

The Annual Report  
of **Kesh Malek** Organization

# 2016



**KESH MALEK**  
كش ملك



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.. Let us make Syria a Republic again

## Who we are

Founded in late 2011, "Kesh Malek" is a **non-profit, civil society organization (CSO)** which activities are focused in **Aleppo province**, in the north of Syria.

"Kesh Malek" was established as a part of the revolutionary movement in Aleppo, and its activities focused in the early stages on **calling and mobilizing people to demonstrate, and distributing awareness and mobilizing flyers, serving the goals of the revolution** in freedom and dignity. Additionally, the organization was involved in organizing politically and revolutionary oriented **advocacy campaigns** according to the current developments. After the **liberation of the eastern areas of Aleppo city**, "Kesh Malek" shifted its activities to the liberated areas and organized a cluster of activities in participation with the civil society, and particularly **targeting children**, and it was well aware of the importance of **building educational and service entities and initiatives** that may fill the gap following the withdrawal of the state institutions and address the deteriorating situation of livelihood. Therefore, the organization commenced in **organizing clean-up campaigns, and opened the school of "martyr Mustafa Karman"**, who is one of the organization's co-founders who was killed by the shelling that targeted a demonstration in Bustan Al Qasr neighborhood. **This school was one of the first educational institutions** that merged in the liberated areas out of regime control.

In the beginning of 2013, "Kesh Malek" opened its headquarters in **Gaziantep, Turkey**, and obtained a license as a Syrian CSO, which was an important step towards institutionalizing, organizing and expanding its operation.

The vision of "Kesh Malek" focuses on **building a democratic Syrian community and state**, that is respectful to human rights, and based on citizenship, justice, and respecting diversity.

In "Kesh Malek", we believe that **the Syrian revolution is the way to bring a radical change in Syria** that will shift the state from a totalitarian rule to a democratic state that has no place for dictatorship, and which is respectful to its citizens and will achieve justice and freedom.

## "Kesh Malek" Projects

- Educational Project
- "A country's Identity" Project
- Women-empowerment project

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# 1- Education project

With the liberation of Aleppo city in the summer of 2012, the withdrawal of the regime state institutions from the liberated areas, along with the constant, arbitrary shelling, resulted on a large gap in all the aspects of civil life, including education.

Born in 1983, Mustafa Karman was one of the co-founders of "Kesh Malek". His dream was to open a school in the liberated areas in Aleppo, but he could not achieve his dream as he was killed in a peaceful protest in Bustan Al Qasr neighborhood as a result of a mortar shelling by the regime forces targeting the protest on November 16th, 2012. In order to make his dream come true, in 2013, "Kesh malek" established "Mustafa Karman" school in the same neighborhood where he died.

"Kesh Malek" continued expanding the operation of its educational office to include 7 schools supervised directly to insure the application of the measures committed to by the organization, of respecting children's rights, preventing the enforcement of religious and political ideologies, preventing verbal and physical violence, insuring the space for creativity and recreation, encouraging students to practice freedom of speech, and insuring a safe environment for children through equipping under-ground shelters to avoid the regime and Russian airstrikes targeting public institutions including schools.

