RAPID PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT IN SYRIA

**Thematic Assessment Report prepared by
ACU Information Management Unit**

November 2014

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SUMMARY

The protracted crisis in Syria has a severe impact on the schooling system throughout the country, with large numbers of Syrian children unable to access their right to education. According to the 2014 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), there are 3.9 million of people in need (age between 3 to 17 years old) within the education sector, including 1.1 million boys and girls which are out of school and an additional 1.26 million children are enrolled but do not attend or attend school irregularly. The overarching objective of the education sector response is to ensure the continuation of education for children who are still in school and to facilitate the return to education for those who have dropped out.

At the request of the Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Syrian Interim Government, the Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) conducted a rapid assessment of public schools in Syria in order to inform the education sector response. More specifically, the assessment aimed to collect information about school enrolment (academic year 2013-2014) by category, type of school, and school grade; reasons for dropouts; school staffing and remuneration; schools facilities in regards to the availability of teaching materials and classroom equipment; the level, type and sources of support received by public schools, as well as priority needs.

A total of 1,507 public schools in 62 sub-districts across 9 governorates were assessed in July 2014. Data collection was carried out through IMU's network of enumerators based at sub-district level in Syria. This assessment was funded by the ACU and included consultation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and humanitarian partners in the Education Sector Working Group. Key findings presented in further details in this report include:

- The rapid assessment identified a **low proportion (6%) of temporary schools**, which can be partly explained by the fact that a relatively **high proportion of regular public schools are still functioning** despite the duration and intensity of the ongoing crisis in Syria.

- About **one third (30%) of assessed public schools were not receiving any external support and their regular functioning costs were no longer covered** by the government in Syria. Among assessed public schools receiving support, 24% of schools whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria did not receive any other support. About one third (35%) out of the assessed public schools, whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria, also received external support.

- **Staff salaries comprised the largest part (61%) of support received**. A bit less than a third (28%) of assessed public schools received support in the form of stationery, and (11%) assessed public schools received other types of support, such as psycho-social assistance, meals, toys, and financial incentives for school staff.

- There is a **high level of enrolment in primary school**, which is compulsory, but a much lower level of students enrolled in lower secondary and upper secondary school, as fewer pupils pursue their education beyond primary schooling and instead start working in order to contribute to the livelihoods of their families.

- The **primary reason for students dropping out of school is the need to work in order to support their families**. At the time of the assessment, one third (34%) of key informants reported that students had left school in order to work. The two other main reasons reported by key informants for students to drop out of school were displacement (24%) and insecurity (20%).

- There is a fairly **balanced level of enrolment of male (51%) and female (49%) students** across school categories and all governorates, except in the sub-districts of Al Thawra in Ar Raqqa governorate and Tal Hamis in Al Hasakeh governorate, where the presence of armed groups may explain the lower level of school-aged girls enrolled in school. These two specific cases should be further investigated.

- A **large majority of official staff (87% - 24,440 staff members) continued working** in assessed public schools which also received support from volunteers (13% - 3,588). Among official staff, **a large proportion was reported as unpaid (80%)** indicating that a high proportion of school administration and teaching staff continued working while they were no longer receiving salaries.

- The reported **availability of books in assessed schools reached 48%**, but there are **significant differences between governorates and sub-districts.** In Idleb governorate, the availability of teaching books reduced to 0% in Darkosh sub-district, while on the other hand 100% of availability was reported in the Kafr Takharim sub-district. Similarly, in Ar-Raqqa governorate, the availability of teaching materials declined to 0% in Al-Thawrah sub-district, while it was reported at 81% in Karama sub-district.

- The **main reported needs for classroom equipment were student desks (49%)**, teacher chairs (21%), teacher tables (13%), boards (10%) and cabinets for educational materials (7%).

- The **highest reported need related to electricity were lamps (46%)**, followed by sockets and switches (37%), electrical switches (14%) and generators (3%). This indicates that generally public schools had access to a source of electricity during the past academic year but were lacking electric appliances notably for lighting.

- There was a **reported need for a total of 10.966 heaters** across all assessed schools. Considering data collection that took place over the month of July, it may be expected that this figure may be increased during the winter period. Concomitantly, assessed public schools reported a total of **22.171 windows/glass panels and 6208 doors** were needed in order to rehabilitate the current school facilities. Additionally, a large number of cement bags were reported by most schools as a priority need for the rehabilitation of school buildings.

- The **main reported needs related to water and sanitation were water taps (67%)**, followed by toilets (18%) and water tanks (15%).

With the rapidly approaching winter season, the state of school buildings and heating systems raises serious concerns for the well-being of children who will attend classes during the 2014-2015 academic year. It is crucial to ensure that public schools receive support in preparation for the winter in order to mitigate its negative impact on students.

This rapid assessment aimed to gauge the overall state of school buildings and rehabilitation needs, and not specifically the functioning of facilities already existing in schools, notably in relation to electricity, heating, water and sanitation. The findings presented in this report point to areas where more in-depth sector-specific assessments should be undertaken.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACU   Assistance Coordination Unit

IDP   Internally Displaced Person

IMU   Information Management Unit

INGO   International Non-Governmental Organisation

LC   Local Council

LNGO   Local Non-Governmental Organisation

MoE   Ministry of Education

SARC   Syrian Arab Red Crescent

SBF   Syrian Business Forum

SHARP   Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

Geographical Classifications

Governorate   Highest form of governance below the national level

District   Sub-division of a governorate in which government institutions operate

Sub-district   Sub-division of a district composed of towns and villages

Village   Lowest administrative unit

The **Information Management Unit (IMU)** aims to strengthen the decision-making capacity of aid actors responding to the Syrian crisis by collecting, processing, and sharing information on the humanitarian situation in Syria. To this aim, the IMU has setup and maintained a wide network of enumerators, which forms part of the Dynamic Monitoring (DYNAMO) system through which the IMU collects data which is not broadly available and difficult to access by international aid actors. IMU releases different types of information products including maps, daily situation reports, flash reports on specific issues, camp monitoring report, monthly reports (food price index), and thematic reports. For more information and to access IMU products, please visit: www.acu-sy.org. You can also write to us directly at: imu@acu-sy.org and call us: +90-342-22-010/77/88/99.

List of Tables, Figures and Maps

INTRODUCTION

As the Syrian crisis gets more protracted, the humanitarian situation throughout the country continues to worsen. An estimated 6.5 million people have been internally displaced within Syria and 9.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, 46% of them are children. The ongoing and high-intensity crisis severely undermines access to school for Syrian children. According to the 2014 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), there are 3.9 million of people in need (age between 3 to 17 years old) within the education sector, including 1.1 million boys and girls which are out of School and an additional 1.26 million children are enrolled but do not attend or attend school irregularly.

The overarching objective of the education sector response is to ensure the continuation of education for children who are still in school and to facilitate the return to education for those who have dropped out. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) leads the coordinated education sector response provided by a broad range of international non-governmental organisations (INGO) and local aid actors. In support of the education sector response, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the Interim Government requested the Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU)[1] to carry out an assessment on the situation of public schools in Syria.

The assessment carried out by IMU aims to inform the education sector response for the ongoing Syria crisis by collecting, analysing and sharing information at the sub-district level on public schools in Syria. The assessment aimed specifically to address gaps in the current information available about public schools, in particular about: school enrolment for the term 2013-2014 by grade; reasons for students to stop attending class ('drop-outs'); school staffing level and source of remuneration; student-teacher ratio by school; physical conditions of school infrastructures and equipment; availability of educational / teaching materials; support provided to schools and its source(s); priority assistance needs of schools.

For this assessment, IMU applied a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data, including: key informants interviews, direct field observations, and review of school registers and available secondary data from other previous assessments. In particular, IMU used data from its Dynamic Monitoring (DYNAMO) system. The assessment covered 1,507 public schools in 62 sub-districts across 9 governorates. The data collection phase started July 1, 2014 and was completed within one month. Data collection was carried out through IMU's network of enumerators based at sub-district level throughout Syria. In total, 93 enumerators contributed to this assessment. This assessment was funded by the ACU and included consultations with the MoE and education sector partners.

This report presents the key findings from the assessment, which are organised around three main sub-sections. The first section provides an overview of public schools and support received. The second section explores school attendance and reasons for dropouts. The third part analyses school staffing and facilities. Based on the key findings, IMU developed a list of priority interventions which are included in the conclusion of the report.

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[1] The ACU website is available at: http://www.acu-sy.org/HomeEn/

METHODOLOGY

This section provides an overview of the methodology designed and implemented by the IMU for the rapid public school assessment. The overall approach applied for the assessment combines quantitative and qualitative methods. More specifically, the assessment included: 1) key informants interviews, 2) direct field observations, and 3) review of school registers and other documents. This section presents in details the assessment sample and sampling method, the assessment tools; the data collection process; subsequent data management and analysis; and the limitations thereof.

ASSESSMENT SAMPLE

The assessment aimed to cover all public schools which are still functioning in Syria. However, the ongoing high-intensity protracted conflict limited the scope of data collection. Nonetheless, the assessment sample included 1,507 public schools located in 62 sub-districts in nine governorates: Aleppo, Al Hasakeh, Ar Raqa, Deir ez Zor, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Lattakia, and Rural Damascus. Only one public school could be assessed in Damascus governorate, thus this governorate was subsequently removed from the assessment sample. The detailed number of assessed public schools in each governorate is provided in the table included as annex 1 of this report.

Table 1: Assessment sample

Governorate	Sub-district	# assessed public schools
Al-Hasakeh	9	414
Aleppo	18	384
Ar-Raqqa	4	153
Deir-ez-Zor	7	209
Hama	3	36
Homs	2	21
Idleb	10	168
Lattakia	2	20
Rural Damascus	7	102
Total	62	1,507

It should be noted that the assessment sample did not include private schools, based on consultations with the MoE of the Interim Government who requested to specifically focus the assessment on public schools. Within the overall educational system in Syria, public schools entirely rely on government funding and support in regards to their staffing, teaching materials, classroom equipment and the maintenance of school facilities. 154 private schools were identified in the last Dynamic Monitoring (DYNAMO) report, out of which 87 were assessed as still functioning. Private schools have a total capacity of 72,470 students, which constitutes 6% of the total schools capacity.

Additionally, the assessment sample did not include schools which were no longer functioning, thus only public schools identified as running during the academic year 2013-2014 have been assessed. According to the latest DYNAMO data, 58% of assessed public schools (3,318) were still functioning.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

For the purpose of this assessment, IMU designed a structured questionnaire, which was developed in two phases. First, IMU produced an initial draft of the questionnaire covering a broad range of issues related to the status and needs of public schools in Syria. The draft questionnaire was reviewed together with the MoE of the Interim Government. Second, IMU elaborated the final questionnaire, notably by including questions which had been prioritised by partners during the consultation process.

The questionnaire was administrated by enumerators during key informant interviews with school principals. To complement key informant interviews, data was also collected through direct field observations by enumerators and the review of school records such as the register of students attending school in each grade.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection phase started July 1, 2014 and was completed within one month. Data collection was carried out through IMU's network of enumerators based at sub-district level throughout Syria. In total, 93 enumerators contributed to this assessment. These enumerators have been recruited by IMU based on specific criteria such as their level of education, the web of their social relationships, notably with local councils and other key sources of information, as well as their ability to work under pressure and to communicate in an efficient manner.

Enumerators selected by IMU have an extensive knowledge of the sub-district in which they are based. For instance, they knew or could quickly get the contact of each school headmaster in the sub-district. Enumerators directly went to each school to administer the questionnaire to the principal of the school. The questionnaire was directly filled in Google forms. As part of the interview, the enumerators reviewed the school registers and other documents together with the school principle. This review allowed to gather detailed information such as number of students by grade. After completing the interview with the school principals, enumerators visited school facilities to directly observe the status of infrastructures and equipment.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

IMU Data Management Officer received the collected data in Excel format and proceeded with data cleaning and validation. In particular, all sub-districts were checked to verify that these were included in the correct governorates, and eventual data errors were addressed.

