

# Labor Market Assessment Report

## I. Background

Wars are dramatically altering and affecting lives around the globe, especially those of youth. In Iraq, youth have been significantly affected by violence in recent years, and have often been the direct targets of extremist acts intended to cause maximum civilian casualties and terrorize communities. These conflicts affect the economy, and the subsequent upheaval has an enormous impact on thousands of youth's physical and mental well-being, as well as their chances to have a stable income and job opportunities. Most male and female youth do not have the skills to enter the labor market, especially due to the lack of job opportunities in both private and governmental sectors. In order to provide youth with the required and desirable skills, it is very important to conduct a market assessment to determine the market's needs, which change as the environment and economy changes due to conflict.

- **The primary and main objective of Youth Training Center is to enable a total of 1000 beneficiaries**, selected among the Baghdad Governorate according to specific criteria, to access the job market and establish their own small income generating activities.
- **The primary sub-objective** of the Youth Center is to allow youths from the Baghdad Governorate to access a safe learning space to develop skills for future jobs and enhance their competitiveness in the job market.

To assess local market needs and opportunities in the project area and obtain feedback from the target population on their employment-related needs, objectives, and challenges, a labor market assessment (LMA) was conducted by Mercy Hands in early February.

## II. Methodology

The LMA was conducted from February 5 - 11 in the Al-Doura district of Baghdad. The overall target was 220 youth participants, which was calculated using the Raosoft sample size calculator with a 90% confidence level and 5.5% margin of error. The population size for al-Dora is 200,000 - while this is the population of this area overall, rather than only youth, the sample size does not change significantly for populations above 20,000. A mixed method approach was used,

including in-person surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs) of the target population. Key informant interviews (KIIs) of market stakeholders were also utilized.

Overall, 226 youth participated in surveys, 114 of whom also participated in FGDs, and 66 KIIs were conducted. More detailed information on each method is below:

### ***Door to Door Survey***

To obtain randomized data from youth in Al-Dora, MH staff members administered a door to door survey. Each of the 8 groups of staff interviewing youth included a man and a woman. The resulting sample was 112 participants (83 male / 29 female).

Some women refused to do the survey or open the door to MH staff, resulting in a higher representation of male youth. In addition, people were apprehensive about anything bearing the name of an organization due to the presence of political, religious, and other organizations that collect donations. However, after giving an overview of MH and the aim of the questionnaire, people were cooperative.

### ***Focus Group Discussions***

FGDs were held with former participants of the MH ACE Project and were facilitated by trainers with the ability and background of running group discussions. There were 24 FGDs held in total, with group size ranging from 2-6 to ensure collection of quality data. The resulting sample size was 114 participants (71 male / 43 female).

### ***In-Person Survey***

While the FGDs were held, participants were asked to complete the same survey as explained in method 1. The resulting sample size was 114 participants (71 male / 43 female). The findings from both surveys have been combined in the following “Findings” section of this report. Therefore, the overall sample for the survey was 226 (154 male / 72 female).

### ***Key Informant Interviews***

A market assessment form was used to collect information from key market stakeholders through in person visits. MH staff interviewed stakeholders from a variety of sectors (private, government, NGOs). A total of 66 stakeholders were interviewed (53 male / 13 female).

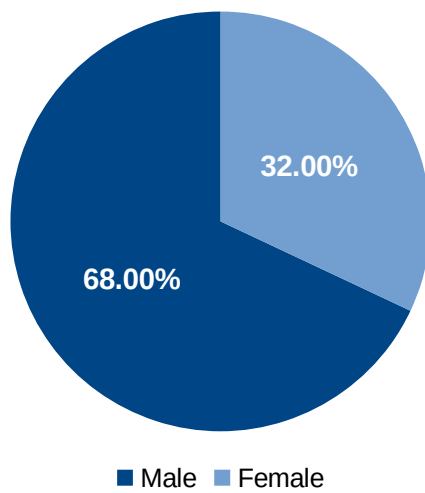
### III. Findings

#### Door to Door and In-Person Survey

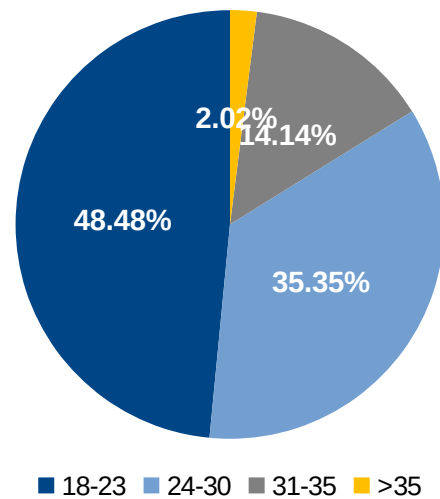
#### DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of participants were male (68%), from the age of 18-30 years old (83%), and were not IDPs or returnees. While educational level was varied, the highest percentage of participants held a BA (31%).

