



Local Development
Organization
منظمة التنمية المحلية

Economic studies of cities

Idleb city



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index

Introduction.....	2
Research Methodology.....	2
Information about the region and geographical location.....	3
Population.....	4
Income Sources and Main Livelihoods in the City.....	5
The Most Important Skills and Knowledge in the City.....	6
The Most Important Resource in the City.....	7
The Priorities and Needs of the Region in terms of Projects, by Sector.....	10
Recommendations and Suggestions.....	11

Introduction

This study is part of the economic studies carried out by the Research and Studies Department of the Local Development Organization (LDO) on cities and towns in Syria, and it contains economic information about a number of cities in Idleb and Aleppo provinces, and this series of studies came as a result of its reliance on the field survey in order to document the situation of economic development in the Syrian cities that were studied, with the aim of preparing economic development plans that contribute to improving the standard of living of the region's residents, qualifying human resources capable of adopting and implementing income-generating projects, increasing access to basic resources and services, and supporting for conflict-affected communities and achieving the goal of reaching sustainable ones.

The economic reality of the cities was analyzed with a view to determining the need for income-generating projects in order to achieve strategic goals and development plans, to mitigate the impact of unstable economic conditions in the region.

Research Methodology

This study relied on sectoral analysis, reviewing during the study the factors affecting the economic status of each city, regardless of the cities, areas, or districts to which it belongs administratively.

This study relied on a field survey with the aim of documenting the economic situation in the cities covered by the study. A questionnaire was prepared for this purpose. The sample size reached 50 people from each city distributed as follows:

5 people: Members of the city's local council.

5 legal persons: Mukhtar or a person working in an organization from the people of the region.

10 people: local residents, with educational attainment.

30 people: professionals, and shop owners.

The monitoring and evaluation team at the Local Development Organization collected the required data by the questionnaire. The information of this study monitors the economic situation in the targeted cities in July 2020, where the preparation of the questionnaire and data collection took 15 days, then the period of preparing economic studies for the targeted cities started, which It lasted 15 working days and ended with the researcher's release of economic studies on July 28th 2020.

In addition to relying on secondary data by the local councils in the cities concerned with the study.

Information about the region and geographical location

Idleb city is the capital of Idleb Governorate that is located in Northern Syria, it is called Green Idleb because there are many olives trees in it. Idleb is located in the southwest of Aleppo that is 60 km away from it and 330 km from Damascus. Idleb city is the first administrative region in the province. Idlib area is also historically significant, containing many "dead cities" and museums in which the most important sign is clay tablets that were discovered in Ebla - Tell Mardikh.

Idleb governorate has an important and significant site on the silk road as well as an important way of the trade from Anatolia and Europe to the East or vice versa through Bab Al-Hawa border crossing. Idleb is considered one of the richest provinces in Syria

as well as it is the link between the coastal and central areas and Northern and Eastern regions in which it is a bridge between the agricultural production areas of Syria and the Eastern and export areas of the port of Lattakia. Idleb and its rural is popular with olives production; it was named olives country in 1772 since olives were its first product. Olive trees' number is estimated by 3 million. There are various ancient industries, such as the olive pressing, soap making, and tomato paste, halva making and shoe industry. Idlib city is a large commercial market for the surrounding areas and controls the olive trade and olives oil in Syria. In addition to olive crop, there are other important crops such as figs, grapes, wheat, barley, cotton, pulses, and spices. Climate: the climate is dry that is similar to the Mediterranean climate; the rainfall ratio is 495 mm annually. Idleb city is a sanctuary for patients who come for its fresh air due to its rising from the sea level 451 m and it is an island among 3 million olive trees. The average temperature is (30-45) in the Summer while (-3- +13) in the winter as well as it is a little wet.

Population

Idleb city currently has approximately 650.000 people, of whom nearly 100.000 are indigenous people and during the revolution, nearly 550.000 people have been displaced from different Syrian governorates.



