



Local Development
Organization
منظمة التنمية المحلية

Economic studies of cities

Afrin - Aleppo



April 2020

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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 51 people from each city distributed as follows:

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

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

16 people: professionals, and shop owners.

14 people: local residents, with educational attainment.

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 March 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 April 10th 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

Afrin city is located within a mountainous region in the far northwest corner of Syria, it forms the Syrian-Turkish border. It is bordered from the west by the Amik Valley that is located in İskenderun-Hatay Province and The Afrin River that forms the borderline in that region, from the north by the train railway that goes from Meidan Ekbis to Kilîs, from the east by Azaz and from the south by Mount Simeon region.

Afrin city is the center that is located 63 km off Aleppo, and it belongs to Aleppo province administratively.

The most important industries are the traditional hand carpets, famous olive-related industries such as olives oil extraction, soap, and Olive Pomace (birene) manufacturing are based on olives farming and influenced by it. Afrin is considered as an important center in this field in Syria. Important facilities, factories, and business premises are spread in Afrin and its respective regions. In addition, different industries such as heritage manufacturers and modern industries.

Population

Afrin city currently has approximately 229,000 people, of whom nearly 77,000 are indigenous people, and during the revolution, nearly 152,000 people have been displaced, from the Damascus, Rif Damascus, Aleppo and the eastern areas of Syria and Daraa.