**Gender**



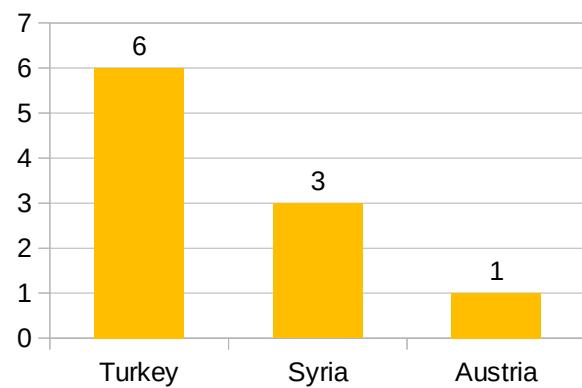
**Age**



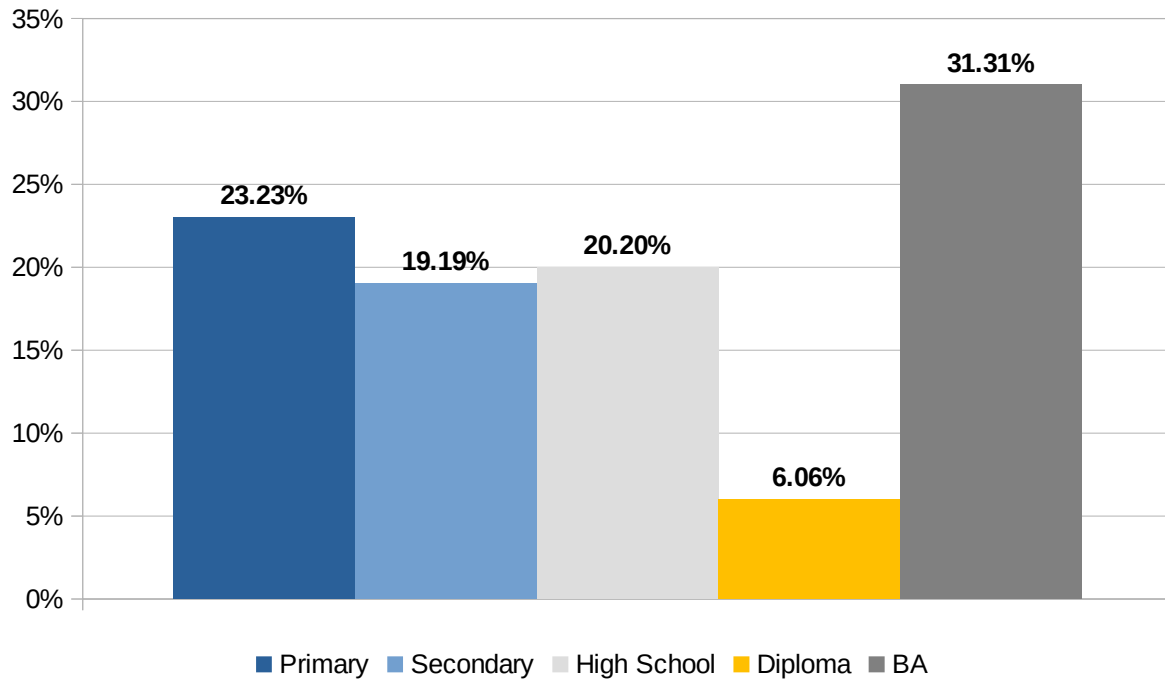
**Number of IDPs/Returnees**



**Returning Country**



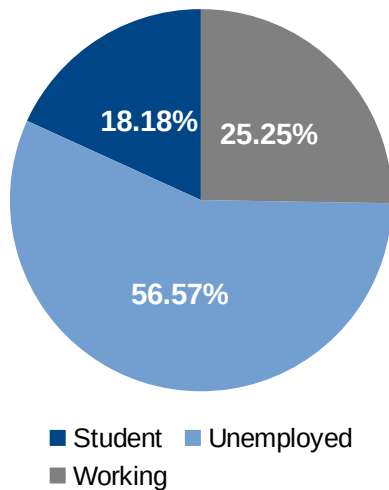
### Educational level



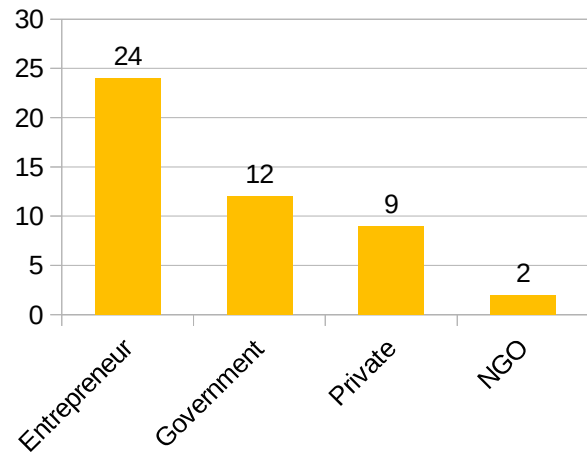
### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Most respondents were unemployed (57%), and simply stated being unable to find a job or studying (being a student) as the reason. However, the following 2 reasons for being unemployed were lack of training, lack of experience, which highlights the need for projects involving both job training and practical experience.