The average number of family

members is 5 people

Male ratio **41,5%**

Female ratio **58,5%**



18 Under
118,000



Displaced
550,000



Indigenous
100,000

Source: Local Council

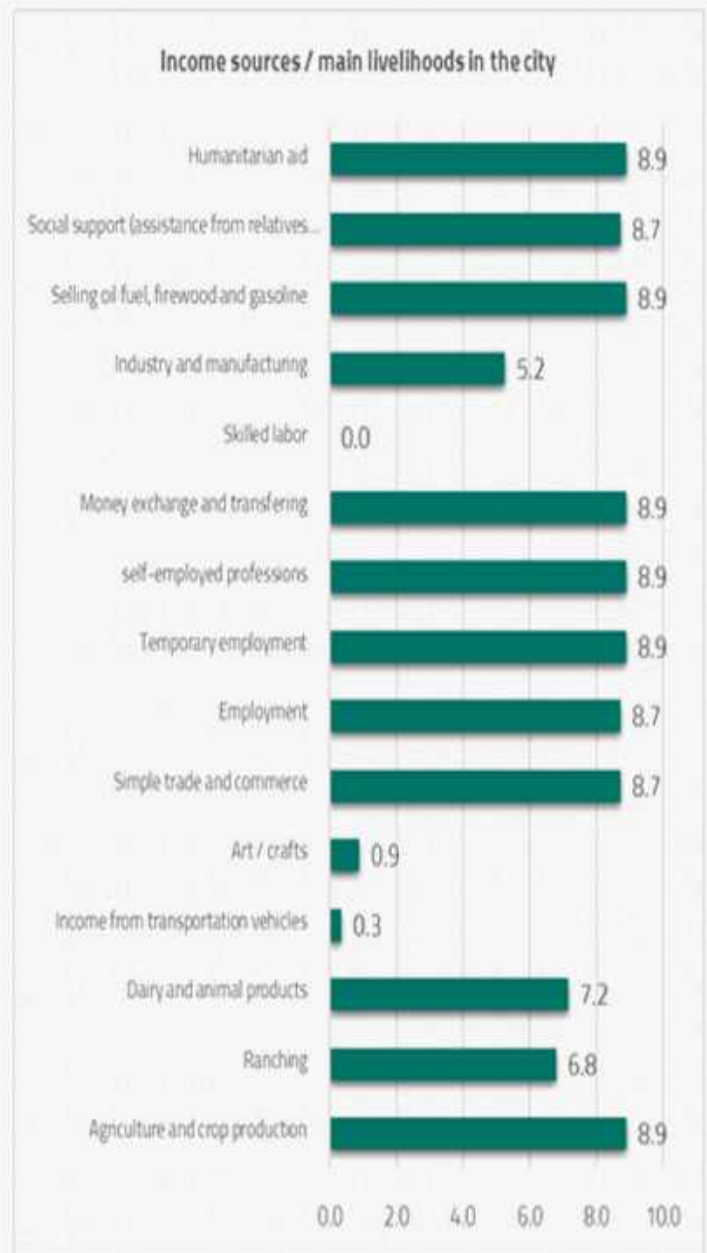
Income sources and main livelihoods in the city

Residents of Idleb city depend on several sources of income and livelihoods, the most important of which are scientific careers, temporary labor wages, exchange and money orders in addition to agriculture, crop production, sale each of petroleum fuel, firewood, and gas.

They also depend mainly on humanitarian aids and social support through assistance from relatives and friends as well as the main income source belongs to those who work in civil society organizations or the local Council and its service sectors (mill-cleanliness), also the salary of the Free Army and fighting factions.

In a small percentage, the population depends on sources of income such as transportation vehicles, handcrafts, industry and manufacturing. It is worth to be mention that none depends on skilled labor as a source of income.

Some people collect old plastics or saleable waste. scrap trade and wild plants collecting are considered a simple source of income for some families. Job opportunities are very few in contrast to the population due to the very large number of displaced people within the City.

