is being used for camps and settlements, further reducing farmable areas.

The economy of Greater Idlib is hence heavily dependent on imports, specifically from Turkey. However, local purchasing power is not nearly sufficient to cover basic needs, with the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) having recorded in January 2022 that 89% of people in Greater Idlib suffered from extreme poverty, with less than 1.90 US Dollar (USD) available per person per day.¹⁸

Affordability of items depends both on the cost of these products and on the income of the household. In other words, it depends on purchasing power – the amount of goods and services a household can buy with its income. In Greater Idlib, the lack of purchasing power is apparent. The median household income in January 2022 was 1,330 Turkish Lira (TRY) while the median household expenditure lay at TRY

1,950, illustrating the imbalance between the cost of living and the livelihoods that households can generate.¹⁰ Accordingly, as reported by REACH’s Humanitarian Situation Overview (HSOS), livelihoods were most often mentioned by KIs as one of their community’s top three priority needs in May 2022.■

Most recently, a rapid depreciation in the TRY paired with market impacts of the most recent crisis in Ukraine and high levels of aid dependency have been increasing economic vulnerability in Greater Idlib. The following discusses these factors in greater detail, highlighting their impacts on commodity prices in the region’s markets.

Currency Depreciation (November - December 2021)

Currency depreciation means that the value of a currency drops compared to the value of other currencies. The TRY, the most commonly used currency in Greater Idlib, has seen a strong deterioration in value against the dollar over the past year. The situation between November and December 2021 stands out from the rest of the time period, with the TRY losing almost 44% of its value against the USD. Figure 2 shows this, depicting the number of TRY that were needed to buy one USD in markets in Idlib governorate.■ Although the depreciation does not directly affect the cost of locally produced goods, it increases the price of imported goods and goods which use imported materials in their production. For

Greater Idlib, this includes a wide range of essential goods – most notable of which are fuels and foods.

The price of food items monitored by the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI)^{■a} increased by 34% on average (median 40%) between November and December 2021. Almost all items saw an increase, with increases being greatest for milk powder (+85%), chickpeas (+76%) and bulgur (+61%)^b. Vegetables generally saw the lowest increases in prices. While it is not entirely clear why this is the case, it could be because some vegetables are cultivated in Greater Idlib¹⁹ and because Turkey is an important vegetable producer and exporter,²⁰ meaning that a larger proportion is produced in TRY-areas. As most vegetables are harvested in the second half of the year,²¹ availability should be better and prices should be lower around this time. Although local production is generally also impacted by exchange rates due to increased costs of inputs, the impacts are expected to be less strong.

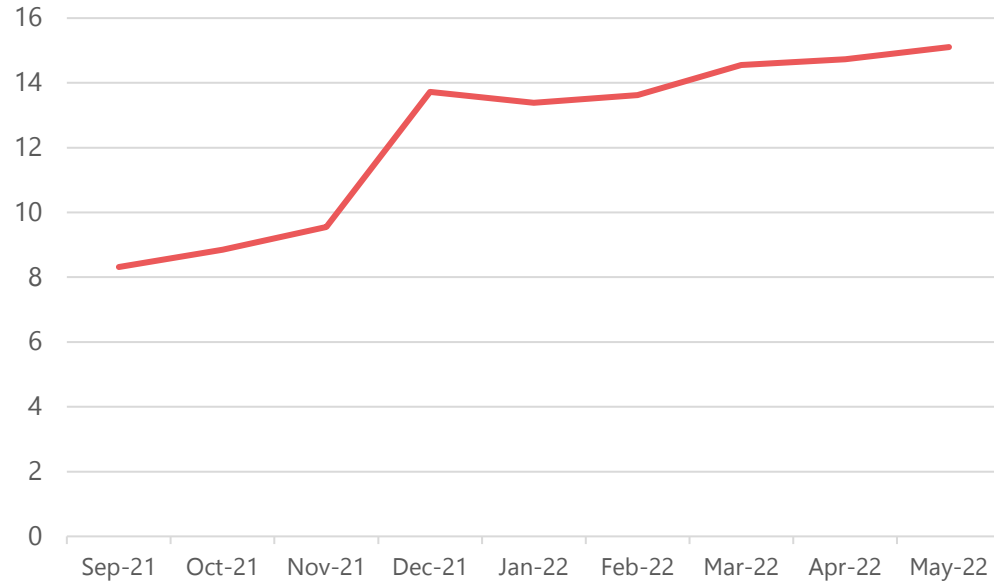
For hygiene products (soaps, toothpaste, disposable diapers, sanitary pads), the average price change was a 46% increase (median 41%) from November to December 2021. Bathing soap saw the lowest increase at 17%, which was swiftly followed by a 14% decrease from December 2021 to January 2022.■ Notably, while food prices were close to identical between rural and urban areas,^c prices of



1. Market Trends



2. Exchange Rate: Price 1 USD in Turkish Lira Idlib Governorate



hygiene products did differ. Specifically, laundry detergent and dish soap were consistently more expensive in rural areas.

By contrast, fuel prices (manually refined and industrially refined diesel, industrially refined petrol, and liquified petroleum gas) did not differ between rural and urban areas. There are two sources of fuel in Greater Idlib. Industrially refined fuels are imported from Turkey through Wadat Petroleum, a company operating in the Greater Idlib area. Alternatively, and at a lower cost, crude oil can be manually refined. However, the resulting quality is generally lower. As Greater Idlib does not

have its own oil fields, this crude oil has to be bought from traders with access to areas of Syria containing oil fields.²² While the cost of this manually (locally) refined diesel was overall lower than of industrially refined diesel, both saw price increases of around 41-42% from November to December 2021. For industrially refined petrol and liquified petroleum gas (cooking fuel), this increase was even steeper at 44-46%.²³

Considering these changes, price increases between November and December 2021 were consistent with the 44% drop in TRY value in Idlib governorate.

2. Overview of Month-on-Month Price Changes (in %)

PRICE ITEMS		NOV 21 - DEC 21	NOV 21 - JAN 22	JAN 22 - FEB 22	FEB 22 - MAR 22	MAR 22 - APR 22	APR 22 - MAY 22
FOOD	FLOUR	▲ 56	0	0	▲ 36	▲ 5	▼ -10
	RICE	▲ 54	▲ 8	▼ -4	▲ 14	▲ 2	▲ 2
	BULGUR	▲ 61	▲ 10	▲ 6	▲ 18	0	▲ 10
	RED LENTILS	▲ 43	▼ -2	0	▲ 4	▲ 17	▼ -6
	SPLIT LENTIL	▲ 25	▼ -2	0	▲ 14	▲ 25	▲ 14
	GHEE	▲ 57	▼ -9	▲ 5	▲ 52	▲ 5	▼ -1
	SUGAR	▲ 48	0	▲ 13	▲ 21	▼ -5	0
	POTATOES	▲ 14	0	▲ 13	0	▲ 78	▼ -8
	TOMATOES	▼ -20	▲ 63	▲ 54	▼ -10	▲ 92	▼ -20
	ONIONS	0	▲ 9	▲ 14	0	▲ 40	▼ -14
	CUCUMBERS	▲ 5	▲ 109	▲ 9	▼ -8	▲ 64	▼ -67
	MULUKHIYA	▲ 20	▼ -6	▲ 8	▲ 8	▼ -12	▲ 6
	TOMATO PASTE	▲ 48	▼ -5	▼ -1	▲ 22	▼ -13	▲ 1
	CHICKEN	▲ 31	▲ 8	▼ 22	▲ 16	▲ 24	▼ -13
	OIL	▲ 56	▼ -8	▲ 3	▲ 60	▼ -8	▲ 2
	EGGS	▲ 29	▼ -1	0	▲ 6	▲ 17	▼ -8
	MILK	▲ 25	▲ 20	▲ 8	▲ 8	▲ 14	0
	BREAD	▲ 40	▼ -5	0	▲ 13	▲ 14	0
	MILK POWDER	▲ 85	▼ -14	▲ 13	▲ 8	▲ 3	▼ -18
	BABY FORMULA	▲ 49	▲ 5	▼ -2	▲ 3	▲ 5	▲ 2
CHICK PEAS	▲ 76	▼ -9	▼ -5	▲ 21	▲ 7	▲ 2	
GREEN PEAS	▲ 29	▼ -6	0	▲ 24	▲ 7	▲ 8	
PASTA	▲ 43	▲ 7	▲ 13	▲ 20	▲ 11	▲ 0	
CANNED FISH	▲ 29	▲ 5	▲ 6	0	0	▼ -1	

TABLE CONTINUES ON PAGE 6.



2. Overview of Price Changes (continuation)

PRICE ITEMS		NOV 21 - DEC 21	NOV 21 - JAN 22	JAN 22 - FEB 22	FEB 22 - MAR 22	MAR 22 - APR 22	APR 22 - MAY 22
FOOD	TURNIP	▲ 56	0	0	▼ -17	.	.
	SALT	▲ 54	▲ 8	▼ -4	▲ 27	▲ 14	0
	TEA	▲ 61	▲ 10	▲ 6	▲ 7	▲ 6	▲ 11
HYGIENE	DIAPER	▲ 43	▼ -2	0	▲ 6	▲ 9	▲ 2
	LAUNDRY SOAP	▲ 25	▼ -2	0	▲ 13	0	▲ 1
	BATHING SOAP	▲ 57	▼ -9	▲ 5	▲ 14	0	0
	DISH SOAP	▲ 48	0	▲ 13	▲ 4	▼ -12	▼ -13
	SANITARY PADS	▲ 14	0	▲ 13	▲ 40	▼ -20	0
	TOOTHPASTE	▼ -20	▲ 63	▲ 54	▲ 10	▼ -9	0
FUELS	IND REF PETROL*	▲ 5	▲ 109	▲ 9	▲ 16	▲ 18	▲ 3
	IND REF DIESEL*	▲ 20	▼ -6	▲ 8	▲ 13	0	0
	MAN REF PETROL*	▲ 48	▼ -5	▼ -1	▲ 7	▲ 32	▼ -14
	COOKING GAS	▲ 31	▲ 8	▼ 22	▲ 12	▲ 4	▲ 3

Correspondingly, as the TRY stabilised going into January 2022, so did prices. However, while the difference between November and December 2021 was the most prominent, it is worth noting that the currency depreciation, and with it the price inflation, has continued. According to JMMI data, 58% more TRY were needed to buy a USD in May of 2022 compared to November of 2021; at the same time, the price of foods monitored by JMMI increased by 91%, and fuels by around 80%.[■]