### Occupation



### Work Sector



## Reasons for Unemployment

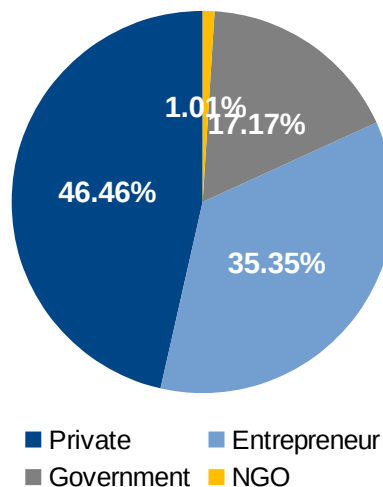


*Note: The above responses are only from people who were not working (unemployed or students). Respondents can choose more than 1 answer.*

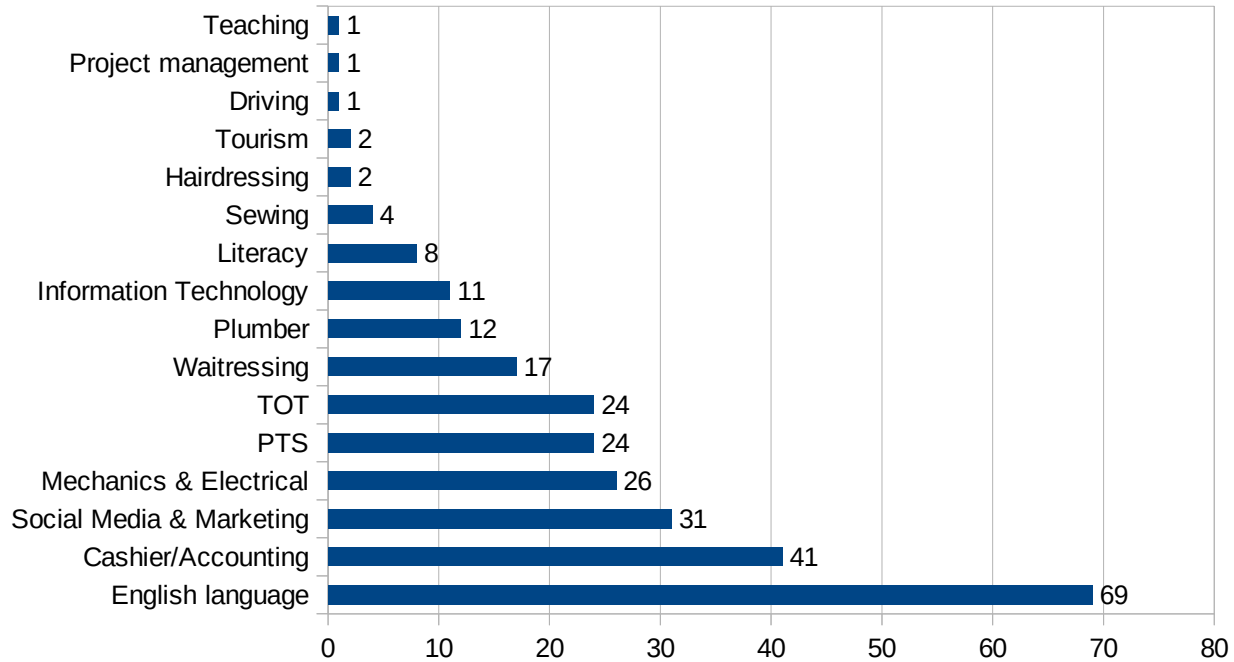
## INTERESTS

Respondents were most interested in working in the private sector (46%) or being an entrepreneur (35%). 100% of those surveyed were interested in training courses. The 3 most popular skills to learn were English (69 respondents), Cashier/Accounting (41 respondents) and Social Media & Marketing (31 respondents).

