



Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid

Rapid Market Assessment

Al Salhiah & Al Baradi'yah

Basra Governorate

Javier

[Date]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cooperation Partner

Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid

UNDP Project

Beautiful Basra: Job Creation through Green Urban Beautification and Revitalization of Basra Governorate

Project Country

Iraq

Project Area

Basra Governorate (Al Baradhiya, and Al-Salhiya)



Basra Province is an Iraqi city, is located in southern Iraq country, and on Shatt Al-Arab River, around 545 km south of the capital city (Baghdad), the province bordered by Missan to the North East, and Thi Qar to the North West, and Basra is roughly 110 km (68 mi) from the Persian Gulf. There are eight districts in Basra province,

Basra had an estimated population of 2.5 million in 2012. Basra is also Iraq's main port, which is handled at the port of Umm Qasr.

The Shatt-Al-Arab and Basra waterways define the eastern and western borders of Basra, respectively. The city is penetrated by a complex network of canals and streams, vital for irrigation and other agricultural use. These canals were once used to transport goods and people throughout the city, but during the last two decades, pollution and a continuous drop in water levels have made river navigation impossible in the canals.

Basra has a hot desert climate, like the rest of the surrounding region, though it receives slightly more precipitation than inland locations due to its location near the coast. During the summer months, from June to August, Basra is consistently one of the hottest cities on the planet, with temperatures regularly exceeding 50 °C in July and August. In winter Basra experiences mild weather with average high temperatures around 20 °C. On some winter nights, minimum temperatures are below 0 °C. High humidity – sometimes exceeding 90% – is common due to the proximity to the marshy Persian Gulf.

Basra has the five largest oilfields (South and north of the Rumaila oilfields, Zubair oilfield, West Qurna-1 &2 and Majnoon oilfield). And many foreign companies have been worked in these oilfields. In April 2017, the Iraqi Parliament recognized Basra as Iraq's economic capital.

2. METHODOLOGY

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) is to provide critical data which will be used to inform the implementation of the Mercy Hands project “*Beautiful Basra: Job Creation through Green Urban Beautification and Revitalization of Basra Governorate.*” Through the RMA, the project team will have an increased understanding of the labor market needs and opportunities in Basra and will therefore be able to provide better informed programmatic results. This includes the establishment of CfW activities types in the other outputs and designing the vocational trainings. The project team will be able to understand the key dynamics and focal points within the labor market for more effective project implementation. Lastly, the RMA will also be used to select beneficiaries for the project (see separate document “*Practical Approach to Beneficiary Selection*”).

II. Assessment Overview

The RMA consists of a household survey as well as key informant interviews with business owners. The RMA took place in Basra governorate and was conducted in November and December 2020, pending approval from local authorities. The survey has been designed in KoBo Toolbox in both English and Arabic and combines a quantitative and qualitative approach. Both questionnaires have been reviewed and approved by UNDP.

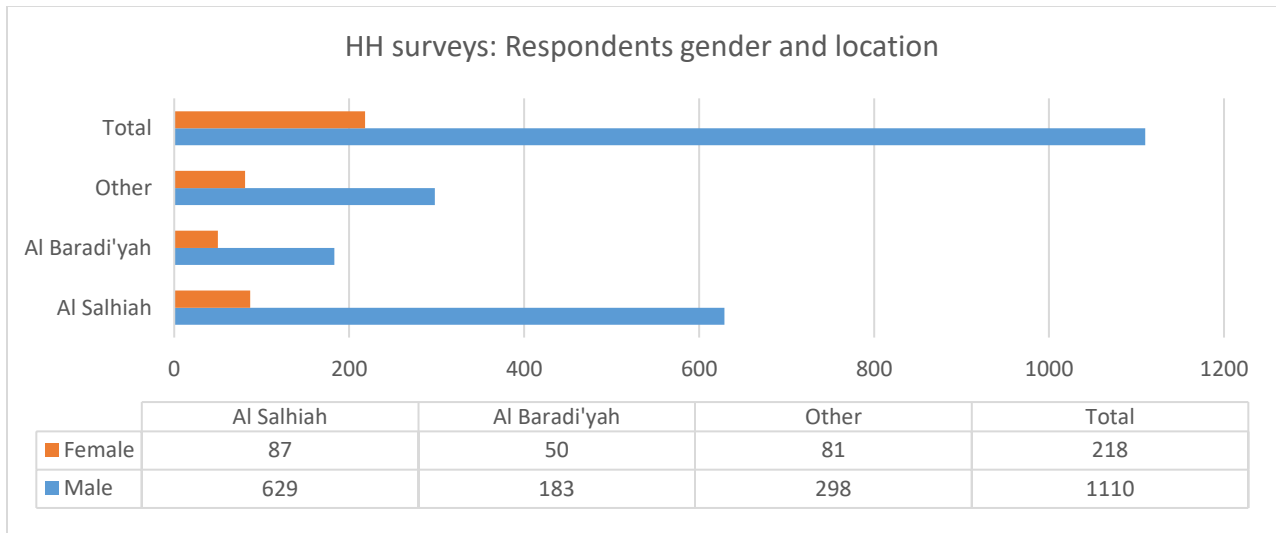
III. Sample Size and Procedure

For the household survey, a random sampling technique was used out of an estimated population of approximately 2.5 million people in Basra Governorate. With a 99% confidence interval and 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size for the household survey should be 664 respondents. However, since this survey is also being used for beneficiary selection (for approximately 400 beneficiaries), the overall sample will be 1,200 respondents. The sample will also take the following in consideration:

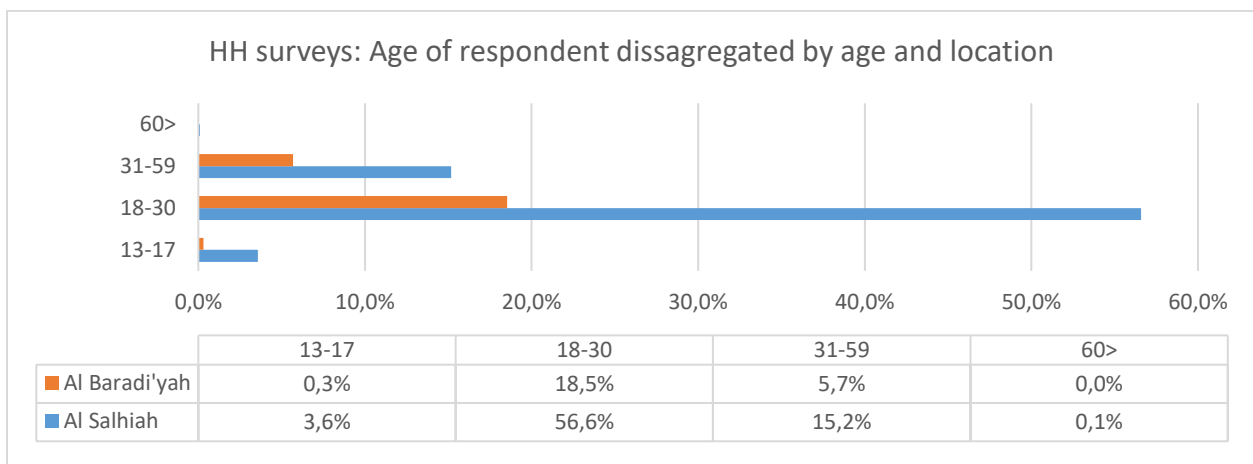
- At least 40% of respondents should be female
- The survey should take place in Al Baradhiya, and Al-Salhiya neighborhoods
- Respondents should be both employed and unemployed, from a variety of sectors
- Households should come from a range of family sizes and living conditions
- Households to be chosen by additional methods according to our “*Practical Approach to Beneficiary Selection,*” such as via coordination with NGOs, an online application, local authorities, and community representatives

For the survey with business owners, a minimum of 60 interviews will be conducted. Selection of respondents will include the following considerations:

- Respondents should be chosen from a wide variety of sectors (i.e. tailoring, construction, tourism, oil)
- Respondents should be chosen from both the private and public sector
- Respondents should be chosen from a variety of employment types (self-employed, small business, large business, etc.)
- Female business owners should be actively searched for and interviewed



Some of the respondents to the survey were not resident in Al Baradhiya, or Al-Salhiya, these respondents have been filtered out for having a better picture of the situation in these neighbourhoods without data disturbance.



3. LIMITATIONS

Most challenges were faced regarding the disaggregation of the respondents, as it can be seen in the graphs above. Finding female respondents have been an issue for the enumerators, which in the end it will make the report hard to analyse through a gender lens.

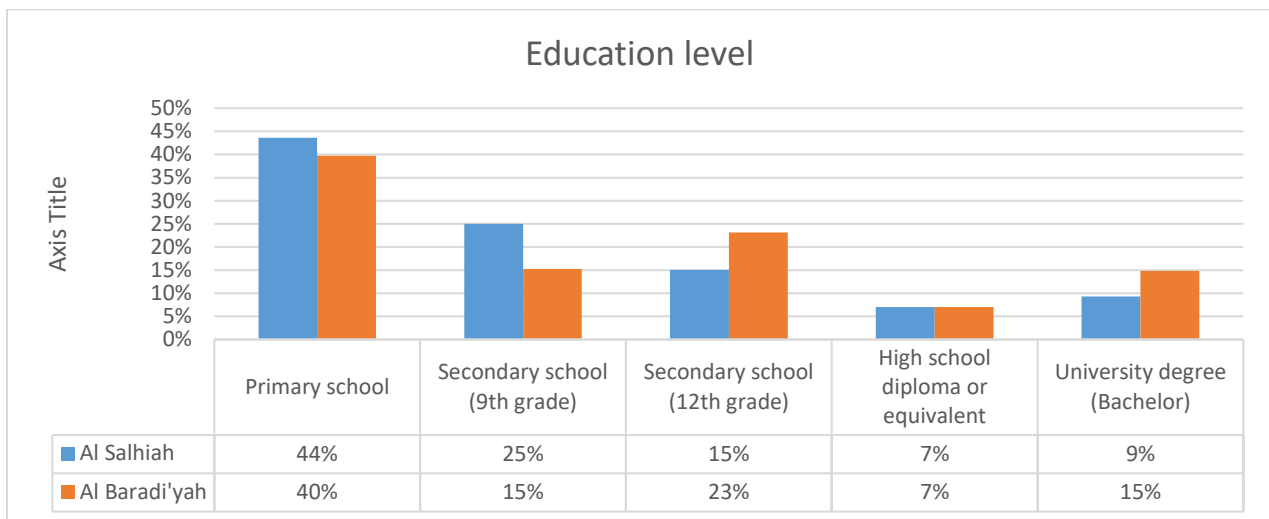
In the future, more time for the implementation of the data collection should be taken into consideration, in order to find female respondents.