Upon consolidation of the collected data, the IMU data analysis team proceeded with data visualisation by identifying the required tables, graphs, and maps which will feed into the analysis of assessment findings. Data visualisation was conducted using MS Excel program. An IMU GIS officer produced the maps using Arc GIS software. Additional maps can be produced by IMU upon request by partners.

The consolidated dataset served as a basis for the statistical analysis related to each issue covered by assessment. Further in-depth analysis of specific variables was conducted to elaborate the key findings presented in this report. Data analysis shaped the structure of the report and informed the development of the priority interventions outlined in the conclusion.

IMU Reporting Officers produced a first draft of the report and submitted it for review by a close group of partners within the education sector. The feedback from partners aimed to help refining the analysis and recommended priority interventions. IMU will actively disseminate the findings through the release of the final report and presentations with relevant stakeholders.

LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations have been identified during the assessment and are outlined below.

- While the direct presence of IMU enumerators at sub-district level facilitated their access to functioning public schools, the prevailing high-level of insecurity in some areas limited their ability to carry out the assessment.

- IMU enumerators faced difficulties in getting information from some school staff members who were reluctant to participate in the assessment due to the fact that they are still being remunerated by the government. Where possible and appropriate, IMU enumerators identify alternative sources to collect information.

- Qualitative information gathered by enumerators through targeted interviews and direct observations is very useful for the analysis presented in this report, but it is not without limitations. To mitigate data errors, IMU triangulated the data collected for this assessment with the quantitative data collected through the Dynamic Monitoring (DYNAMO) system. Further, IMU reviewed relevant secondary data available for different sources, notably from aid actors operational in the education sector.

- In order to avoid disturbing the usual preparations taking place in each school for the upcoming academic year, it was decided that data collection should take place over the summer break, in July. For this reason, the figures for the number of students registered by grade reflect school enrolment for the past academic year (2013-2014). It is expected that these figures will change but the analysis based on these figures and presented in this report remains relevant for the ongoing humanitarian response in Syria.

Map 1: Governorates, districts, and sub-districts covered in schools assessment (2013-2014)
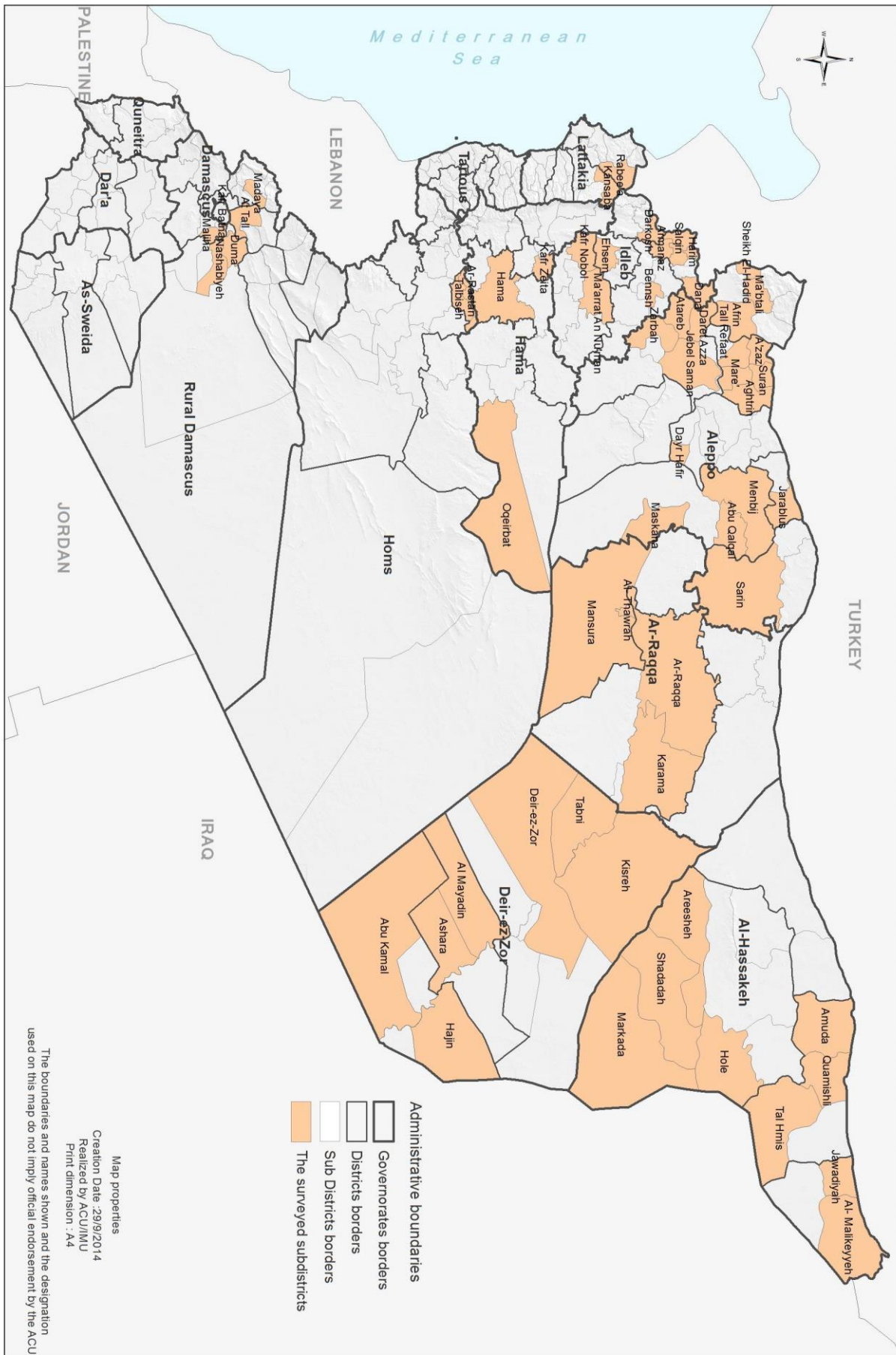
KEY FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings from the assessment, which are structured into three sub-sections. The section opens with an overview of assessed public schools and the support they received, followed by findings related to school enrolment and reasons for students dropping out of school. The third sub-section explores the current level of school staffing and the status of school facilities.

1. OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SUPPORT RECEIVED

Through the assessment, data was collected on the categories, types, of public schools which were functioning during the academic year 2013-2014 in Syria, as well as on the source and type of support received by these schools.

1.1   Categories of assessed public schools

The education system in Syria comprises three categories of schools: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools. Primary schools comprise students from grade 1 to 6; lower secondary schools comprise students from grade 7 to 9; and upper secondary schools comprise students from grade 10 to 12. The assessment covered a majority of primary schools (56% - 1,106 schools), and about one third of assessed public schools (34% - 616 schools) were lower secondary schools. It should be noted that some schools comprise two or all three education levels, from primary to upper secondary school. For the purpose of data analysis, combined primary/lower secondary schools as well as primary/lower secondary/upper secondary schools were included as two or three units respectively.

The high number of assessed public primary schools is related to the fact that primary education is compulsory for all children in Syria (from grade1 to grade 9). Consequently, this component of the Syrian educational system is better established across the country than for secondary and tertiary levels of education. Primary education constitutes the entry point for children into the educational system, thus findings related to school attendance, staffing and facilities of primary schools have direct implications on the other higher schooling levels.

Figure 1 Overall proportion of assessed public schools by school category
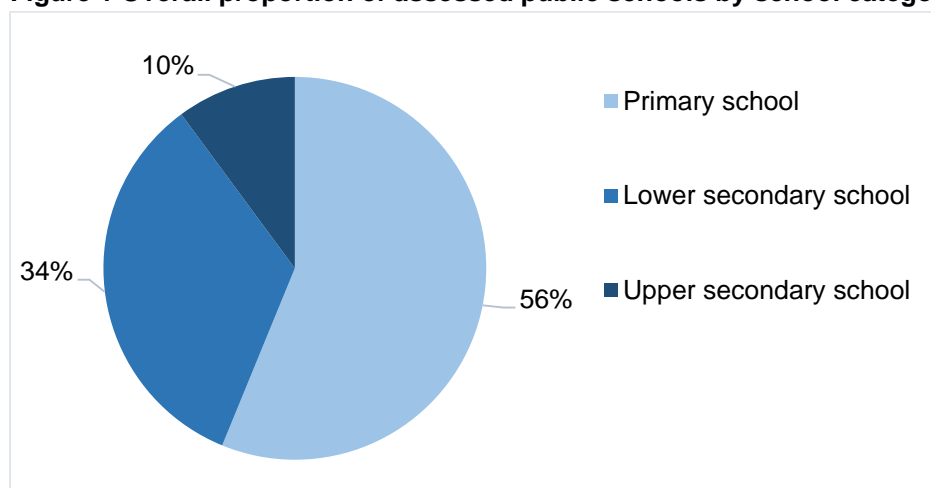
Table 2: Assessed public schools by school category by governorate

	Aleppo	Al-Hasakeh	Deir-ez-Zor	Idleb	Ar-Raqqa	Rural Damascus	Hama	Homs	Lattakia	Total
Primary school	298	324	156	114	85	66	27	16	20	**1,106**
Lower secondary school	177	166	68	79	61	36	14	7	8	**616**
Upper secondary school	51	39	29	25	28	20	3	4	0	**199**

It should be noted that the table below indicates a total number of 1921 schools which is higher than the sample of functioning public schools covered by the assessment (1507 schools). This is due to the fact that some schools comprise several educational levels (e.g. combine primary and secondary schools; or secondary and upper secondary schools; or schools comprising all three categories) and can therefore be counter in several categories.

1.2   Types of assessed public schools

The assessment covered two types of schools: regular schools which were functioning before the crisis, and temporary schools which have been set-up as a result of the impact on the education system of the ongoing crisis in Syria. The assessment covered only 6% (83 schools) temporary public schools out of the total number of assessed schools. The limited number of these schools (in spite of its importance and the need for them) is due to the lack of staff (cadres volunteer) and acute shortage of books, stationery and educational equipment.

Figure 2: Overall proportion of assessed public schools by school type
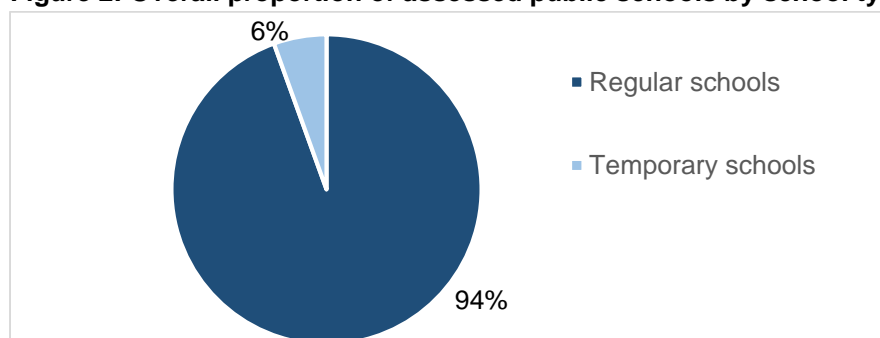
The low proportion of assessed temporary public schools can be partly explained by the fact that despite the duration and intensity of the ongoing crisis in Syria a relatively high proportion of schools is still functioning. As illustrated in the table below (based on the latest DYNAMO data), the majority of schools are still functioning across governorates. The lowest proportion of functioning schools was found in Homs (35%) and Lattakia (35%) governorates.