### What sector would you like to work in?



### What skills do you want to learn?



Note: Respondents can choose more than 1 answer.

### Focus Group Discussions

Demographic information, employment information, and the interests of FGD participants has been captured and documented in the above section. Overall, the profile of these previous beneficiaries was remarkably similar to those surveyed door to door. The majority of participants were male (62%), from the age of 18-30 years old (83%), and were not IDPs or returnees. While educational level was varied, the highest percentage of participants held a BA (31%). And, the majority of participants were unemployed (67%).

Participants were asked to discuss the following key questions: themes from their answers are described below.

### What would you like to achieve in the next 5 years?

Answers to this question fell into 3 major groups. Participants either discussed the type of employment they would like to have, the type of business they would like to start, or what they would want to learn or have learned.

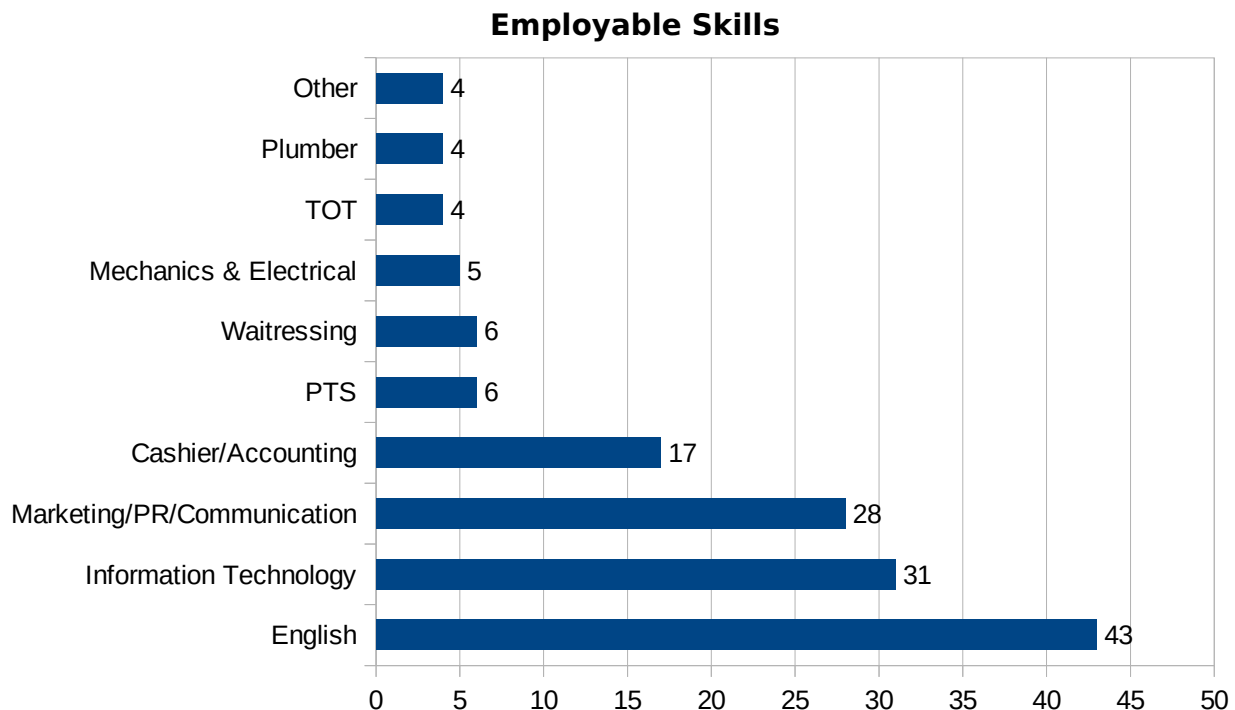
**Employment:** While 29 respondents did not specify how they would like to be employed, others had a wide array of answers, including translator (3), accountant (2), famous Youtuber (1), analysis lab technician (1), engineer (1), center manager for children (1), policeman (1), project manager (1), project officer (1), sewing (1), marketing (1), TOT trainer (1), working in a well-known restaurant (1), and being an English teacher in an institute (1).

**Business:** While 6 respondents did not specify what type of business they would like to start or own, others again had a wide array of responses, including cars/car shop (1), barber shop (1), electrical (1), design clothes (1), photography (1), media (1), mobile shop (1), hair salon (1), and sewing (1).