The average number of family members is 5 people

Male ratio **48,9%**

Female ratio **51,1%**



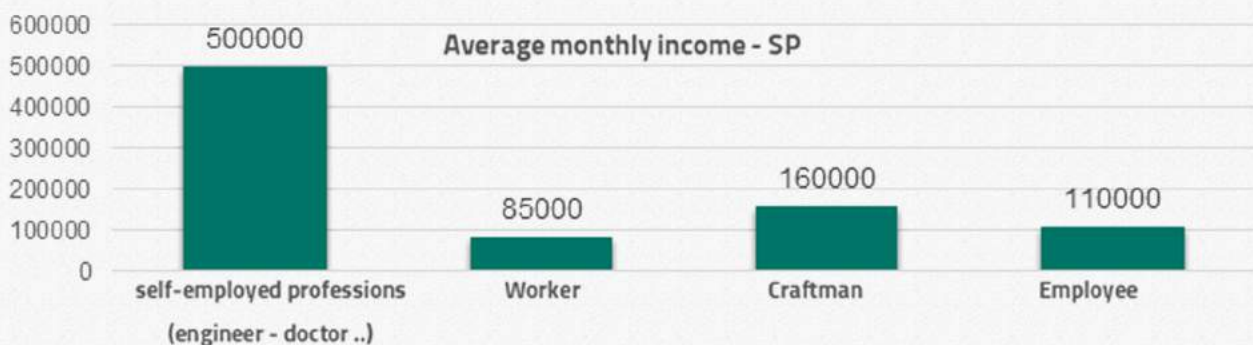
18 Under
139,000



Displaced
152,000



Indigenous
77,000

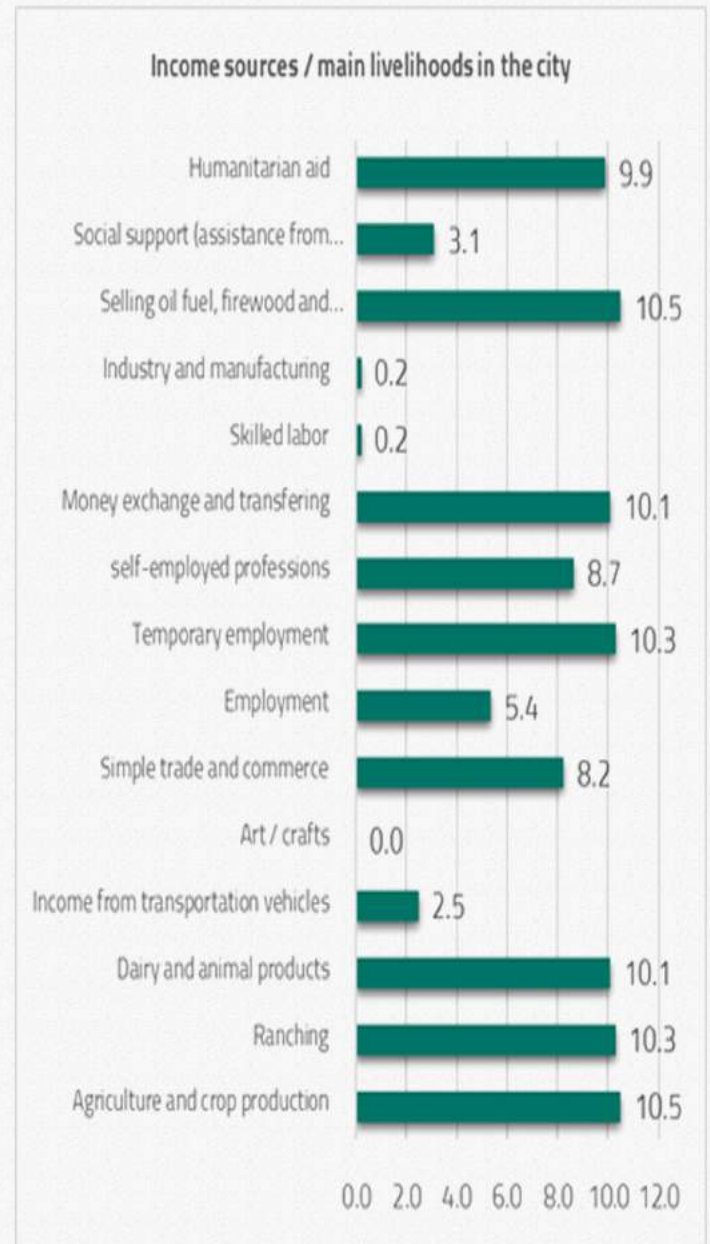


Source: Local Council

Income sources and main livelihoods in the city

Residents of Afrin city depend on several sources of income and livelihoods, the most important of which are agriculture, Crop production, livestock breeding, milk and animal products, then temporary labor wages, the sale of fuel and money-changing establishment. In an average percentage, the population depends on job, handicraft, trade, simple commercial exchange and humanitarian aid. In a small percentage, the population depends on sources of income such as social support of relatives' assistance; and in so small percentage, they are depending on skilled-labor and industry and manufacturing.

There are other sources such as mobile entrepreneurship, and salaries paid by the National Army