Nonetheless, the low proportion of temporary public schools covered by this assessment will need to be further investigated to gather additional information on the status of these schools and their needs in terms of teaching materials and equipment.

The proportion of regular and temporary assessed public schools varied across the assessed governorates. The assessment highlighted a higher number of temporary public schools in the Al Hasakeh governorate where the majority (50%) of this type of school were assessed, and in particular in 62 sub-districts, which comprised 1,507 of assessed temporary public schools.

Table 3: Number and percentage of functioning and non-functioning public schools

Governorate	Total # of schools	# of functioning schools	# of non-functioning schools	% of functioning schools	Capacity (# students)
Aleppo	1227	721	506	58.76%	288,800
Al-Hasakeh	739	556	183	75.24%	94,150
Ar-Raqqa	971	401	570	41.30%	123,560
Damascus	28	11	17	39.29%	2,700
Deir-ez-Zor	816	539	277	66.05%	235,425
Hama	543	364	179	67.03%	114,000
Homs	325	113	212	34.77%	48,000
Idleb	541	310	231	57.30%	103,700
Lattakia	59	21	38	35.59%	600
Rural Damascus	445	261	184	58.65%	167,990
Tartous	21	21	0	100.00%	13,500
Total	**5715**	**3318**	**2397**	**58.06%**	**119,2425**

While there is still a relatively high proportion (75%) of regular public schools functioning in Al Hasakeh governorate[2], the higher number of temporary schools assessed in this governorate can be explained by the large influx of displaced population towards Al Hasakeh. According, to the latest DYNAMO data, 130,000 IDPs have moved to Al Hasakeh.

Table 4: Assessed public schools by type by governorate

	Al-Hasakeh	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-ez-Zor	Hama	Homs	Idleb	Lattakia	Rural Damascus	Total
Regular school	372	378	152	200	36	14	160	15	97	**1,424**
Temporary school	42	6	1	9		7	8	5	5	**83**
Total	**414**	**384**	**153**	**209**	**36**	**21**	**168**	**20**	**102**	**1,507**

1.3   Functioning costs and support received

As part of the assessment, data was collected on the number of schools whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria, as well as the source and type of external support they received. Overall, about one third (30%) of assessed public schools were not receiving any external support and their regular functioning costs were no longer covered by the government in Syria.

Among assessed public schools receiving support, 24% of schools whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria did not receive any other support. About one third (35%) out of the assessed public schools, whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria, also received external support. A low proportion (11%) of assessed public schools received external support, while their functioning costs were no longer covered by the government in Syria.

Although the functioning costs of a number of public schools may still be covered by the government in Syria, it should be noted that additional costs may have resulted from an increase in the number of students attending schools in some sub-districts where IDPs have settled.

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[2] Based on the latest DYNAMO data, 556 out of 739 regular public schools were still functioning within Al Hasakeh governorate. DYNAMO report vol. 3 available at: http://www.acu-sy.org/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/Audios/3f32c1d7-d11d-4e0d-9fd4-3de3bc4b001f.pdf

Further, the damage caused by the ongoing fighting in some areas is not part of the functioning costs usually covered by the government in Syria and thus requires additional funds and support.

Figure 3: Overall proportion of assessed public shools receiving support / sources of support received
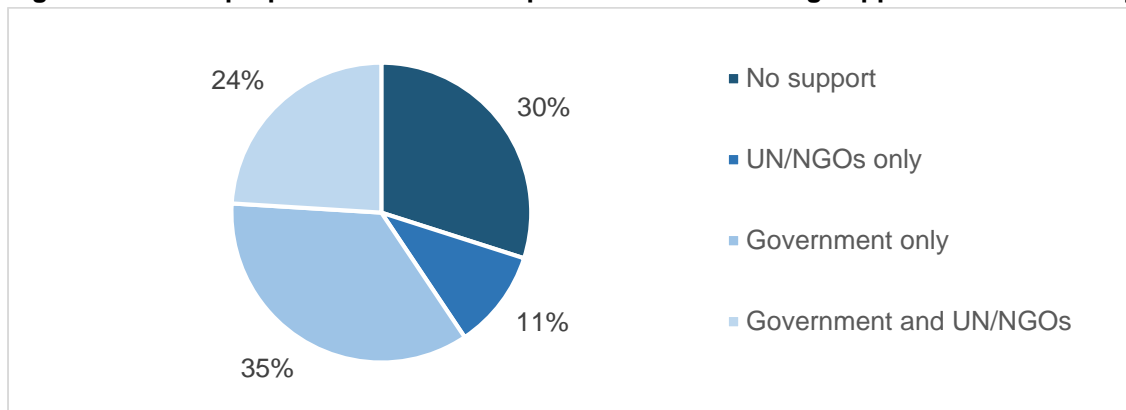
There are significant differences across governorates in regards to external support received and functioning costs being covered by the government in Syria or not.

The highest proportion of assessed public schools whose functioning costs were no longer covered by the government in Syria and not receiving any external support were found in Aleppo governorate (61% - 234 out of 384 assessed schools) and Lattakia governorate (60% - 12 out of 20 assessed schools). In Lattakia governorate, the functioning costs were no longer covered by the government in Syria in all assessed public schools, which means that all schools were relying on external support to continue operating.

The highest proportion of assessed public schools whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria and not receiving external support were found in Homs governorate (all 21 assessed schools but one), Hama governorate (89% - 32 out 36 assessed schools) and Idleb governorate (78% - 131 out of 168 assessed schools). In Hama and Homs governorates, only one assessed public school in Homs received external support.

The highest proportion of assessed public schools whose functioning costs were no longer covered by the government in Syria but receiving external support were found in Lattakia governorate (40% - 8 out of 20 assessed schools) and Ar Raqqa governorate (33% - 51 out 153 assessed schools).

The highest proportion of assessed public schools whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria and also receiving external support were found in Rural Damascus governorate (51% - 52 out of 102 assessed schools); Al Hasakeh governorate (49% - 205 out of 414 assessed schools); and Ar Raqqa governorate (34% - 52 out of 153 assessed schools).

The high proportion of assessed public schools receiving external support in the govenorates Al Hasakeh, Ar Raqqa and Rural Damascus can be partly explained by the current geographic coverage of the relief response in Syria which is significantly determined by the level of humanitarian access.

Figure 4: Assessed public shools receiving support and sources of support by governorate
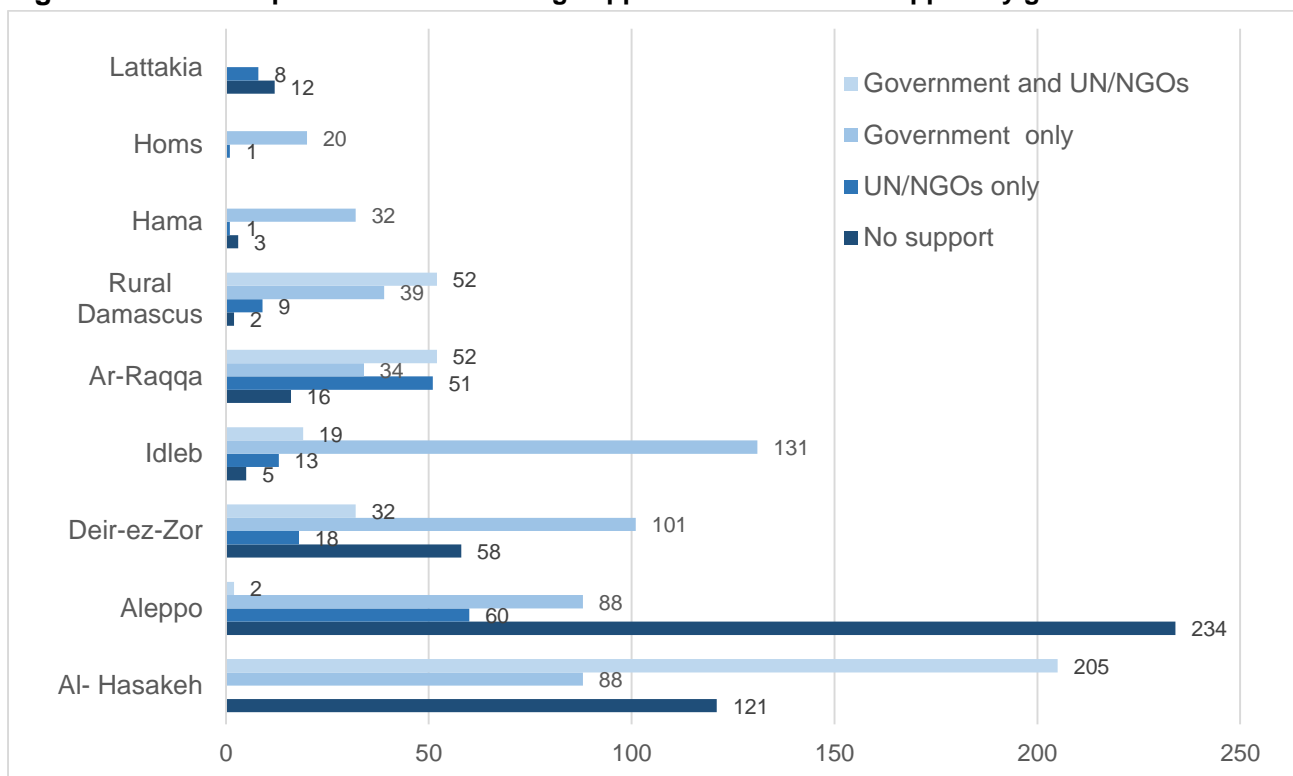
In regards to the type of support received by assessed public schools, staff salaries comprised the largest part (61%) of this support. Nonetheless, it is important to clarify that key informants included the payment of staff salaries by the government in Syria as part of the support received by their schools, while this would be usually considered separate from external assistance. A bit less than a third (28%) of assessed public schools received support in the form of stationery, and (11%) of assessed public schools received other types of support, such as psycho-social assistance, meals, toys, and financial incentives for the working staff.

Figure 5: Type of support received by assessed public schools
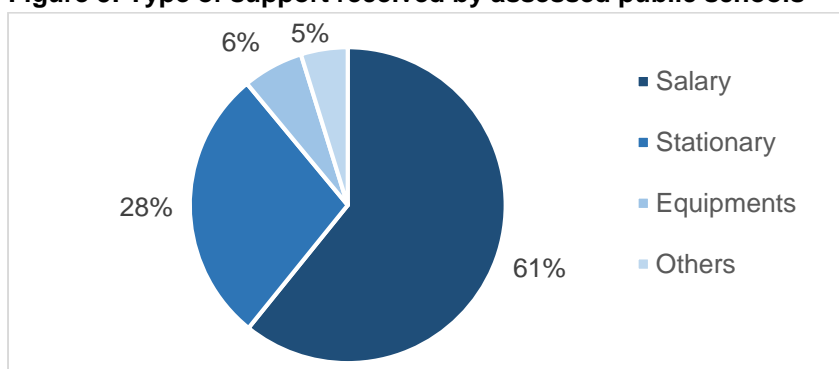
As stated in the 2014 SHARP, the provision of learning spaces is one of the key priorities of the education sector response. More particularly, education sector actors have prioritised key activities such as the provision of school benches for classrooms, and teaching and learning materials. Further, the education sector response is designed to address the vulnerabilities of Syrian children, notably through school feeding, in cooperation with the nutrition, and food and agriculture sectors, as well as through psycho-social support.[3]

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[3] 2014 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), Education Sector Response Plan available on at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014_Syria_SHARP.pdf

2. SCHOOL ENROLMENT AND REASONS FOR DROPOUTS

This section provides an analysis of the level of enrolment in assessed public schools for the academic year 2013-2014 and the main reasons for students to drop out of school. The analysis below is based on a review of school registers and available secondary data, as well as information provided by respondents during key informant interviews.

