

INDICATORS
A chance of improvement

Syrians Employment Via Internet

Self-made program

April 2018

About INDICATORS

INDICATORS is a limited liability company, specialized in the field of statistical studies and field research, with specialists in field research methodologies, samples, questionnaires development and data analysis. INDICATORS was established in 2017 in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, its field teams cover both Syria and the neighboring countries (Turkey - Lebanon - Jordan - Iraq), in addition to the European Union countries.

INDICATORS provides its services in the fields of:

1. **Market research:** market analysis, product development, marketing studies, customer experience testing, and customer satisfaction studies.
2. **MEAL & TPM:** needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian projects, impact analysis, in addition to developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and systems of accountability to affected populations.
3. **Socio-politics:** polls, academic studies, and societal development studies.

INDICATORS has provided services to many local and international institutions including Syrian, Arab and international organizations, in addition to establishing research partnerships with several international universities and study centers. INDICATORS has also successfully contributed to many pioneer projects and companies through its market studies and consultation services.

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Introduction

The Internet provides wide-range employment opportunities with characteristics that suit the Syrians. Such employment is neither restricted by a particular location or a situation, hence making it the most appropriate form of work for Syrians who seek jobs. Those who are working online only need a computer and internet connection to work from wherever they go to.

Other advantages include receiving payments in foreign currencies. The difference in the exchange rates between the foreign currencies and the Syrian currency means gaining a much higher income than working in the local market. Moreover, it contributes to the inflow of foreign currencies into the country, hence it activates of the local markets.

Working online provides an unlimited market that offers services, technical products and public relations, as well as gaining more experience in a competitive market that requires familiarity with everything new in this field.

In addition, the online working method allows employees to be independent in terms of choosing their work hours. This helps creating a better balance between work and life. However, a great effort must be put at the beginning to gain the customer's confidence and to increase the feedbacks at online platforms.

Working online is considered as one of the ways to overcome the problem of unemployment, which is highly rampant in the Syrian society.

Executive Summary

Over eight years, the Syrian crisis has led to the loss of the income sources for many Syrians including the internally displaced people (IDPs) who were forced to leave their homes, jobs, shops, and handicrafts, and the injured people whose injuries have led to disabilities that prevented them from pursuing jobs that require any physical effort. Moreover, many workers in the private enterprises and companies have lost their work either as a result of the destruction of their companies by the bombings or the owners have closed their companies and fled from Syria to other countries due fears from the ongoing conflict.

In light of all the above, it was necessary for Syrians to search for jobs and sources of income that suit them and do not get affected by the field conditions while giving them greater stability. Working online may be considered as one of the best jobs because it only requires a personal computer and internet connection. The online worker is not bound by a specific location to start work and can provide his services wherever he is, as he is not connected to a company, institution or employer. It is an independent work that gives the worker a great deal of freedom to sign contracts and provide services to various parties. Adding to that, the person who works online can earn enough income to cover his monthly needs.

Due to the importance of working online as a suitable opportunity for offering jobs for the Syrians, INDICATORS center conducted this study to know the level of the awareness among Syrians about the concept and the fundamentals of working online, their willingness to learn and start working, and to assess their abilities and skills that qualify them to work online and seek to develop these skills. In addition, the purpose is to identify the most important needs and requirements of the Syrians, and to find the appropriate ways to meet them.

The study was conducted in the Syrian northern regions and Daraa governorate and included 12 interviews with online workers in these areas using an in-depth interview questionnaire. A random sample of Syrians was selected, where 302 Syrian males and females were interviewed with an emphasis on young people aged between 18 and 40 years at different levels of education. In their interviews, a special questionnaire with closed questions was used. Finally, two online business consultants were interviewed.

The results of the study showed that the Syrians have many skills, which can be utilized to start working online if appropriate support is provided. Also, there is a great willingness among most Syrians to learn the techniques of online work and start this kind of work, knowing that they can be qualified to start working within a relatively short period of time, maximum three months. We recommend the need to speed the establishment of training centers to prepare the Syrians and equip them with the necessary skills to work. There is a need for awareness raising campaigns about the importance of working online, its features and the income that can be earned monthly through it. In addition, there is a need to provide the required help for people who are

ready to work, in order to make them overcome the obstacles they might encounter by meeting their needs and providing the needed equipment.

It is noted that a lot of Syrians have access to the required equipment for working online. There is a reliable Internet connection, electricity of more than 6 hours a day and computers. About one third of Syrians have skills that enable them to start working online almost directly. The report recommends providing guidance and consultancy to this category to facilitate their entry into this type of work.