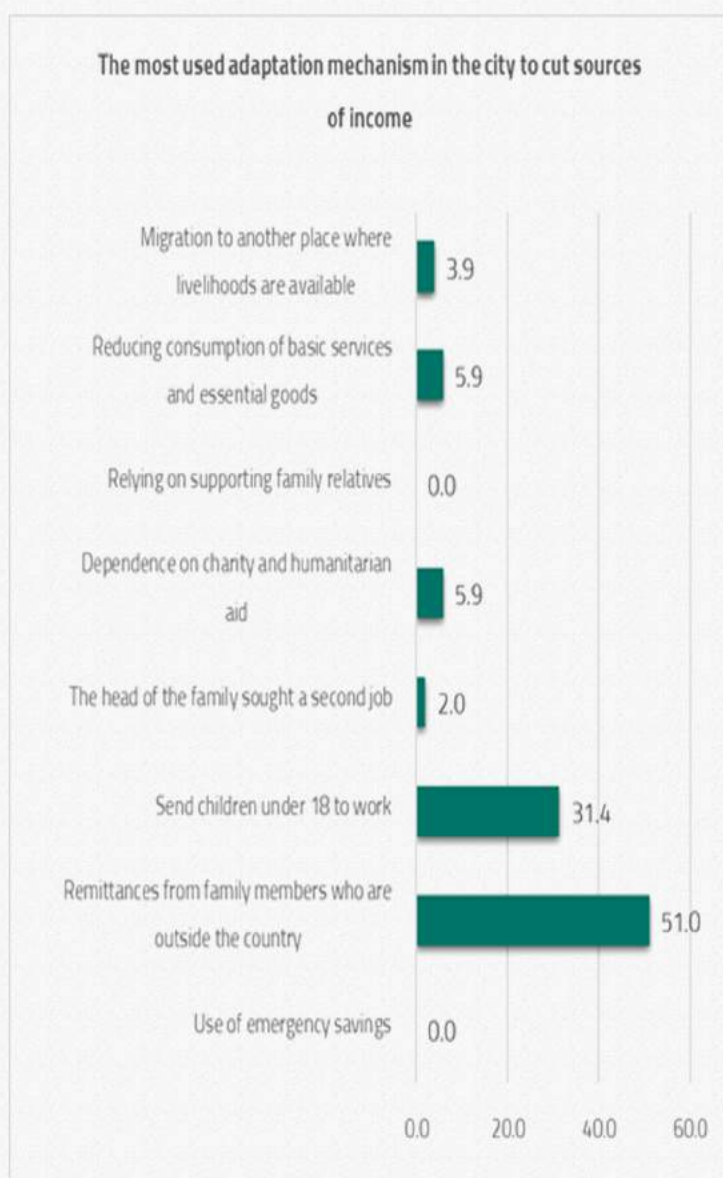


The diagram shows the ratio of the source of each income from the sources in the city.

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

Naturally, some people may have 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 Afrin city rely on several mechanisms to adapt to this situation.



Most of the mechanisms are remittances from the family's members who are outside of Syria, as well as child labour; these two mechanisms are the most used

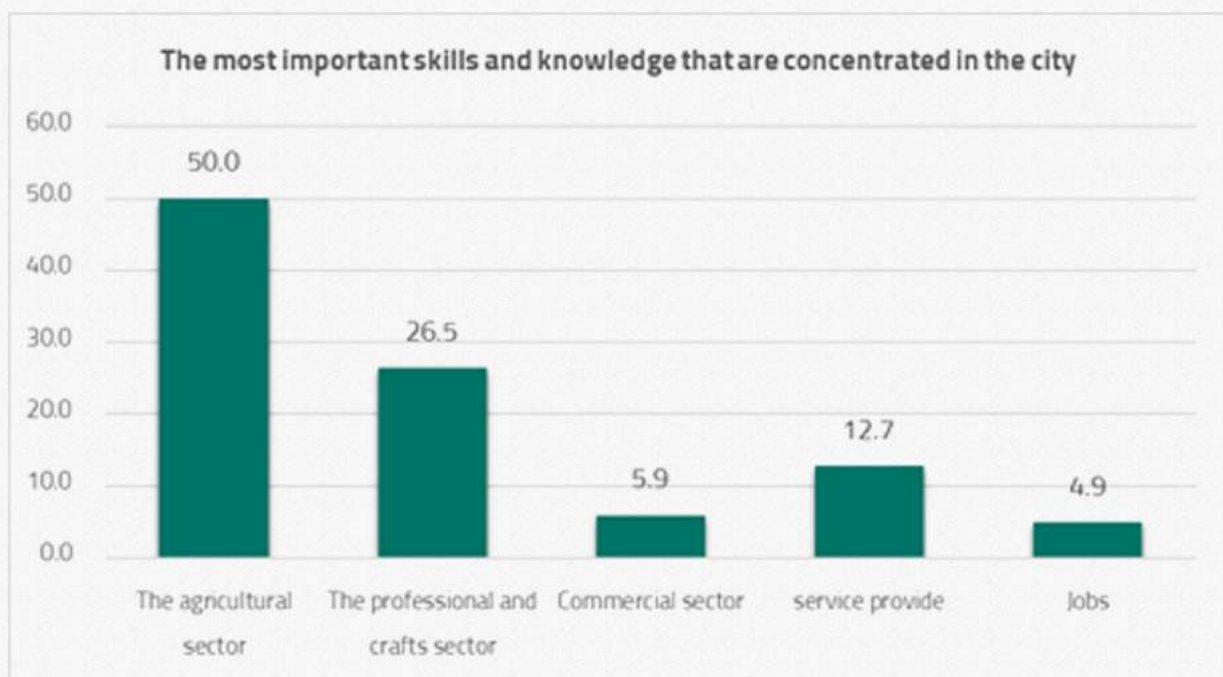
Then followed by reducing the consumption of basic services and necessary goods, and relying on charities and humanitarian aids or moving to another place where work is available, or searching for another job in the same area by the household head.