2.1   Enrolment by school category and grade

The level of enrolment was analysed in relation to school category (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary school) and school grades.

2.1.1 Enrolment by category of school

The level of school enrolment mirrors the findings on assessed public schools by categories presented above. Overall, there is a high level of school attendance in primary school. The number of students who were registered in lower secondary and upper secondary school during the academic year 2013-2014 is significantly lower than for primary schools. This can be explained by the fact that fewer pupils pursue their education beyond lower secondary schooling as upper secondary education is not compulsory. Most importantly adolescent boys and girls often leave school to start working in order to contribute to the livelihoods of their families.

Figure 6: Overall proportion of enrolled students in assessed public schools by school category (2013-2014)
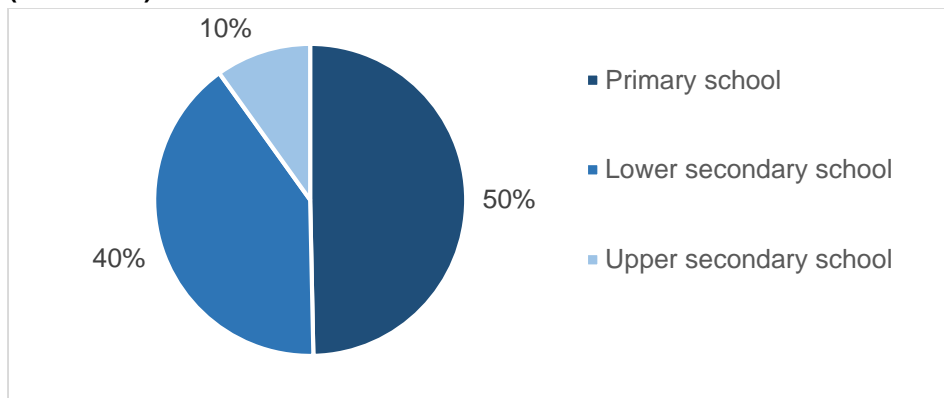
The proportion of students enrolled by school category displays many similarities across the assessed governorates. The enrolment was highest in primary school, with the exception of Ar-Raqqa governorate where the enrolment in primary and lower secondary school is equal, and in Idleb governorate where a slightly higher proportion of assessed students (47%) were enrolled in lower secondary school (compared to 45% in primary school). Across the governorates, enrolment in high school was highest in Ar-Raqqa (14%) and Deir-ez-Zor (13%).

Figure 7: Number and proportion of students by school category and by governorate (2013-2014)
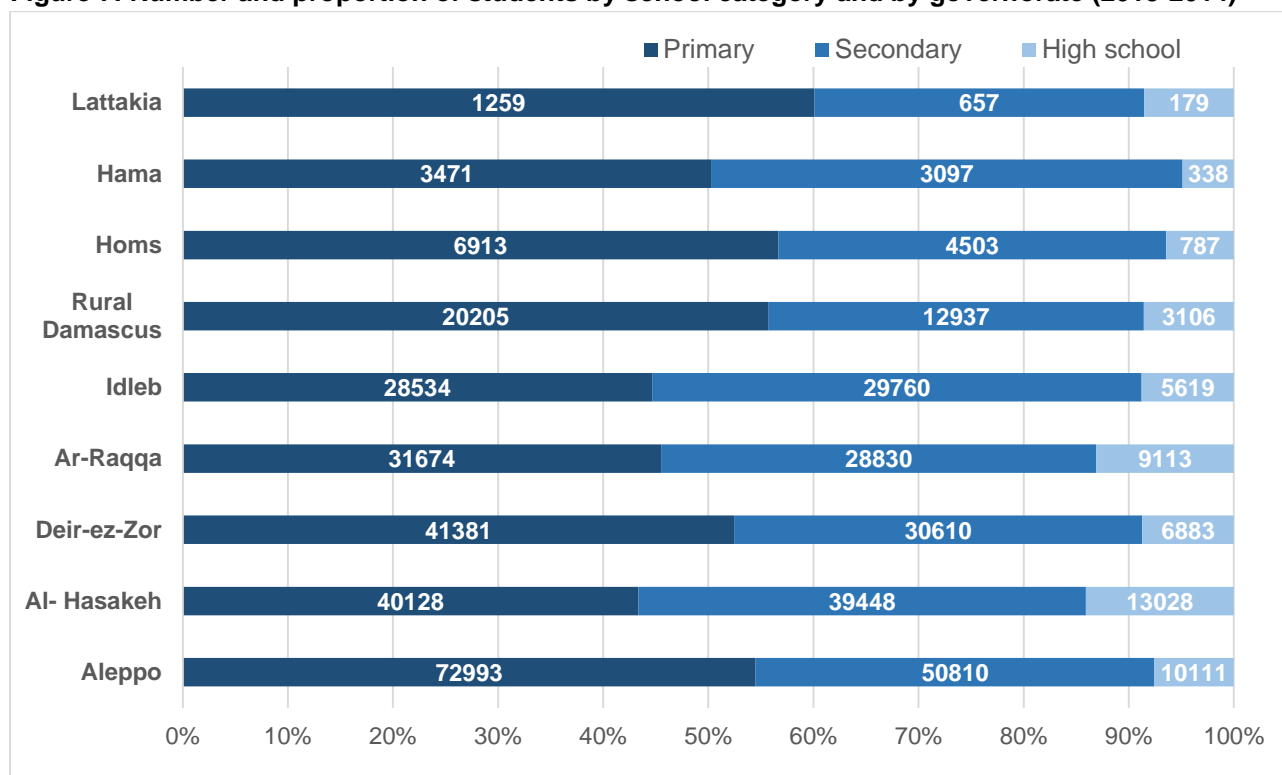
2.1.2 School enrolment by grade

The table below provides an overview of the number of students registered from 1st to 12th grade in the assessed public schools for the academic year 2013-2014. A gradual decrease in the number of enrolled students can be observed reversely to the progression in school grades. As mentioned above, primary education being compulsory for all children in Syria, explains the high proportion of children registered in primary school. The low enrolment levels in secondary schools are further discussed in the section below on reasons for students to leave school (2.3).

Table 5: Number of students by grade and by governorate

School category	grade	# of students	% of students
Primary school	1	75,075	15.1%
	2	61,086	12.3%
	3	57,491	11.6%
	4	52,906	10.7%
Lower secondary school	5	47,646	9.6%
	6	42,311	8.5%
	7	40,541	8.2%
	8	35,888	7.2%
	9	34,266	6.9%
Upper secondary school	10	16,966	3.4%
	11	8,447	1.7%
	11	8,382	1.7%
	12	8,188	1.6%
	12	7,181	1.4%

Map 2: Number of students and female ratio in assessed public schools by sub-district
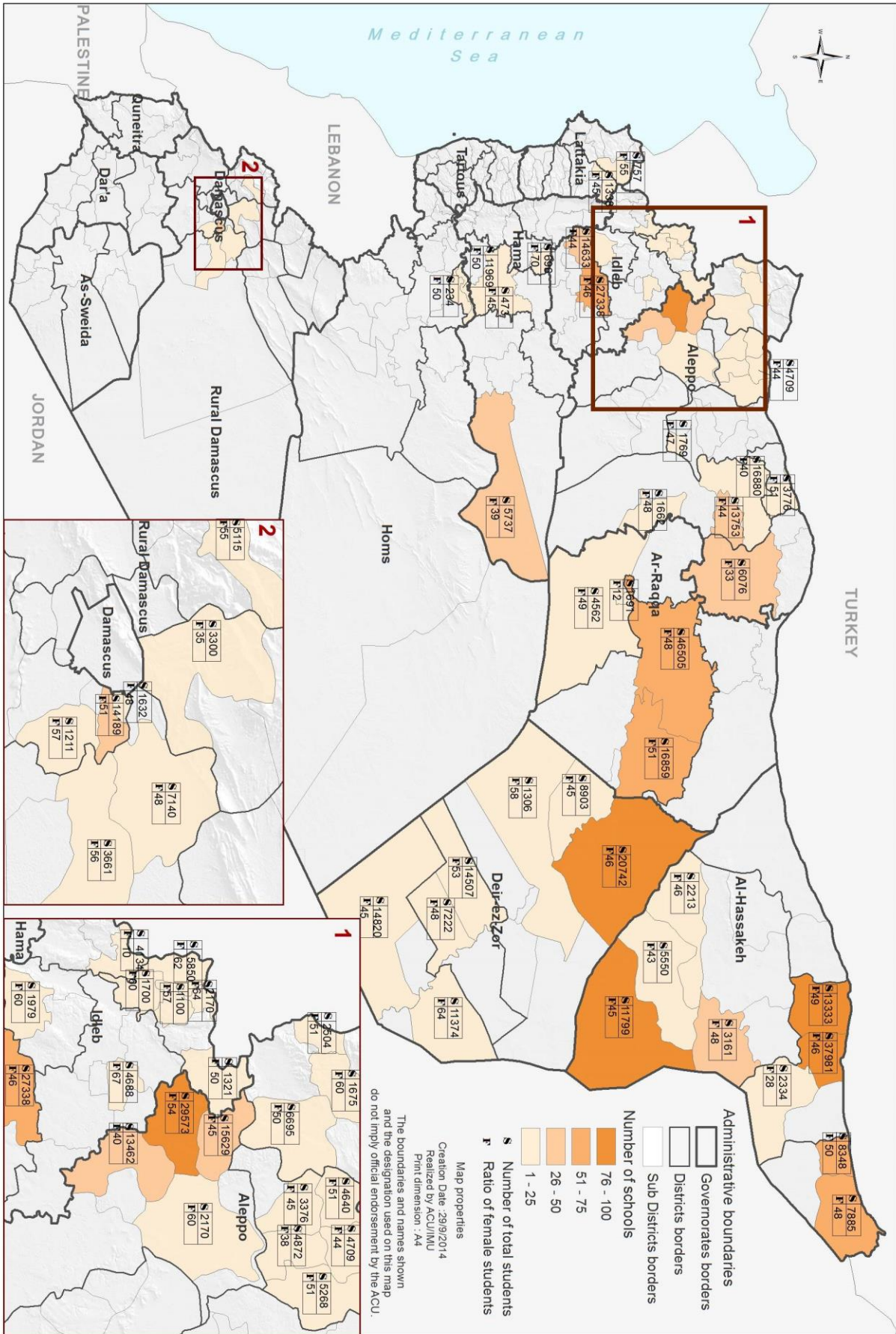
2.2   School enrolment disaggregated by sex of students

The enrolment of male and female students is presented below for the total assessment sample and by school category (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary school). Overall, the data shows a fairly balanced level of enrolment of male and female students across school categories and governorates.

Figure 8: Overall enrolment disaggregated by sex in assessed public schools
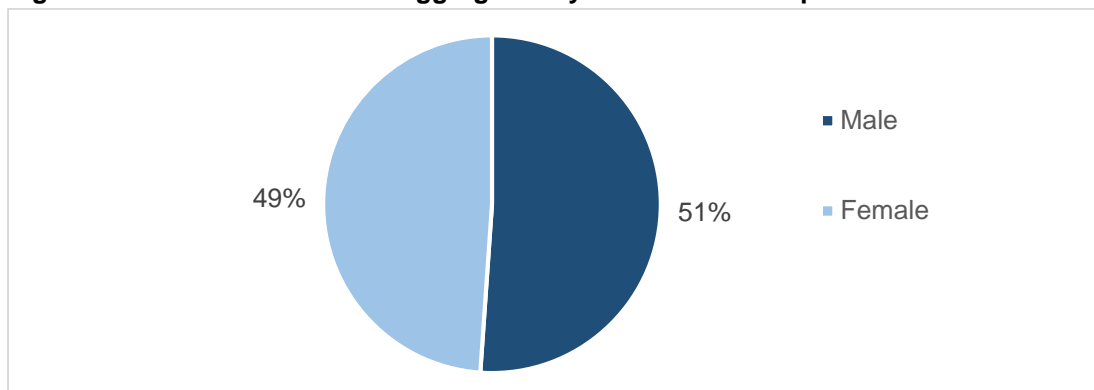
Overall, the enrolment level of female students in assessed public schools is similar to that of male students across governorates. In turn, collected data showed[4] that the enrolment of female students declined to a very low ratio in Al Thawra sub-district in Ar Raqqa governorate (13% - 192 female students out of 1,600 students), and to a lesser extent in Tal Hamis sub-district in Al Hasakeh governorate (28% - 663 female students out of 2,334 students). The large presence of armed groups in these two sub-districts can partly explain the low level of enrolment of school-age girls. These specific cases should be further investigated.