Key Findings

1. There is a reasonable knowledge of working online in the Syrian society.
2. More than one-third of people, aged 18-40, have the required skills, and are ready to start working online.
3. About a quarter of females, between the ages of 18 and 40 years, have skills and are willing to start working online.
4. The Syrian workers in the traditional fields work on average 7.6 hours per day for 100 \$ to 150 \$ per month. Online workers work 5 hours a day for 300 \$ to 500 \$ per month. This income is estimated for the first nine months, and mostly it improves later.
5. The monthly living expenses of Syrian families are between 150 \$ and 300 \$. So, the online workers can earn an income that cover their expenses during the first nine months of their work.
6. The estimated time to get a good income from working online is about 9 months, as it is expected to exceed 500 \$ per month.
7. More than half of the Syrian women have heard about working online. Most them are familiar with social media and the Internet. Many of them have the skills to start working online.
8. Most Syrians have enough free time to learn and start working online. It is not necessary for a person to leave his or her present job. It is possible to stay at his or her current job while simultaneously start learning and working online.
9. Low wages in the start-up phase due to high competition with no income is a major challenge facing online workers.
10. The majority of Syrians have access to Internet. Electricity is available to more than two-thirds of them for 6 to 10 hours per day, which is sufficient to working online.
11. The Syrians, living in northern Syria, face the problem of money transfers due to the absence of banks. However, the Turkish government opened branches of the PPT bank in these areas, which solves the problem. Additionally, more than half of Syrians have relatives and friends who have accounts abroad and are willing to help them receive wages and transfer them through traditional money transfer systems.
12. Working online is a great opportunity for people with special needs, who are increasing in percentage as a result of the Syrian war. Working online provides job opportunities without the need for mobility or physical effort.

13. More than half of the Syrians have a good level of English, so, they can deal with foreign platforms.
14. In terms of skills demanded for working online, programming comes first, followed by graphic design and design of mobile phone applications, then websites design. On the other hand, we find that the skills that most Syrians have and are relevant to working online are education, data entry, writing articles, consulting services and data analysis. Therefore, training on the most needed skills is one of the most important needs of Syrians to increase their chances of employment.
15. In addition to specialized training, e-marketing training is the most important training for Syrians, followed by dealing with online platforms.

Recommendations

To Humanitarian Organizations Interested in Syrians Employment

1. Work on preparing people, that have the needed skills for working online, by providing them with what they need in terms of equipment and guidance to start working online as soon as possible.
2. Working on increasing awareness about working online among the Syrians and emphasis on their abilities to start working. For example, in 2017, online workers constituted 35% of the workforce in the United States of America, and there is no doubt that increasing awareness among Syrians about working online and its methods will help them to think about how to use and develop their skills so they can take advantage of online jobs.
3. Preparing and publishing educational guidebooks about working online, its platforms, and e-marketing. It is recommended that these guidebooks contain written materials to be published as hard copies or electronically, and videos to be published online to reach the largest number of Syrians, in addition to direct electronic training.
4. Focus on empowering the most vulnerable groups to start working online. It is a real opportunity that suits their situation as working online is not connected to a particular place and does not require great effort. Therefore, it is more suitable for women and people with special needs. However, it is important to keep in mind the special equipment needed by these categories.
5. Launch training packages that enable Syrians for working online. It is recommended that the trainings include the basic principles of e-marketing, dealing with online platforms, using social media, e-mail and office applications, as well as specialized training in the most demanded fields for working online while considering the skills and experiences that Syrians have. Following the training, there should be follow up, guidelines and orientation for the trainees.
6. Provide financial support to people who are ready for working online to overcome the challenges faced during the start-up phase, so they can cover their living expenses until the worker earns a suitable wage. It is recommended

that the period of financial support is not less than six months, and not less than 200\$ per month.

7. Establishing centers equipped with the necessary equipment to working online to enable qualified people to work at them, with the possibility of providing means of transportation to and from those centers for people with special needs. It is also recommended that these centers contain computers, electricity, internet and cameras. Additionally, there should be an experienced specialist who manages the center to guide people that working online and to help them to overcome the challenges they face.
8. Launch an electronic platform to train Syrians to working online, offering online training programs, manuals and educational videos, as well as an indication of the most important jobs the Syrians can perform, with supervisors following the workers online and providing them with the appropriate guidance to improve their success chances.

To Syrians Interested in Online Working

1. Find more about working online, its most popular platforms and methods of raising the feedback in these platforms.
2. Be patient in the first stage (especially the first six months). Try to provide your services with any given wages so you raise your evaluation and increase the salary, even if some services are provided voluntarily.
3. Rely on social networking sites to a great extent as they are the most used platform in our time, so you can create accounts on these sites and use it to expand the network of friends, and display your services and a sample of your work.
4. Improve your English, and the skills of writing e-mails and CVs. This helps improve your communication with potential customers.
5. Constantly develop your skills in your domain and focus on the most demanded aspects of your domain to increase the quality of services you provide and thus increase your evaluation and the wages you earn.
6. For those working in traditional business, it is advisable to continue your current work while starting on marketing your services online until you reach a good and stable income from working online.
7. Do not rely on a single working platform. It is better to diversify the platforms between Arabic and English, and between the online work platforms and the social networking sites.
8. Look for platforms specialized in your domain. There are platforms for designing services, audio recording platforms, and programming platforms. In addition, there are women-only platforms.
9. Open an official bank account in the branches of banks opened at northern Syria, namely the PTT Bank and Ziraat Bankasi Bank.
10. Search for specialists in working online business and e-marketing, and consult them about the obstacles you might face.