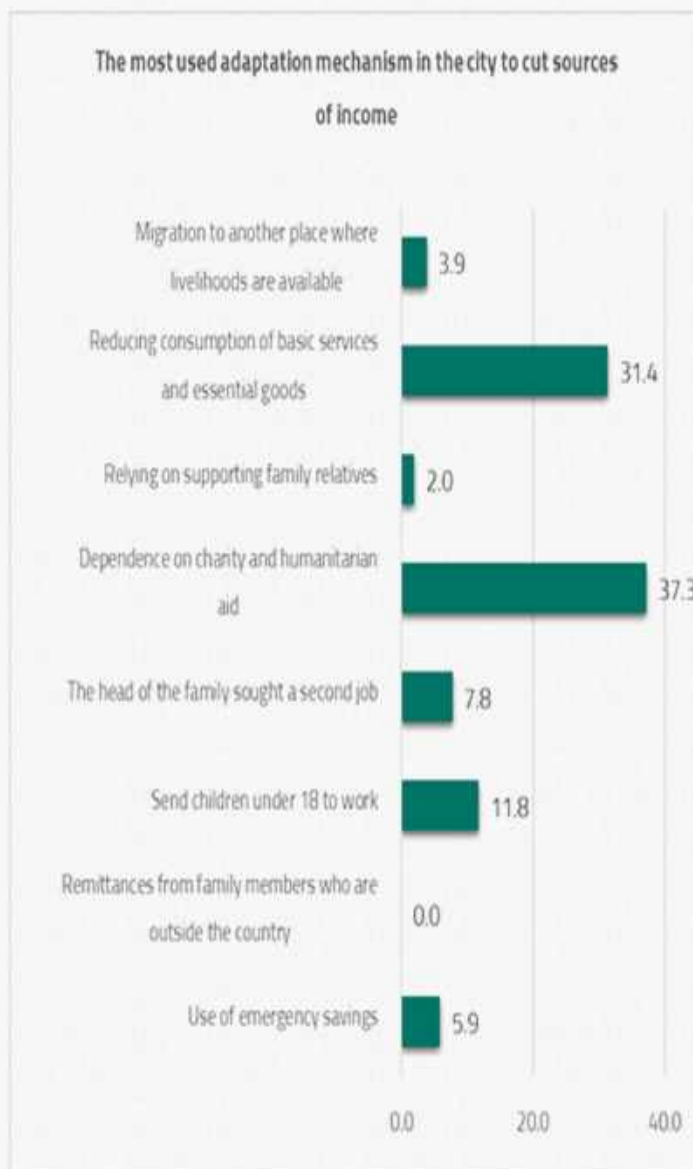


The diagram shows the ratio of the source of each income from the sources in the city.

The most used adaptation mechanism in Idleb city, which the residents' resort to in response to the interruption of their income sources

Naturally, some people may be tempted to leave their jobs for several reasons, including the expiry of the work contract, or problems that may encounter, so there may be a break in the source of income, the interruption period may be longer or shortened.

In response to the interruption of income sources, the residents of Idleb city rely on several mechanisms to adapt to this situation.



Most of the mechanisms depend on Humanitarian aids in which humanitarian organizations contribute to the survival of a huge number of indigenous and displaced people in which the income of household head doesn't fit with living needs as well as there are many people who live under the poverty line and there is a spread of begging phenomenon in the city.

Other mechanisms of responding to overcome the break of income resource are to reduce of consumption of essential services and commodities; that the consumption is limited to the pressing needs such as bread and rice.

While the poor people are reluctant to buy expensive items such as meat and chicken. These two mechanisms have more than two-third of the adaptation mechanisms compared to others. It is worth to be mentioned that the residents of Idleb rely on child labor even at low wages in order to help them as well as the household head searches for a second job, in addition, to use the emergency saving if any.