Figure 9: Overall attendance disaggregated by sex in assessed public schools

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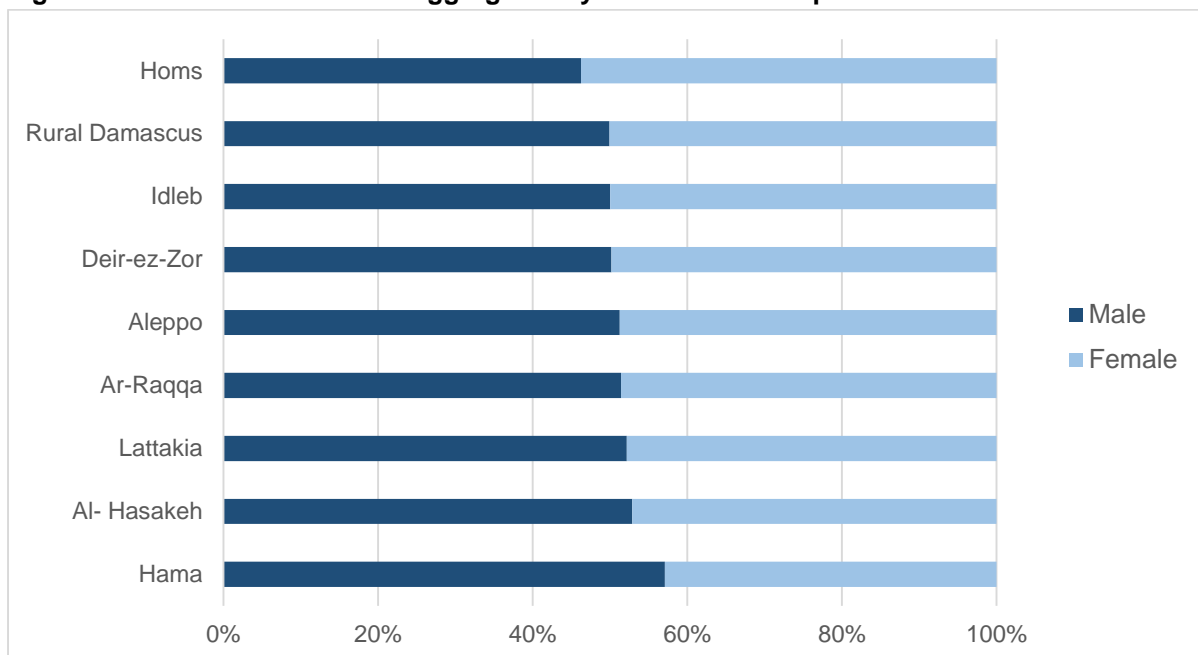
[4] Refer to Annex 1 Assessed Public schools and number of registered students by sub-district.

2.3 Reasons for students to leave school

As part of the assessment, key informants were asked to list the main reasons for students to stop attending class. Overall, the primary reason for students dropping out of school is the need to work in order to support their families. At the time of the assessment, one third (34%) of key informants reported that students had left school in order to work. The two other main reasons reported by key informants for students to drop out of school were displacement (24%) and insecurity (20%).

Figure 10: Main reported reasons for students dropping out in assessed public schools
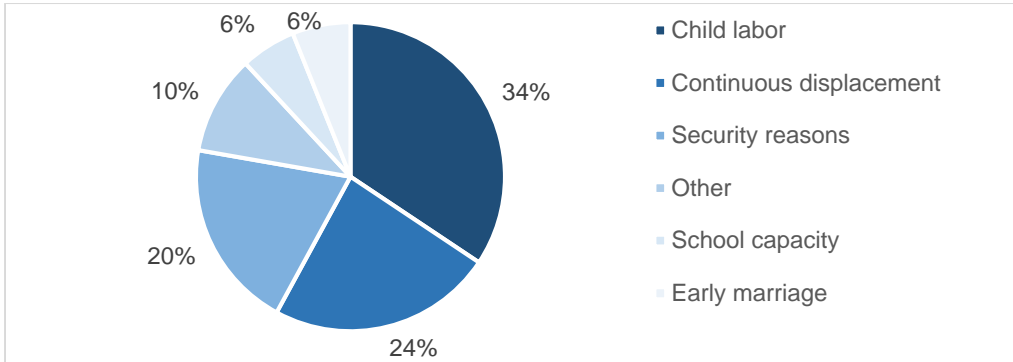
The collected data shows variations among governorates in the reported main reasons for school dropouts. In the four governorates of Aleppo (32.2%), Ar-Raqqa (60.6%), Al-Hasakeh (37.2%) and Deir-ez-Zor (58.1%), the most reported reason pushing students to stop attending class is the need to generate an income. In the two governorates of Al-Hasakeh and Idilb, repeated displacement is the second most cited reason for students dropping out of school. General security concerns in terms of direct risks for the life of children were reported as a third reason for school dropouts in the governorates of Rural Damascus, Idleb and Aleppo.

There are many reasons why students encounter difficulties in accessing schools, including distance from the locality, the presence of a sniper, or daily shelling/ Idleb governorate / Ma'arrat an Nu'man sub-district recorded the highest number of schools which are difficult to reach (13 schools out of 45 assessed schools were defined as difficult to reach).

Figure 11: Main reported reasons for students dropping out in assessed public schools by governorate
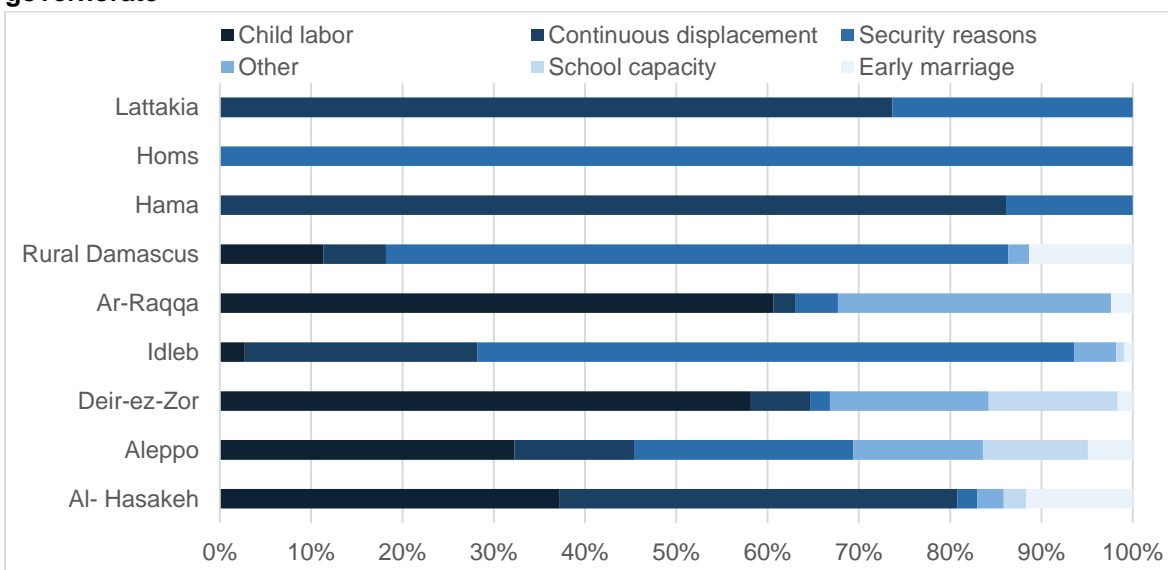
3. SCHOOL STAFFING AND EQUIPMENT

This section provides further details on current staff in assessed public schools, including regular administrative and teaching staff, as well as volunteers who are temporarily providing support although these are not trained academic or official administrative school personnel. Second, the section investigates the state of school facilities, in particular the availability of teaching books and classroom equipment, and the state of the overall school infrastructure.

3.1 School staffing

This section provides an overview of the type of staff which were working in the assessed public schools during the past academic year, as well as information about their remuneration.

3.1.1 Regular staff & volunteers

The total number of staff (volunteers & official) reached 28,028 people in the entire monitored area with 24,440 for the official staff (people who worked in the schools before the revolution), and 3,588 for the volunteer staff (people who did not practice this career before the revolution). As shown below, 13% of the total number of staff are volunteers and 87% are regular school staff.

Figure 12: Overall proportion of regular and volunteer staff in assessed public schools
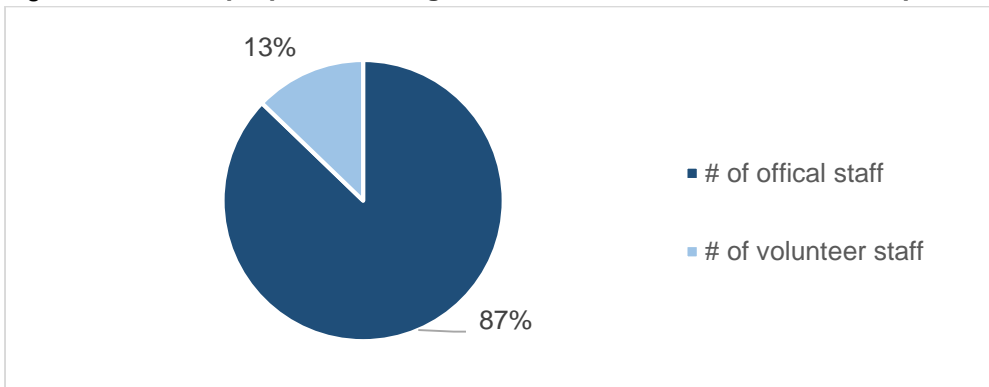
The highest proportion of official regular staff can be found in the governorates Ar-Raqqa (100%), Deir-ez-Zor (95%), Idleb (93%) and Al-Hasakeh (92%). By far the highest proportion of volunteer staff can be noted in Lattakia governorate, where 73% of the staff were reportedly volunteers.