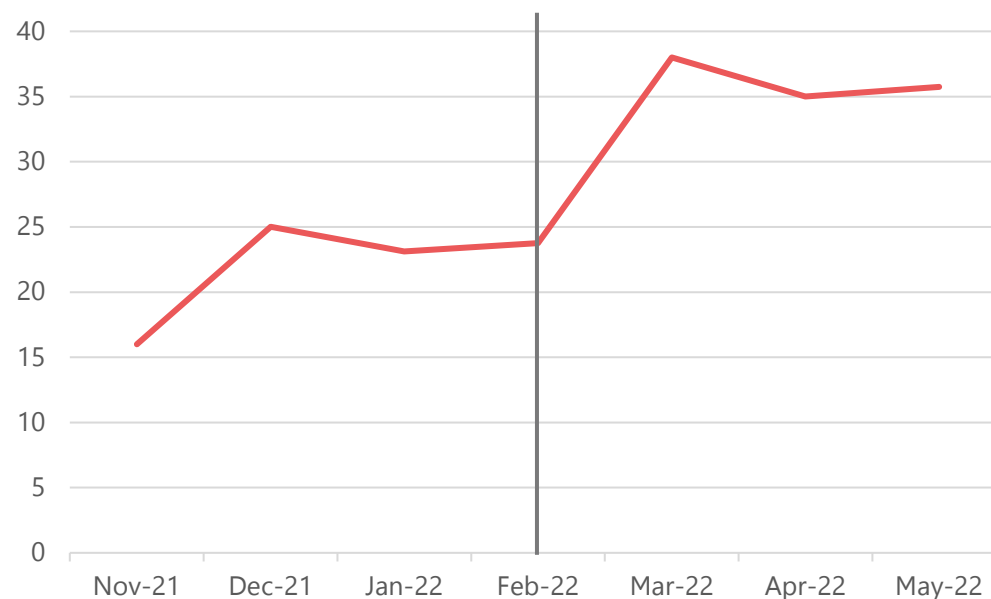
Ukraine Crisis (February - May 2022)

Ukraine and Russia are major food producers, amounting to 12% of total globally traded calories. The crisis in Ukraine, which began in late February 2022, limited the export of these goods and made them more expensive; the impacts of global food prices were immediate.²³ Ukraine and Russia together produce 73% of globally traded sunflower oil, which the countries are now unable to export at previous levels.²⁴ In response,

Indonesia, the world's largest palm oil producer, temporarily restricted palm oil exports. Global vegetable oil prices rose sharply, increasing by almost 30% from the onset of the crisis until the beginning of May 2022 as sunflower oil prices increased by more than 40%.²⁴ The northwest of Syria was an important production site for olives and olive oil before the conflict. Despite widespread destruction of agricultural land and permanent crops, the crop has remained important to the local economy, serving both the local and the export market.⁷² However, even though local production has

continued, the global price hike has had a disproportionately large impact on local prices, reflected in a 60% price increase in cooking oil from early February to early March 2022 (see figure 3). This recovered slightly towards April. However, cooking oil was largely unaffordable to households even before the price hike, with KIs in 56% of communities assessed by REACH's HSOS reporting it as a priority food need for IDPs in host communities in February 2022, and 53% for host populations. By May 2022, this had increased to 80% and 77% respectively.[■] This is nutritionally concerning: vegetable

3. Price of Cooking Oil per Litre (in TRY)[■]



*IND REF= Industrially Refined; MAN REF = Manually Refined

oils make up around 10% of calories in diets worldwide, making them the second most important food group in terms of calories supplied. Furthermore, they provide an important source of nutrients such as Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids and vitamins E and K.²⁴

More frequently spoken about in the context of the crisis are staple foods, most notably wheat, as Ukraine and Russia are responsible for around 34% of traded wheat.²³ The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has estimated that

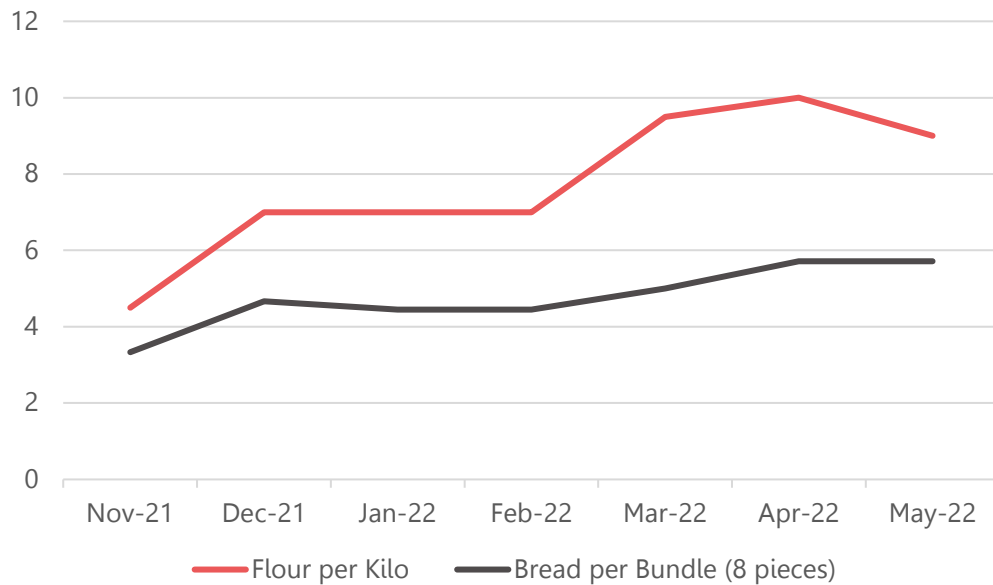
global wheat production will fall in 2022 for the first time in four years, partially due to climate-related production shortfalls in other countries and partially due to the Ukraine crisis.²⁵ The price of wheat consequently increased by 20% from February to March 2022 alone.²⁶ The wheat situation in Syria was already problematic due to a drought particularly affecting the northeast of the country²⁷ and Turkey.²⁸ Given Turkey's own production difficulties and their reliance on wheat from Russia and Ukraine,²⁹ the country has restricted

the export of wheat flour and some other wheat products.³⁰ Given the reliance of Greater Idleb on imports,³¹ this has had substantial repercussions, with the price of flour having increased by 36% from February to March 2022 and a further 5% from March to April (see figure 3). However, prices recovered somewhat going into May, falling by 10%.³²

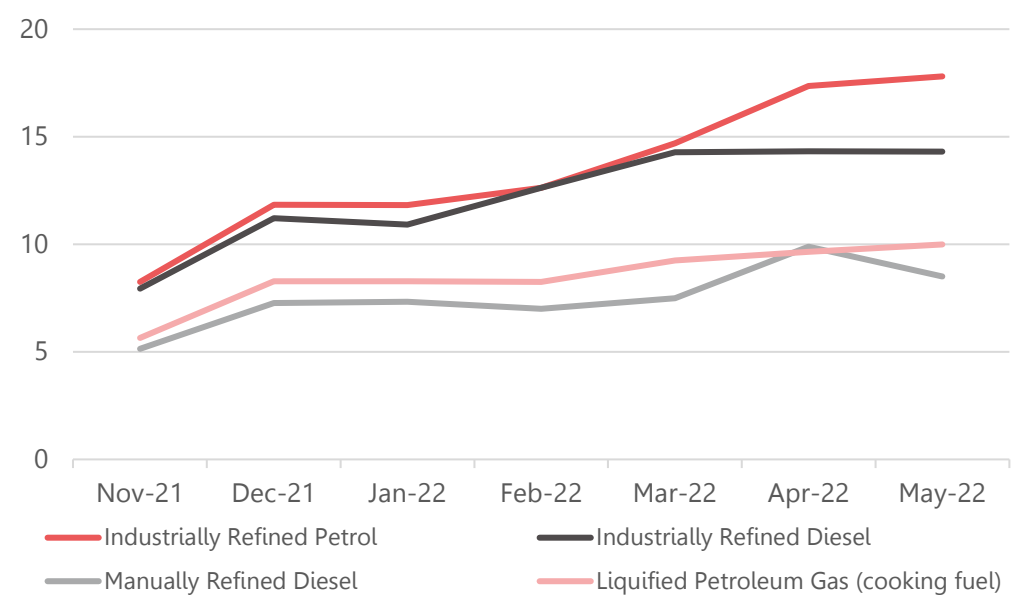
With Russia also being the world's third largest producer of crude oil and second largest producer of natural gas,³² global prices have fluctuated strongly since the

onset of the conflict.³³ These fluctuations were not mirrored in Greater Idleb; with the exception of industrially refined petrol, which is generally imported, impacts appear to be largely in line with earlier price increases (see figure 5). Specifically, manually refined diesel became 21% more expensive between February and May 2022 and cooking fuel (liquified petroleum gas) increased by the same amount.³⁴ While fuel prices have increased, electricity access in Greater Idleb remained largely unaffected. In fact, KIs reported an increase in hours

4. Flour and Bread Prices (in TRY) ³⁵



5. Fuel Prices (in TRY) ³⁶



of electricity access between February and May 2022 (see figure 6). This may be due to the high reliance on solar panels, reported by REACH's HSOS as the main source of electricity by KIs in 62% of communities in May 2022. ▀ Idleb governorate receives around 5 hours of sunshine per day in February compared to 9 hours per day in June,³⁴ which should improve access to solar power during summer.

Lastly, fertiliser exports from Russia and Belarus have been seriously affected by the crisis, while export restrictions previously

imposed by China have already impacted global fertiliser availability.³⁵ This reduction was reflected in an immediate upswing in global prices for fertilisers. The World Bank reported in May that fertilisers are now at their least affordable since the 2008 global food crisis.³⁶ Accordingly, the percentage of assessed communities in which KIs reported that high operational costs (including the cost of inputs, fuel, shipment, labour, and more) are a barrier to agricultural livelihoods increased from 52% in February to 61% in May 2022. ▀ Higher input prices not only raise the prices of locally produced goods,

but also reduce farmers' access to such products and thereby limit their ability to generate livelihoods from agriculture.

Food Aid Dependency (November 2021 - May 2022)

Humanitarian aid is an important source of food for households in Greater Idleb. In November 2021, food aid reached the majority of the population (around 2.7 million people), 1.3 million of whom received food baskets.^{d.37} Although this means that over a third of the population received food baskets, the Food Security Cluster estimates that this only covers 55% of people in need. Since then, the World Food Programme (WFP) has reported that due to increased operational costs, the number of beneficiaries of food aid and the size of the food baskets has been decreasing.