4. FINDINGS

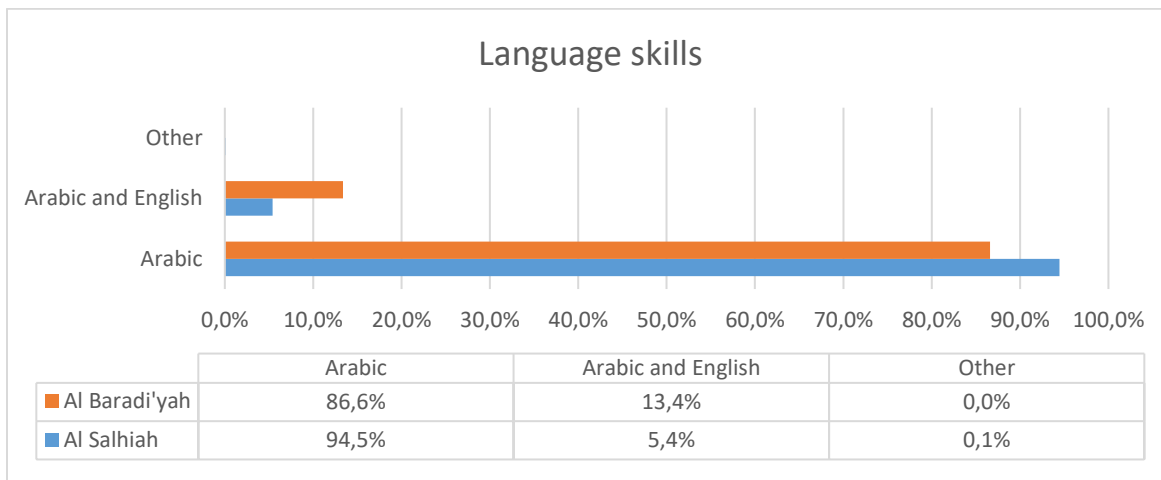
1. EDUCATION AND JOB HISTORY

In terms of education, 84% of the respondents in Al Salhiah and 78% in Al Baradi'yah reported having less than a high school diploma. Thus, only 16% of respondents in Al Salhiah and 22% in Al Baradi'yah reported to have an education level higher than Highschool diploma.

Therefore, the education level of respondents remains low in these two districts.

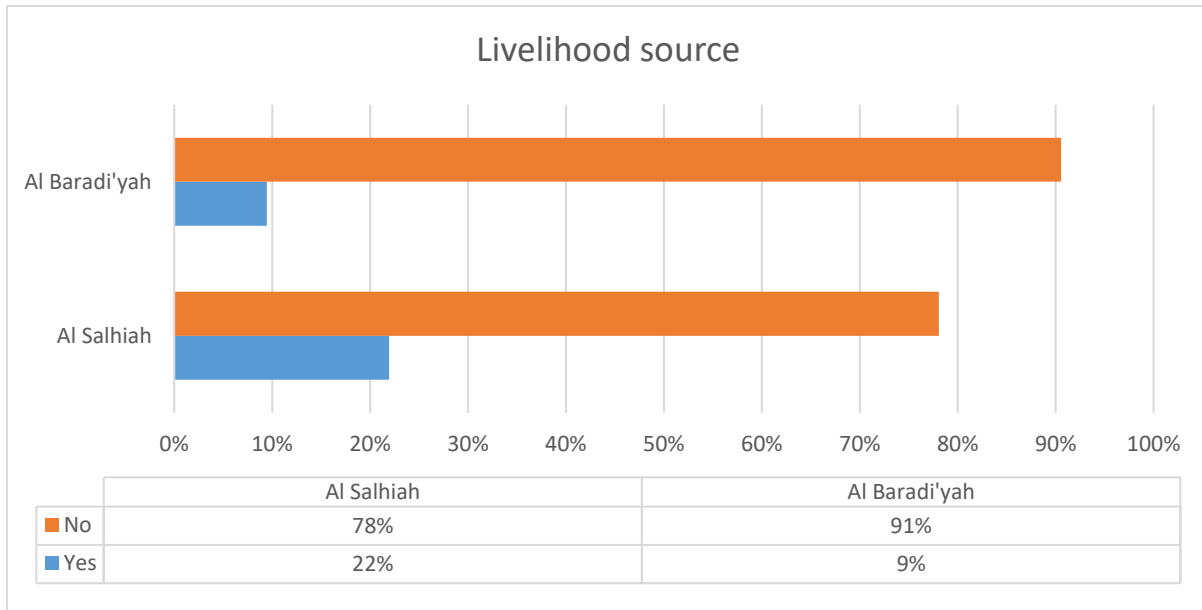


Regarding language skills the **vast majority in both districts speak Arabic**, while only 5,4% in Al Salhiah and 13,4% in Al Baradi'yah also speaking English. This higher percentage in Al Baradi'yah can be due to the highest number of University graduates.



At the same time most of the respondents in both locations at **69%** in both of them expressed that they would be comfortable learning **English**.

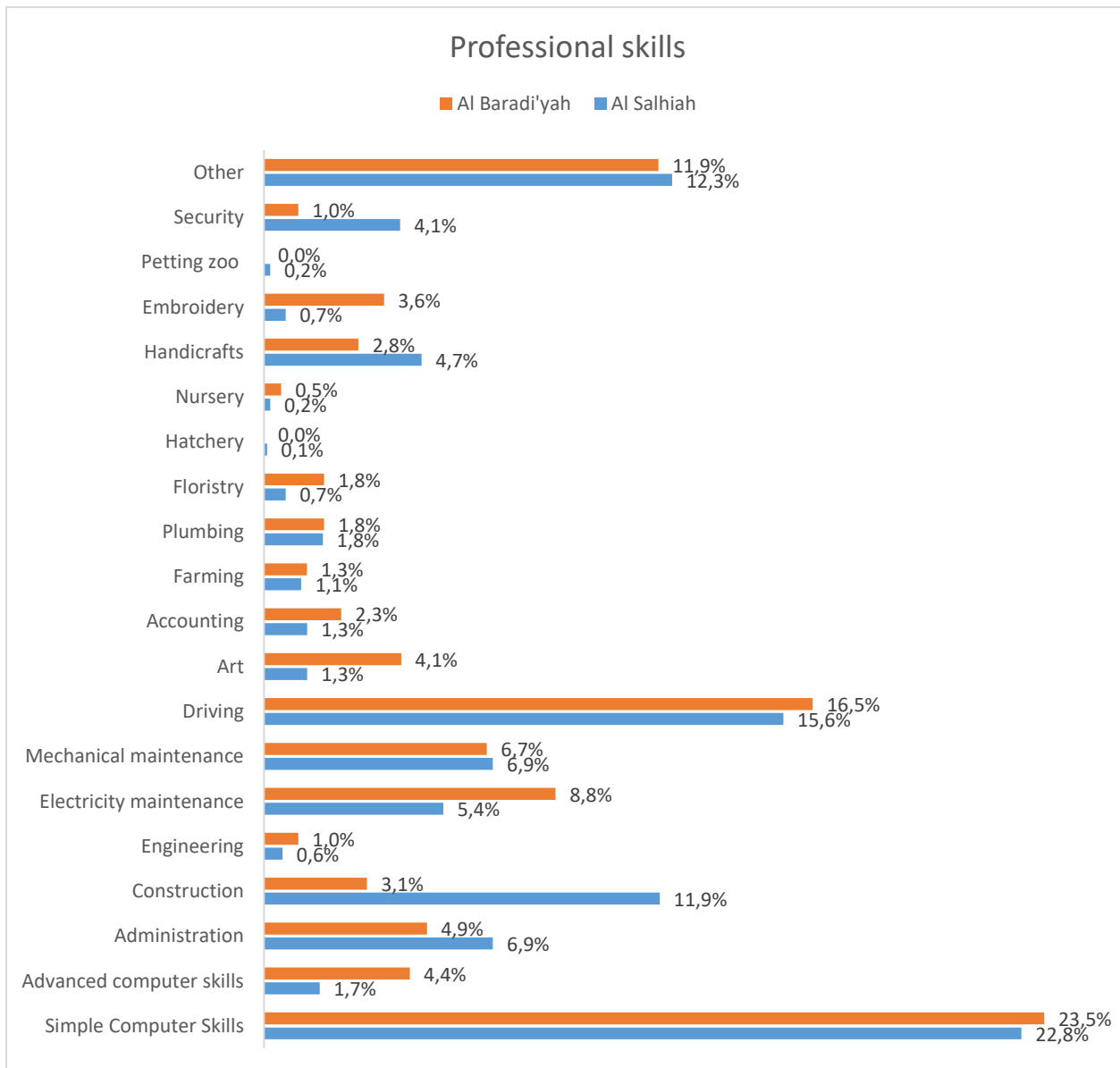
Regarding what kind of livelihood they have at the moment, the respondents have at the moment, to the question “Do you have a job now?”, **78% of respondent in Al Salhiah and 91% of the respondents in Al Baradi'yah reported that they do not have a job at the moment.** With only 22% in Al Salhiah and 9% in Al Baradi'yah reporting having a job.



2. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

As show in the figure below, simple computer skills in Al Salhiah (23,5%) and in Al Baradi'yah (22,8%) is the most prevalent professional skill for respondents. This is followed by **Driving** and Other. "**Other**" largely refers to lack of skills.

It is important to identify, that there are plenty of respondents that show different skills in a wide range of jobs, and that they are well distributed through the different fields of work, with the exception of **Construction in Al Salhiah**, which is much higher than in Al Baradi'yah.

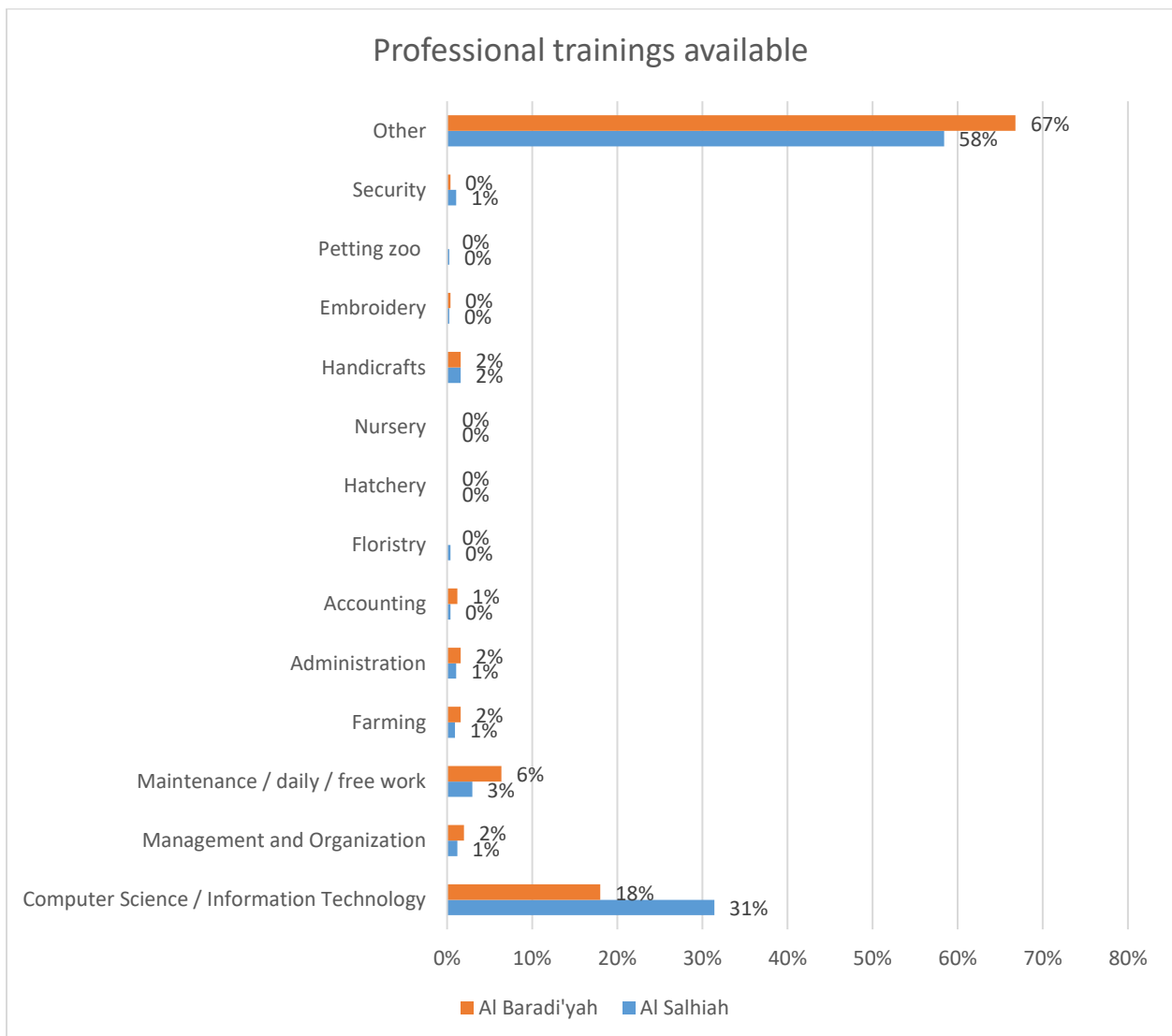


3. AVAILABILITY OF VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

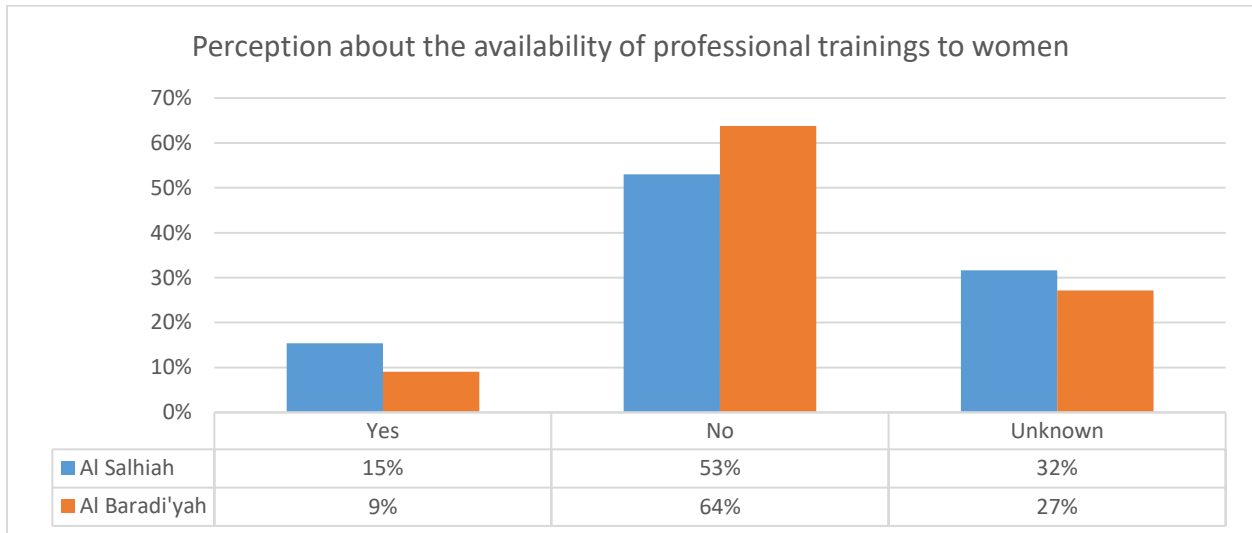
32% of respondents in Al Salhiah and 12% of respondents in Al Baradi'yah declared that there are other types of trainings available in their area.

The second most available training has been in **Computer Science and Information Technology** with 17% in Al Salhiah and 3% in Al Baradi'yah. If we compare this information to the one regarding their professional skills, showing a high proficiency in Simple Computer Skills compared to the other skills, this might show us a trend regarding that when there are trainings available, the respondents have been taking them.

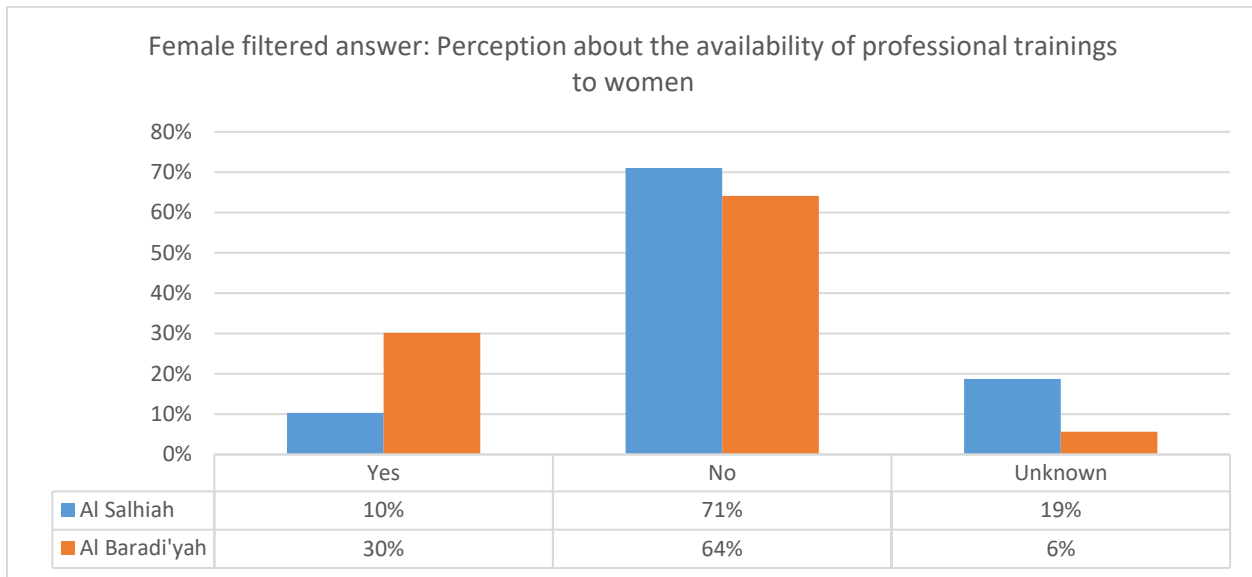
The majority of "Other" responses referred to the lack of available vocational trainings.