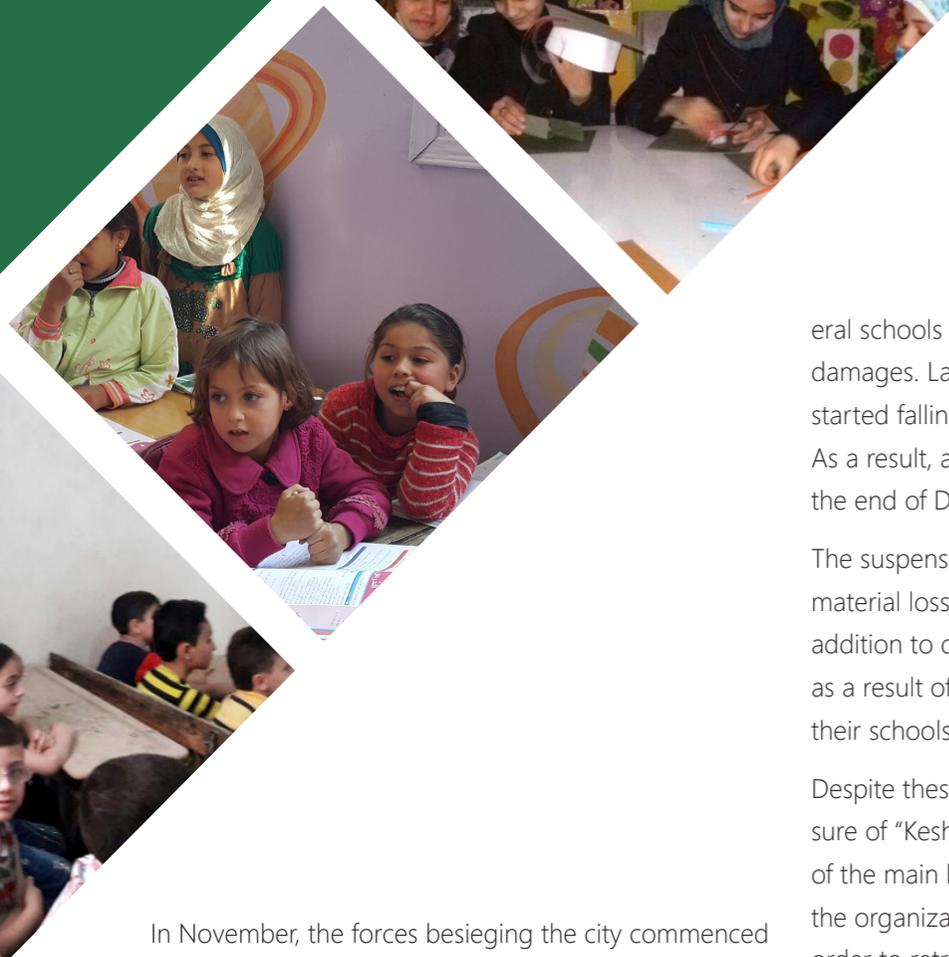
## About the project

With the beginning of the fourth year of the long journey in education, the organization was keen on the continuation of this project as one of the main basis of its operation.

In the beginning of the second school term of 2016, "Kesh malek" sought to rehabilitate all its education staff through building their personal and professional abilities in the fields of communication, interactive education, and class administration. Additionally, the organization sought to rehabilitate its education staff to work in a danger environment, including the ways to deal with emergencies, and that is through creating an emergency plan and training all staff members on the main steps of first aid and evacuation during armed clashes.

Up until 2016, The educational project of "Kesh Malek" had faced several of challenges and obstacles, hindering, and eventually resulting on eliminating a large portion of activities, in addition to generally affecting the educational process. The most important of these challenges was the barbaric military offense, conducted by the Russian-backed regime forces and in allegiance with sectarian militias, targeting the city of Aleppo, and which resulted on a crippling blockade on the rebel-controlled neighborhoods in the city.





eral schools leaving them suffering medium to severe damages. Later on, the neighborhoods of our schools started falling one by one in the hand of the regime. As a result, all schools were permanently suspended in the end of December.

The suspension of "Kesh Malek" schools resulted on material loss and loss of documents of these schools, in addition to denying education to hundreds of children as a result of their displacement and the closure of their schools.