**Learning:** 18 respondents wanted to obtain their BA degree in the next 5 years. Other goals in this category were to continue their studies (3), finish high school (5), advance in English (2), improve accounting skills (1), and improve skills (1).

In addition, 24 respondents did not have an answer, and one wanted to marry.

### What skills are the most important for people in Al-Doura to learn in order to find work?

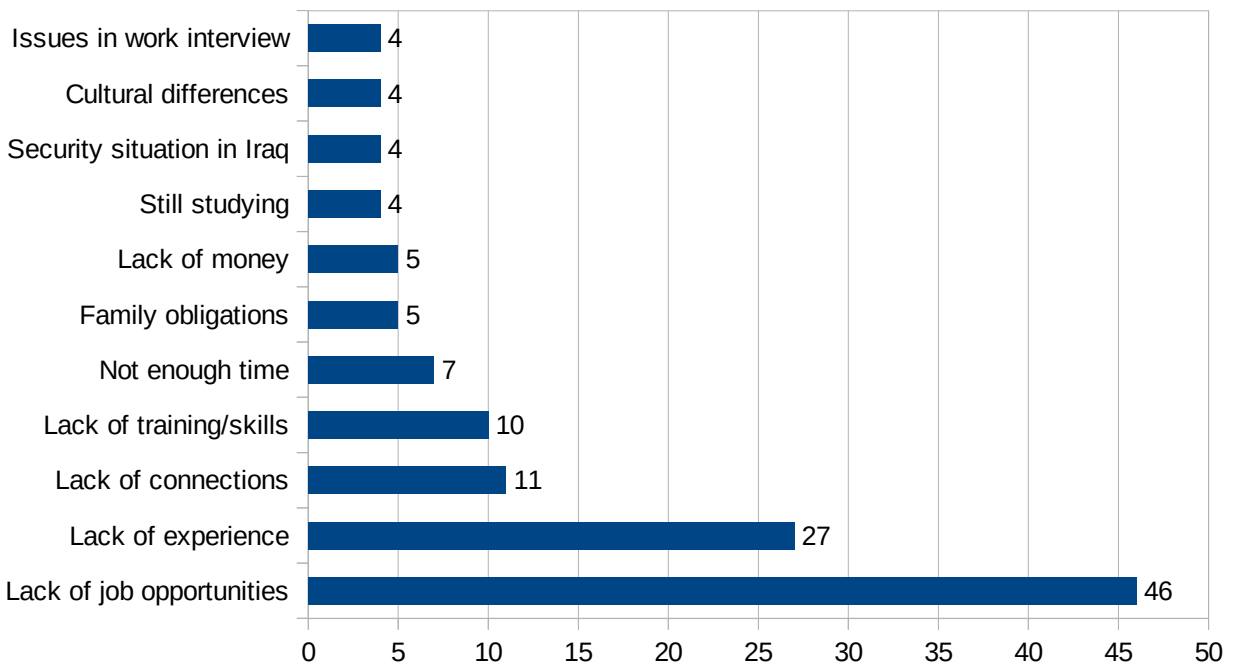


## What issues have effected you or someone you know while looking for a job? AND What challenges do you have in Al-Doura with finding work?

*As these questions were similar, and provoked similar responses in participants, they have been grouped together in the analysis.*

The most common challenges were lack of job opportunities (46) and lack of experience (27).

### Challenges



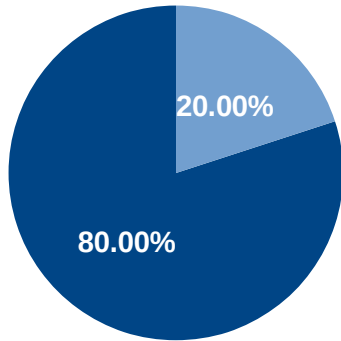
In addition to the above, other less common responses were: location (3), long working hours (2), educational level (2), working more hours than the salary (2), health/psychological conditions (2), lack of confidence in work (2), lack of marketing culture (1), and conflict in the workplace (1).