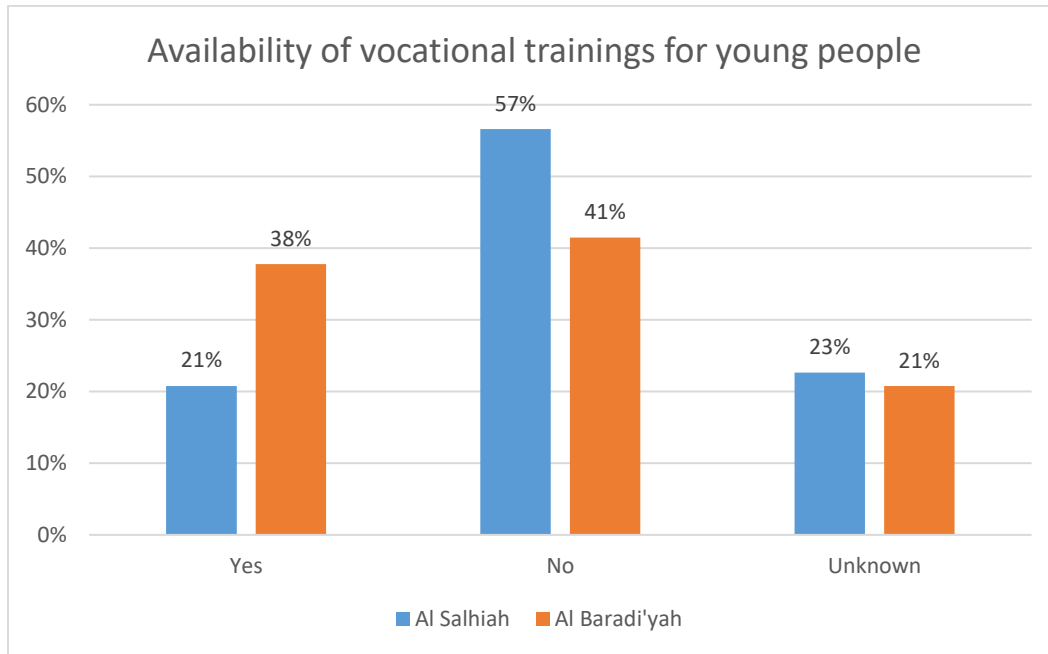
When the respondents were asked if they think there are **enough professional trainings available** for **women**, in both locations the highest answer was “**No**”, with 53% of the total in Al Salhiah and 64% in Al Baradi’ya. It is significant to point out that the second highest answer in both locations was “Unknown”, with 32% and 27% respectively.



When the same question is filtered by female respondents, the result is that the perception of lack of trainings for women is increased in Al Salhiah from 53% to 71%, and it remains the same in Al Baradi’ya at 64%.



When the question was asked but regarding **young people**, the highest answer in Al Salhiah and Al Baradi'yah was “**No**” with 57% and 41% respectively. It is worth mentioning that 38% of the respondents in Al Baradi'yah stated that there is availability of trainings for young people.

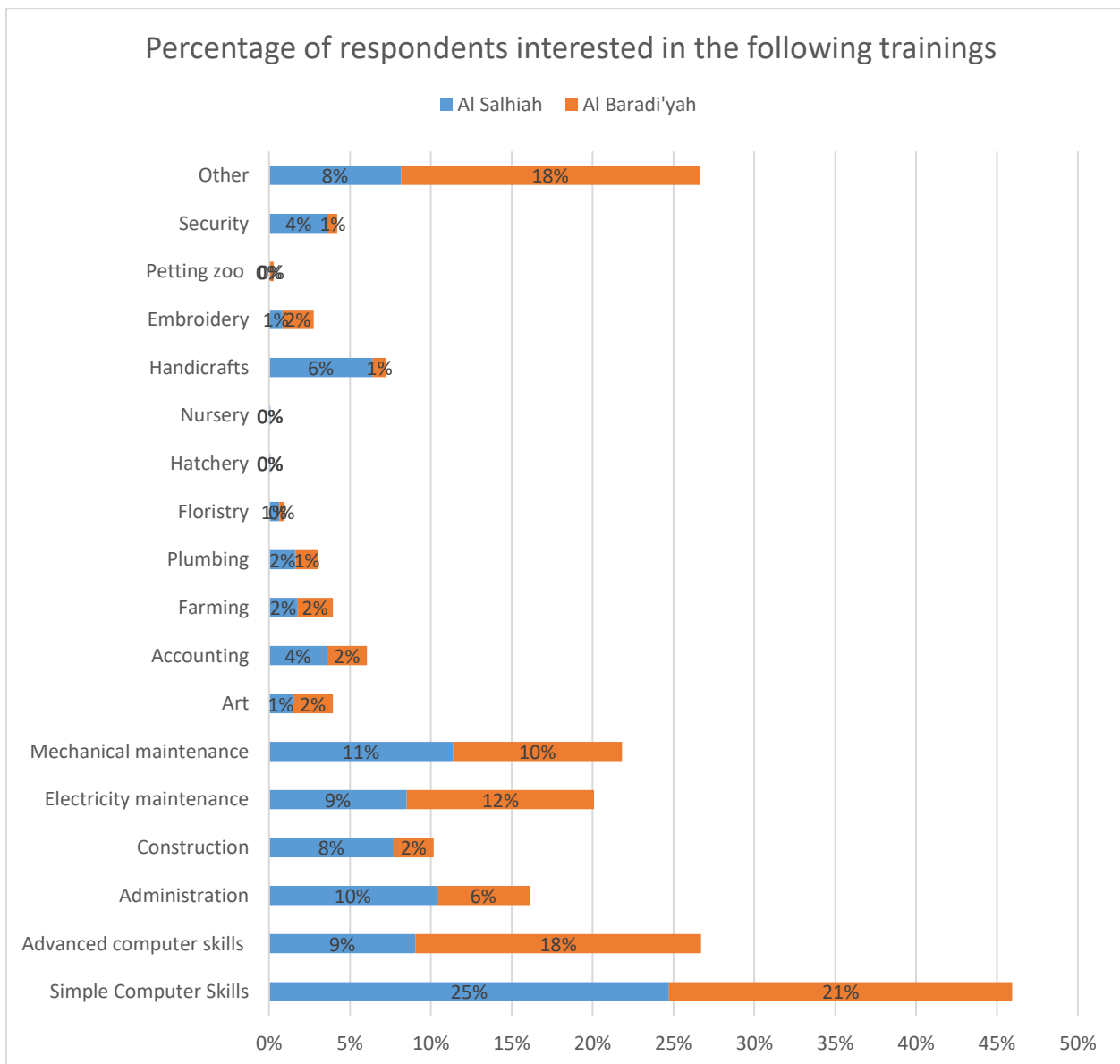


4. DESIRES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAININGS

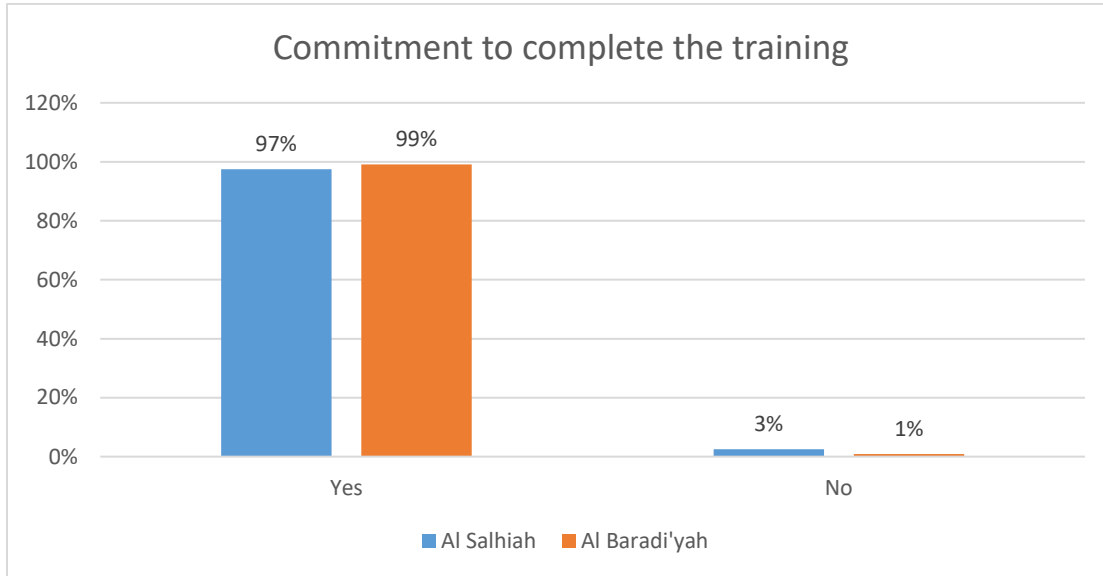
In terms of enthusiasm for employment by sector, respondents responded favourably when asked what sorts of vocational trainings would be desired. Significantly, at 25% in Al Salhiah, and 21% in Al Baradi'yah, **“Simple Computer Skills”** was the professional training with **most requests**. In Al Baradi'yah, it was followed by “Advanced Computer Skills” at 18%.

Most of the other trainings range between 5% and 12% of request, with Other type of trainings being also highly requested at 18% in Al Baradi'yah.