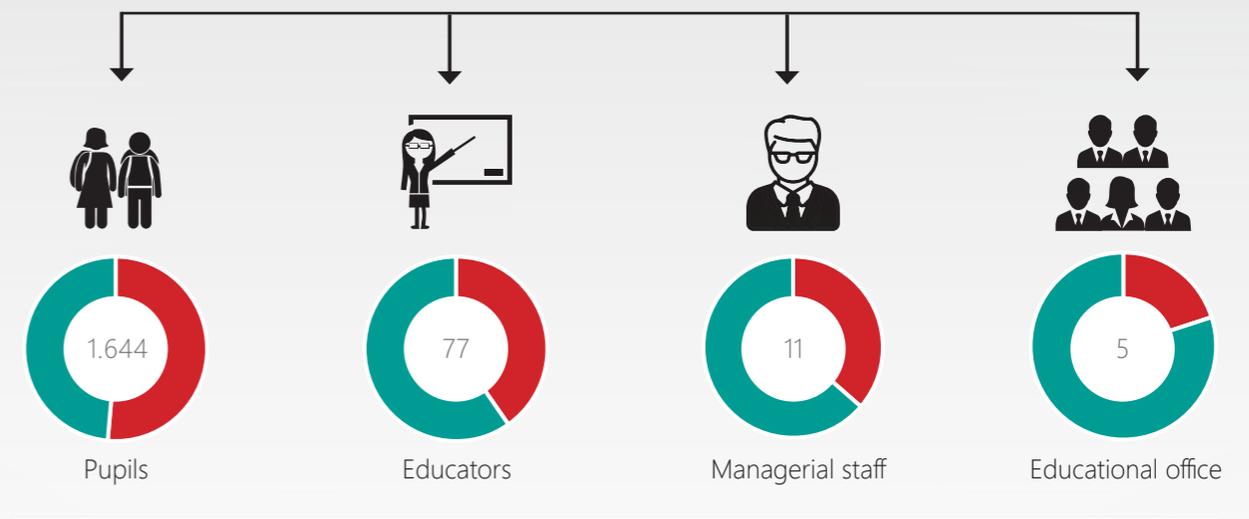
Despite these unfortunate events, which led to the closure of "Kesh Malek" schools, the education is still one of the main basis of the organizations, which motivated the organization to quickly adapt and work harder in order to retrieve this project, given its importance and value to the next generations, specifically the rights of education, freedom, and a dignified life.

In late 2016, the organization exerted tremendous efforts sin order to re-launch the education project, targeting the northern suburbs of Aleppo as the main base, due to the geographic importance of the area and its vast need to similar projects. The education office of the organization will have its headquarters in the area as a strategic base, in addition to re-opening seven schools in several towns in the area.

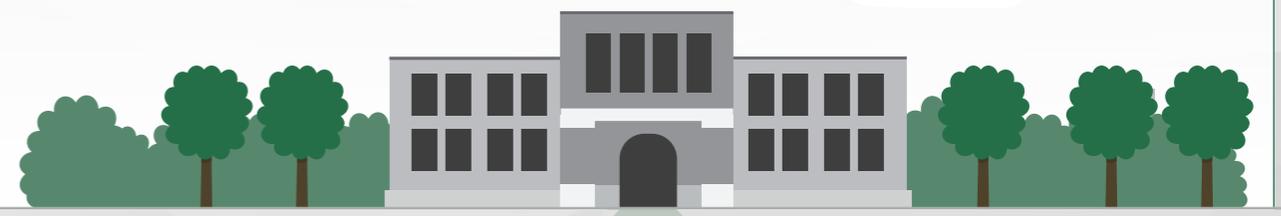
In November, the forces besieging the city commenced in a ruthless shelling campaign, targeting the highly populated residential neighborhoods, and resulting on hundreds of deaths and injuries and causing severe destruction to houses and public institutions, and particularly medical and educational facilities. In mid-November, the regime ground forces advanced in the eastern side of the city, resulting on vast waves of displacement away from clashes, and a severe deterioration in humanitarian situation on all levels, and particularly the complete suspension of education in the eastern parts of the city, after directly targeting sev-

## The educational office in Aleppo city in the school year 2014-2015

Total number  
**1.737**



■ male  
■ Female





## 2. "A country's Identity" project

For decades of its rule, the Assad regime worked on eliminating the sense of citizenship among Syrians, banning all political activities and civil society organizations that dedicate citizenship instead of ethnic and sectarian identities, which resulted on weakening sense of an inclusive citizenship.

As one of the main goals of "Kesh Malek" is to empower and reaffirm the national unity and cohesion of all the diverse components of the Syrian people, the organization sought to conduct activities that may link Syrians to each other and improve their unity.