## Key Informant Interviews

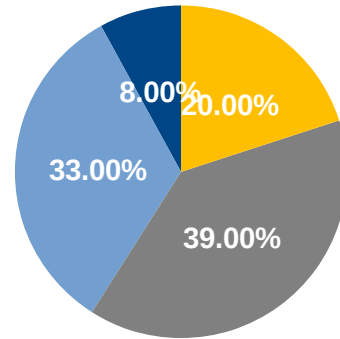
### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Gender**



■ Male ■ Female

**Age**

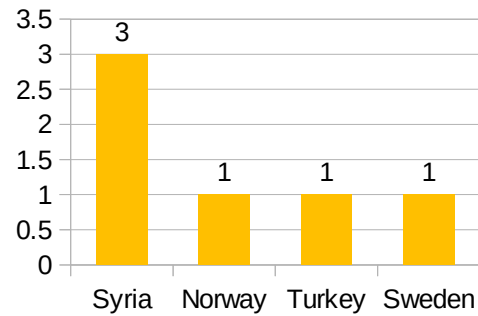


■ 18-23 ■ 24-30 ■ 31-35 ■ >35

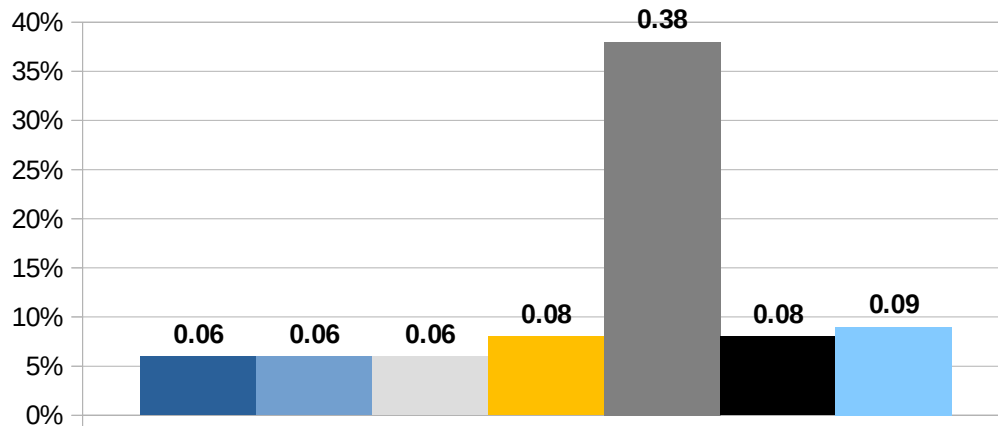
**Number of IDPs/Returnees**



**Returning Country**



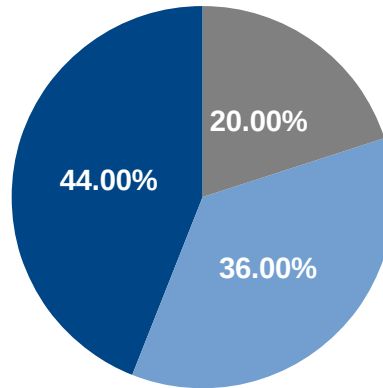
**Educational level**



■ Primary ■ Secondary ■ High School ■ Diploma  
■ BA ■ M.A. ■ Ph.D.

## EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

### Work Sector



■ Government ■ Private  
■ Entrepreneur

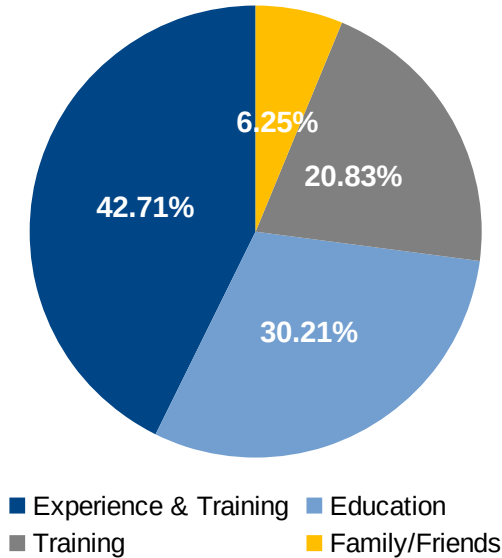
### Work Position

While many interviewees were in management (11) or Professors/Teachers (11), a range of other positions were represented to ensure a wide array of perspectives:

- Sales Representative (6)
- "Employee" (5)
- Media/Marketing (4)
- Administration (4)
- Accountant/Cashier (4)
- Engineer (3)
- Data entry (2)
- Associate (2)
- Registration Officer (2)
- Dentist (2)
- Cashier (1)
- Team Leader (1)
- Journalist (1)
- Internal Medicine Specialist (1)
- Consultant Researcher (1)
- Dealer (1)
- Business Owner (1)
- Businessman (1)
- Trainee (1)
- Translator Assistant (1)

## EMPLOYABLE SKILLS

### How did you acquire the skills for your job?



In addition, **71%** of those interviewed had received some sort of vocational training, highlighting the importance of providing training services.

### What are the most important training courses to obtain work?

The highest responses were English (22), IT (18), and Marketing (12).