Methodology

Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Increase the employment of Syrians in working online, by monitoring the available experiences that fit this type of work.
2. Identify the obstacles faced by Syrians who want to start working online and suggest the appropriate solutions to overcome them.
3. Identify the weaknesses of Syrians who wish to work online and recommend the projects that can help them overcome the weaknesses.
4. Propose projects that could be more appropriate for the Syrian situation, and sharing them with the humanitarian organizations that are interested in recruiting the Syrians.

Main Topics

1. Experiences available among Syrians which qualify them to working online.
2. Describe the situation of Syrians who are currently working online.
3. Obstacles and challenges that faces working online.
4. Growth expectations for working online in Syria.
5. The recommended projects for preparing the Syrians for working online.

Data Sources

1. Syrian individuals: they were interviewed in order to monitor their competencies for working online, their awareness of the concept of working online, knowledge of the equipment they have for this type of work, the challenges they face due to their presence in Syria and the poor services due to damage to the infrastructures, and finally to monitor the extent of their willingness and interest in learning about working online.
2. Syrians working online: to present their stories as a case study about Syrians working online: how they started their work, the amounts they earn, the challenges they face, and their needs to improve their business.
3. Online business consultants: to obtain more in-depth information about working online, what they recommend for the Syrian situation, and what is recommended to deal with the challenges facing Syrians in online work, in addition to determining the types of training that Syrians need to enable them to start working.
4. Secondary data: to review any researches conducted about working online, what are the most requested services, how the online platforms function, and how to manage money transfers, and to view the most important online platforms locally and globally.

Scope

The study was conducted in January 2018 and covered three governorates: Idlib, Aleppo and Daraa. Two main regions were selected in each governorate, as shown in the following table:

Governorate	First district	Second district
Idlib	Idleb city	Silqeen
Aleppo	Jarablus	I'zaz
Daraa	Nawa	Tafas

Sampling Method

A random sample of individuals in the targeted areas was selected. /302/ male and female members were interviewed. A special questionnaire that include closed questions was distributed. The focus was on people aged 18 to 40 years without requiring a specific level of education for the targeted people. Twelve online workers in these areas were interviewed by conducting in-depth interviews with them. Besides, two consultants in working online and E-marketing were interviewed. They were asked open-ended questions based on sub-questions that helped guide interviews.

Limitations

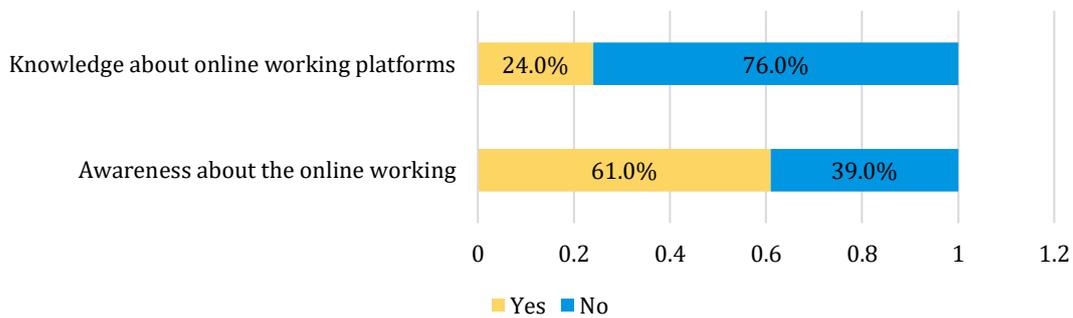
- The study was conducted in the cities and did not include the rural areas, which weakens the representation of the study for the entire categories of Syrian society.
- The rapid change in Syrian situation may affect the effectiveness of the proposed projects for the study. Therefore, a technical review for these projects is recommended at the design stage to make sure that they are suitable for the situation then.

The Syrians ability to work online

Awareness about the Online Working

Almost two-thirds of Syrians have an awareness of the concept of working online, which is the first element of their potential for working online. Starting any job requires at the beginning an awareness of the concept of the job. There are many sources that have helped increasing the awareness of Syrians of the concept of working online. The most important source is that there are many Syrians who have friendships or acquaintances with people who have a real experience of working online in Syria, or young people who have been forced to emigrate as a result of the war, especially to Turkey and Europe where working online is wide spread.

Awareness and knowledge about the online working



In addition, many articles about working online have been published on search engines or social networking pages, encouraging the Syrians who have read these articles to search for more information and to watch many YouTube videos that define the concept working online.

However, it is noted that the sources that talk about working online, especially Arabic ones, provide only introductory information without offering training about online platforms or providing practical tools. Therefore, we find that although a high percentage of people are aware of the concept of working online, but the knowledge of the methods used in working online is lower. Only about a quarter of the Syrians have knowledge of how to handle online platforms. However, according to the experts, the Syrians can be trained on how to work on these platforms within a period that does not exceed three months.

The rate of knowledge about the means financial transfer is 32%, although it is more likely to use traditional money transfer systems (Hawala), which often do not suit companies because they do not enable them to provide official invoices for wages paid. It is expected that more reliance will be placed on bank transfers as a result of the Turkish government's intention to open banking branches inside Syria, and branches of the PTT Bank have already been opened in the regions of Jarablus, Al-Bab and I'zaz.