The most important skills and knowledge in the city

The population residing in Afrin depends on a number of skills and knowledge, and since the region is distinguished by its nature and a large proportion of agricultural land; the most important of skills and knowledge are skills in the agriculture sector in addition to grassland.

Then the industrial sector, occupational sector, crafts sector, manufacturing and trade. The most important industry is olives-related such as olives oil extraction, soap, and Olive Pomace (birene) then traditional hand carpets manufacturing. Afrin is considered as an important center in this field in Syria. Important facilities, factories, and business premises are spread in Afrin and its respective regions. In addition, different industries such as heritage manufacturers and modern industries; providing different substantive services is one of the skills and knowledge, in a small percentage, there are job-related skills.

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

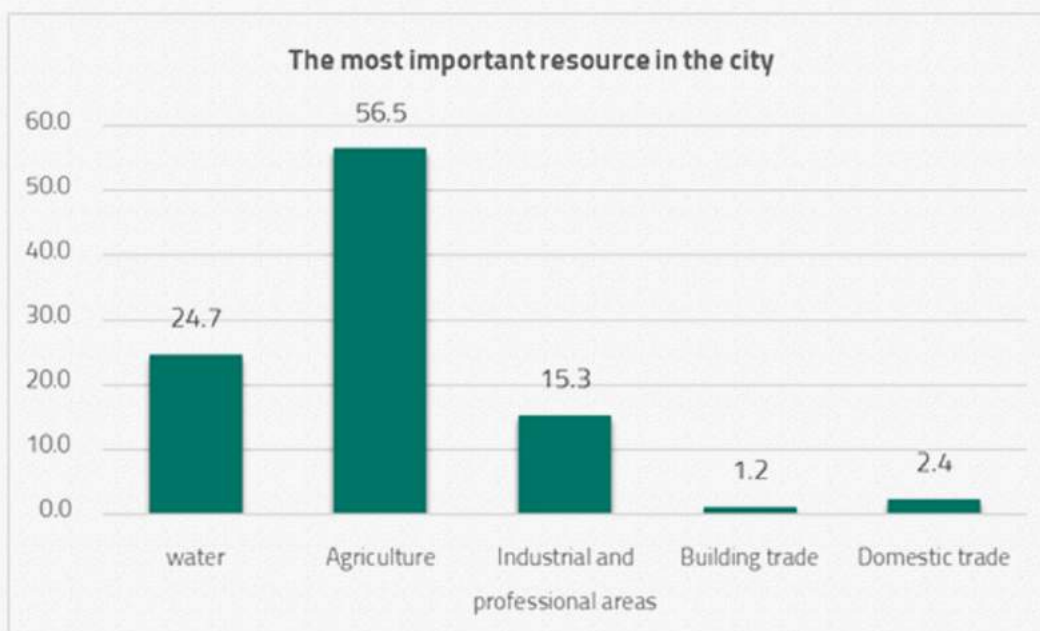


The most important resource in the city

The climate in Afrin is mild because it's near the sea in which its climate is moderate in summer and cold in winter; rain falling is relatively heavy and snowfalls. Therefore, Afrin region is fertile and typical for Mediterranean agriculture, for many reasons such as the existence of the mild climate, valleys, plains, mountains, soil fertility, and water abundance, where grain is grown such as wheat, lentils and barley, all kinds of vegetables, cotton, sugar cane, citrus fruit, apples, grapes and other kinds of fruit. So, agriculture is considered as the most important source of income in Afrin; the main growing is olive cultivation that grows all over the region, and olive trees are more than 10.000.000.

With regard to industrial and occupational areas, Afrin has an economical importance after the Syrian revolution, especially after Olive Branch operation as well as because of the stable security situation, many traders have relocated their plants and goods to the industrial area that is about 2200 sq. meters. The industrial area is located on the outskirts of the city far away from civilians cause of sounds, noise and gas fumes that issued from it.