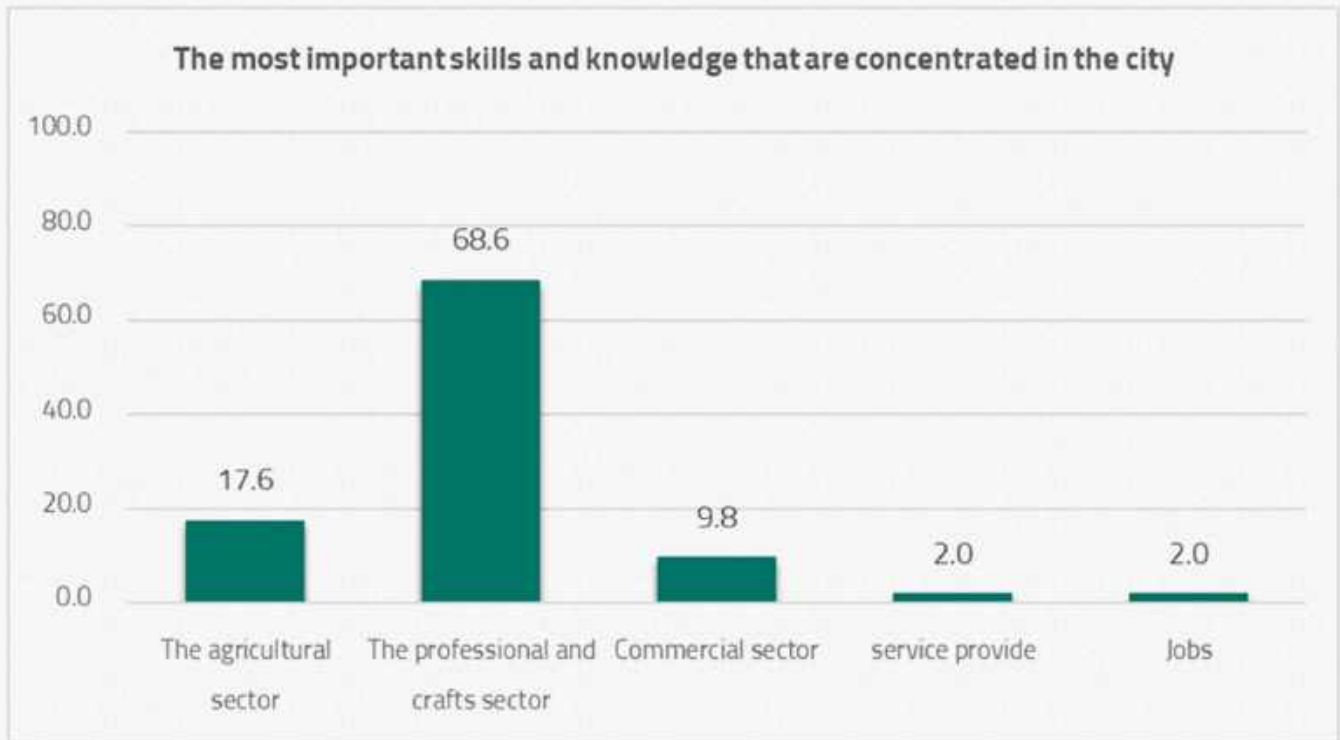
Remittances from the family members who are outside of Syria are very little. Instead, there are some people who prefer to sell gold and household items as a response to the break of income. people think about immigration, especially the youth, but they do not have money as well as the status of crossings don't allow to do this step.

The most important skills and knowledge in the city

The population residing in Idleb depends on a number of skills and knowledge; the most important of these is the sector of professional and craftsman but they need to support and refine the skills even more. There is a professional and craftsman training center that is located to the west and 5 km from Idleb which was completed a few months ago; with the aim of preparing and qualifying professional staff in the field of construction and rehabilitation, in addition, to provide the labor market with technical and trained expertise where they would have a professional experience certificate that helps them to have a job.

There are other skills that are related to agriculture and the commercial sector. The most important types of trade are clothing trade “secondhand clothing market” which is considered as a substitute for the new garment trade, for many people, due to its high price in addition to the poor economic and living conditions. Another type of trade is foodstuff trade despite the high price resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of the crossing with Turkey.

The most important skills and knowledge that are concentrated in the city are distributed as follows:



The most important resource in the city

Before the Syrian Revolution 2011, Idleb didn't receive the same attention that the Syrian regime government provided to other governorates in Syria; especially in the term of the economic field that is related to agriculture, industry, and trade sectors. Idleb governorate seemed as "forgotten" region where there are no major economic projects although the necessary materials are available. Idleb is a border area and has fertile lands.