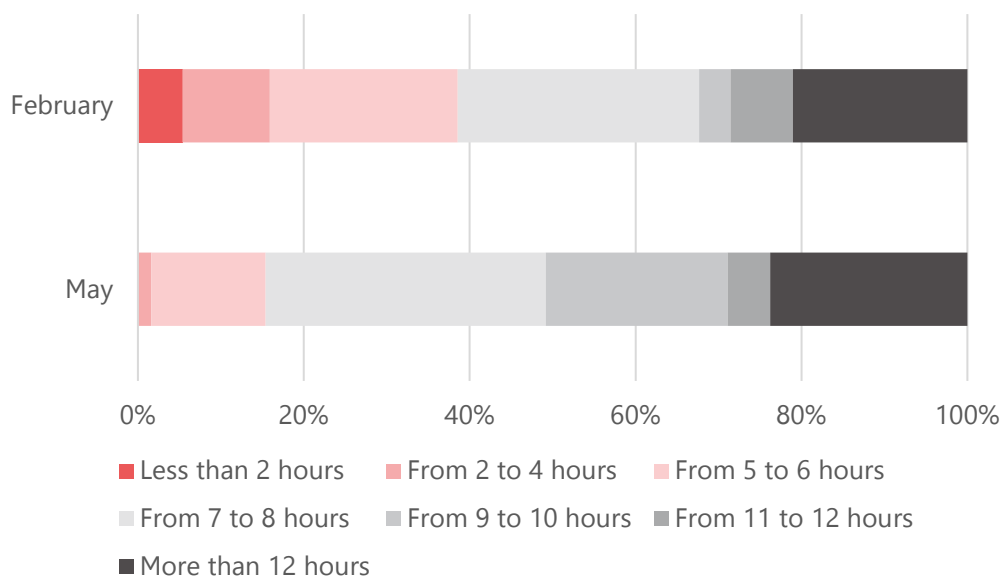
In May 2022, KIs in 77% of communities assessed by HSOS reported that out-of-camp IDPs received food or nutrition assistance in the month before data collection, and 69% for host populations. Not only was food aid available in a large number of communities, but households also relied strongly on it. KIs in 18 to 23% of assessed communities reported that assistance from local councils, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or other groups was one of the most common sources of food across the study period (November 2021 to May 2022). Besides the direct benefit of increasing food

access, the sale of food aid can increase household income. For IDPs, KIs in 17 to 23% of communities reported that some households sold in-kind humanitarian assistance as a way of coping with a lack of income; for host populations, this was reported in 8 to 16% of assessed communities in the study period. ▀

The UN is the major supplier of food aid, having supplied around 800,000 beneficiaries in Idleb governorate each month in February and March 2022 through the cross-border mechanism alone, in addition to other essential aid.³⁸ This cross-border mechanism, UN Security Council Resolution 2585, ensures that UN aid can be delivered to Greater Idleb through the Bab al-Hawa crossing with Turkey. However, the resolution is due to expire on the 10th of July 2022, with the Security Council having to vote on whether it should be renewed.³⁹ UN representatives have repeatedly emphasised that this aid cannot be substituted by UN cross-line deliveries, which would cross into the Greater Idleb area from South-Central Syria.⁴⁰ An expert further noted that local NGOs, which would be able to import food through commercial borders for food distributions, do not have the capacity to replace the UN's food response.

In case the Security Council votes not to renew the resolution, it is not clear what the repercussions for the population of

6. Electricity Access in February 2022 and May 2022 (by % of communities) ▀





Greater Idleb would be. The impact of food aid on recipient countries is strongly debated in academic literature. What appears clear is that if aid reaches the poorest households, it increases access to food and therefore helps to alleviate poverty and reduce malnutrition.⁴¹ At the market level, however, there are many possible outcomes. Food aid can increase local supply of food, in which case it reduces market prices.^{41,42} This can be beneficial to poorer consumers, yet if this happens during the harvest period, it can negatively affect local producers.⁴³ This is particularly relevant in the present context, where high producer prices are recognised as barriers to agriculture (see section on Ukraine Crisis). Thus, local procurement can be preferable to food imports insofar as they provide price and demand guarantees for local producers, and provide incentives for improved quality. At the same time, local procurement can substantially slow down the aid supply chain,^{44,43} and it is dependent on there being sufficient production capacity in the region. Furthermore, a large reliance on domestic production is more vulnerable to crises and shocks, and therefore not always desirable.⁴⁵

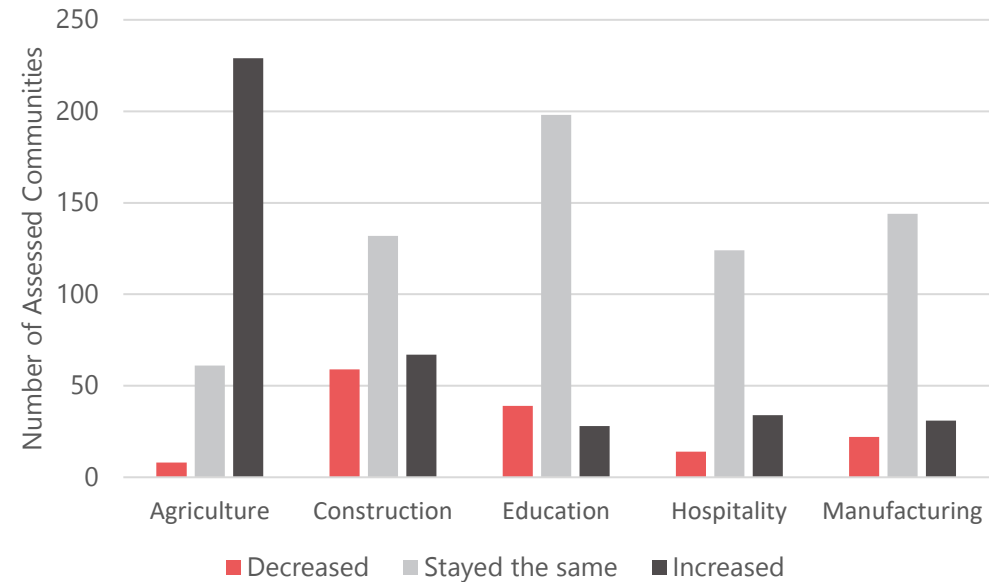
Purchasing Power (November 2021 - May 2022)

The discussion of prices above provides only part of the picture on purchasing power. The other part is the income

situation of households. Capturing household income is more complex and requires a more detailed household assessment, which is currently being done by HNAP every six months. As the last round of this data collection was in January 2022, REACH conducted a rapid needs assessment (RNA) in June 2022 to follow up on changes in wages, purchasing power, and coping strategies since then. As this assessment was done using information from KIs, note that in contrast to the HNAP data, this RNA data is only indicative and not representative.

Firstly, 82% of all working-age men (aged 18 to 64) and 6% of all women in this age range were working in January 2022 according to HNAP. Despite 29% of unemployed men having reported that work was unavailable, this shows that the majority of men are able to find work and thus earn an income.¹⁰ The low employment rate for women is less strongly related to the economic situation, and more to local customs that discourage women from working outside the household. However, women too have been reported to have to seek employment more often, particularly in cases where the main (male) breadwinner is ill or absent.⁴⁶ Similarly, a gender analysis conducted in 2021 by the UN with partners indicated that women were increasingly working outside of the household to combat economic insecurity, despite this leading to tensions within the household.^{e,47}

7. Change in Employment in Sectors since November 2021



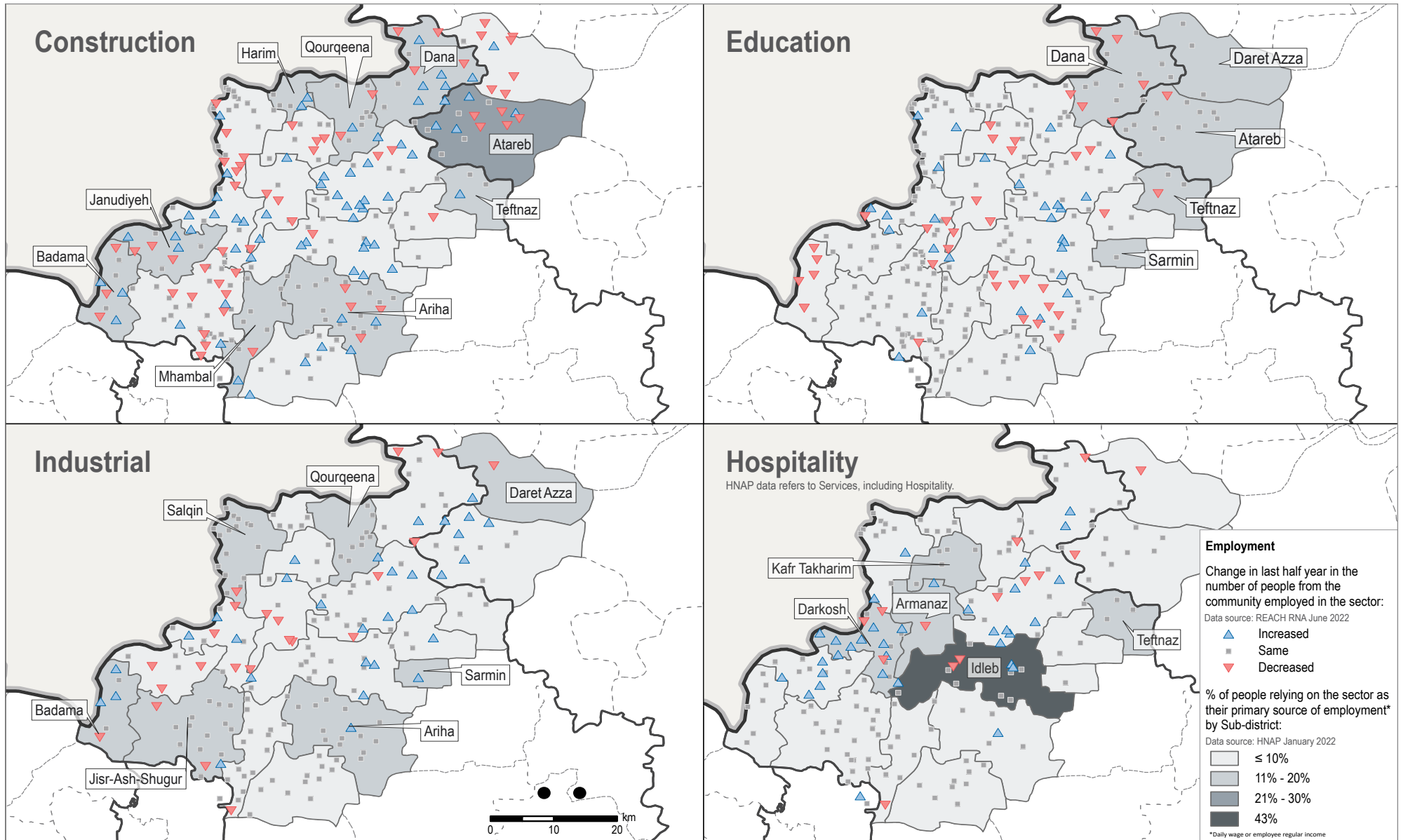
In terms of waged employment, the RNA does not suggest a loss of employment in assessed sectors between November 2021 and June 2022 (see figure 7). In fact, with the exception of the education sector,^f all sectors saw an increase in employment. Most notable of these is the agricultural sector, for which KIs in 77% of communities reported an increase in employment. ■ This is a seasonal phenomenon, with many crops being harvested around June.⁴⁸ REACH's urban labour market assessments

in the towns of Idleb and Dana similarly anticipated an increase in employment. In Idleb, 3 out of 14 business KIs reported in November 2021 that they were planning on hiring new staff in the following year. In Dana, 10 out of 12 business KIs reported this.⁴⁹ This suggests that the employment situation in Greater Idleb has not been deteriorating since November 2021, and may be improving.