Figure 13: Proportion of regular and volunteer staff in assessed public schools by governorates
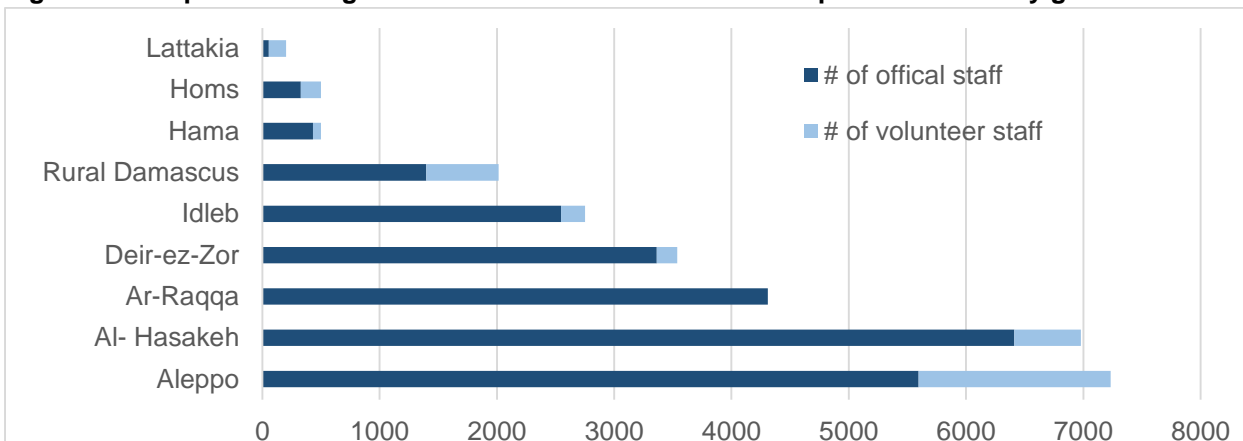
3.1.2 Staff remuneration

Across the assessed governorates, 80% of staff was reported to be unpaid regular staff, while the remaining 20% was reported to be paid regular staff, indicating that a high proportion of school administration and teaching staff have continued working while they were no longer receiving their salaries. Some of these public servants may not be able to continue working without pay for much longer and this may drive them to find alternative employment in order to ensure their families' livelihoods. Direct financial support to public schools is critical as a mean to ensure school staff is available to continue providing education to Syrian children in areas affected by the crisis.

Figure 14: Overall proportion of paid and unpaid regular staff in assessed public schools
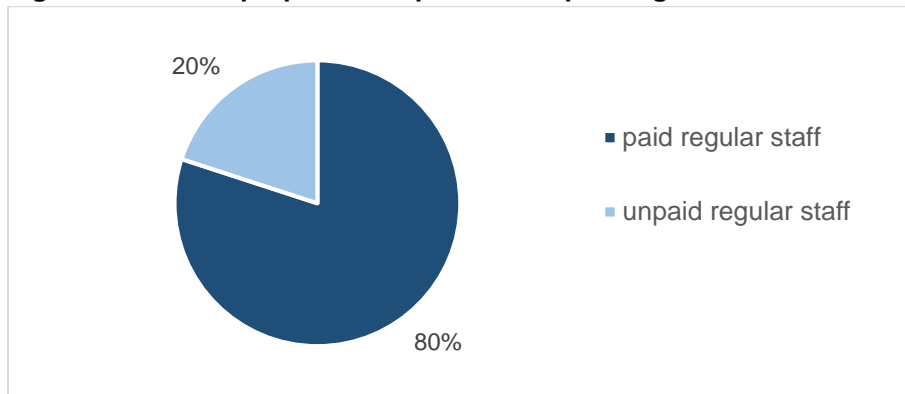
The proportion of paid/unpaid regular staff differs across the assessed governorates. For example, in Lattakia governorate all assessed regular staff was reported to be paid, followed by 46% of regular staff in Rural Damascus governorate and 41% in Aleppo governorate. The lowest ratio for paid regular staff can be observed in the governorates of Hama, Homs and Ar-Raqqa (0%, 1% and 3% respectively).

Figure 15: Proportion of paid and unpaid regular staff in assessed public schools by governorate
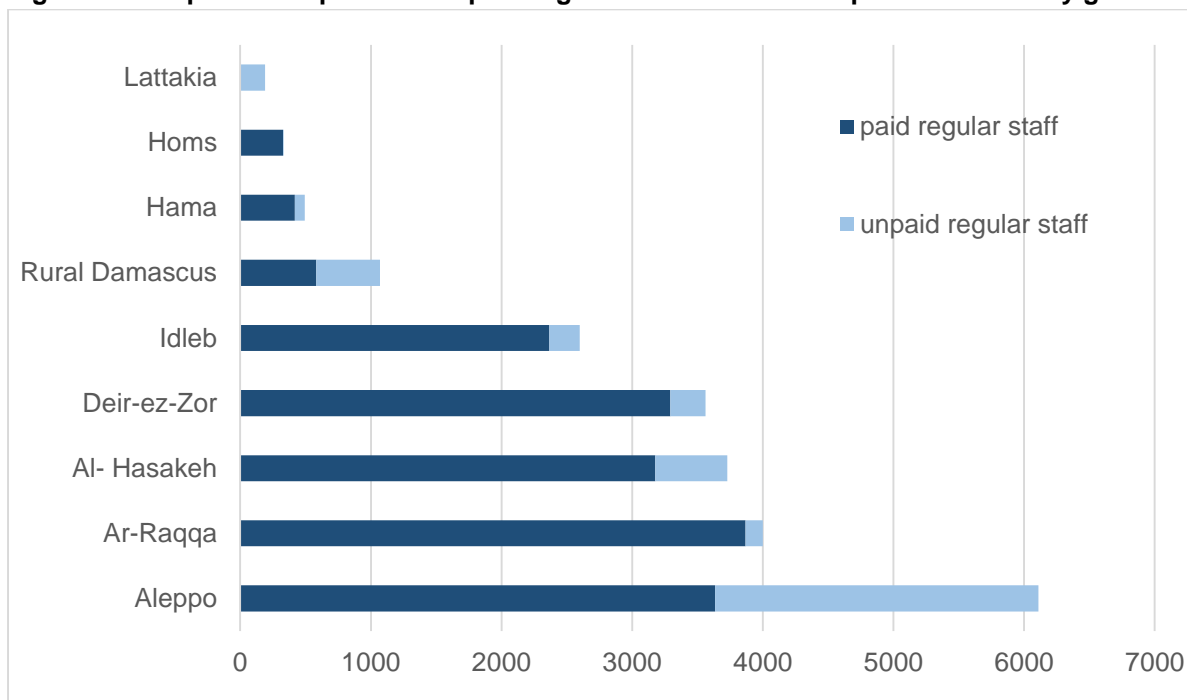
Map 3: Paid and unpaid regular staff and proportion of volunteers by sub-district (2013-2014)

3.2   Teaching materials and classroom equipment

One key component of the assessment focused on gathering information on the situation of public school facilities and their priority needs for support, specifically in terms of the availability of teaching materials and classroom equipment, as well as the status of school infrastructure in regards to electricity and heating, water and sanitation, as well as school buildings (doors, walls, windows).

3.2.1 Teaching materials

The assessment collected data on the availability of teaching materials, and more specifically academic books which are usually provided to teachers and students in the Syrian public schooling system. Overall, the reported availability of books in assessed schools reached 48%. Nonetheless, there are noticeable differences between governorates.

Figure 16: Availability of teaching books in assessed public schools by governorate
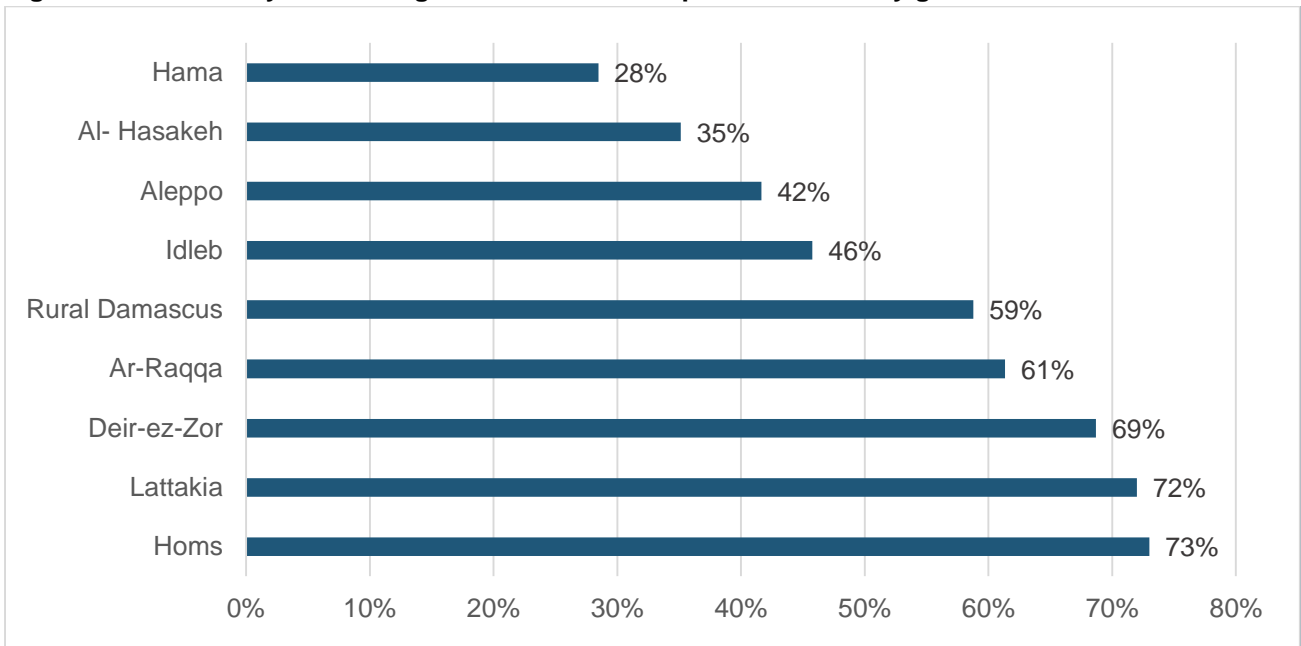
Further, there are also significant differences between sub-districts in regards to availability of academic books in assessed public schools. The assessment showed a wide variation in the percentage of availability of teaching books at governorate level. For example in Idleb governorate, the availability of teaching books reduced to 0% in Darkosh sub-district, while on the other hand 100% of availability was reported in the Kafr Takharim sub-district, which is due to greater accessibility and changes in the conflict dynamics in this area. Similar findings can be found in Ar-Raqqa governorate, where in Al-Thawrah sub-district the availability declined to 0% and rose up to 81% in Karama sub-district. The table below provides an overview of teaching book availability at the sub-district level.

Table 6: Availability of teaching books in assessed public schools by sub-district

Sub-district	Availability of teaching books
Al- Hasakeh	**35%**
Quamishli	19%
Al- Malikeyyeh	27%
Areesheh	32%
Hole	36%
Markada	37%
Amuda	41%
Shadadah	49%
Tal Hmis	49%
Jawadiyah	50%
Aleppo	**42%**
Abu Qalqal	6%
Mare'	13%
Zarbah	26%
Afrin	28%
Sheikh El-Hadid	28%
Jebel Saman	38%
Tall Refaat	41%
Jarablus	41%
Menbij	43%
A'zaz	45%
Ma'btali	47%
Atareb	50%
Suran	53%
Dayr Hafir	53%
Daret Azza	56%
Aghtrin	65%
Sarin	73%
Maskana	74%
Ar-Raqqa	**61%**
Al- Thawrah	0%
Ar-Raqqa	47%
Mansura	67%
Karama	81%

Sub-district	Availability of teaching books
Deir-ez-Zor	**69%**
Abu Kamal	29%
Al Mayadin	30%
Hajin	32%
Tabni	46%
Ashara	56%
Deir-ez-Zor	68%
Kisreh	100%
Hama	**28%**
Oqeirbat	27%
Hama	35%
Kafr Zeita	43%
Homs	**73%**
Talbiseh	60%
Ar-Rastan	74%
Idleb	**46%**
Darkosh	0%
Dana	24%
Kafr Nobol	28%
Bennsh	35%
Ehsem	45%
Salqin	56%
Armanaz	60%
Ma'arrat An Nu'man	62%
Harim	81%
Kafr Takharim	100%
Lattakia	**72%**
Rabee'a	30%
Kansaba	100%
Rural Damascus	**59%**
At Tall	23%
Madaya	30%
Duma	41%
Kafr Batna	54%
Arbin	75%
Maliha	80%
Nashabiyeh	100%
Total	**48%**

Map 4: Ratio of academic books deficiency in assessed public schools by sub-district (2013-2014)

Lack of academic books in assessed public schools by sub-district (academic year 2013 - 2014)

Mediterranean Sea

PALESTINE
Quneitra
Dara
As-Sweida
JORDAN
LEBANON
Damascus
Rural Damascus
Homs
Hama
Tartous
Lattakia
Idleb
Aleppo
Ar-Raqqa
Deir-ez-Zor
Al-Hassakeh
TURKEY
IRAQ

Administrative boundaries
Sub Districts borders
Districts borders
Governorates borders

lack of academic books
76% - 100%
51% - 75%
26% - 50%
0% - 25%

Map properties
Creation Date :29/9/2014
Realized by ACU/IMU
Print dimension : A4

The boundaries and names shown and the designation used on this map do not imply official endorsement by the ACU.

