The status of Syrian higher education: assessments by Syrian DAAD alumni and scholarship holders

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Survey Results

- Time period: 15 April – 10 May 2020

- Target group: DAAD scholarship holders and alumni from Syria

- Number of persons contacted: 245

Survey response rate

Response
47%

non
Response
53%

■ Response ■ non Response

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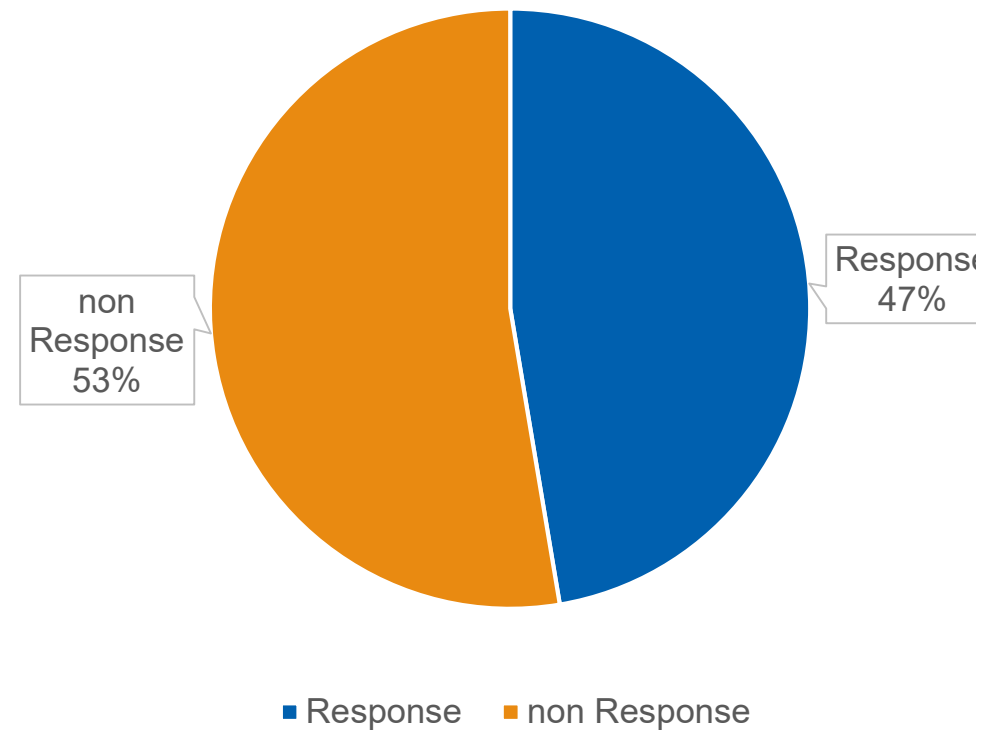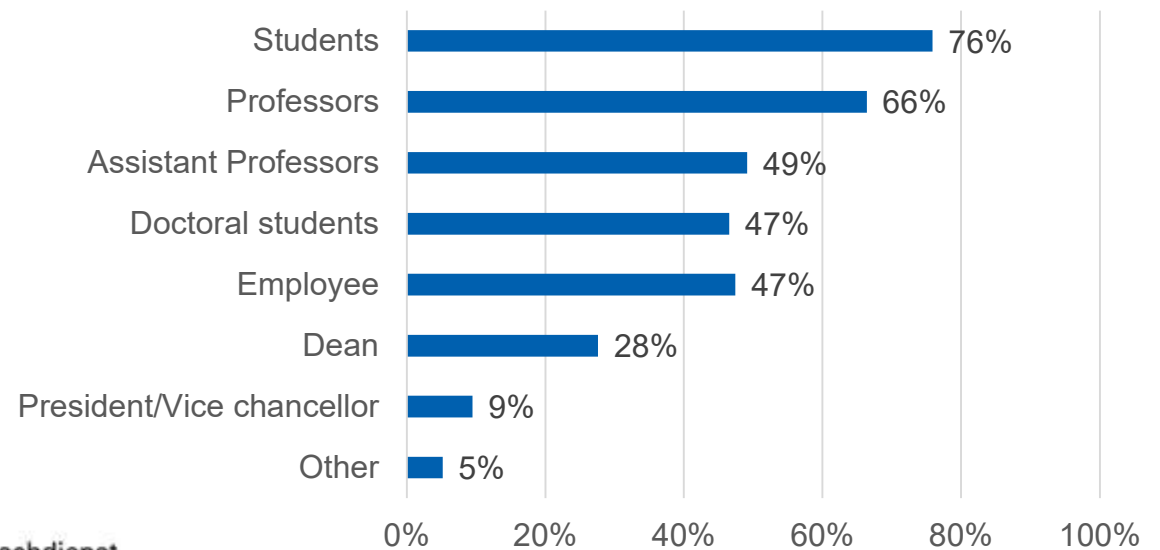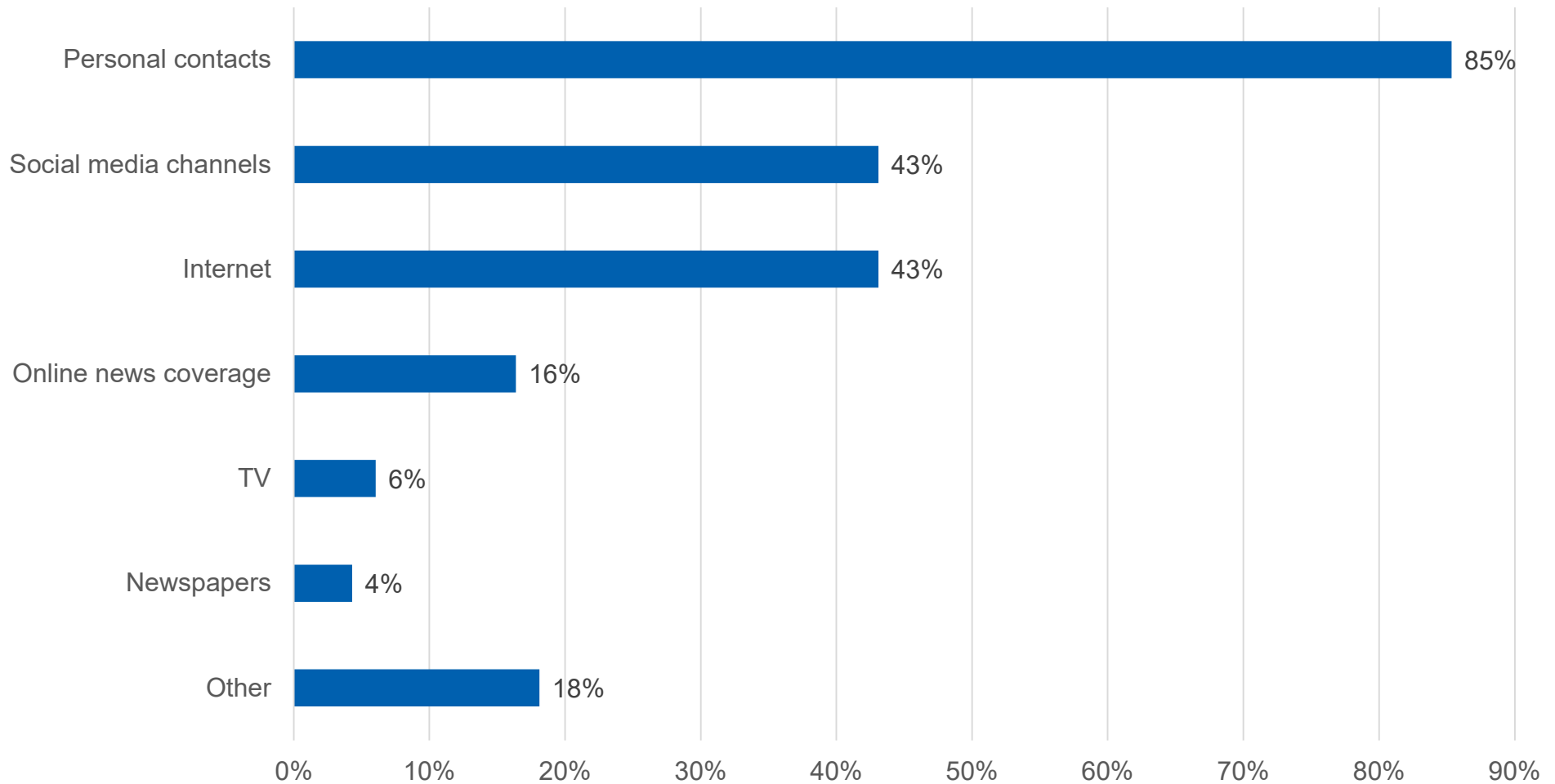
How many people in the Higher Education sector do you know in Syria? Who do you know in the Higher Education sector in Syria?
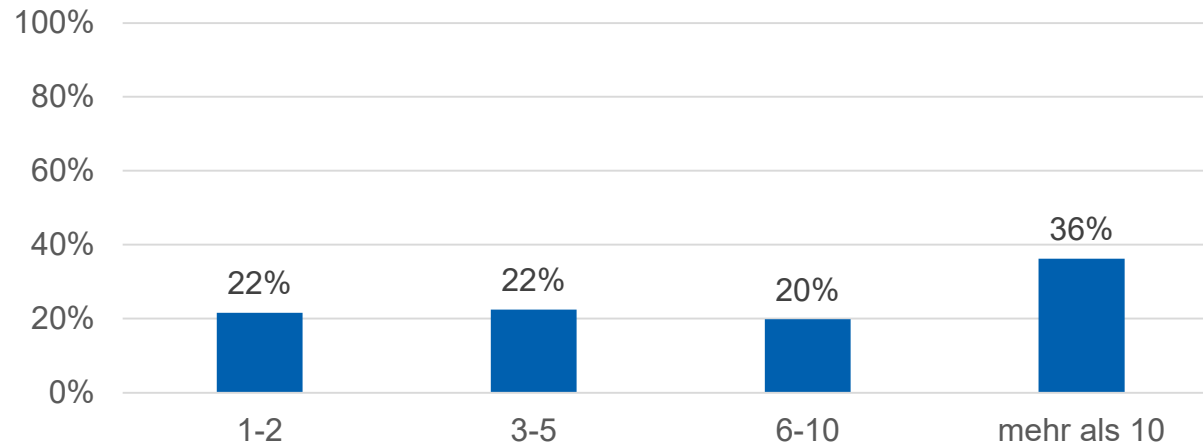
The results show that the (former) grantees have potential contacts in the Syrian higher education sector