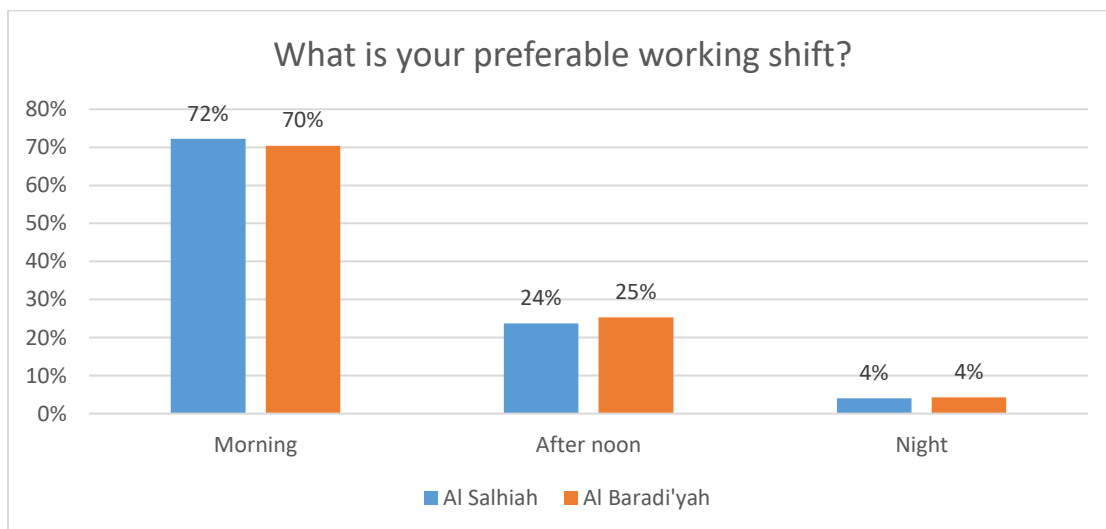
Refrigeration and air conditioning, shaving, sewing, blacksmithing, English language were the main trainings requested within the “Other” answer.



Respondents in both locations said that given the opportunity they will **commit to complete** the **trainings**. With **99%** in Al Baradi'yah and **97%** in Al Salhiah.



When it came to the **preferable working shift**, most of the respondents, with over 70% of the answers in both locations, indicated that they preferred **morning shifts**, followed by afternoon shifts with 24% and 25% respectively and only 4% in both locations preferring the night shift.

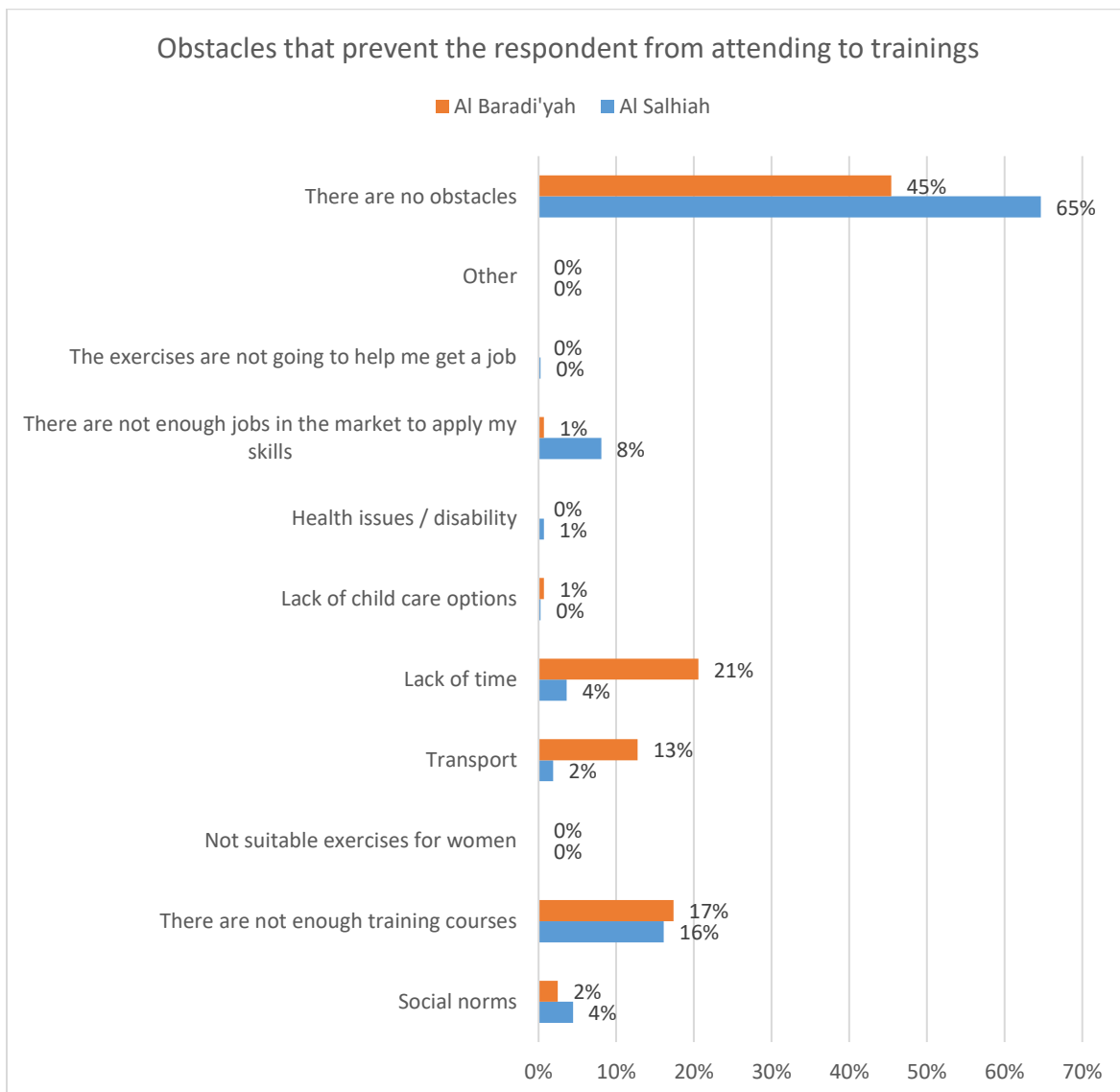


5. BARRIERS FOR LIVELIHOODS AND ATTENDING VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

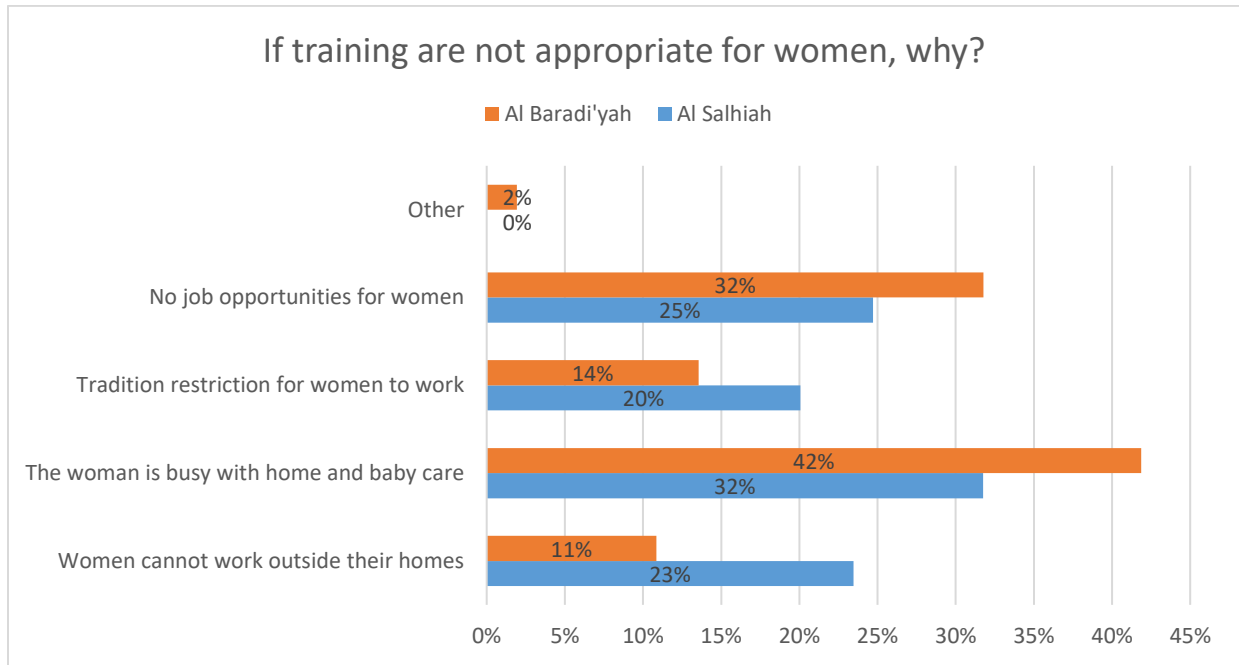
In terms of obstacles that prevent respondents from participating in trainings, in both locations it was stated that there are **no obstacles that prevent them from attending**, with at 65% in Al Salhiah and 45% in Al Baradi'yah.

Lack of time in Al Baradi'ya (21%) was also recorded.

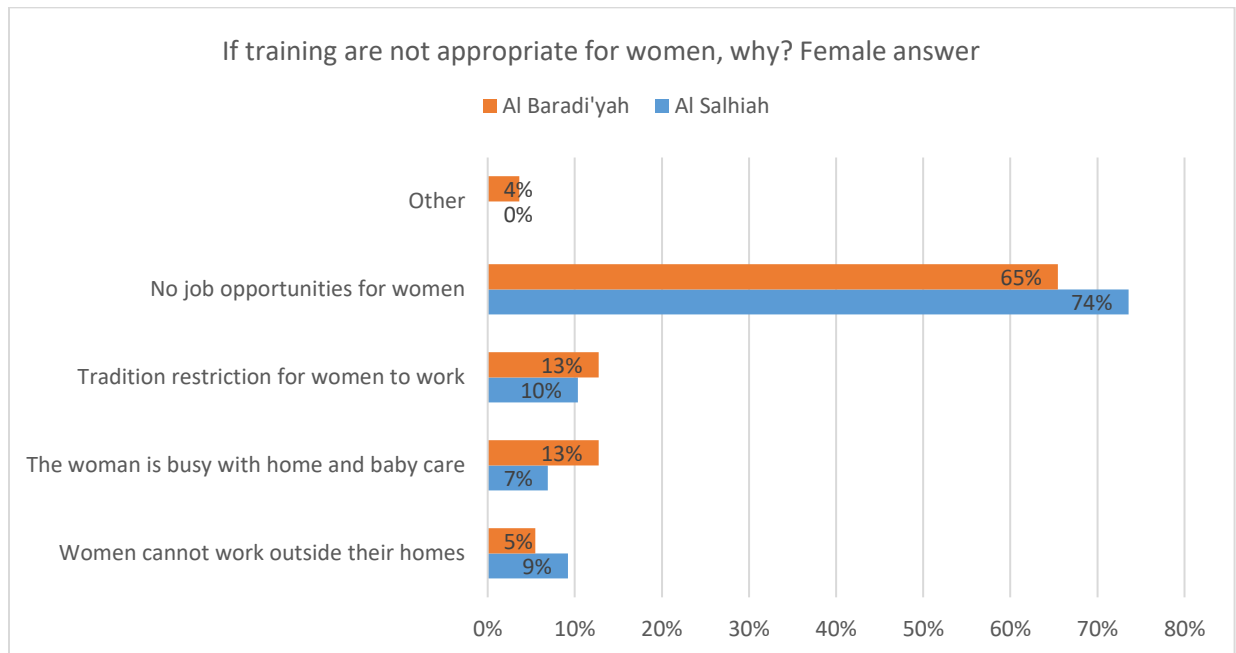
Lack of trainings in both areas was recorded at 17% in Al Salhiah and 16% in Al Baradi'ya.