"A country's Identity" is a project that provides training and educational courses in order to help Syrian youth improve their skills, and offers the space to empower local women through general awareness discussions regarding rights, health, the general situation in town and the legal and political developments. Additionally, the project established, in each of its centers, a public library and a monthly book club in order to contribute to the enrichment and development of personal intellect, along with weekly children activities, alongside other recreational, sport, and educational activities for children.

In "Kesh Malek", we work on expanding and popularizing the project of "A country's Identity". In 2015, we commenced in opening one center in Urem Alkubra town in the western suburbs of Aleppo, and two other centers in Kafr Naha and Ainjara in late 2015.

### The activities of "A country's Identity" centers



#### General discussions

About the local political and social situation



#### Art and culture activities

- fairs
- Cinema
- Public library and book club



#### Educational courses

- English
- Literacy
- Computer



#### Children and youth activities

- Recreational
- sports
- Educational



#### Training courses

- Capacity building
- Increasing managerial and leadership skills



#### Activities for handicapped

training teachers on methods of dealing with handicapped and integrating them with others



#### Women activities

- cultural and political awareness
- Discussions
- Advanced trainings



## Art and culture activities

Every month, the centers are conducting the following activities:

- Art galleries, exhibiting art work that contributes to re-introducing the rich and diverse Syrian culture, and highlighting the issues that touch on the Syrian situation.
- Screening cultural films; every center conducts a monthly screening of films that highlight some social and political issues we are facing and similar experiences faced by other countries in their struggle for freedom and justice.
- Hosting poetry events.
- Other variety of activities, including a chess club and the screening of some soccer matches.
- Every center has a public library, and has conducted monthly book club that contributes to increasing the level of intellect and enriching ideas through analyzing and criticizing.

## General Discussions

The centers of "A country's Identity" project have been conducting monthly discussion sessions in a "town hall meeting" fashion, facilitating meetings between the local residents and their local governance structures and institutions (i.e. local councils, free police, education and services offices, or any organizations operating in the area). These meetings represent a space for local residents to raise their concerns and questions about the issues they face. The discussion aims to identify possible solutions and the proper ways to implement these solutions. These sessions are contributing to strengthening the principles of democracy, public monitoring and public engagement in the process of decision-making.



## Educational courses

We believe the tools of knowledge are a right, and a need for everyone in the process of building and changing. Therefore, we conducted a number of educational courses throughout the past year; literacy, computer, and English courses for youth over 14 years old from both genders. These courses were explicitly popular with a high attendance level.



## Training courses

"A country's Identity" centers conducted a variety of training courses in order to increase the experience and skills, and facilitate the search for job opportunities.

These courses revolved around building individual abilities and increasing the managerial and leadership skills (Strategic planning - Effective communication - discussion management), in coordination with the members of the local councils, and CSOs. The course targeted youth over 18 years old from both genders.