3.2.2 Classroom equipment

The survey further sought to identify gaps in terms of available classroom equipment. Across all assessed public schools, the main reported needs in terms of classroom equipment were student desks (49%), followed by teacher chairs (21%), teacher tables (13%), boards (10%) and cabinets for educational materials (7%).

Figure 17: Overall reported need for classroom equipment in assessed public schools
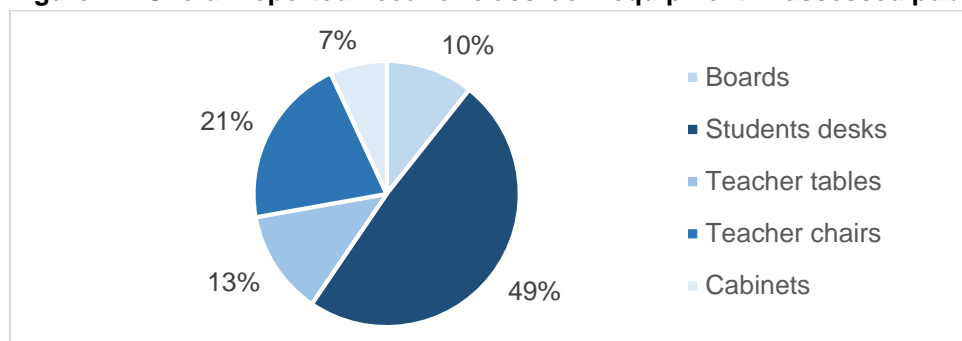
The reported needs for classroom equipment in the assessed public schools vary between governorates. However, it is important to note that this assessment only gathered information on the lack of classroom equipment, and not on the state of the equipment which was already available in assessed public schools. Further, the figures shown in the table below should be read in conjunction with the number of schools assessed in each governorate and thus do not indicate a priority ranking between governorates, rather the figures point out to reported needs in terms of number of items by category of classroom equipment.

Figure 18: Reported needs for classroom equipment in assessed public schools by governorate
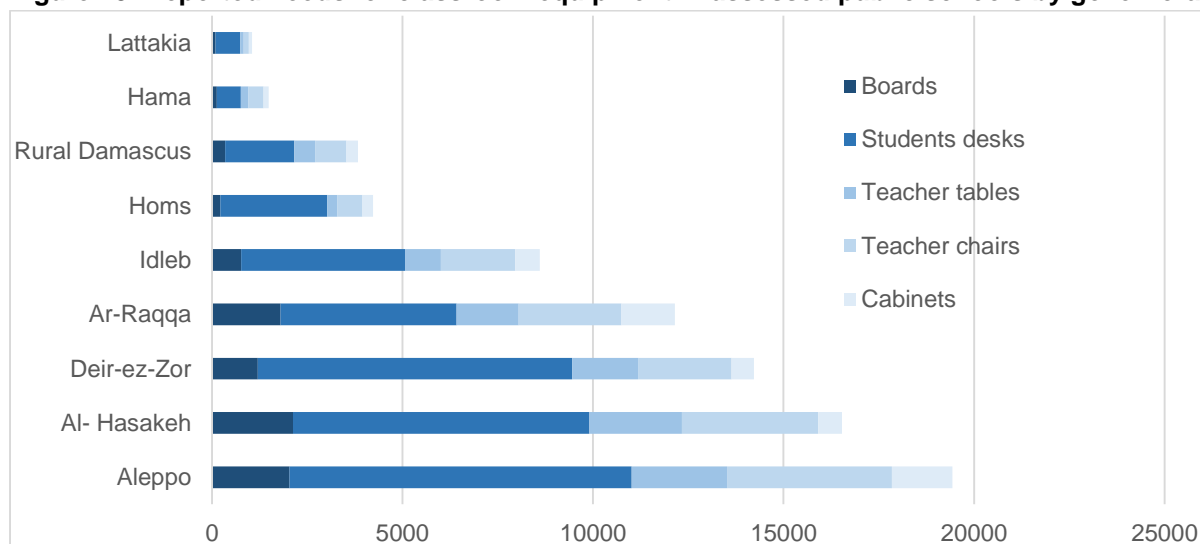
Table 7: Needs for classroom equipment in assessed public schools by item and by governorate

Classroom equipment item	Al-Hasakeh	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-ez-Zor	Hama	Homs	Idleb	Lattakia	Rural Damascus	Total
Boards	2127	2030	1796	1201	124	219	764	89	344	**8704**
Students desks	7774	8981	4620	8251	628	2800	4302	651	1813	**39945**
Teacher tables	2428	2506	1633	1729	200	269	938	92	544	**10351**
Teacher chairs	3583	4325	2699	2450	400	662	1949	134	823	**17049**
Cabinets	621	1589	1400	592	136	270	646	81	307	**5657**

4. SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND NEEDS

This section highlights assessed needs in terms of school infrastructure, with a specific focus on electricity, heating, water and sanitation facilities, and school buildings. It is crucial that these needs are addressed prior to the winter season in order to ensure that children can access safe and adequate learning environments and are able to pursue their education even during the coldest period of the academic year.

4.1 Electricity

The assessment gathered data on needs for electrical appliances. Across the governorates, the highest reported need in terms of electricity-related equipment were lamps (46%), followed by sockets and switches (37%), electrical switches (14%) and generator (3%). This indicates that generally public schools had access to a source of electricity during the past academic year but were lacking appliances to use electricity in classroom and other areas of the school.

Figure 19: Overall availability of electric appliances in assessed public schools
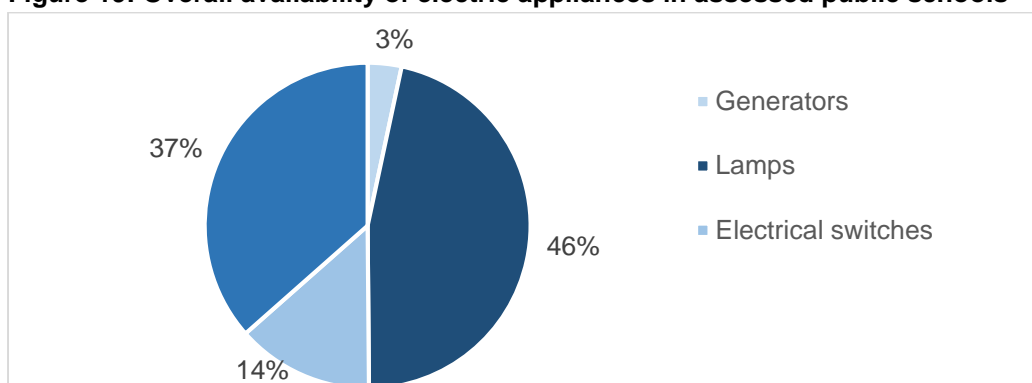
The assessment found differences in reported needs for electric appliances in public schools across governorates. However, it is important to note that this assessment only gathered information on the lack of electrical appliances, and not on the state of the appliances which were already available in assessed public schools, thus further investigation is needed to evaluate the current functioning of electrical systems in public schools.

Figure 20: Needs for electric appliances in assessed public schools by governorate
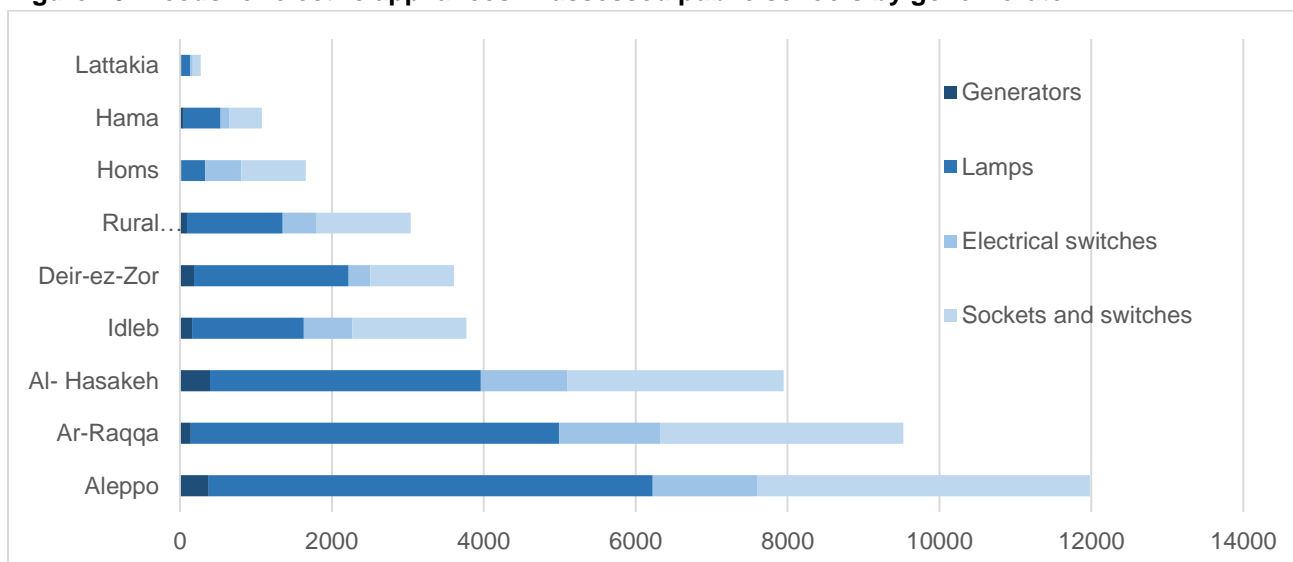
The figures shown in the table below should be read in conjunction with the number of schools assessed in each governorate and do not indicate a priority ranking between governorates, rather the figures point out to reported needs in terms of number of items by category of electric appliances.

Table 8: Needs for electric appliances in assessed public schools by governorate

Electric appliance	Al-Hasakeh	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-ez-Zor	Hama	Homs	Idleb	Lattakia	Rural Damascus	Total
Generator	397	379	141	184	49	21	159	19	92	1443
Lamp	3565	5844	4854	2036	485	311	1472	114	1259	19940
Electric switch	1141	1374	1326	288	118	477	638	37	441	5840

4.2 School buildings and heating

With the rapidly approaching winter season, the state of school buildings and heating systems raises serious concerns for the well-being of children attending classes. The rapid assessment gathered information on needs reported by public schools in terms of walls, windows, doors, and heaters.

Overall, assessed public schools across all governorates reported need for heaters totalled 10.966. Considering data collection that took place over the month of July, it may be expected that this figure may be increased during the winter period. Concomitantly, assessed public schools reported a total of 22.171 windows/glass panels and 6208 doors were needed in order to rehabilitate the current school facilities. Additionally, a large number of cement bags were reported by most schools as a priority need for the rehabilitation of school buildings, along, with painting of classroom walls.