What is the basis of your assessment on higher education in Syria?

Category	Percentage
Personal contacts	85%
Social media channels	43%
Internet	43%
Online news coverage	16%
TV	6%
Newspapers	4%
Other	18%

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How would you describe the current teaching infrastructure at Syrian universities?

Category	Very bad	Insufficient	Enough	Good	Don't know
Total (n=116)	14%	45%	22%	9%	10%
Science (n=36)	14%	50%	19%	8%	8%
Engineering, manufacturing and construction (n=35) (n=35)	17%	46%	26%	9%	3%
Social sciences, business and law (n=20)	5%	45%	15%	15%	20%
Health and welfare (n=14) (n=14)	14%	36%	36%		14%
Humanities and Arts (n= (n=8)	13%	38%	25%	13%	13%

Legend: ■Very bad ■Insufficient ■Enough ■Good ■Don't know

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How would you describe the current teaching infrastructure at Syrian universities?

Qualified academic staff
[…]"Many of the highly respected professors left Syria, so there is also a shortage of qualified teaching staff. In addition, research in Syria is practically non-existent."

Lack of equipment
"As for technical faculties and the same, no laboratories are efficiently equipped." "When it comes to materials, no reliable sources are available."

Corruption
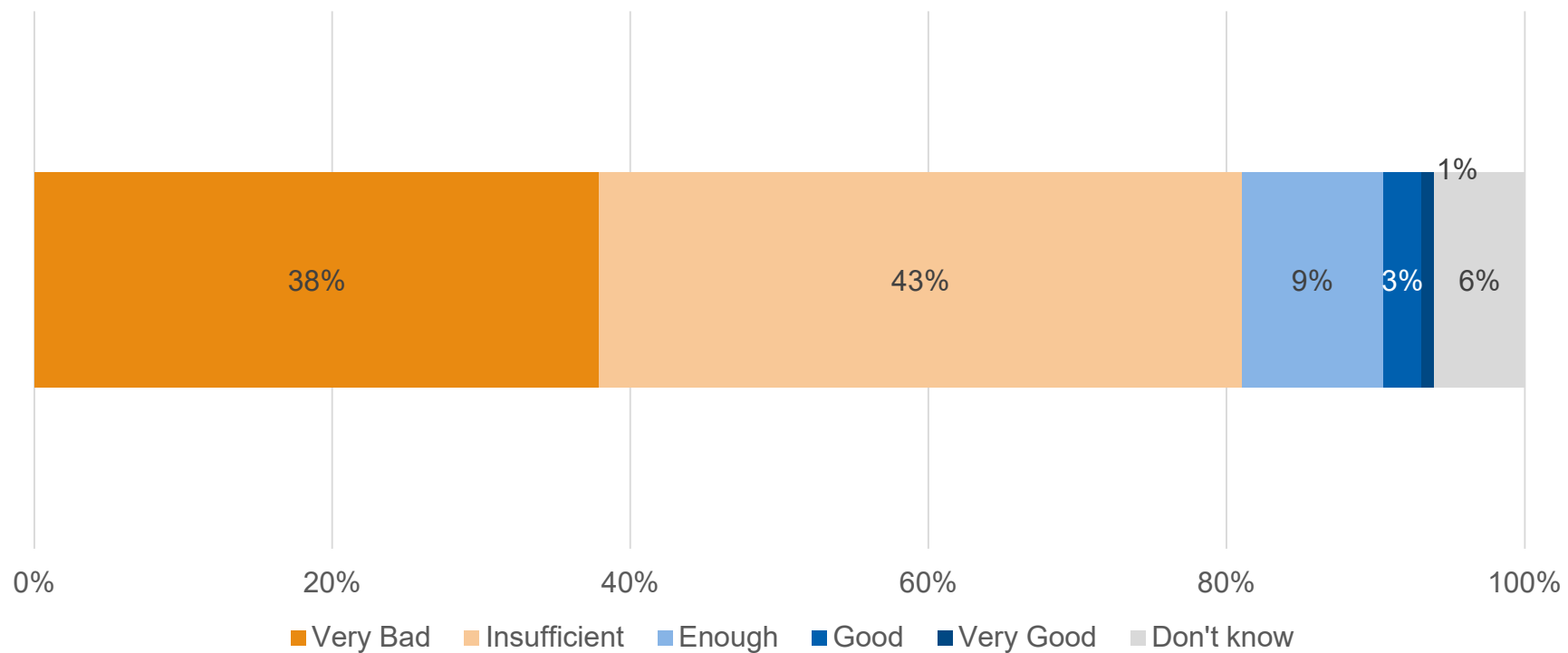"Corruption from both sides - professors and students e.g. bribes to get the exams in advance or to pass them."

Funding
"The funding designated for laboratories is corrupted by the university board."

State of war
„[…] the teaching infrastructure has collapsed significantly, the campus has been used as camps for displaced people, teaching in some Universities stopped because of terroristic attacks […]"

How would you rate the research infrastructure at Syrian universities in general?

Very Bad	Insufficient	Enough	Good	Very Good	Don't know
38%	43%	9%	3%	1%	6%

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How would you rate the research infrastructure at Syrian universities in general?

Freedom of Research
> "academic freedom is the biggest hurdle. controlled research topics."

Security situation for researchers
> […] many students fled the country, teachers, and the professor fled as well, or got killed or even have been arrested!"