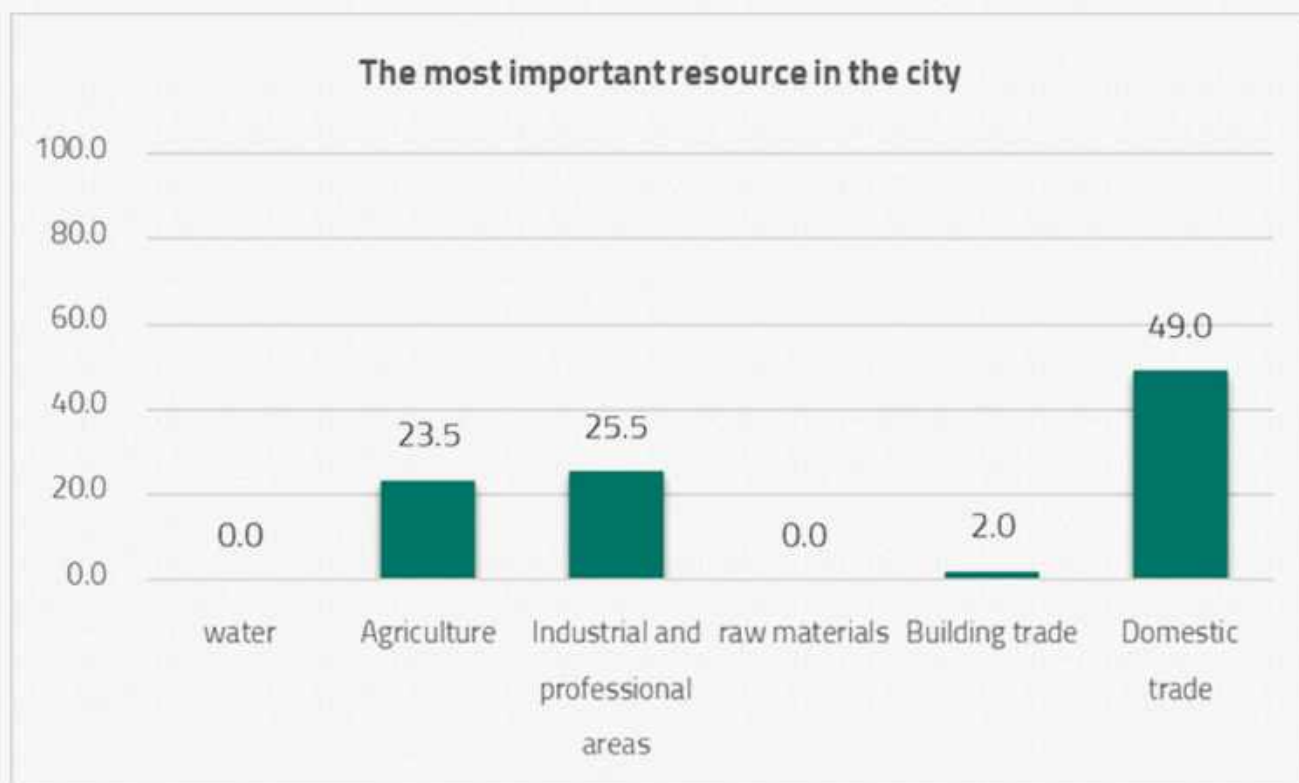
Now, the situation in Idleb is stable and calm; there are questions about the economic situation that will be in Idleb. Will Idleb be poor or active economically?

Some people refer that Idleb is self-sufficient in the agriculture production level; it is the source of olives and olive oil production to Syria in addition to pomegranate and other different agriculture crops that were exported to all Syrian governorates but these days Idleb face some problem in marketing due to the difference between the quantity of production and consumption which gives a surplus.

Bab Al-Hawa border crossing is considered the economic lifeline to Idleb; as well as it was the conflict point among the major factions in the past years because of the big returns that be gotten to the party who owns it.

The local economy depends on many sectors; the most important of which are agriculture and the internal trade in which trade in fruits and vegetables, especially olive and olive oil, is considered one of the most important sources of income for the population. Also, Crafts are considered a source of income for a part of the population.

There is a bit of monopoly by some opposing factions, to the trade-in building materials such as iron, so the trade-in building materials is far from the population.