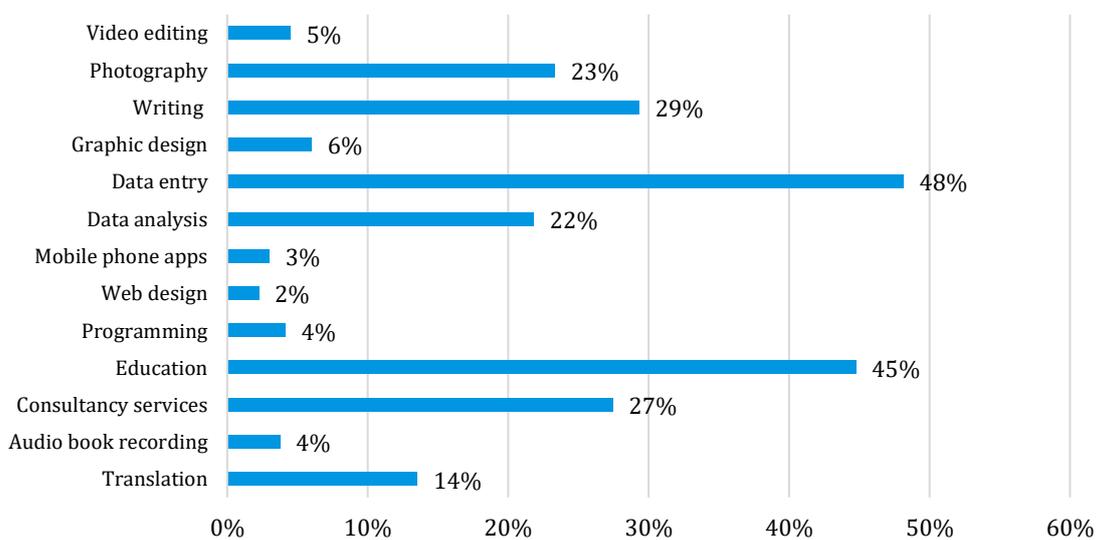
Syrian Capabilities for Online Working

Two thirds of the Syrians have skills that can be utilized for working online. These skills were acquired through various ways, some through the academic studies and some accumulated from previous work. There is a high percentage of Syrians who graduated from universities and technical institutes. 44% have a degree in engineering, or arts and humanities, while 19 % are colleagues’ graduates. Therefore, these people can benefit from the skills they build up during their academic studies for working online. For example, the graduates of IT engineering have a variety of skills including programming, designing websites and smart phone applications. Graduates of civil engineering or architecture have the ability to use designing programs. Graduates of English or French literature departments can work in translation. And other graduates of technical institutes can offer teaching courses, writing content or providing consultancy services, all of which are on demand in the online labor market.

However, having an academic degree or a level of education is not a prerequisite to start working online. This is the opinion of experts as the majority of the required skills for working online can be mastered through practical experience or training courses and there are many people able to get those skills through self-education by watching training materials that are published online.

The same is applicable for the English language, since mastering it is not a requirement for working online for Syrians, especially there are many Arabic platforms as Khamsat, Mustaqel and Bahr platforms. But having an additional language besides Arabic, especially English, as the world's language, can open wider horizons for working online and increase the demand for their services. They can meet the demands of the customers from around the world. Besides, most companies or institutions require proficiency in English for those wishing to work with them. From this perspective, more than a third of the Syrians have a good knowledge of English.

Syrian capabilities for online working



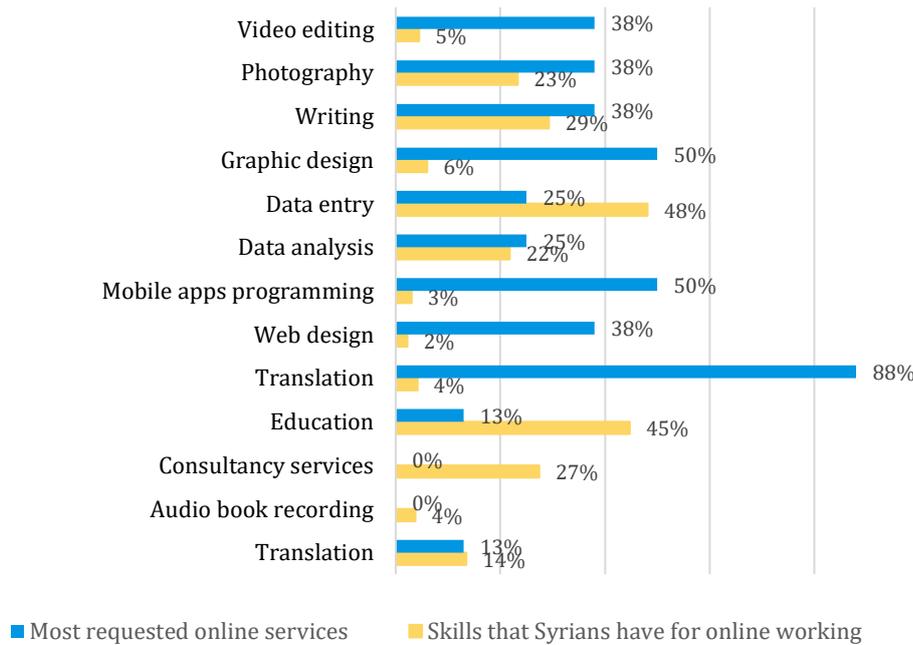
One of the skills that can increase the chances of Syrians to work online is being familiar with the use of MS OFFICE programs. Three quarters of Syrians have good experience in using these Applications, which can be used in many of the advertised online jobs such as data entry and analysis, writing reports, articles and presentations. In addition, they have experience with smart phone applications such as Skype, WhatsApp, and the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. 81% of the Syrians use these applications on daily basis. This is useful in communicating with customers and following up on the offers of businesses. Also, these skills can be used for self-marketing through uploading CVs and viewing the services it offers which increases the chances of getting an online job.