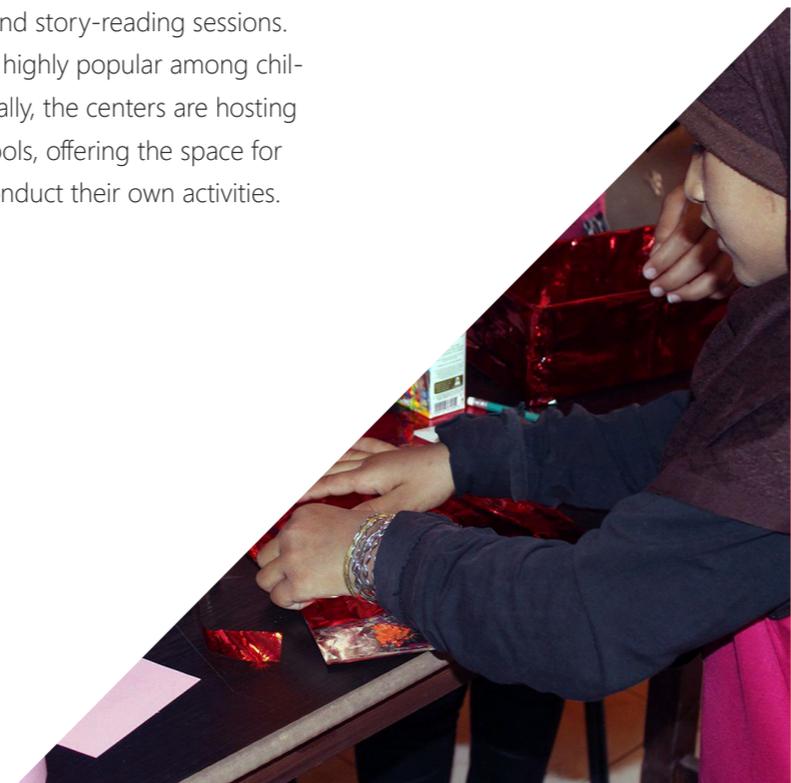
## Women activities

The centers provide weekly activities directed explicitly for women, in order to provide space for women in cultural, legal, and political discussions, and therefore increasing their knowledge allowing them the ability to express and demand their rights. These activities were highly popular among local women.



## Children activities

Every center conducts weekly children activities. The activities, such as painting sessions, photography, screening of meaningful children films, aim to give space for children to express their individual characters and discover their gifts. The activities further include rehearsing and performing theatre plays, and story-reading sessions. The children activities were highly popular among children and parents. Additionally, the centers are hosting activities requested by schools, offering the space for children and teachers to conduct their own activities.



## Handicapped activities

"A country's Identity" project seeks to make all its centers handicapped-friendly, through adding architectural modifications in order to facilitate the entrance and movement of handicapped into, and out of the centers. This step will facilitate the benefit of handicapped individuals from all the educational and training courses offered by the centers. Furthermore, this will contribute to reintegrate them in their local communities. The project also conducts special training courses aiming to train teachers on the methods to deal with handicapped children and reintegrate them with the rest of the children.



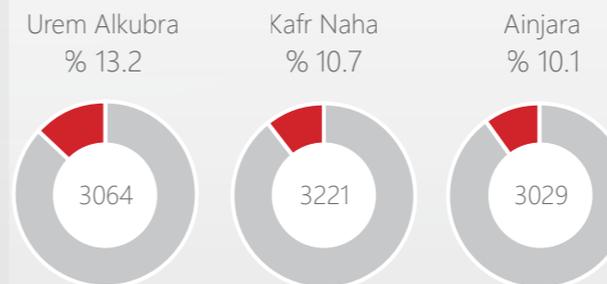
## The activities of "A country's Identity" project in 2016



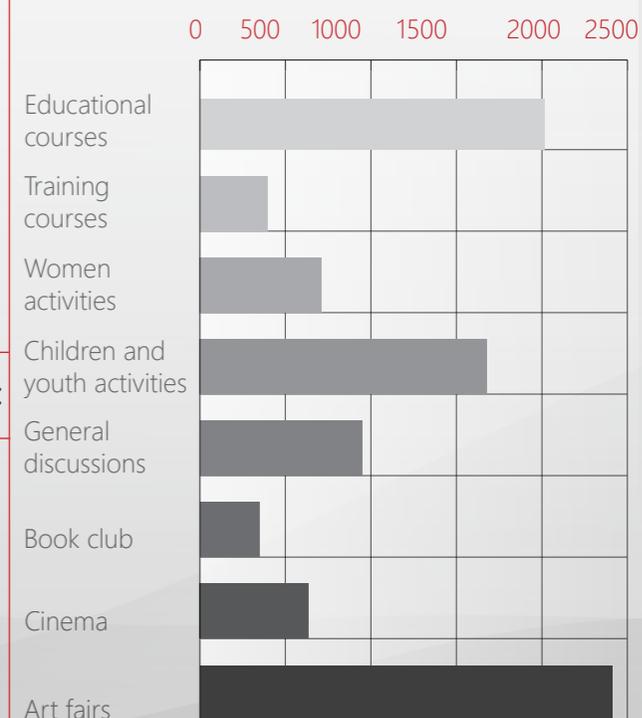
## The number of the beneficiaries of country's identity's centers in 2016