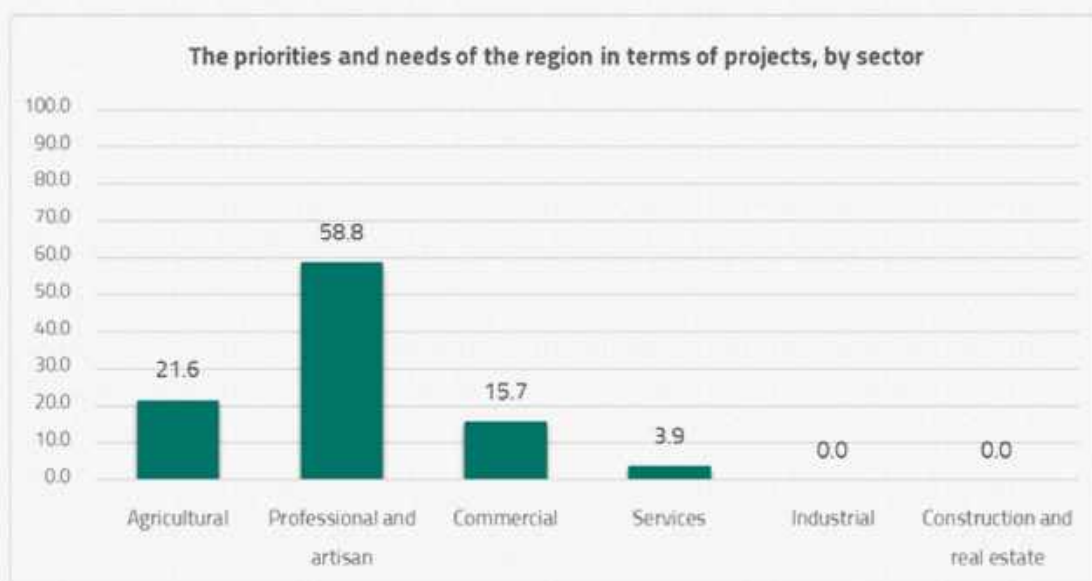
The priorities and needs of the region in terms of projects, by sector

Idleb city, in cooperation with the local council, civil society organization and all other actors in the city and residents, is looking to implement a number of projects during the coming period. A survey was distributed to all active actors with the aim of identifying the priorities and needs from projects to the city according to sectors.

The most important project that the city need is what related to professional and craftsman sectors since the need to more experience through expert trainers, implement livelihood projects for training, supporting as well as having job opportunities since unemployment is high in Idleb.

Agricultural and livestock projects are also needed in which many humanitarian organizations support the development projects in Idleb including chickens, sheep and cows' distribution as well as opening of commercials and industrial shops for the poor such as supporting the owner of a furniture shop and tailoring especially for people who have special needs of the disabled in order to be able of relying on their selves and to have job opportunities. However, there is a need for such projects.

In the following graph, the percentage of project needs is according to each sector



Recommendations and suggestions


- Working to encourage programs that enhance the culture of entrepreneurship, mainly among youth and women, by the following
 - Supporting service and industrial sector until Securing infrastructure to create a coefficient.
 - Encouraging the capitals abroad to invest in the city. - Secure employment opportunities for the labor force. -secure basic needs, it is a necessary material for the city.
- Directing the organizations' support to small projects (sewing workshops, carpentry workshops, and various handicrafts) since most of the population does not have sufficient liquidity to open development projects and to tackle the issue of unemployment.
- Supporting the medical sector; providing supplies to combat the Coronavirus epidemic, supporting sterilization supplies.
- Encouraging the creation of small-scale industries and grant loans to fund new graduates in order to conduct workshops and small projects that will enable them of having a good job. Encouraging small-scale industries through establishing a special fund to overcome challenges and obstacles that people face where many of them are unemployed and rely on humanitarian aid.
- Conducting a need assessment survey with the aim of knowing the most important professional and occupational as well as project needs in agriculture and livestock that are required in the city.
- Revitalizing the commercial and agricultural through organizations, consuming the city's resource and providing development projects to benefit from the resources and experiences of the city.
- Establishing agriculture facilities to support the agriculture sector such as feed factory, yogurt factory and conserves factory to have benefited from agriculture production and to cover the region's feed needs.



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