More than a third of Syrians between the ages of 18 and 40 have the ability to start working online almost immediately if they are adequately supported by providing the necessary equipment to work online, or the financial support, or the guidance and follow-up services. Those people have a university degree as well as other skills that can be utilized for working online. The percentage of males that are ready to start working online is 39%, the percentage of ready females is 23%, while 87% are willing to learn online.

Online Services Provided by Syrians

The Syrians offer many online services, mainly writing articles and photography. In contrast, there are many areas where Syrians can utilize their skills more. The demand for programming is very high at 88%, while the Syrians working online who provide this service do not exceed 13%. Same thing applies to websites design, graphic design and data analysis as the required services outweigh the services provided by Syrians. Therefore, it is possible to work on increasing the skills of Syrians in these areas and to expand the range of the services provided by them. There are many required services that the Syrians have not utilized their skills at them yet, and this is an important opportunity. For example, the demand for designing smart phone applications is remarkably high, but there are no services provided by Syrians in this field. This applies also to data entry as there is a good demand in the labor market. Nearly half of the Syrians have the skill of data entry, but there is no utilization of their skills in this field. May be if the skilled Syrian followed-up, provided guidance and raised awareness among the Syrians about the most important services on demand for working online, they can be integrated directly in the labor market. The following figure shows the required services compared to the services provided by the Syrians:

Services offered by Syrians online workers

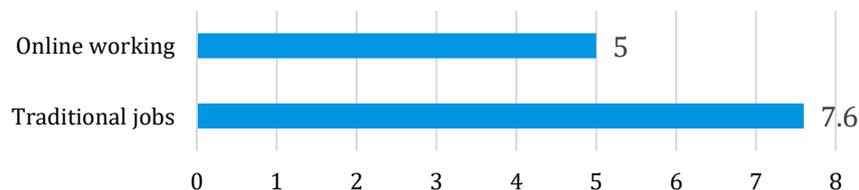


Females Online Working

Advantages of the online working

Working online can be considered a one of the best jobs for females. They can work at home, thus overcome the difficulties of security conditions and social obstacles. Females working online are not restricted by specific working hours, this enables women to set their own schedules and coordinate between work and housework. Besides, working online saves time as the average number of working hours is 5 hours a day, while the average working hours in traditional jobs is 8 hours.

Average of working hours

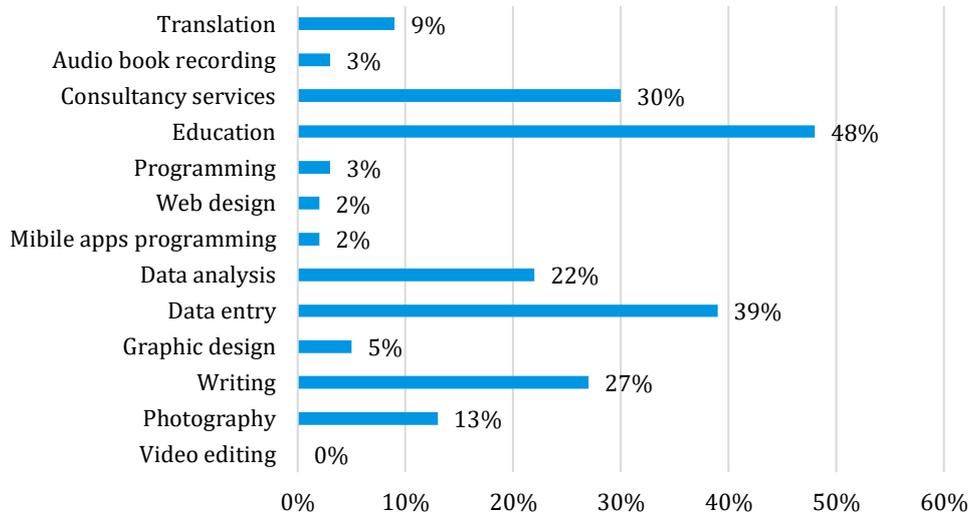


Women's Capabilities for the Online Working

More than half of Syrian females are aware of the concept of working online, but their knowledge of work skills is significantly low. Only 13% of them are aware of working online platforms, while only 8% of them are aware of the styles of contracts. On the other hand, women have many qualifications and abilities to work online. In particular, Syrian women have the proper education with 40% of the females have graduated from university with degrees in engineering, humanities science and literature. They can utilize the skills they accumulated during their studies in the fields of education,

design and translation, which are the best fields for online work for women, according to the experts.