However, wages appear not to have kept step with the rapid price inflation. HNAP



8. Reliance on Sector Employment and Change in Employment by Sector (November 2021 - June 2022)





data for January 2022 suggests that men earned a median monthly income of just under TRY 930 from employment activities, and women earned just under TRY 810.¹⁰ In January, the median income for men would have covered an estimated two-fifths of the SMEB in Greater Idleb⁹ and one-third for women. Hence, in order to cover the minimum expenses for survival through livelihoods alone, a six-person household would need almost three working adults

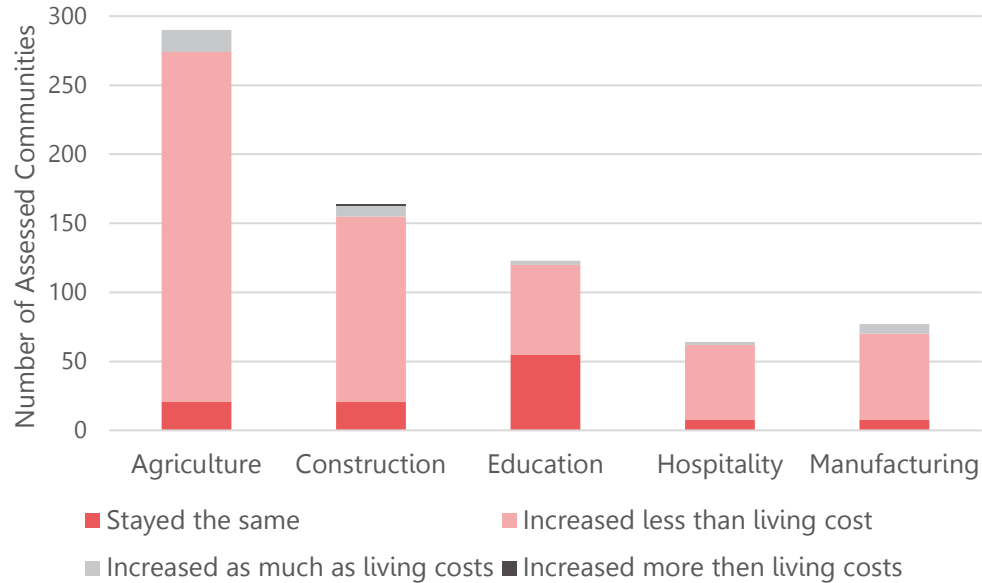
earning the median income. However, livelihoods were the primary income source for only 66% of all households, with the second-largest proportion, 13%, having relied on charity from organisations and 11% on remittances.¹⁰

REACH's RNA suggests that wages have risen since January, but to a lesser extent than living costs (see figure 9). This is also reflected in HSOS data, which monitors daily wages for unskilled labour. These

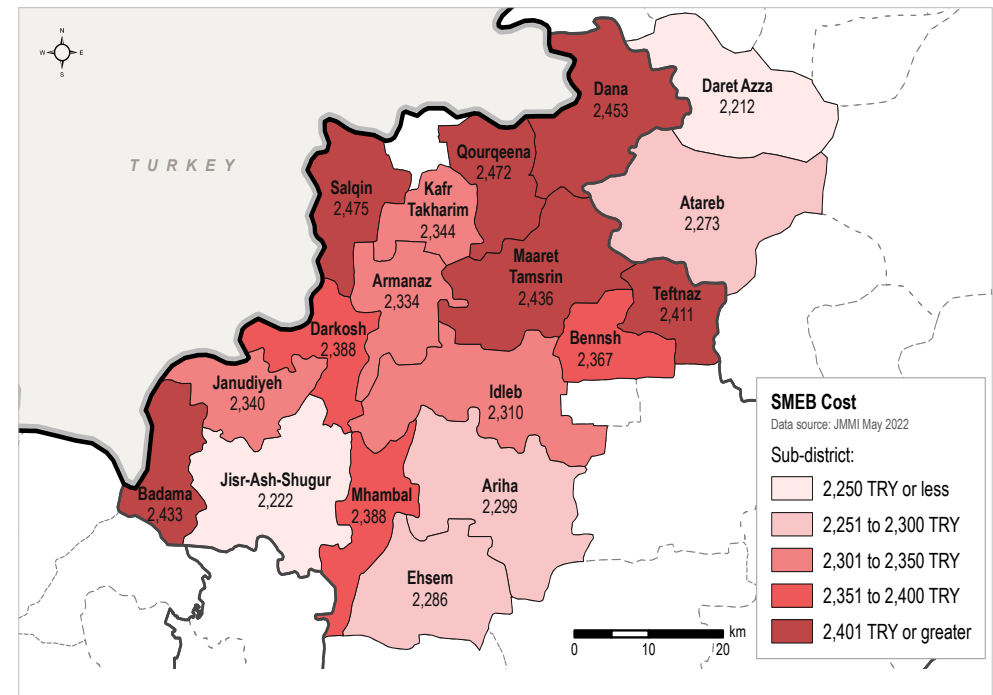
wages reportedly increased for both host populations and IDPs.¹¹ However, taking into account that the TRY lost around 58% of its value against the USD between November of 2021 and June of 2022,¹² the USD equivalent of wages decreased somewhat. The education sector is again notable here for having the largest proportion of communities (44%) in which KIs reported wages staying the same despite living costs increasing. Such problems in the

education sector are not new; instead, there have been long-running issues with teachers reporting working without pay or receiving a very low income.^{50,51} Accordingly, KIs in the vast majority of assessed communities indicated reduced purchasing power. Specifically, KIs in over 90% of communities reported that IDPs (93%) and host populations (92%) could not afford as many goods and services as in November 2021.¹³

9. Change in Wages in Select Sectors for Communities that Reported Increased Living Costs

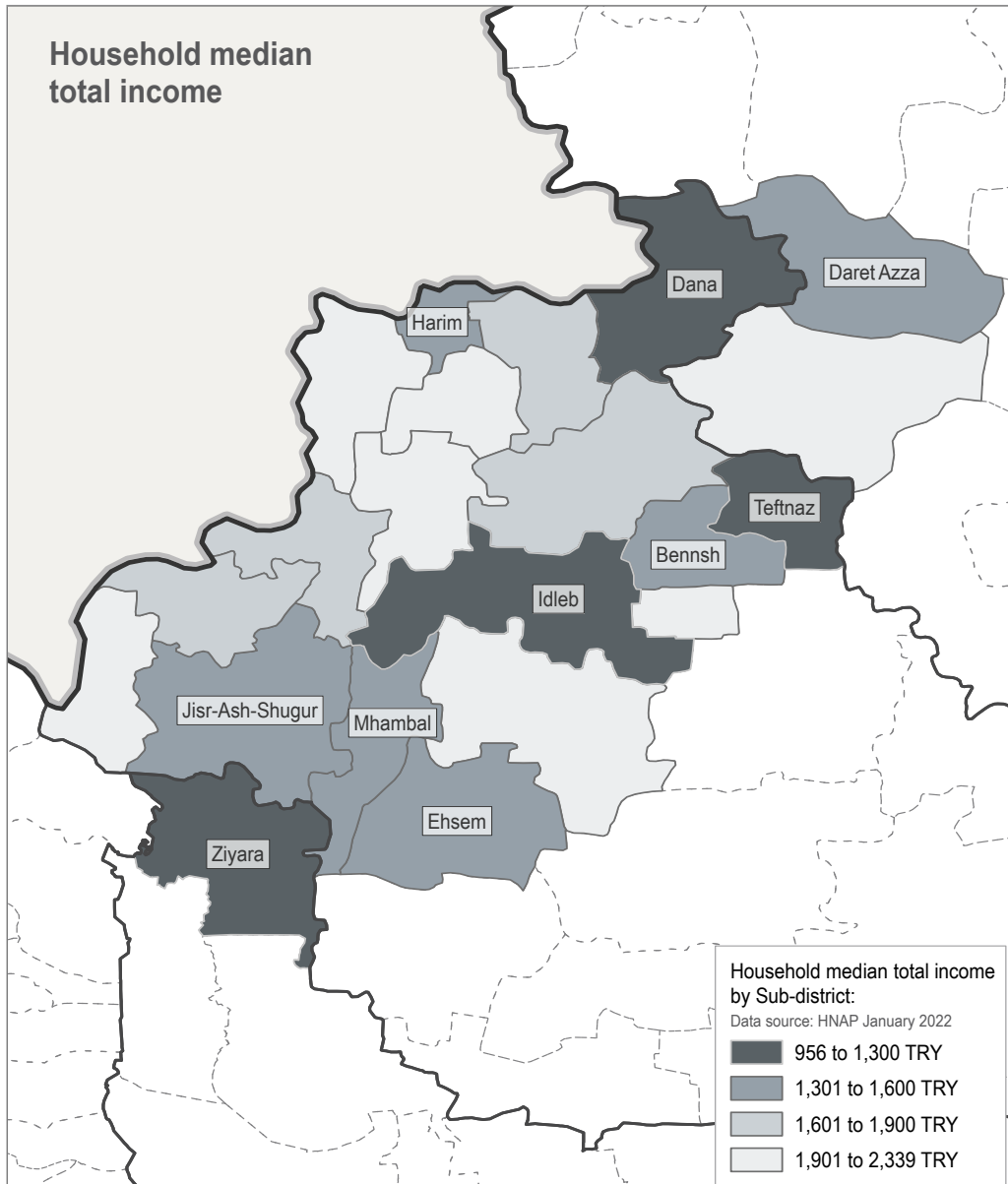


10. SMEB Cost May 2022 (in TRY)

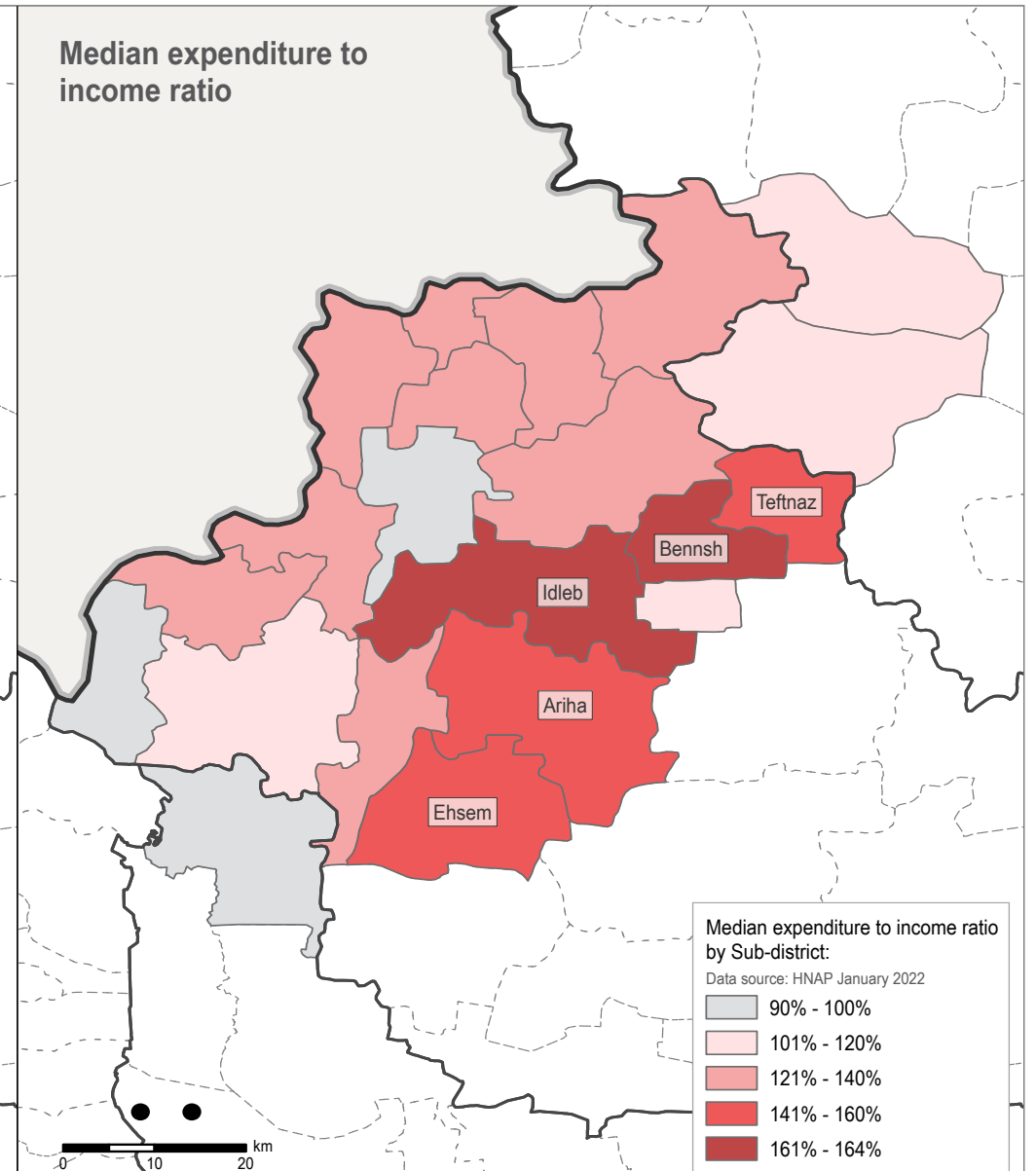




11. Household Median Income in January 2022¹



12. Median Expenditure to Income Ratio in January 2022¹





2. Humanitarian Impact



Due to their weak economic situation, many households relied on credit to buy essential items. This increases their burden of debt and leaves them in an even weaker financial situation. Given the lack of purchasing power, households have been relying on lower quality and less preferred food items to reduce costs and reduced food consumption. This can have serious impacts on their health and nutritional status. This is particularly problematic for pregnant and lactating women, who