Qualified staff
> "Many of the Professors left Syria, and that lead to the limpness of the educational staff."
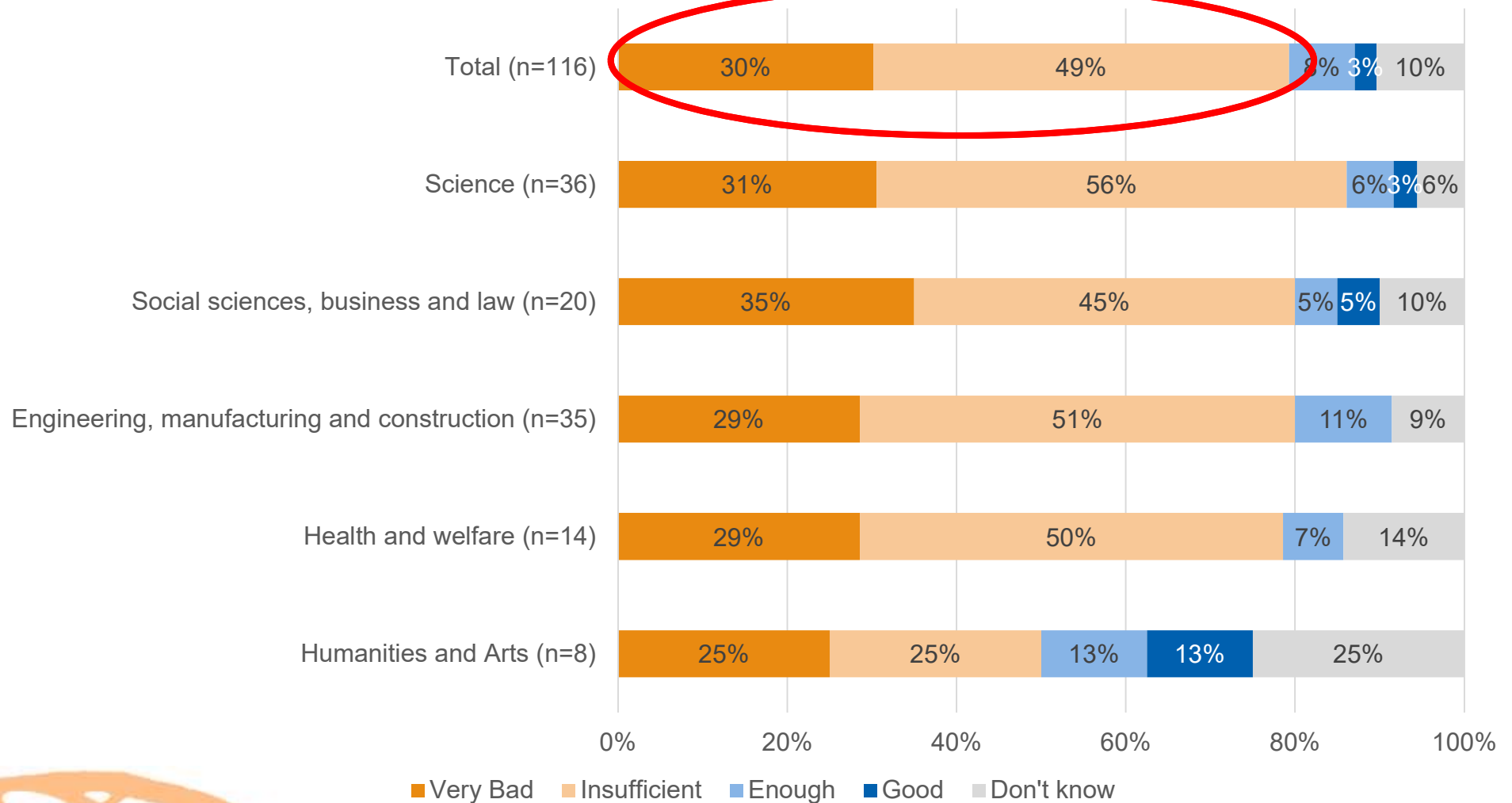
Funding
> "no funding available for research"

Internationalization of research
> „Their publications are in Arabic. […]"
> […] They are not widely spread publications.

Access to research infrastructure/literature
> "Laboratories are barely equiped for research and abscence of proper […] "There's no access to updated scientific papers […]"

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How would you rate the research infrastructure at Syrian universities in your field of study?

Total (n=116): Very Bad 30%, Insufficient 49%, Enough 8%, Good 3%, Don't know 10%

Science (n=36): Very Bad 31%, Insufficient 56%, Enough 6%, Good 3%, Don't know 6%

Social sciences, business and law (n=20): Very Bad 35%, Insufficient 45%, Enough 5%, Good 5%, Don't know 10%

Engineering, manufacturing and construction (n=35): Very Bad 29%, Insufficient 51%, Enough 11%, Don't know 9%

Health and welfare (n=14): Very Bad 29%, Insufficient 50%, Enough 7%, Don't know 14%

Humanities and Arts (n=8): Very Bad 25%, Insufficient 25%, Enough 13%, Good 13%, Don't know 25%

Legend: ■ Very Bad ■ Insufficient ■ Enough ■ Good ■ Don't know

Access to literature:
"There was only one case of a student in my faculty, who published a paper in an internationally recognized journal based on her and her professors´ efforts outside the university frame."

Lack of qualified staff:
"Math research in the Syrian universities is dead; Even before the crisis, all math students are assumed to end up teaching math to high school students. There was no encouragement to go beyond that."

Academic Freedom:
"No books or libraries. […] In addition, in social sciences, you can't publish your real results if they spot the light on a social problem."

How would you rate the research infrastructure at Syrian universities in your field of study?

Lack of equipment:
"Zero research methodology (lecture-based teaching style). […] "

Lack of funding:
"[…] the overall infrastructure of the universities-Labs- are really in bad situation and not insufficient. However, some private universities have better teaching infrastructure."

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Conclusion

■ The interviewees are in **close contact** with people from the higher education sector, from which it can be concluded that **networks** have formed here

■ The respondents' assessments of the current **teaching and research infrastructure** at Syrian universities tend to be negative overall

■ Fundamental **aspects** like funding, qualified staff, access to literature and equipment are lacking in Syrian higher education

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Thank you for your attention

The presentation slides represent a partial evaluation of a survey conducted by the DAAD in 2020 and are only intended for presentation at the virtual workshop "Higher Education in Syria after a decade of war" (15 April 2021) organized by the DAAD and GJU (German-Jordanian University).

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