PHOENIX SPACE

Gulfsands

Syrian Society for Social Development
الجمعية السورية للتنمية الإجتماعية

IMPACT REPORT

SSSD Syria x Phoenix Space
STEM Spark Course
August 2025

Recognised social research, such as the Heckman Curve, illustrates that that investments made in the earliest stages of learning yield the highest returns in lifetime earnings, productivity, and social stability. Embedding STEM education alongside foundational skills- critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving- creates a compounding effect: each skill gained early accelerates later learning, employability, and national growth.

Syria now stands at a critical inflection point after more than a decade of conflict. Traditional reconstruction models centred on infrastructure and trade are constrained by sanctions and economic stagnation. To overcome these barriers, Gulfsands and Phoenix Space are placing learning capacity-not physical capital-at the centre of Syria's recovery strategy.

By investing in the talent, innovation, and potential of Syria's youth from a young age, this approach enables the nation to bypass traditional industrial stages and integrate directly into the knowledge and digital economy. Through STEM education, digital upskilling, and inclusive learning ecosystems, we are building a future-ready generation equipped to lead Syria's economic recovery and secure its long-term prosperity.

** The **Heckman Curve** is an economic theory demonstrating that investments in human capital- particularly in education and skill development- yield the highest returns when made early in life.*

Course Overview

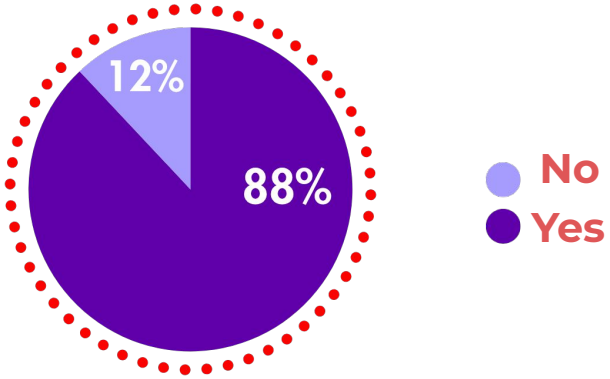
Launched in August 2025 with the generous support of Gulfsands, this STEM Spark cohort was comprised of **120 students between the ages of 9 and 14 in Aleppo, Syria**. STEM Spark introduces younger children to core scientific and technical disciplines, such as algebra, geometry, Newtonian mechanics, space science, programming, and experimental design. More than subject knowledge, STEM Spark nurtures the ability to ask questions, test ideas, solve problems, and collaborate effectively, skills essential not only for academic growth but also for rebuilding societies in times of crisis and recovery.

"I love imagining myself in space, and this course makes the dream even closer."

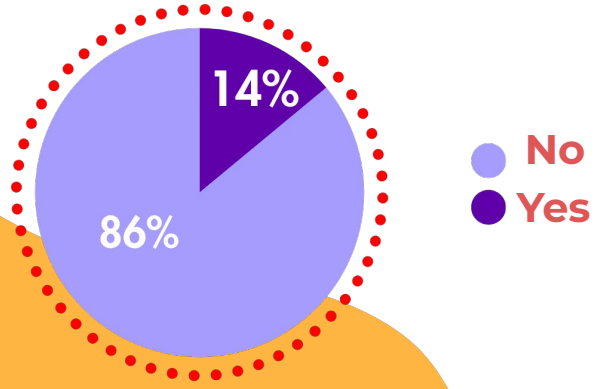
Muhammad, 10

Student Education Data

Are you currently enrolled in school?



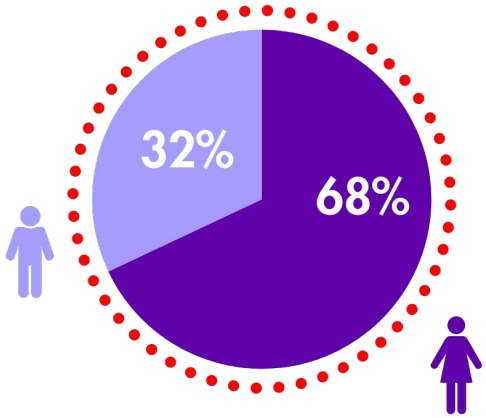
Do you have any gaps in education?



Student Demographics

120
Students

11
Average Age



Course details

A 2-part course

Part 1: Airbus Foundation Lessons: In each of the first practical lessons students learn about some aspect of a fictional mission to a space hotel. Students learn through a combination of a video-assisted practical lessons followed by a theoretical question.

Part 2: Phoenix Space Lessons: 5 lessons to equip students with fundamental knowledge and skills in physics, programming and maths.

Hear From Our Partners

Syria has endured more than a decade of turmoil and heartbreak, yet today we are beginning to see the first signs of hope. History shows that crises often spur innovation and Syria now stands at a pivotal moment, ready to rebuild, to reimagine its future, and to once again contribute on the international stage. Through Gulfsands' partnership with Phoenix Space, we are investing in Syria's most powerful asset: its youth. By supporting digital upskilling and STEM education, we aim to equip young Syrians with the tools to participate in the modern economy, unlock new opportunities, and drive the innovation needed for long-term recovery. Investing in youth is not just vital for Syria's future- it is essential for sustainable, inclusive growth across the region.

Omar Hamad, Gulfsands GM Syria

At the Syrian Society for Social Development(SSSD), we believe Syria's greatest infrastructure is its youth-not concrete and steel, but curiosity, resilience, and the courage to ask 'why?'. In partnership with Phoenix Space and with the generous support of Gulfsands, our STEM Spark initiative is lighting the first sparks of a knowledge-led recovery. Through hands-on science, creative problem-solving, and digital literacy, we're not just filling classrooms- we're cultivating a generation of thinkers, builders, and future leaders ready to reimagine Syria's tomorrow. Because when a child in Aleppo builds a paper rocket and learns it falls at the same rate as a feather in a vacuum, they're not just discovering gravity- they're discovering their own potential.

The Team at SSSD

Omar Hamad traveled from Damascus to Aleppo to visit SSSD and see the first hand the difference our partnership is making.

Course details

Areas of Focus	Practical Exercises
Gravity and Other Forces	Investigating air resistance with different objects
Scientific Method	Testing theories using homemade objects
Weight & Combined Forces	Making matchbox rockets
Computer programming	Scratch lessons on laptops
Geometry	Making different shapes with paper and tape

Student and Teacher feedback

100%

of students would recommend this course to their friends

"How could the course be improved?"

44%

of students want more! (*more time for lessons, and more experiments*)

100%

of teachers were **satisfied with the course curriculum**. While they found it sufficiently aligned with the students' incoming academic level, **some modifications were required.**

Skills development

96%

Believe learning science, maths and computers is **important for their future**.

99%

Are more comfortable applying **critical thinking** skills to the data presented to them in class.

93%

Are more comfortable **collaborating** and sharing opinions with their peers.

99%

Are more confident **practically applying** what they've learned in their daily life.

99%

Are better able to find **solutions to problems** and will **persevere** until they do.

99%

Are more comfortable applying **analytical skills** – taking information and figuring-out its meaning.

Our Students' Voices

I went home and told my family about the ball and feather experiment - that a metal ball and feather fall at the same rate in a vacuum.

Wafaa, 10

My favourite lesson was when we built paper airplanes and learned how planes fly.

Rahaf, 12

I learned about the force of gravity through fun scientific experiments.

Mahmoud

The most important thing I learned was how to apply scientific laws in real life.

Fatima, 10

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