already face high barriers to healthcare access. As a result of households relying on incomes generated by children, rates of children working have gone up across the study period (November 2021 to May 2022), particularly affected teenaged boys and IDPs. Additionally, children are affected by low access to education, with households being unable to pay for schooling, education being cut short by early marriage, schools lacking funding, and more.

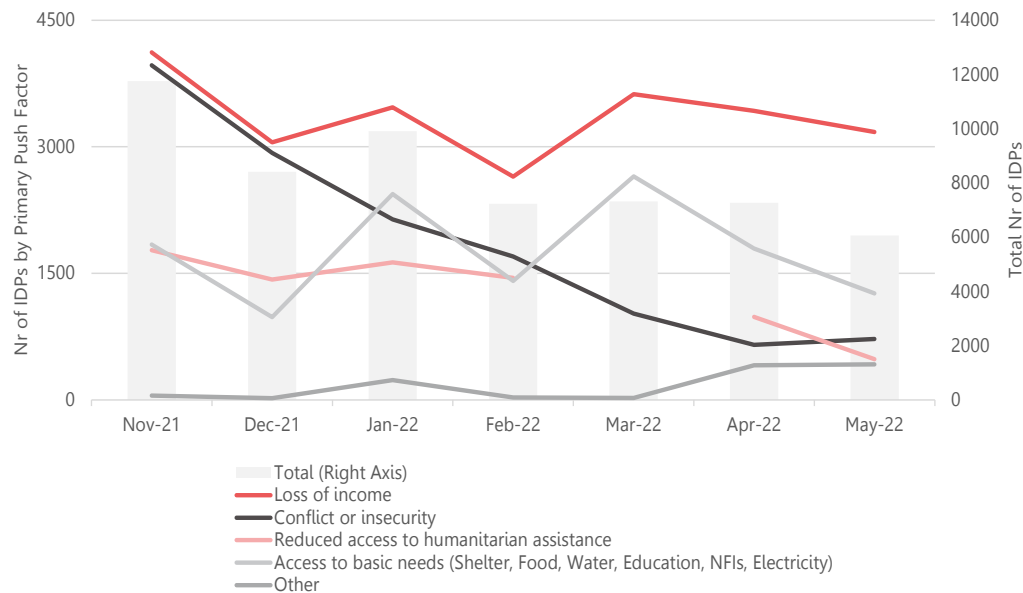
Coping Strategies

The discussion in the previous chapter shows that purchasing power in Greater Idlib most likely declined. At the same time, income insufficiency has long been very high. KIs in almost all communities reported that incomes did not cover the cost of living for some households each month from November 2021 to May 2022. Accordingly, this was the most commonly reported barrier to accessing

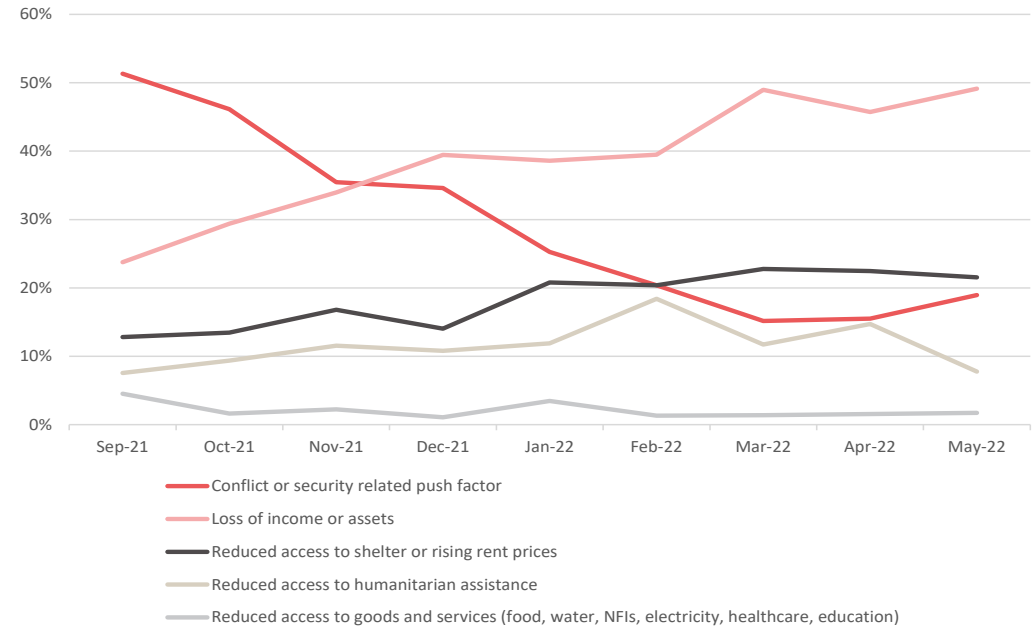
livelihoods. On the other side, KIs most frequently reported the need for access to humanitarian programmes supporting livelihoods as a priority livelihoods need in their community for both IDPs and host populations. This shows the high reliance on humanitarian assistance as a result of the weak economic situation.

At the household level, the most common coping strategy in January 2022 was purchasing essential items on credit.

13. Number of IDPs that Arrived in Locations by Primary Push Factor (ISMI-CCM)



14. Most Common Push Factor for IDP Arrivals [sums up to 100%] (ISMI-CCM)





According to H NAP, this strategy was used by 74% of households in Greater Idleb in the 3 months prior to January 2022.⁹ In REACH's RNA in June 2022, most KIs indicated that this coping strategy had become more common in their community since then.[■] While REACH's field team indicated that the practice of selling items on credit (in terms of vendors accepting delayed payment) was also prevalent in the past, a strong reliance on credit can have negative consequences. The median expenditure on debt in Greater Idleb was 12% of total household expenditure in January 2022. This means that households spent more on repaying their debts each month than on any other items, except for food and heating.¹⁰ Hence, although the use of credit can be helpful to keep consumption stable in the short-run, households continue having to spend money on repaying their debts. If the household is unable to increase their income in the medium-term, this can lead them into a vicious cycle of taking up new debt in order to repay old debts. Overall, this decreases their ability to purchase basic goods and services, making them less able to cope with the next shock.⁵²

A similar issue arises with sales of non-productive household assets (coping strategy reported by 35% of households in January 2022) and productive household assets (coping strategy reported by 7% of households in January 2022).⁹ In REACH's RNA, KIs in around a quarter

to a third of communities reported an increased prevalence in the sale of non-productive or productive household assets since January 2022 for IDPs and host populations respectively, compared to KIs in only 5 to 10% of communities reporting a reduction.[■] Income from these sales can temporarily help to keep consumption stable. However, the household is left with less value and therefore a lower ability to deal with the next shock. For productive assets, this is particularly problematic. In losing productive assets, households decrease their ability to earn an income.

Since November 2021, the economic crisis has also become the primary reason for displacement in Greater Idleb. By May 2022, 49% of all assessed locations reported that the most common reason these people were forced to leave their previous location was due to a loss of income and assets. At the same time, the total number of recorded IDP arrivals halved, reducing from just under 12,000 in November 2021 to just over 6,000 in May 2022 (see figure 13).⁵³ This is most likely due to a wave of displacement following an increase in hostilities in September 2021 which meant that displacement rates in November were still higher.⁵⁴ Thus, looking at the number of people arriving in communities that reported loss of income as the primary push factor, this number remained relatively stable across the study period.

Impact on Food Security, Health, and Protection

Food Security

KIs in almost all communities (97% assessed by HSOS reported in May 2022 that purchasing food was one of the most common sources of food, while a lower proportion reported reliance on own food production and farming (60%).[■] Hence, an increase in market prices directly affects households. The link between food prices, purchasing power, and food insecurity is strong – poorer households already spend more of their income on food than on any other expenses. In Greater Idleb, the median household spent TRY 750 on food in January 2022,⁹ according to H NAP. Hence on median, 37% of total household expenditures are used for food.¹⁰ Therefore, a relative increase in food prices has the largest impact on household expenditures, compared to price increases of any other goods.

Considering that household expenditure in Syria already exceeds income (the average household in Greater Idleb spent 37% more than their income in January 2022¹), households are usually not able to afford these increased prices. In fact, essential food items being unaffordable was the most frequently reported barrier to food access across the study period (November 2021 to May 2022), reported by KIs in 83 to 90% of communities.[■] Hence, households have to use a range of strategies to cope with the increased costs.

The most common of these strategies, reported increasingly more widely over the study period, was relying on less preferred and lower quality food (see figure 15).[■] However, while this may allow households to consume enough energy, consumption of nutrients and quality of food are equally important components of food security and health. In the absence of good quality, nutrient-dense foods, so-called hidden hunger can occur, characterised by a deficiency in essential vitamins and minerals. This can have severe impacts, amongst other things hindering mental and physical development, inhibiting growth, increasing the risk of recurring infections, and increasing the risk of low birth weight.⁵⁵

The second most commonly reported coping strategy is buying food on credit or borrowing money to access food.[■] However, this strategy too has limitations. The most worrying coping strategies reported however are related to reduced consumption of food – skipping meals and reducing meal sizes.[■] H NAP reported for January 2022 that around 22% of households were skipping meals.^{h,10} The RNA asked for changes in the prevalence of this coping strategy within communities since January 2022. KIs in 47% of communities reported an increase for host populations and 58% for IDPs.[■] This suggests that more households may have been resorting to skipping meals in June than in January 2022.