Female skills for online working



Academic experience is followed by the fact that a high rate of females up to two-thirds of them have good skills in using MS OFFICE applications, which can be utilized for data entry, analysis, writing articles, reports and presentations. Besides, more than third of the females have an acceptable or good level in English, which increases the chances of getting a job not only through Arab platforms but through global platforms such as UPWORK and Freelancer, which offer higher wages compared to Arabic platforms. Females can also benefit from using social media such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn in self-marketing as nearly 80% of women use it on daily basis.

Nearly a quarter of Syrian females, between the ages of 18 and 40 years, are almost ready to start working online as they have the skills that qualify them to work.

An opportunity for the people with disabilities

The war in Syria has played a major role in increasing the disability rates. Eight years of fighting and the use of all types of weapons including the internationally prohibited weapons, the cluster weapons and landmines, have led to a significant raise in disability rates. A report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), in 2017, says that 2.8 million Syrians suffer from permanent disability due to the war. These people are having difficulty in getting a source of income for themselves and their families to cover their monthly expenses due to their disability and inability to resume the traditional works that usually requires a physical effort and mobility. Additionally, many business owners refuse to hire people with disabilities and there is a lack of an adequate attention to them by the humanitarian organizations.

In the light of the above, it can be said that working online is a great opportunity for people with disabilities. They can get a job which is suitable for their situation, and

earn a monthly income that covers their living expenses, as it does not require a physical effort. It is possible to work from home without having to move to and from work. Many people with disabilities already have skills that enable them to provide online services. Most of them were not disabled before and were able to finish their university studies or develop other skills during their previous work. Therefore, it is possible to prepare people with disabilities for work by providing the required training starting with learning how to deal with working online platforms and e-marketing, and a specialized training in one of the required skills such as programming or design. Experts said that these trainings can be provided within three months. It is crucial to provide means of transportation for people with disabilities to and from training centers.

The Syrians Opportunities

The Monthly Income

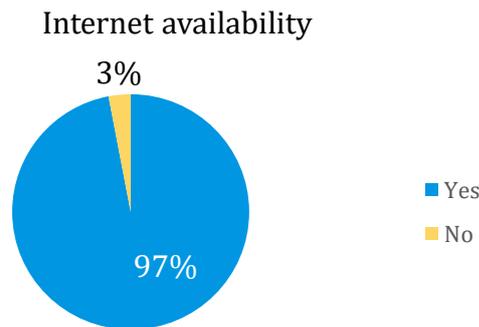
Syrian sources of income vary between working as employees in institutions, government departments, humanitarian organizations or private companies, followed by manual and agricultural work. Syrians work 7 to 8 hours a day to earn an average income of 100 \$ to 150 \$ a month, while by working online, you can earn between 300 \$ and 500 \$ per month in the first nine months of online work if you have good experience using online platforms and self-marketing. Knowing that



the demand on their services in the first three months might be low, so, workers must be financially supported to help them overcome this stage. As for the expected income after nine months of starting work, it will probably exceed 500 \$ per month, therefore, working online can provide the Syrians with an appropriate income to cover their monthly expenses, which are estimated to be 150 \$ per month. The Syrians can work online without the need to leave their current work as the average hours of work online does not exceed 5 hours a day, so they can start working online during their spare time and earn an additional income.

Availability of the Requirements

The Internet, electricity and computers are among the most important work requirements for working online. It was found that many Syrians have these requirements. 97 % of Syrians, a high percentage, have access to the Internet either through satellite Internet networks spread in most Syrian regions or through DSL servers which are the most suitable option due to the low costs. As for the availability of computers, we find that nearly half of Syrians have computers. 84% of them have modern mobile devices that can be used for electronic communication. In addition, around one quarter of Syrians have the required equipment for their fields of work, such as professional cameras for those who work in media or photography.



More than three-quarters of the Syrians have electricity for more than six hours per day either from the large generators that feed the neighborhoods and household batteries, or through the use of solar energy panels for long enough to complete daily online work. As noted above, the average daily time for working online is 5 hours.

The Arabic online jobs platforms are an important opportunity for Syrians who are not familiar with English and who wish to start working online. There are many of these platforms such as Khamsat, Mustaqel, Rawaq and Bahr. The Syrians can use these platforms to start their work directly in Arabic. More than a third of the Syrians have good skills in English, which increases the demand for their services and allows them to use the global platforms such as Freelancer, Upwork and Udemy. However, even those who are fluent in English need training and follow-up to learn the specialized terminology used in this field of work.

Regarding the financial transfers of wages earned from working online, we find that nearly half of the Syrians have friends or relatives abroad, who have bank accounts and are ready to assist in receiving wages and re-sending them through the Hawala systems available at most areas in Syria. Besides, the decision of the Turkish government to open branches of their banks inside Syria is the best solution to problems related to bank transfers, where Syrians can now open bank accounts and receive wages through these branches.