There was a range of additional suggestions related to specific types of employment, such as Electricity & Mechanics (5), Plumber (4), TOT (3), Cashier/Accounting (3), Waitressing (2), Carpentry (1), Crisis Management (1), PR (1), Risk Management (1), Service Management (1), Sewing (1), Driving (1), Starting small projects (1), Dyeing (1), HR (1), Media (1), Translation (1), Mobile Maintenance (1), and Project Management (2).

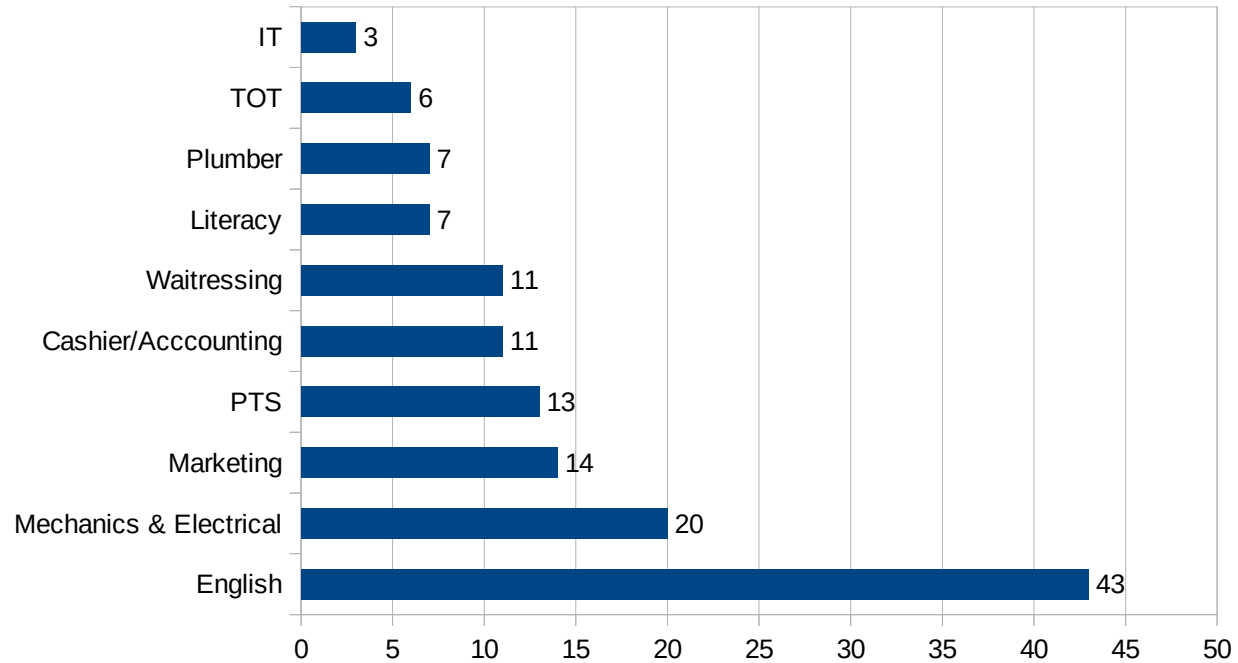
Suggestions were also made of soft skills and additional types of support unrelated to a specific type of employment: PTS (6), Microsoft Office (2), Working protocol (1), PSS (1), Literacy (1), and Time management (1).

### What skills are most important for people in Al-Doura to learn in order to find work?

Notably, when the question was made more specific to Al-Doura, the answers narrowed down significantly and IT was no longer a top skill, while Mechanics & Electrical was. However, IT is again listed in the following question as top desirable skill in hiring someone.

These answers are very similar to what FGD participants listed in answer to the same question: English (43), IT (31), Marketing (28), and Cashier/Accounting (17). The key difference is that IT skills remained a top answer among FGD participants.

### Employable Skills



### If you were to hire someone, what are the most important skills they should have?

The most common answer by far was English (27 responses), followed by IT (19), and experience (11). Notably, IT skills had a high response, despite it not being listed as a top employable skill. It is also valuable to see that potential employers, aside from wanting candidates to have good English and computer skills, highly valued multiple soft skills/characteristics. Answers provided by at least two respondents are listed below:

#### Hard Skills

- English (27)
- IT (19)
- PR (4)
- Marketing/Social Media (3)

#### Soft Skills/Characteristics

- Good image/look (8)
- Tactful (4)

- Intelligence (3)
- Loves his work (3)
- Working under pressure (2)
- Adaptable (2)
- Organizational skills (2)
- Honesty (2)
- Teamwork (2)