Nutrition

Evaluating the impacts of food security on nutrition is relatively more difficult. The last comprehensive data available on the subject is Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) conducted by Physicians Across Continents in June of 2021, including both Greater Idlib and northern Aleppo. This found for children between 6 and 59 months (<5 years) that 8% were underweight (too light for their age) and 24.5% were stunted (too small

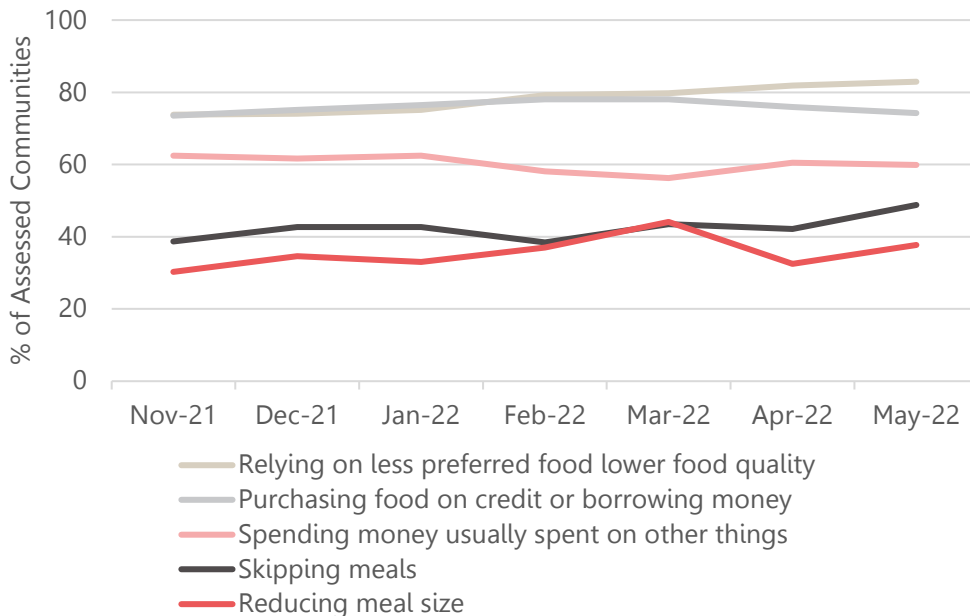
for their age).¹¹ Both are associated with severe and long-lasting negative impacts on children. This includes compromised mental and physical development as well as becoming more vulnerable to diseases;^{55,56} stunting is additionally associated with difficulties in giving birthⁱ and undesirable birth outcomes, such as low birth weight.⁵⁶ In the long run, this leads to a loss of human capital as the child's reduced mental development and vulnerability to disease reduces their ability to do well in school, and then earn a good income later on.⁵⁵

Pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) are also at a high risk. Some 12% of PLWs suffered Global Acute Malnutrition (upper arm circumference of less than 23 cm) and 54% of all women aged 15 to 49 had anaemia (low level of red blood cells) in June of 2021.¹¹ Maternal malnutrition is associated with a range of negative outcomes, including low birth weight, diseases affecting the child, and increased risk of mortality.⁵⁷

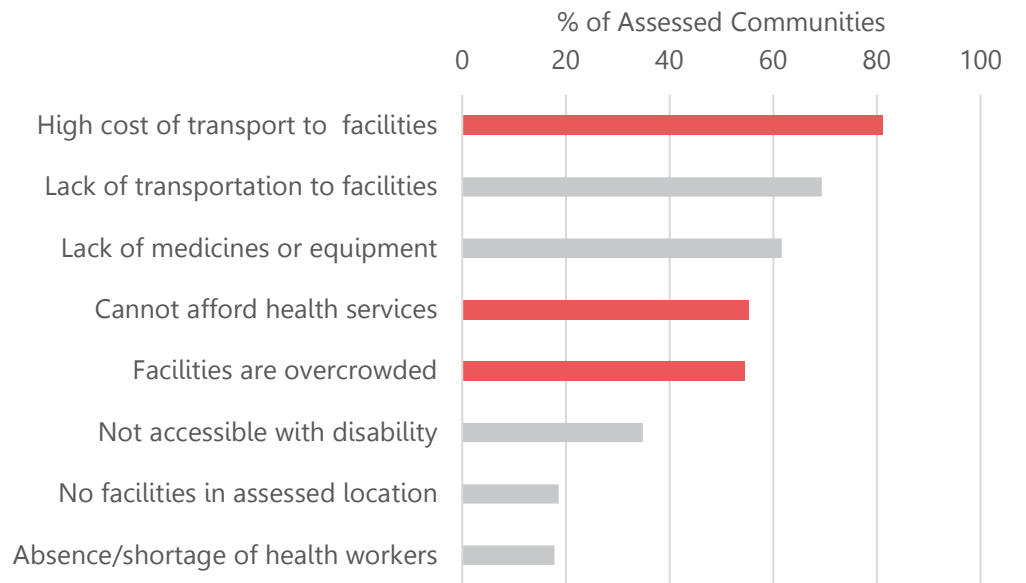
Health and Protection

Healthcare provision for pregnant women in Greater Idlib is particularly problematic. Physicians for Human Rights reported that over the course of the Syrian conflict, healthcare centres began moving towards field hospitals where reproductive services were no longer provided. Additionally, there is a lack of skilled obstetricians (professionals in the areas of pregnancy, child birth, and the post-partem period) across northern Syria.¹²

15. Most Frequently Reported Strategies to Cope with a Lack of Food between November 2021 and May 2022



16. Most Frequently Reported Barriers to Accessing Healthcare between November 2021 and May 2022





A shortage in funding has now also led to several hospital closures,^{58,59} which is made more difficult for the population as they cannot afford to access private health centres,⁶⁰ and at the same time struggle to afford transportation to healthcare centres that are further away.^{12,60} This is reflected in REACH's HSOS, in which KIs in the greatest number of communities reported the high cost of transportation as a barrier to healthcare access, with unaffordability of health services and overcrowding of facilities amongst the top 5 most frequently reported reasons (see figure 16).[■] Increased travel times are particularly problematic for women in need of maternity services.⁶⁰

Compounding factors in the situation of girls and women are linked to the economic crisis. Women have increasingly been required to work outside the home as household purchasing power has fallen. While this is leading to a gradual shift in gender norms, as of yet women carry the double burden of having to work in employment and maintaining their household duties.¹³ The economic deterioration is also associated with increased incidents of domestic violence.^{13,52} The link between domestic violence and economic stressors is relatively well-established, with financial stress and shifting gender roles within the household being associated with higher levels of violence against women.⁶¹ While issues of domestic violence are more sensitive and harder to evaluate using a KI methodology, it is noticeable that in the study period

(November 2021 to May 2022), KIs in 8 to 12% of communities assessed by HSOS noted domestic violence as one of the main protection risks faced by households each month.[■]

Additionally, the second most commonly reported protection risk in May 2022 was early marriage, reported by KIs in 68% of communities.[■] Two particularly frequently named reasons for this are that parents hope to protect their daughters from sexual violence by marrying them off early, and to provide financial relief for the girl's family.^{13,62} Thus, early marriage is in part a result of economic struggles in Greater Idlib. HSOS data supports this narrative, with KIs in many communities also reporting early marriage as a coping strategy for a lack of income. This data suggests that early marriage is more prevalent amongst IDPs, with KIs in 36 to 47% of communities reporting this each month compared to 32 to 37% for host populations.[■]

Child Labour and Education

Child Work

N.B.: A distinction is made here between "child labour" and "child work", where child labour refers to work that may be harmful to the physical and/ or mental development of the child,⁶³ and child work refers to both child labour and other forms of productive activities that may be unproblematic or beneficial for children.

Child labour is a widespread issue in

Greater Idlib with around 22% of children aged 15 to 17 and 4% of children aged 9 to 14 having worked in the three months up to January 2022.⁹ However, not all children are equally likely to work, with older boys – those aged 15 to 17 – being far more likely to work than girls (35% versus 2%), though the difference is small in the 9-to-14-year age group (3% compared to 5%).⁹ The higher levels of child labour in boys are most likely due to the fear that girls will be exposed to higher risks in their workplace, including sexual abuse and exploitation; additionally, households may hold the idea that it is the role of men to provide for their families, making them more willing to send male children to work than females.¹³ A substantial number of working children appear also to be involved in jobs that require physical effort and that are dangerous to the child's life. The Joint Education Needs Assessment, conducted in late 2021 in Greater Idlib and Northern Aleppo, found that of interviewed out-of-school children (aged 6-18 years) who worked, 11% of the displaced children and 8% of the residents worked in dangerous jobs. This again reflects the greater risk to displaced children, and so too for older children and for boys.⁶⁴

The situation appears to have deteriorated further during the study period (November 2021 to May 2022). REACH's RNA, conducted in June 2022, asked KIs about whether child work increased, decreased, or stayed the same in their community

between November 2021 and June 2022. The groups assessed are children aged 6 to 11 and 12 to 15, separated by gender. Particularly for boys in the older age group, aged 12 to 15, KIs in most communities reported an increase (see figure 17). Thus, KIs were both more likely to report higher rates of child work for older children (12-15-year-olds) and boys, and more likely to report an increase in child work for this age group. Increases were also reported more frequently for IDPs, suggesting again that displaced children face additional vulnerabilities.[■]

REACH's HSOS asks KIs both about whether child labour was one of the main protection risks in the community, and whether hazardous child labour was one of them. While reports of child labour reflect the increases reported in the RNA, reported rates of hazardous child labour were relatively lower (reported in <10% of communities for IDPs and residents) and did not show the same trends.[▲] This suggests that while child labour may have become more prevalent, children were not necessarily more likely to be involved in dangerous activities. However, it has also been noted that in households that rely on children for income, additional tensions might arise that may increase the risk that these children are subjected to abuse.⁶⁵ Various reports have also noted that children face the risk of abuse and exploitation in their workplace,^{66,13} suggesting that even in relatively safer occupations, there are risks



to children’s physical and mental wellbeing. Increases in child labour were likely linked to the economic situation, with the number of assessed communities for which the use of child work (children aged 15 or under) was reported as a coping strategy for a lack of income increasing. Specifically, this was reported in 81% of communities in November 2021, up to 88% in May 2022. The rate overall was higher for IDPs, aligning with the greater economic needs generally observed in IDPs and the overall higher rate of child labour in displaced children. One report notes that extreme poverty amongst IDPs has particularly forced households to rely on child labour, including the worst forms of child labour.⁶⁷ However, it is also worth noting that not all forms of child work are a result of the family’s desperation. World Vision concluded from focus group discussions with parents in Greater Idlib and Northern Aleppo that parents may not only believe that child labour is acceptable, but may also believe that it teaches children responsibility and may therefore be beneficial.⁶⁷