Table 9: School heating and building rehabilitation needs by governorate

	Al-Hasakeh	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-ez-Zor	Hama	Homs	Idleb	Lattakia	Rural Damascus	Total
Heater	1971	2630	1962	1963	267	297	944	112	805	10966
Glass panel	6134	4478	4191	2390	279	126	2764	110	1699	22171
Door	786	1400	1394	800	182	137	1074	84	336	6208
Wall paint	415	389	153	209	40	22	175	20	104	1528
Cement bag	3753	1472	1604	353	430	173	484	62	449	8880

4.3 Water and sanitation

The assessment gathered information on water and sanitation infrastructure in public schools, and more specifically on the needs for water taps, water reservoirs and toilets. Overall, the main reported needs across all assessed public schools were water taps (67%), followed by toilets (18%) and water tanks (15%). It is important to note that this assessment only collected information on the lack of water and sanitation facilities and not on the functioning of facilities which were already available in assessed schools. Additionally, collected data on toilets does not provide disaggregation by sex (i.e. separated female and male toilets for students and teachers). Follow-up more in-depth sector-specific data collection is thus recommended in order to assess access and usage of these infrastructures in public schools in Syria.

Figure 21: Overall needs for water and sanitation infrastructure in assessed public schools
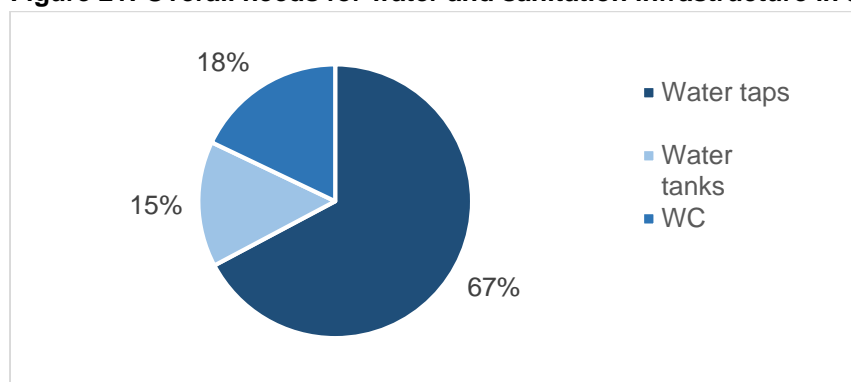
The assessment found differences in reported needs for electric appliances in public schools across governorates. However, it is important to note that this assessment only gathered information on needs related in terms of water taps, water tanks and toilets, and not on the state of the water and sanitation facilities already available in assessed public schools and their accessibility by students and teachers, in particular those living with disabilities. For this reason, a follow-up more in-depth assessment is recommended to evaluate more exhaustively access to water and sanitation as well as hygiene needs of school staff and students.

Figure 22: Needs for water and sanitation infrastructure in assessed public schools by governorate
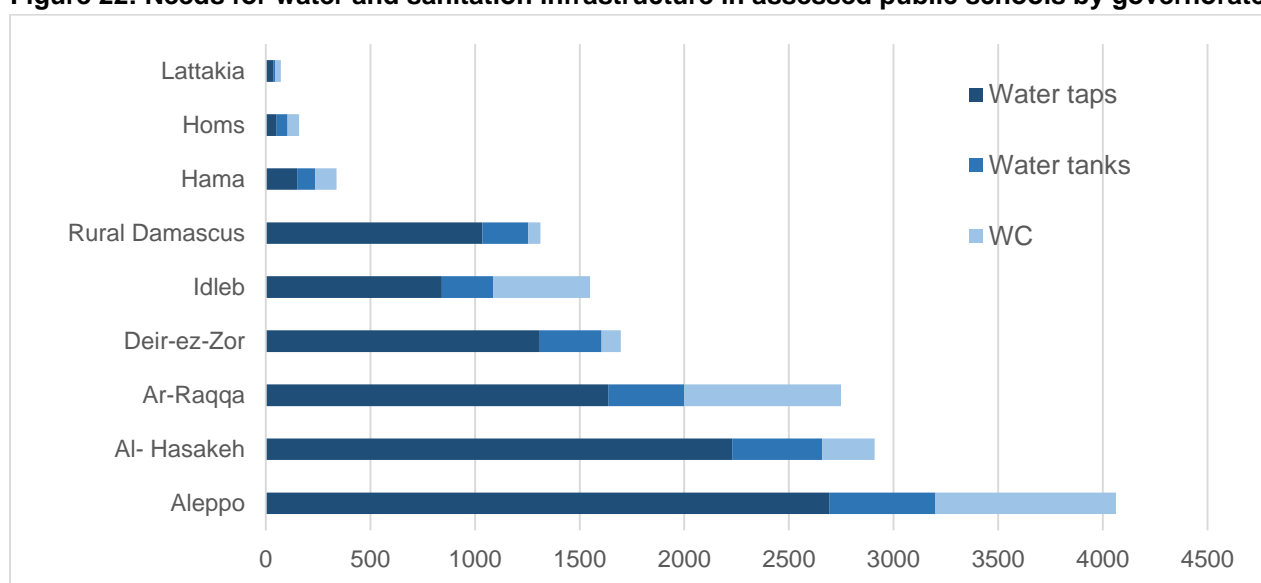
The figures shown in the table below should be read in conjunction with the number of schools assessed in each governorate and do not indicate a priority ranking between governorates, rather the figures point out to reported needs in terms of number of water and sanitation facilities.

Table 10: Needs for water and sanitation infrastructure in assessed public schools by governorate

Water and Sanitation facilities	Al-Hasakeh	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-ez-Zor	Hama	Homs	Idleb	Lattakia	Rural Damascus	Total
Water taps	2229	2692	1638	1310	150	51	841	35	1036	**9982**
Water tanks	429	508	361	295	86	53	247	9	218	**2211**
Toilets	252	863	750	92	102	54	462	27	58	**2666**

CONCLUSION

This rapid assessment of public schools in Syrian carried out by the Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) aims to inform the education sector of the Syrian crisis response. More specifically, the assessment aimed to collect information about school enrolment (academic year 2013-2014) by category and type of school, and school grade; reasons for dropouts; school staffing and remuneration; schools facilities in regards to the availability of teaching materials and classroom equipment; the level, type and sources of support received by public schools, as well as priority needs.

While the majority of public schools are still functioning across Syria, school staff, equipment and facilities have been significantly affected by the ongoing conflict, preventing large numbers of Syrian children to access adequate education. During the academic year 2013-2014, a **large majority of official school staff continued working while not being paid.** The availability of teaching materials varies greatly across governorates within **some sub-districts reporting no books available at all.** About half of assessed **public schools reported they needed student desks** and **lamps,** and two third of schools reported they were lacking **water taps.**

This assessment aim to gauge the overall state of school buildings and rehabilitation needs, and not specifically the functioning of facilities already existing in schools, notably in relation to electricity, heating, water and sanitation. The findings presented in this report point to areas where **more in-depth sector-specific assessments should be undertaken**.

There was a **reported need for a total of 10.966 heaters** across all assessed schools. Considering data collection that took place over the month of July, it may be expected that this figure may be increased during the winter period. Concomitantly, assessed public schools reported a total of **22.171 windows/glass panels and 6208 doors** were needed in order to rehabilitate the current school facilities. With the rapidly approaching winter season, the state of school buildings and heating systems raises serious concerns for the well-being of children who will attend classes during the 2014-2015 academic year. **It is crucial to ensure that public schools receive support in preparation for the winter** in order to mitigate its negative impact of students.

About **one third (30%) of assessed public schools were not receiving any external support and their regular functioning costs were no longer covered** by the government in Syria. Among assessed public schools receiving support, 24% of schools whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria did not receive any other support. About one third (35%) out of the assessed public schools, whose functioning costs were still covered by the government in Syria, also received external support. **Staff salaries comprised the largest part (61%) of support received**, followed by stationery (28%).

Findings from this assessment contributed to the Syria Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) released in November 2014 and will support sector planning for the relief response in Syria. The ACU Information Management Unit will continue actively disseminating findings and will support follow-up specialist assessments by education and other sectors.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: ASSESSED PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND NUMBER OF REGISTERED STUDENTS BY SUB-DISTRICT

Governorate	Sub-District	# of schools	# of students	# of male	# of female	Female ratio
Al- Hasakeh	Al- Malikeyyeh	52	7885	4106	3779	47.9%
	Amuda	77	13333	6512	6821	51.2%
	Areesheh	9	2213	1152	1061	47.9%
	Hole	27	3161	1718	1443	45.7%
	Jawadiyah	52	8348	4110	4238	50.8%
	Markada	78	11799	6531	5268	44.6%
	Quamishli	86	37981	19748	18233	48.0%
	Shadadah	14	5550	3394	2156	38.8%
	Tal Hmis	19	2334	1671	663	28.4%
Aleppo	Abu Qalqal	50	13753	7594	6159	44.8%
	Afrin	23	6695	3379	3316	49.5%
	Aghtrin	15	5268	2607	2661	50.5%
	Atareb	81	29573	12410	17163	58.0%
	A'zaz	8	4640	2264	2376	51.2%
	Daret Azza	34	15629	8031	7598	48.6%
	Dayr Hafir	5	1769	939	830	46.9%
	Jarablus	11	3776	1867	1909	50.6%
	Jebel Saman	13	2170	824	1346	62.0%
	Ma'btali	11	1675	670	1005	60.0%
	Mare'	8	4872	2966	1906	39.1%
	Maskana	9	1662	845	817	49.2%
	Menbij	13	16880	9935	6945	41.1%
	Sarin	32	6076	3791	2285	37.6%
	Sheikh El-Hadid	14	2504	1217	1287	51.4%
	Suran	14	4709	2484	2225	47.2%
	Tall Refaat	8	3376	1258	2118	62.7%
	Zarbah	35	13462	7890	5572	41.4%
Ar-Raqqa	Al- Thawrah	6	1691	1470	221	13.1%
	Ar-Raqqa	65	46505	24073	22432	48.2%
	Karama	60	16859	7952	8907	52.8%
	Mansura	22	4562	2299	2263	49.6%
Deir-ez-Zor	Abu Kamal	21	14820	8131	6689	45.1%
	Al Mayadin	20	14507	7072	7435	51.3%
	Ashara	15	7222	3747	3475	48.1%
	Deir-ez-Zor	11	1306	473	833	63.8%
	Hajin	20	11374	4256	7118	62.6%
	Kisreh	98	20742	11028	9714	46.8%
	Tabni	24	8903	4867	4036	45.3%
Hama	Hama	1	473	260	213	45.0%
	Kafr Zeita	3	696	209	487	70.0%
	Oqeirbat	32	5737	3474	2263	39.4%
Homs	Ar-Rastan	20	11969	5525	6444	53.8%
	Talbiseh	1	234	117	117	50.0%
Idleb	Armanaz	2	1700	680	1020	60.0%
	Bennsh	5	4688	1870	2818	60.1%
	Dana	5	1321	656	665	50.3%
	Darkosh	21	4134	3120	1014	24.5%
	Ehsem	2	1979	792	1187	60.0%
	Harim	8	2170	824	1346	62.0%

Governorate	Sub-District	# of schools	# of students	# of male	# of female	Female ratio
	Kafr Nobol	37	14633	7196	7437	50.8%
	Kafr Takharim	3	1100	500	600	54.5%
	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	75	27338	14446	12892	47.2%
	Salqin	10	5850	2392	3458	59.1%
Lattakia	Kansaba	12	1338	737	601	44.9%
	Rabee'a	8	757	356	401	53.0%
	Arbin	3	1632	738	894	54.8%
	At Tall	4	3300	2520	780	23.6%
	Duma	20	7140	3725	3415	47.8%
Rural Damascus	Kafr Batna	45	14189	6703	7486	52.8%
	Madaya	6	5115	2355	2760	54.0%
	Maliha	7	1211	416	795	65.6%
	Nashabiyeh	17	3661	1637	2024	55.3%
Total		**1507**	**501949**	**256529**	**245420**	**48.9%**