To conclude, there are many opportunities for Syrians to take advantage of. Around third of Syrian people have friends or know people who are already working online and can benefit from their experience and skills. The knowledge of Syrians about using

social networking sites is an important opportunity to present and market their services, and communicate with customers. 81% of Syrians use social networking sites on daily basis.

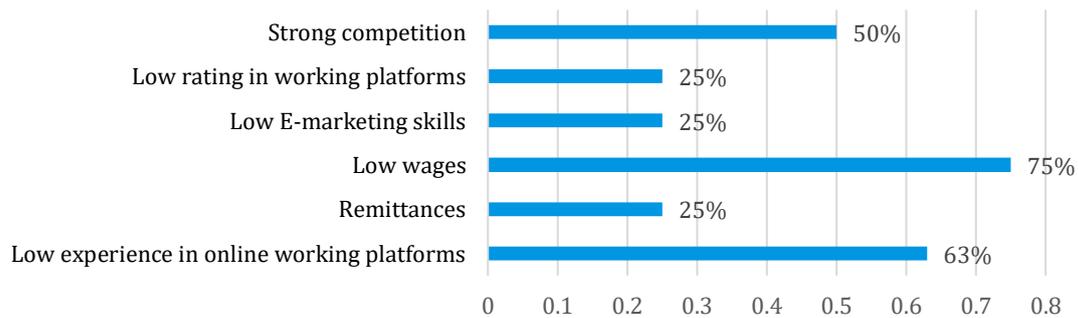
Challenges and obstacles

The majority of Syrians lack the knowledge about the ways to work online. This is the biggest challenge for them to offer online services. Two-thirds of Syrians have poor experience in dealing with work platforms and methods of transferring money to get paid for their online work. Besides, 81% do not have enough knowledge of styles of contracts.

The lack of required equipment to start work is another difficulty as less than a quarter of Syrians have the required equipment to work online at their specialization.

Low income in the start-up phase is also one of the biggest obstacles. As mentioned previously, the expected time to receive the first online service request is three months. The reason behind the length of time to secure the first contracts is the high competition due to the huge size of the services market for working online. We also find that the Syrians lack the experience in dealing with online platforms and in e-marketing skills. In addition, some Syrians do not have a good level of English, which deprives them of the opportunity to benefit from global platforms for working online. All that reduce the competition by Syrians in the job market.

Obstacles faces Syrians in online working



Many Syrians are facing problems related to money transfers due to the lack of banks in most areas in Syria. The branches of Turkish banks, opened inside Syria, covers only the areas of Jarablus, Al-Bab and l'zaz, and their surrounding areas. Syrians living in

other regions depend on friends and relatives who are outside Syria and have bank accounts. The wages are transferred to these banks, then transferred into Syria through the local Hawala offices, which causes high costs and fees of transfer.

Syrians’ Needs for the Online Working

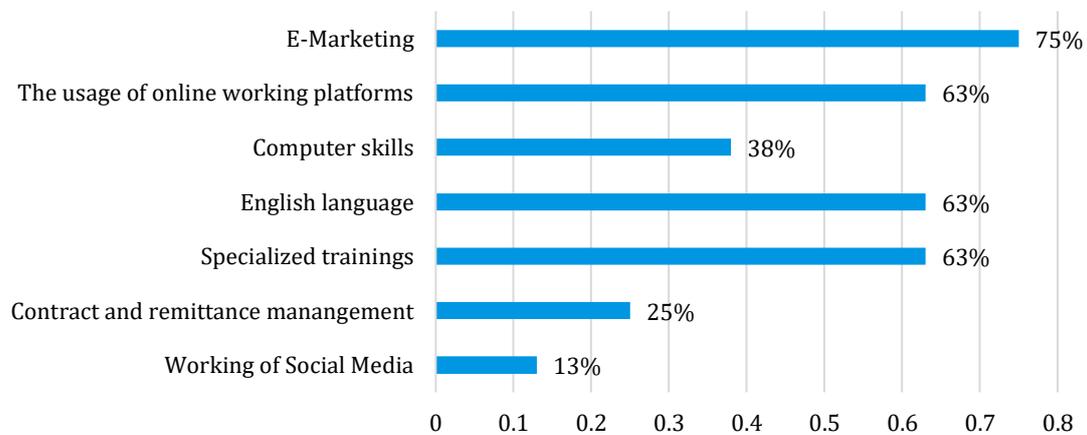
Based on all mentioned above, the challenges that face the Syrians to work online include in the first place the lack of the experience about the fundamentals of working online. Therefore, the first requirement for Syrians is the need to get the necessary trainings to enter this type of work, mainly about the use of platforms for working

online, e-marketing and self-marketing. Three-quarters of Syrians said that they need these trainings to be able to present their skills in a way that increases their chances of getting work. This is followed by the need to raise the Syrian expertise in online work methods such as dealing with its platforms, managing contracts and money transfers.