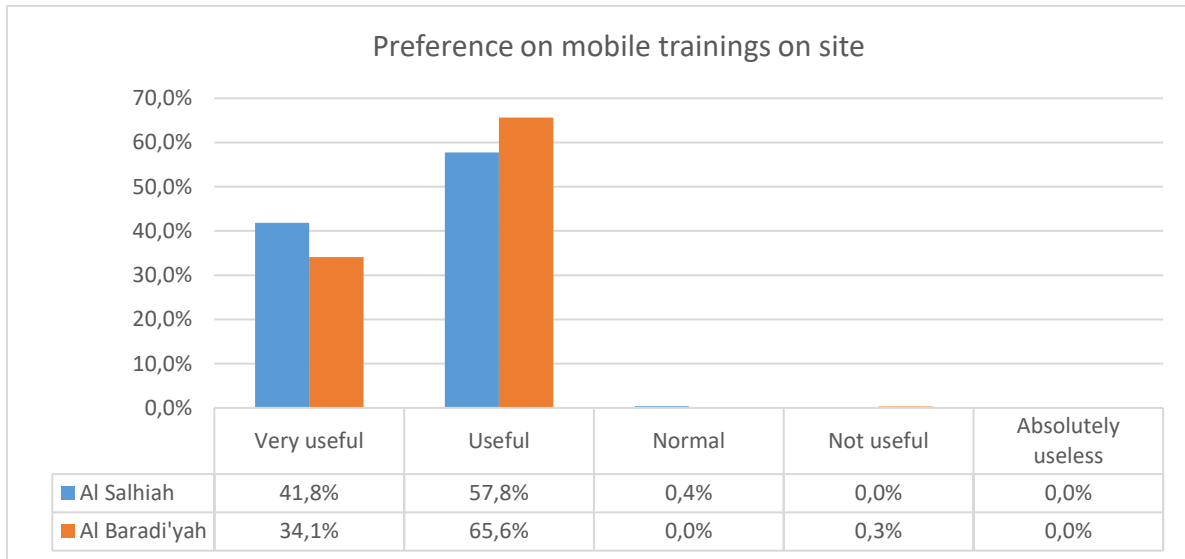
When asked to both males and females, why the trainings were not appropriate for women, the main answer in both locations was that **“The woman is busy with home and baby care”**, followed by **“No job opportunities for women”**.



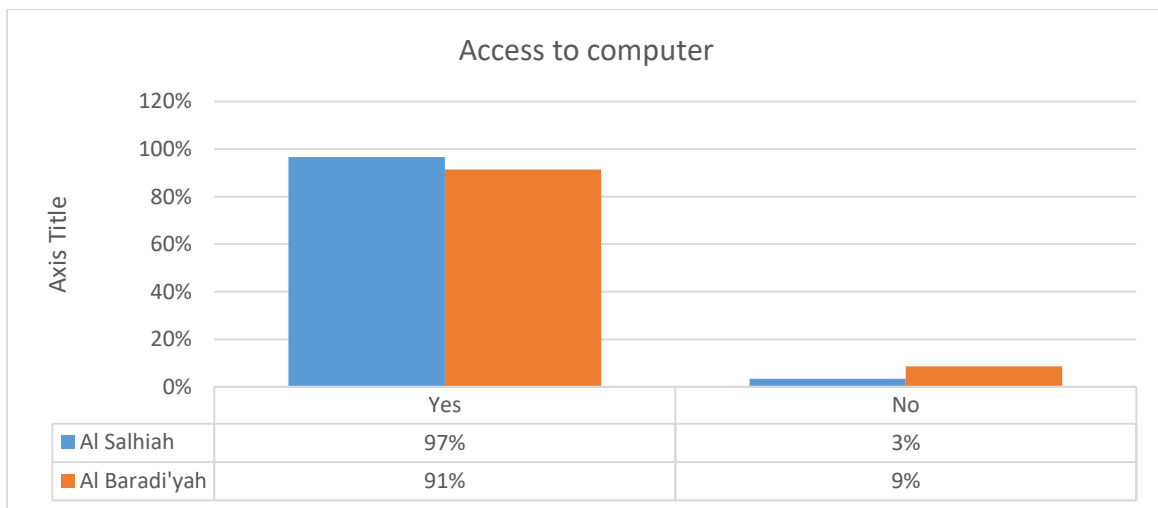
When the same question was asked but filtered by female answers, it is clear that the female respondents focus overwhelmingly, with 65% and 74% of total, on the **lack of employment opportunities for women** and not so much on other aspects.



Regarding if it would be beneficial to have mobile training on site, answers in both locations were between “Very useful” and “Useful”, with only residual answers in other options (“Normal”, “Not useful” and “Absolutely useless”).



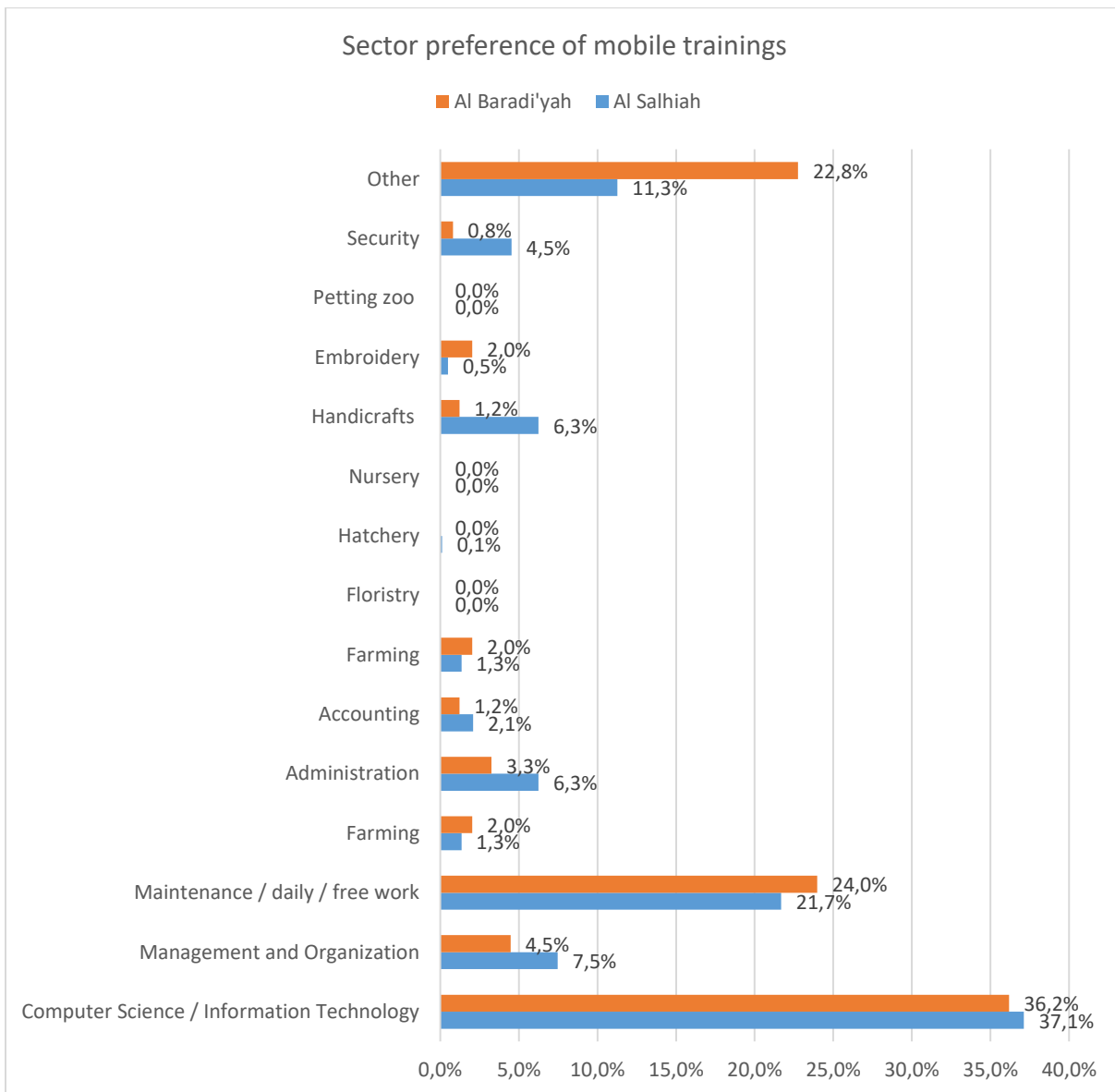
About having access to a **computer**, the great majority of the respondents **have access** to it with a 97% in Al Salhiah and 91% in Al Baradi'yah.