Barriers to Accessing Education

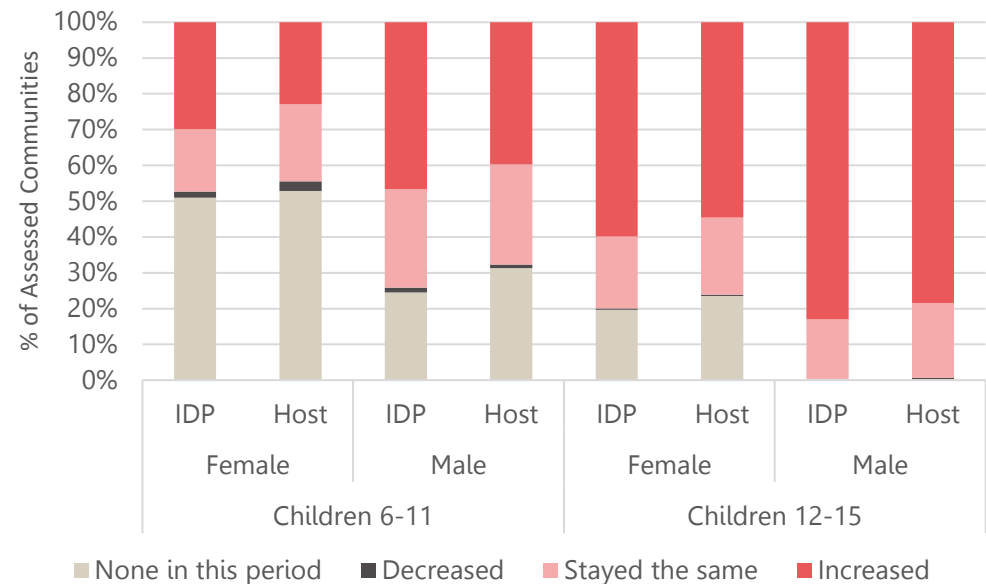
Economic difficulties faced by households can impact their ability to send their children to school. In January 2022 for instance, 15% of individuals aged 4-24 who did not attend school in January 2022 reported being unable to afford schooling. This was second only to the unavailability of schools for the child’s age group among

the primary reasons for not attending school. For another 13% of the individuals who were not in education, having to work to support the household was the primary reason for non-attendance.⁹ In agreement with the higher child labour rates for boys, more 12-to-17-year-old-boys who were not in education reported work as their reason for not attending schools, making this the most commonly reported reason for non-attendance in this group (reported by 45%).⁹ REACH’s HSOS suggests that this barrier became more prevalent for host populations, reported by KIs in around 71-73% of communities between November 2021 and January 2022 and increasing to between 81 and 84% of assessed communities from March to May 2022. While this increase was not observed for IDPs, the IDP group overall saw higher rates of reporting for this barrier (80-86% of communities).⁹

The issue of child marriage, mentioned previously in this report, also has repercussions for the child’s ability to go to school. In REACH’s HSOS, children leaving school due to early marriage was reported in 36% of the assessed communities in May 2022, a slight increase compared to 31% in November 2021.⁹ Note again that child marriage disproportionately affects girls, and that the age at which girls are married has continued to decrease.^{13,68}

Another factor immediately related to the economic situation is cost of transportation

17. Change in Proportion of Children Working between November 2021 and June 2022⁹



to school. This barrier depends both on the household’s financial situation – and thus their ability to cover the costs of transportation – and the region’s economic situation, which affects the price of fuel. Accordingly, the high cost of transportation was the second most commonly reported barrier to accessing schools in REACH’s HSOS across the

study period (November 2021 to May 2022). As would be expected, this is more frequently reported by KIs in rural communities than in urban communities (see figure 18). Furthermore, the overall lack of transportation to schools was the third most often reported barrier, also more common in rural areas.



However, children living in rural areas not only more often face barriers to reaching schools, but also often had no functioning education services in their own or nearby communities. This was reported by KIs in between 13 and 18% of rural assessed communities in the study period, while no KI reported this in urban areas.■

The unavailability of education services in Greater Idlib has been made worse by shortages in funding. The Education Cluster projected for Greater Idlib and

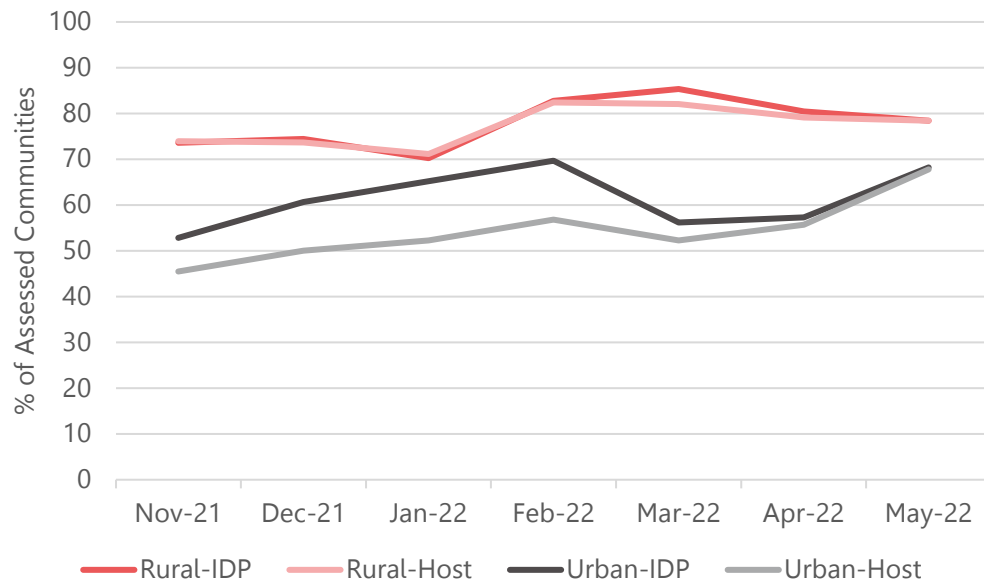
Northern Aleppo a funding gap of 42%, or 22.4 million USD for April to June 2022.⁶⁸ This is particularly concerning as nearly half the schools in Idlib are already non-operational.⁵² Secondary education services are especially suffering from the lack of funding, including the lack of incentives for teachers. Hence, age-appropriate learning for adolescents has been particularly limited.⁶⁹ The lack of incentives for teachers has also meant that some teachers have continued to

work without receiving a salary, while others have had to leave their jobs to find other sources of income.⁵⁰ Accordingly, overcrowding (including a lack of teachers and/ or a lack of classrooms) was reported as a challenge to education by KIs in 61% of the assessed communities in May 2022.■ While it was mentioned above that KIs in urban areas did not report an absence of education facilities, it is worth noting that they were consistently more likely to report overcrowding than KIs in rural areas.■

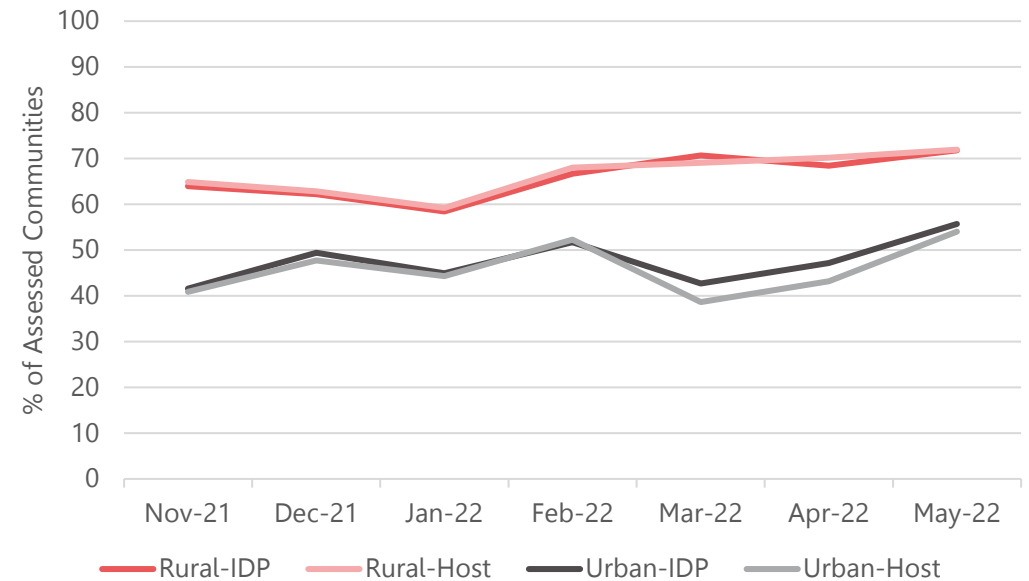
Access to Education

Universal access to education is still far from being attained in Greater Idlib, with around 32% of individuals aged 4-24 not attending school in January 2022.¹³ Furthermore, the likelihood of a child being in school also depends strongly on characteristics such as age, gender, disability, place of residence and belonging to different population groups.

18. High Cost of Transportation as a Barrier to Accessing Education (by % of communities)■



19. Lack of Transportation as a Barrier to Accessing Education (by % of communities)■





Aligned with the problems in secondary education and the greater likelihood of adolescents working, adolescents were less likely to be enrolled than younger children. Household data from January 2022 suggests that 92% of children aged 6 to 11 attended school compared to 70% of the children in the 12 to 17 age group.⁹ However, while boys were more likely to work, they may have been somewhat more likely to attend school than girls (71% compared to 66% for the 6-24 age range). One of the reasons for this is early marriage, with girls leaving school in order to get married.^{13,70} Additionally, security concerns, family obligations (including house work and caring for siblings), and less priority placed on girls education may have contributed to lower attendance rates.⁷⁰ In REACH's HSOS, KIs in 17 to 26% of communities also reported across the study period that there were challenges specific to girls that prevented access to education in their communities, and this was generally higher in rural areas.[■]

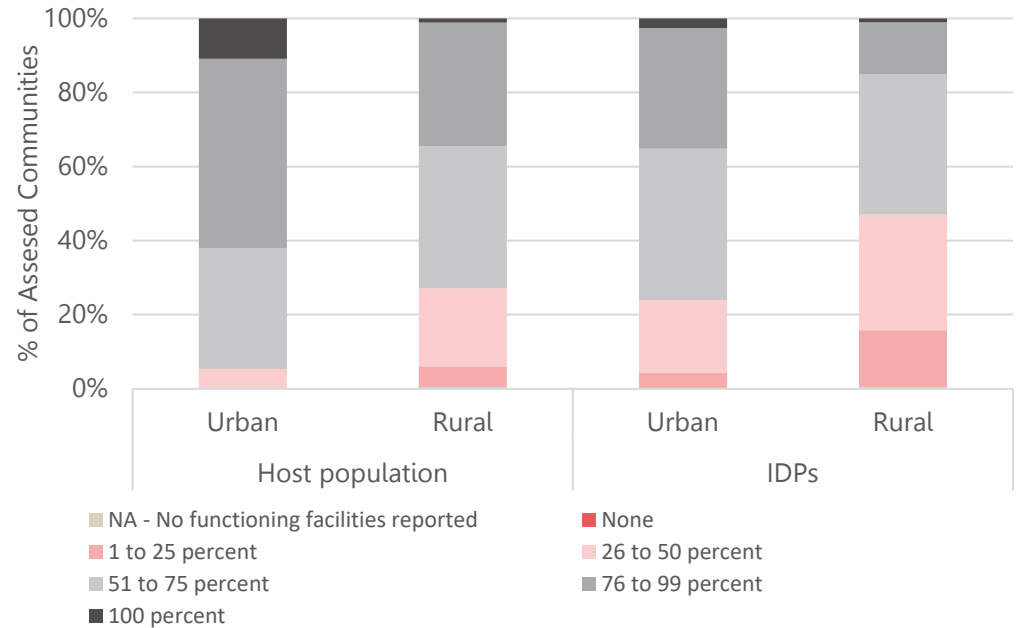
Moreover, household data indicates attendance rates were higher for children without disabilities than for those with disabilities (74% compared to 60%). KIs in around 16 to 21% of communities reported the lack of access to education for children with disabilities.[■] While little information on the situation for children with disabilities is available, one report highlights the lack of specialised education centres and lack of access to education for women

and girls with disabilities,¹³ while another study found that parents were generally dissatisfied with education services for children with disabilities⁷¹ – both for the whole of Syria.