Specialized training in a certain field that suits working online is one of the most important needed trainings for Syrians. The experts pointed out that the most essential areas are designing, programming and content creation as there is large demand for these areas and the Syrians need to develop their skills at them to raise the quality of services they provide. Once again, the estimated duration of basic training is 3 months.

In addition to the trainings mentioned above, there are many complementary trainings that will open up greater horizons for online workers, including English language courses, which will help train the trainee to work on foreign platforms and increase the trainee’s ability to provide services to customers of different nationalities, as well as training on writing CVs and using Google Drive.

Syrians training needs for the online working



As for the most appropriate way to train the Syrians, most of them prefer direct training inside Syria within specialized centers, with the need to take into account holding special courses for females and to provide means of transport for people with disabilities to and from the training centers. There is no difference in the nature of the offered courses. They are the same for all the categories.

Other training methods suitable for Syrians include online training. However, the experts emphasized on the importance of the trainer to be in constant contact with trainees to provide advice and guidance during and after training.

It can be noted that educational videos and guides can be a useful tool for improving the skills of Syrians for working online. But according the experts, they are less effective than direct training and online training.

In terms of the requirements for online work requirements, three-quarters of the Syrians said that they needed computers, and experts suggested that those devices can be offered to those interested in working with the possibility of recovering their prices after a certain period. This is followed by the need for financial support to cover the monthly expenses during the first phase of the work and to provide the necessary specialized equipment in some areas, such as cameras for photographers and videographers, sound recording devices for electronic books recording and sound recording workers, and editing tools for video editing and graphic production.

Success stories

Despite the weakness of the culture of working online and being uncommon among the Syrians, we find many cases of Syrian people who managed to resume working and earn a good income to cover their needs and expenses of living. These cases include:

ALI who is a 28 years old young man from Idlib city. He studied architecture at the University of Aleppo. He is good at working on many programs used in design such as Photoshop, 3D Max and AutoCAD. Ali graduated from the University of Aleppo in 2015 and began to search for work which is relevant to his abilities and experiences, so he applied in vain for jobs with many humanitarian organizations. In terms of private work, there is no presence of engineering offices at the areas controlled by the non-government armed groups, known also as Free Syrian Army areas. There are no reconstruction activities in these areas.

Ali continued to look for a job for six months until he met a friend who came back from Turkey on Eid holiday. His friend, who has a degree in information engineering, told him that he is working online in the software field and advised him to start setting up his own online business using the Freelancer platform. Ali started to access the platform with the help of his friend and after he had knowledge of its use, he began to offer his services of engineering design.

At the start, someone asks for a specific engineering design, many designers send samples of their work, and then the person who asked for the design chooses the most appropriate design. Of course, this involves a great deal of competition and may lead to exploiting the online worker, who is in a weak position in terms of bargaining over wages. This is an obstacle for online workers over in addition to other obstacles faced by the Syrians in particular, namely the cut of electricity in the liberated areas, and the weakness of the Internet and its high prices. Both, electricity and the Internet, are crucial requirement for working online.

This situation lasted for 8 months, with a monthly income of 300-400 \$, until Ali was able to establish a network of relations with a number of clients in Turkey mainly, followed by some requests from the Arabian Gulf countries, and many of these customers started communicating with him directly through WhatsApp and asking for the designs they need.

To avoid the potential embezzlement that occur sometimes when working online, the work has been done in stages, where a payment of wages is sent through transfer agencies for each stage delivered.

After a year of working online, Ali was able to sign a contract with a Turkish company with a salary of 500 \$ per month. His good knowledge of English helped him to get this contract. He even began learning Turkish. In addition to this contract, he has other works that he could offer to people.

At the end of the conversation, Ali showed his full willingness to provide any assistance that could benefit Syrians seeking work or who wish to work online.

Mohammad

a Syrian young man, 28 years old from Deir al-Zour, graduated from the Faculty of Civil Engineering at the beginning of the Syrian revolution, he did not have the opportunity to work within his specialization, where he joined the Syrian revolution as a media reporter, seeking at first to document the demonstrations demanding freedom and dignity, at the beginning of military campaigns and bombardments, Mohammad worked to report the destruction of the Syrian cities and villages for many media channels, accepting risks to show the international community the truth of what is happening.

In one of his media coverage tours of the bombing, Mohammad suffered an injury resulted in the loss of his left arm and he was sent to Turkey for treatment and after his health became better, he decided to live in Turkey because he can't return to his work because of disability, and he started searching for work for a year, where he applied for jobs with many commercial companies and humanitarian organizations but in vain, which led him to develop his skills and expertise in the video industry and editing, seeking to start his own work.

In deed, he was able to use the Arabic-speaking platforms such as Khamsat and Mustaqel to start marketing himself, and he was able to offer many services to different parties .

However, the weak financial income was an obstacle when he started working, the total amount he could collect during the first six months was only 200 \$ per month, but this did not prevent him from working, and was able to sign a permanent contract with a company in addition to the temporary services provided to customers, his income after a year of online work is nearly 500 \$ and improving. The total fees he is getting today after more than two years from the beginning of his work is about 1500 \$ per month, during those 2 years, Mohammad managed to marry and provide a decent life for him and his family.

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