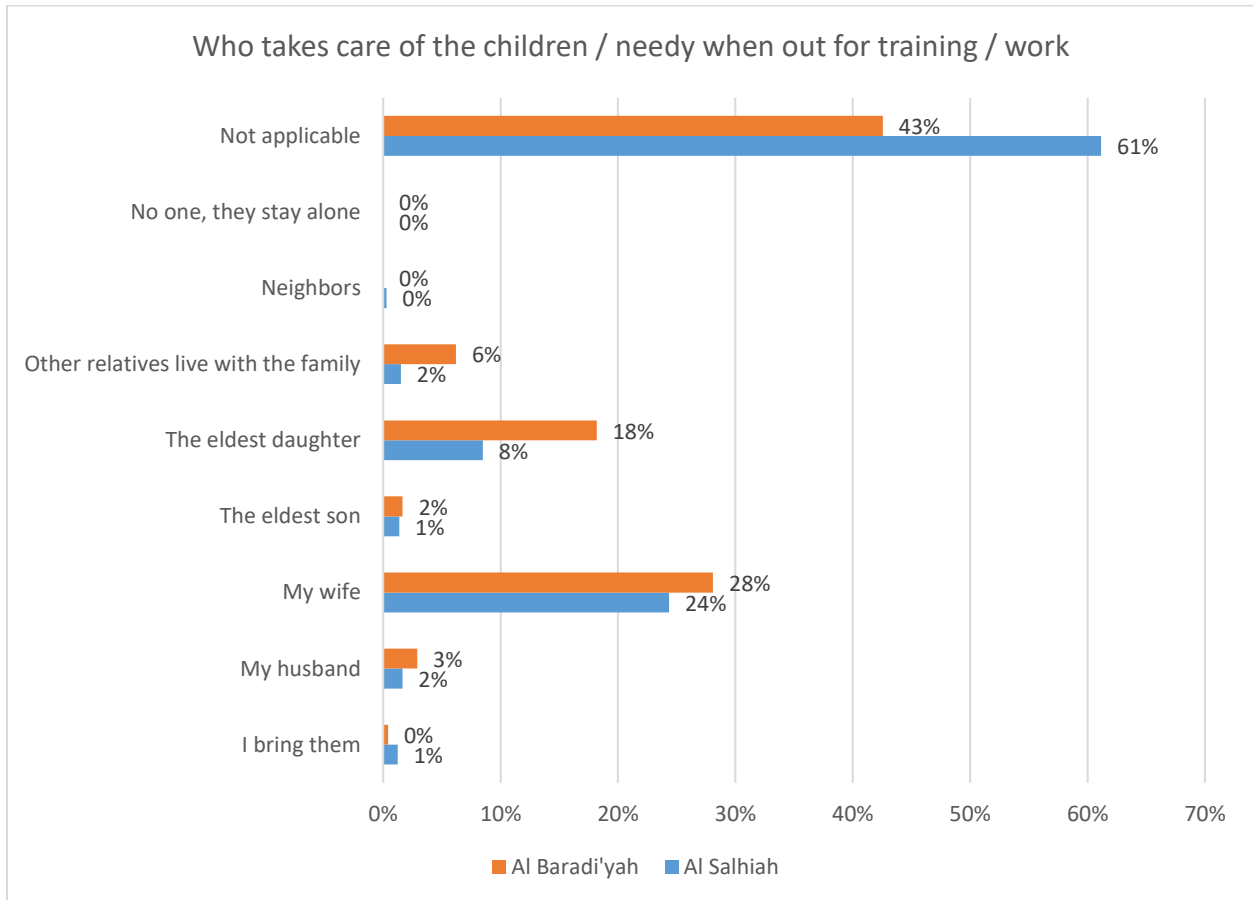
At the same time when asked the question about access to reliable internet, we find the same results (97% and 91%). Consequently, we can assume that all the respondents who have a computer have access to internet, and that it is not a commodity difficult to access.

When preference on these trainings was discussed with the respondents, most of them responded their preference about Computer Science / Information technology with 37,1% of Al Salhiah and 36,2% in Al Baradi'yah. Followed by Maintenance / daily / free work with similar level of responses.

It should be noted that Other answers were also recorded in Al Baradi'yah. Most of the Other responses have been distributed among different sector preferences, being one of the main ones desire to be train as barbers or drivers.



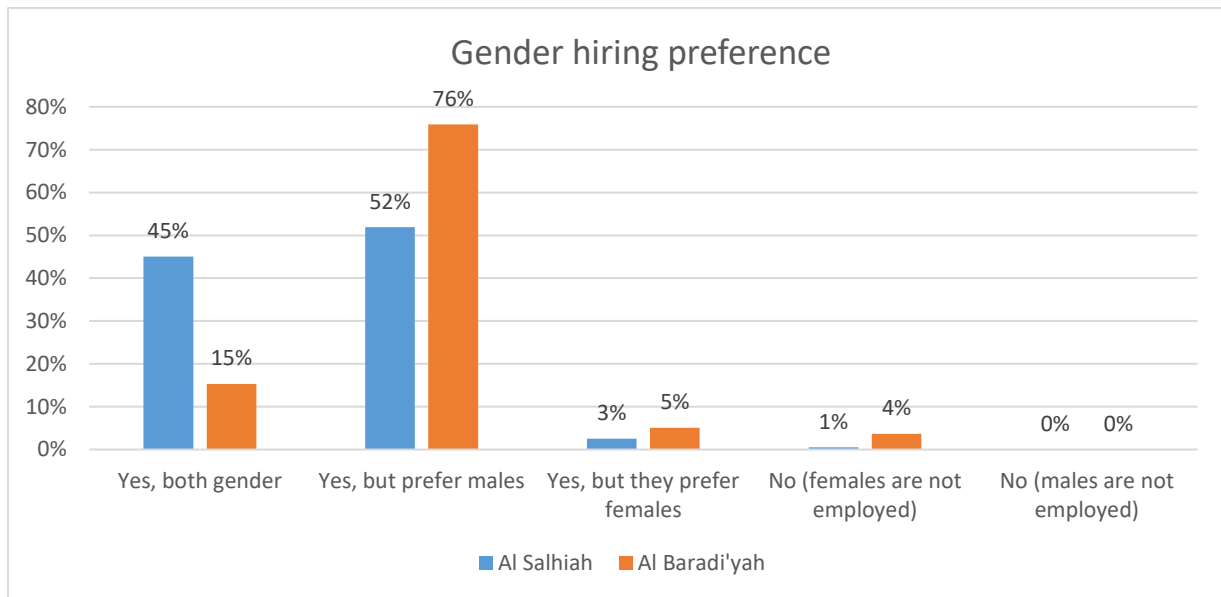
When asked who takes care of the children or the needy people when the respondent is out for training or work, most of the answers in both locations were not applicable, but the second one being “My wife” with 24% and 28%, in comparison with “My husband” of 3% and 2%.



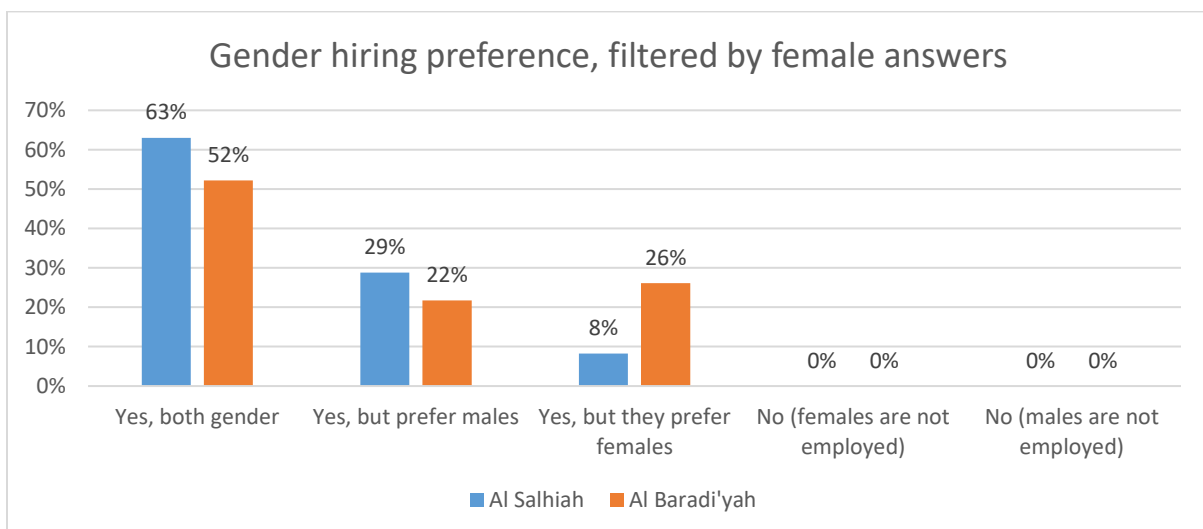
6. OVERVIEW OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

When asked about gender preference perception for hiring. The most recorded answer in both locations stated the preference by the business on **hiring males**. At 52% in Al Salhiah and 76% in Al Baradi'yah.

The next answer indicated that there was no distinction between genders during the hiring process, at 45% in Al Salhiah and 15% in Al Baradi'yah. Even though it is the second highest answer recorded in Al Baradi'yah, comparatively speaking, it is significantly lower than the first answer.