Lastly, estimated rates of access to education collected through REACH's HSOS assessment point at higher access in urban communities and for host communities compared to rural areas and IDPs (see figure 20).[■] There are a range of issues which may explain the rural-urban divide.[■] Looking at the barriers to access reported by KIs in HSOS, some of the most commonly reported barriers were more frequently reported in rural areas. This includes the high cost or lack of transportation to school, as mentioned above, but also more commonly reported early marriage and social issues (such as education not being considered to be important, children not wanting to go to school, groups being marginalised). or IDPs, early marriage and social issues also stand out as being more commonly reported than for host communities, in addition to child work being more prevalent in displaced children.^{■ ■}

Despite the levels of child work reportedly having increased,[■] and KIs in a larger number of communities having reported economic barriers to accessing education (children having to work, high cost of transport to school, etc.),[■] KI reports of access to education suggest some

20. Proportion of Children Accessing Education in Rural and Urban Areas on Average Between November 2021 and May 2022[■]



improvements since the start of the current school year (starting in November 2021; data available up to May 2022). There are several factors which may explain a stable or improving situation in education access. Specifically, several factors that are not a direct result of the economic conditions improved over the same time period. Fear of COVID-19 was reported far less frequently, reported by

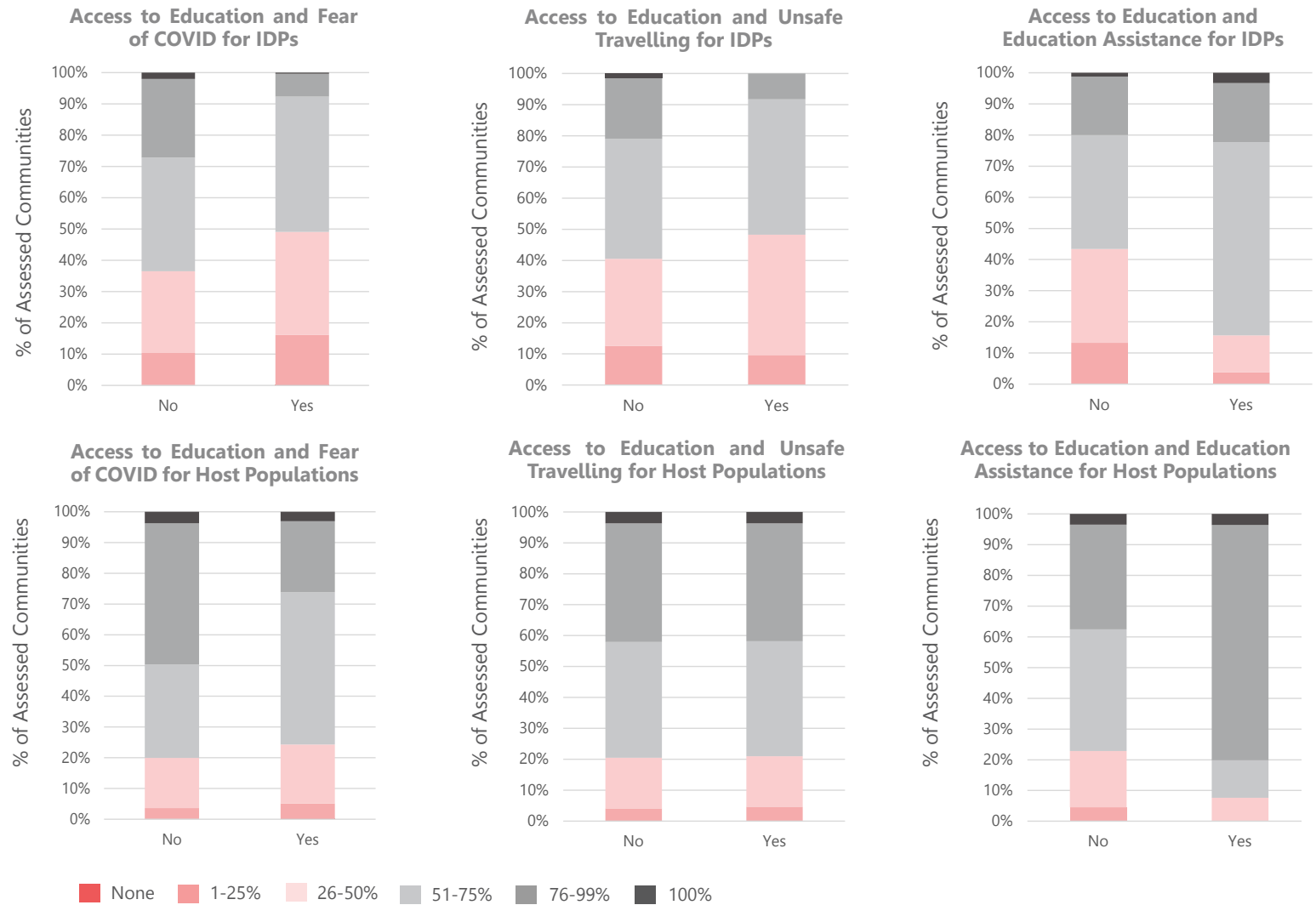
KIs in 61% of communities in November 2021 and 17% of communities in May 2022. Furthermore, travelling to and from school being unsafe was reported less frequently as a barrier to education access (11% to 5%). Further analysis shows a correlation between communities in which KIs reported these concerns and those for which higher education access was reported (see figure 21). Communities



in which KIs reported education assistance being available also showed higher levels of access to education (also see figure 21). At the same time, more communities reported receiving education assistance during this school year, increasing from 6% in November 2021 to 11% in May 2022 each for IDPs and residents. Though this does not fully explain the observed changes, it does so at least in part.⁷³

Poverty and conflict are strong factors affected children's ability to access education.⁷³ Out-of-school children are not only at greater risk of child labour and marriage. Their reduced access to education also reduces their ability to earn a higher income later in their lives, locking them into poverty.⁷⁴

21. Access to Education by whether Fear of COVID-19, Unsafety Travelling to and from School, and Education Aid were Reported in the Community - Aggregated Monthly Data from November 2021 to May 2022⁷⁵



The data are presented for IDPs (top row) and host populations (bottom row) separately. KIs report the percentage of children aged 3 to 18 who accessed education in their community in the 30 days prior to data collection. The leftmost column shows the percentage of communities that reported different levels of access depending on whether or not fear of COVID-19 was reported in that community. The same is done for unsafety travelling to and from schools (middle column) and for access to humanitarian assistance for education.



Notes on the Methodology

The population of interest includes host populations and out-of-camp IDPs (displaced peoples living in host communities). While Greater Idlib has a large population of in-camp IDPs, this group was excluded for two reasons. The first is the relatively weaker data situation on populations in-camps. The second is that in-camp IDPs likely differ from populations outside of camps in terms of their integration into local markets, which would make a separate treatment of this group in relation to the economic situation necessary.

The Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) conducted by the Cash Working Group (CWG) and REACH asks vendors from markets in every subdistrict in Northwest Syria about their prices. As the CWG looks at the whole of Northwest Syria, including northern Aleppo, the coverage used is different. Hence, to get Greater Idlib level data, we considered only vendors in communities within Greater Idlib (1824 vendors in May 2022). Taking the median prices of those vendor in a subdistrict gives the subdistrict level results; the median of the subdistrict values gives Greater Idlib data. A further disaggregation used here is the urban-rural distinction. Enumerators noted whether the community in which the vendor is situated is rural or urban (1050 rural vendors and 774 urban vendors in May 2022). This information is then used to aggregate only rural or only urban communities to the subdistrict and Greater Idlib levels. Note that JMMI data only gives an indication of price levels.

The Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) by REACH asks expert key informants (KIs) about the situation of households in their communities in the 30 days prior to data collection. This includes 3-5 KIs in each community, with 370 assessed communities in Greater Idlib in May 2022. This data is indicative of the household situation for residents and out-of-camp IDPs, but not necessarily representative, and the analysis is presented at the community level. Additional analysis was done to distinguish rural and urban communities. The definition of urban was chosen to align with the World Bank definition of towns (at least 5,000 inhabitants in contiguous grid cells with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km²) and cities (at least 50,000 inhabitants in contiguous dense grid cells with >1,500 inhabitants per km²). 90 communities were classified as urban, and 280 as rural.

The Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) twice a year conducts a Demographic Socioeconomic, Priority Needs & WASH Household Survey for resident and IDP households. The wave of the data used here is for January 2022. It is representative at the household level, with a confidence of 95% that values are within 10% of the true population average. Note here that HNAP data is organized

into four areas of control. Greater Idlib falls into the area referred to as Northwest Syria. This area additionally includes Rukban, a community on the southern border of Syria with 25,534 inhabitants (January 2022). Given the relatively small population size (<1% of total population), the coverage was treated as if it were identical to Greater Idlib.

A Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) was conducted by REACH in June 2022 using a KI methodology. As there was not enough capacity to cover all communities, a subset of communities covered in REACH's HSOS (which includes almost all communities in Greater Idlib) was selected. This was done by considering the communities each enumerator could access, and randomly selecting 12 of these. Communities smaller than 100 people were excluded and communities with more than 50,000 people were all included. This gave a coverage of 228 communities. All enumerators were able to cover additional communities, so that the final sample included 301 communities. This data is only indicative of the situation of resident and out-of-camp IDP households in assessed communities and findings are reported at the community level.

Limitations: Please note the data used in this report mainly relies on KI information. This data is indicative of the situation in assessed communities or markets in Greater Idlib and should not be understood as representative. In particular, HSOS and RNA data is reported in terms of "KIs in X% of assessed communities", indicating the number of communities in which an indicator was reported. This does not necessarily reflect the number of people affected by an indicator as communities differ strongly in size and the prevalence within the communities may differ.

Footnotes

- a. Watermelon is excluded due to unusually large price fluctuations over the monitored period.
- b. There are two exceptions, being turnips and tomatoes. For turnips, there few prices were recorded in November making the value less reliable. For tomatoes, while sufficiently many prices were available, a 20% decrease from November to December 2021 was followed by a 63% increase from December 2021 to January 2022.
- c. Markets are identified as rural or urban by enumerators and key informants.
- d. The other 1.5 million were beneficiaries of bread or flour distributions (0.8m), mixed food items (0.6m) and emergency food rations (0.06m).
- e. The report notes that working outside of the household is at odds with the traditional role of women in this society. The first problem for women arises from the additional workload they experience as they are expected to continue fulfilling their traditional household duties. Another issue is that while men continue to control the household's



resources, some men perceive that they have lost power and have lost the ability to provide for their families, which causes tension within the household. This is considered to be a driver of increased rates of domestic violence.

f. Employment in the education sector follows different trends as it is more closely aligned with the school year. Schools often cannot afford to hire new teachers towards the end of the school year, which may have contributed to the observed decline in employment.

g. The Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), created by the CWG, outlines the minimum culturally-adjusted items that an average six-person household in Syria needs to purchase in one month.

h. This includes coping strategies for all purposes and is not confined to coping with a lack of food.

i. Stunting can lead to cephalopelvic disproportion, where the baby does not fit through the pelvis of the mother.

j. Please note that communities without functioning education services nearby were not included in the education access statistics.

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