### Education/Training

- BA degree (4)
- Educated (3)
- Certificate (2)

### What advice would you give to someone trying to start a business in Al-Doura?

The top piece of advice was to complete a market/needs assessment, followed by skills training. A wide variety of useful advice was given by those interviewed:

### Planning

- Market/needs assessment (17)
  - “Be fully aware of the requirements of the market, as they differ from one market to another and from one region to another near the areas affecting the market or away from it”
- Choose the right place (3)
- SMART goals and objectives (1)
- Study target customers (1)

### Self-Development

- Develop skills with training (14)
  - Communication (4)
  - PR (2)
  - English (1)
  - IT (1)
  - Marketing (1)
- Self-development (5)
- Increase experience (1)

### Financial

- Prepare a budget/financial plan/calculate costs (3)
- Prepare and study the economic feasibility/financial assessment (2)

- Open the project with a small budget/start small (2)
- Avoid raising commodity prices (1)
- Avoid loans (1)

### **Additional Advice**

- Be honest (6)
- Be patient (5)
- Market the project well (3)
- Work perfection (3)
- Be new and creative (1)
- Be careful choosing project partners (1)
- Continue despite failure (1)
- Self-confidence (1)
- “Take advantage of previous experiences of people who started similar projects“ (1)

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **What are the main jobs/opportunities in local markets?**

Opportunities noted by more than three interviewees are listed below:

- Marketing (10)
- Cafes/Restaurants (10)
- Cashier/Accounting (9)
- Trade (8)
- Super markets (6)
- Sales (5)
- IT (5)
- Private Company (4)
- Plumber (4)
- Clothing (4)
- Delivery (4)

### **What are the gaps in local markets?**

Gaps noted by more than three interviewees are listed below:

- Lack of skills (5)
- High prices of store rentals (4)
- Lack of quality material (4)
- Lack of trust (4)
- Neglecting modern marketing methods/promotions/social media (4)

## What challenges to people in Al-Doura face with finding work, and how do you think they can be addressed?

The top challenges noted by interviewers were a lack of skills/experience, and lack of local job opportunities. The most common solutions were providing training courses and financing small projects with loans. Challenges noted by more than three respondents are listed below.

CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
Lack of skills (4) Lack of experience (3) Lack of training (2) Lack of PR skills (2)	Training courses (11) Volunteer in NGOs (1)
Lack of local job opportunities (10)	Provide job opportunities (3) Develop people's skills (1) Private sector to help/provide consultation to job seekers (1) Improve marketing (1) Make good CV (1) Finance small projects with loans (1) Build factories to utilize manpower available (1) Prevent foreign workers from entering (1)
Security situation in Iraq (6)	Finance small projects with loans (1) Education and capacity-building (1)
Large number of foreign workers (3) High demand for foreign workers due to their efficiency (1) and lower wages (1)	Provide training courses (2) Increase youth skills (1) Increase worker wages (1) Support national product (1) Prevent foreign workers from entering (1) Provide government job opportunities (1)
Insufficient capital (4) No financial support (1)	Finance small projects with loans (4) Provide job opportunities (1)
Economic situation of Iraq (4)	Education and capacity-building (1) Support small projects (1) Raise standard of living (1)

## IV. Conclusion

The top challenges to employment noted by key informant interviewees were a lack of skills/experience, and lack of local job opportunities. They also noted the largest gap in local markets as a lack of skills. The most common solutions were providing training courses and financing small projects with loans. Similarly, FGD participants also listed their most common challenges as lack of job opportunities and lack of experience. And, survey respondents noted lack of training and lack of experience as two of the main reasons for not finding work. **In sum, training courses, loans, and providing practical experience are the main employment-related needs in this population.**

According to key informant interviewees, the most important training courses in order to find work are English, IT, Marketing. When asked for Al-Doura specifically, Mechanics and Electrical was added as a top skill to learn. Similarly, English, IT, Marketing, and Cashier/Accounting were listed as the most important skills to learn by FGD participants. And, survey respondents and FGD participants most wanted to learn English, Cashier/Accounting, and Marketing. **So all together, the top recommendations for training courses are:**

- **English**
- **IT**
- **Marketing**
- **Cashier/Accounting**
- **Mechanics & Electrical**

According to potential employers, the most important attributes for candidates to have are English ability, IT/computer skills, relevant experience, and a series of soft skills (such as tactful communication). The first three have been mentioned above, while the latter highlights the importance of courses that go over supplemental job-searching skills, such as PTS. In addition, PTS often showed up for all those interviewed and surveyed as an important course. **Therefore, this assessment reinforces the importance of providing PTS training.**