Construction trades and domestic trade are a less important source in Afrin

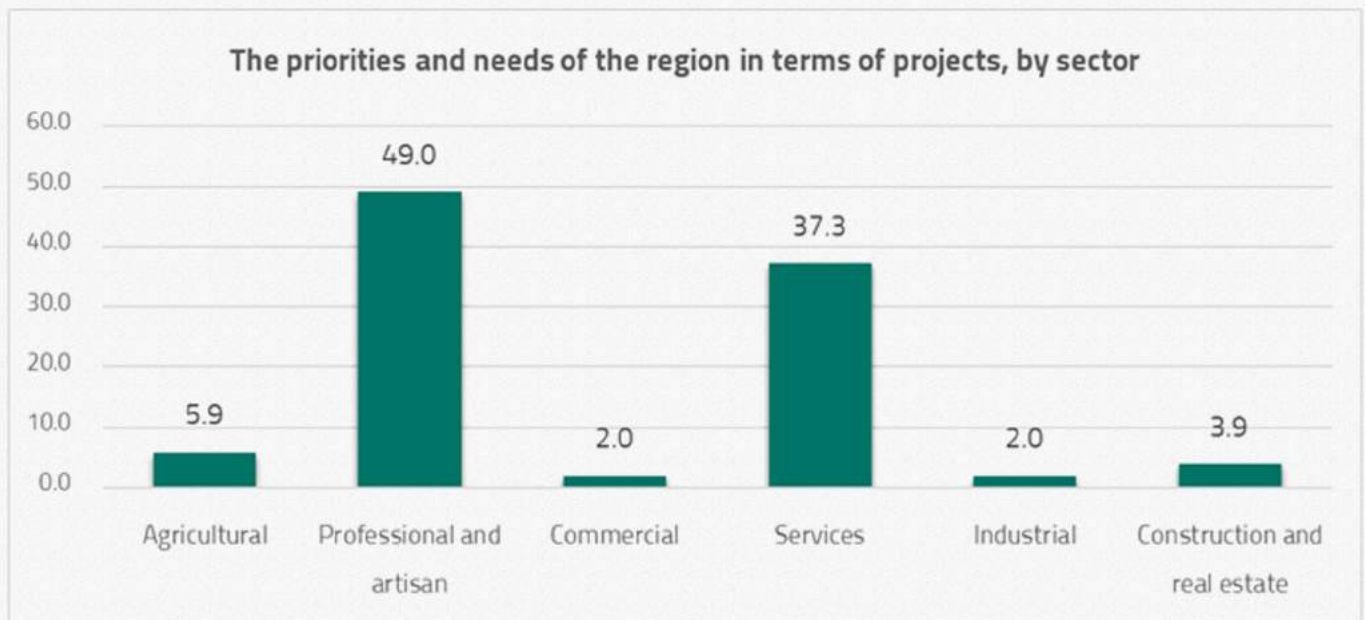


The priorities and needs of the region in terms of projects, by sector

Afrin city, in cooperation with the local council, civil society organizations, all other actors in the city and residents, is looking to implement a number of projects during the coming period; especially after large-scale migration from most of the Syrian governorates in which a questionnaire has been distributed to the actors in the city in order to determine the priorities and needs of the city of projects by sectors.

It turned out that the most important projects that the city needs are occupational and craft-related projects, then the service projects such as the medical sector which is the most important sector at the present time; to a small extent of agriculture, commercial, construction and real estate sectors.

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



Recommendations and suggestions

1. Working to encourage programs that enhance the culture of entrepreneurship, mainly among youth and women, by the following:
 - Supporting service, industrial, occupational, and craft sectors.
 - 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.
2. The interest of the organizations in revitalizing the commercial and agricultural sector, exploiting the city's basic resources and proposing development projects that benefit from the energies and experiences in the city.
3. 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.
4. Establishing agricultural establishments to support the agricultural sector, such as setting up a feed factory and supporting specialized factories for olive treatment such as olive oil extraction and having benefit from the agricultural products in the region.
5. Supporting the medical sector; providing supplies to combat the Coronavirus epidemic, supporting sterilization supplies.



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