**10.620** beneficiaries

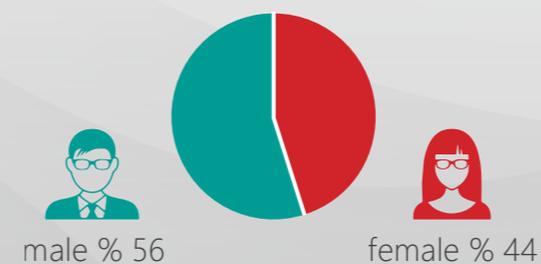
The percentage of beneficiaries in every town:



The number of beneficiaries per activity:



The percentage of male/female beneficiaries:



# 3- Women-empowerment project

## Girls education project

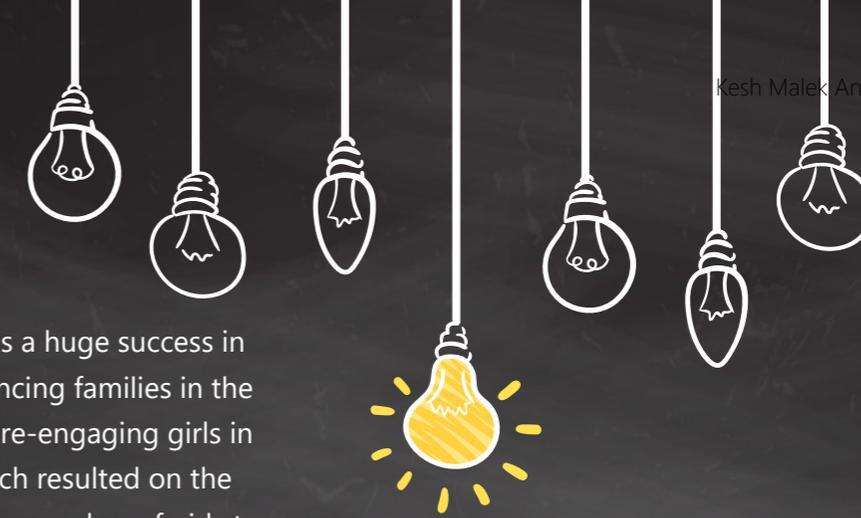
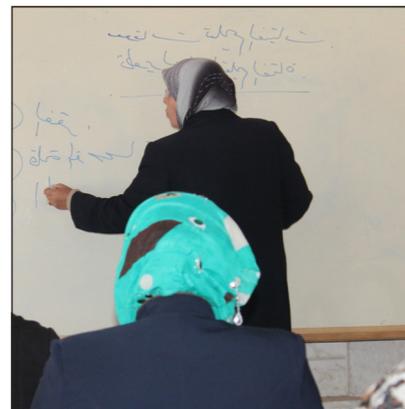
The conservative views of the community, along with the current environment of conflict, resulted on an increase in the number of girls dropping out of school, which, in turn, will become a reason, and a result, to depriving a lot of women rights, including cases of early-marriage and domestic violence.

During our 3 years of school operation, we sufficiently researched the issue of girls dropping out of schools, analyzing this phenomenon and its reasons and results, and setting up a project-plan for a 6 months' trial period.

The project of "girls' education" provides support to women who were not able to continue their education for any reason, and seeks to find solutions through conducting visits to their families and attempting to learn their reasons.

After interviewing 170 families, we concluded that most of the families' main reason to prevent their girls from attending schools is lack of safe transportation means and/or the long distance to school. Therefore, the solution to this problem was to provide transportation means for girls to, and from schools, which encouraged more families to re-engage their daughters in education.

On the other hand, there were several cases of early-marriage that resulted on preventing girls from re-engaging in their education. The suggested solution was to create a home-based-education where the organization provides women teachers willing to visit the students in their places and provide them with a 4-month-long intensive curriculum that is equal to an entire school year.



The project was a huge success in terms of convincing families in the importance of re-engaging girls in education, which resulted on the return of a large number of girls to their schools right after conducting these interviews with their families

### Statistics on girls' education project

Visits	170
Returning to school through providing transportation means	40
Providing home schooling	14
Returning to school by convincing the family	40
Educators and Supervisors	8



## “Kesh Malek” chart

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