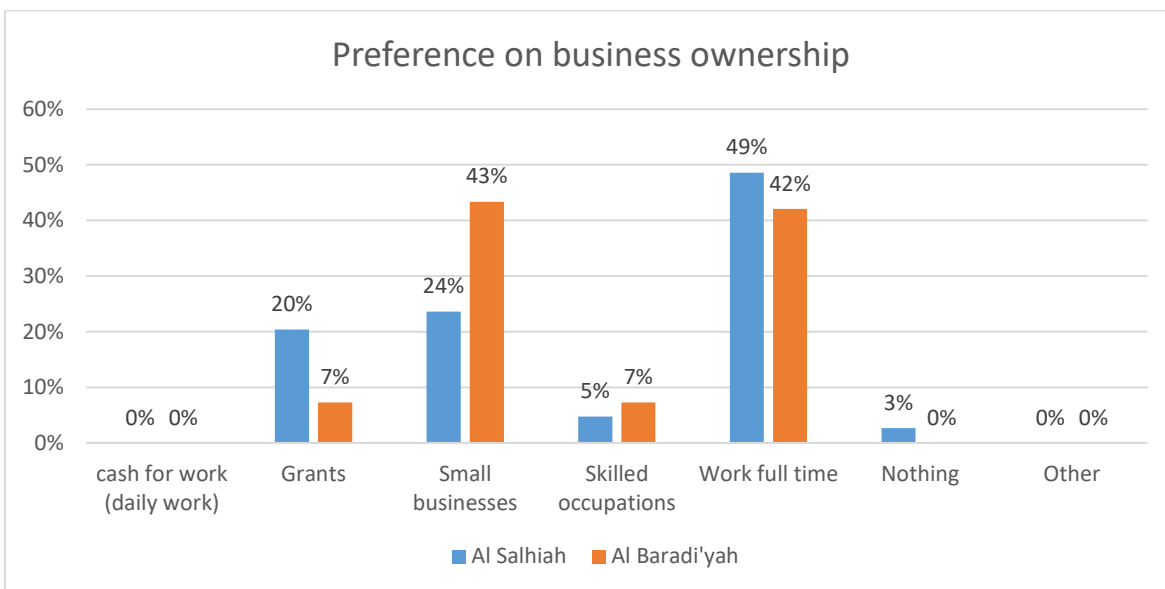
When the same question is analysed by the answers provided by females only, in both locations there is an increase on the perception that the **females** are also considered for hiring, while a decrease on the “Yes, but **prefer males**” answer.



7. SELF EMPLOYMENT

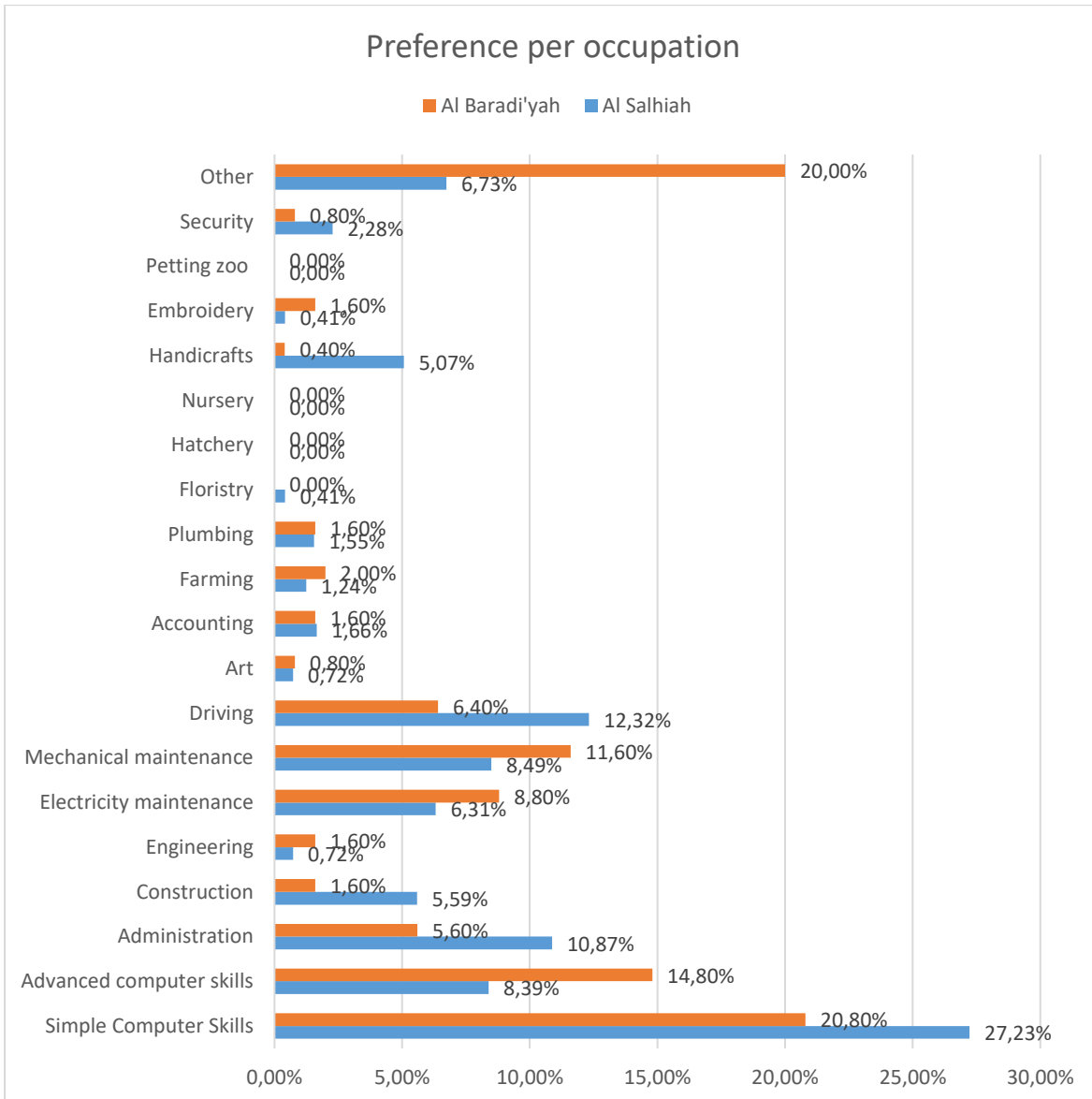
When asked what type of business would you like to have, the main answer for Al Salhiah by the respondents was that they wanted to “**work full time**”, with 49%. Followed by a 42% in Al Baradi’yah.

In Al Baradi’yah, the preference of **owning a small business** was the main answer recorded with a 43% of the respondents being favour to this, followed by a 24% of respondents prioritizing this answer in Al Salhiah.



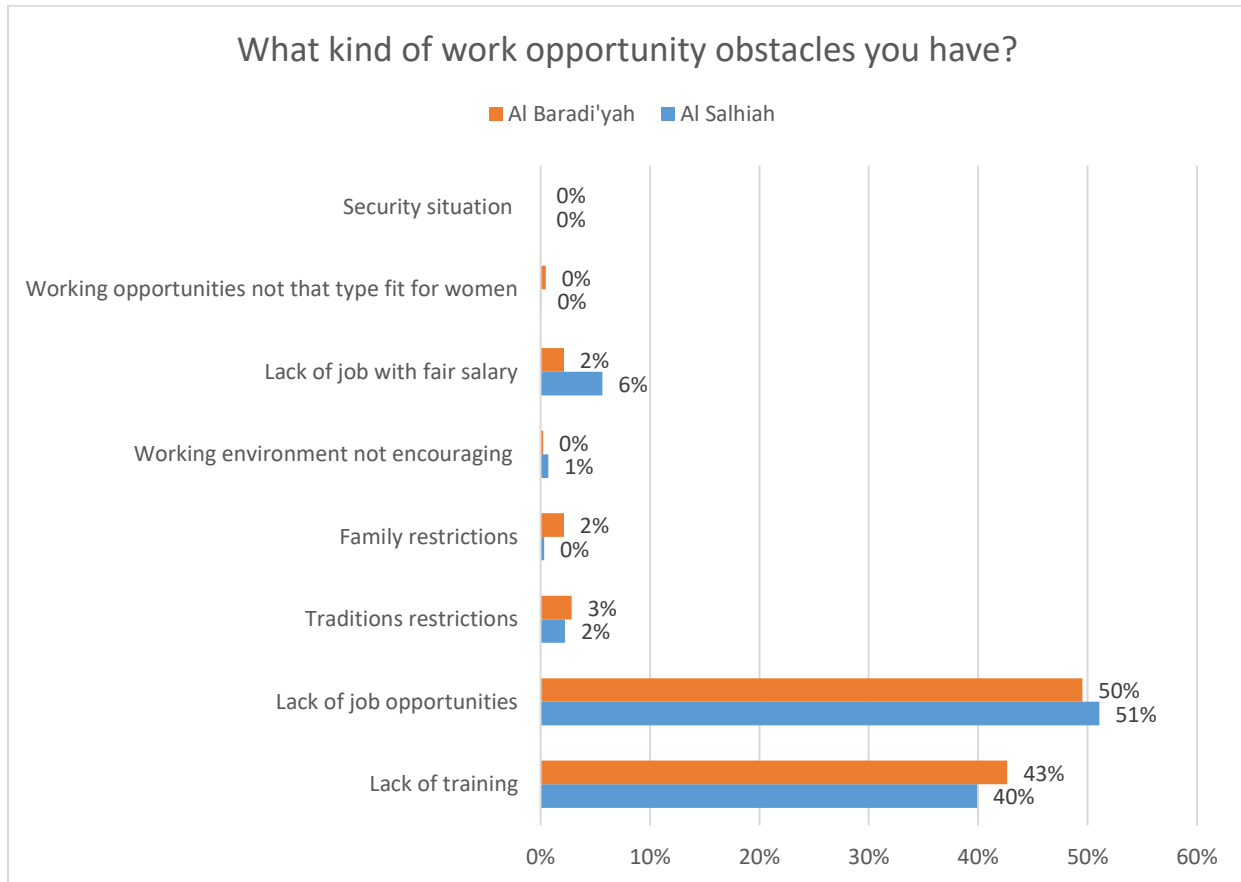
When asked regarding the preference per occupation to dedicate their business to, most of the answers were recorded regarding the desire of obtain Simple computer skills with 27,23% in Al Salhiah and 20,8% in Al Baradi'yah.

It is significant that in Al Baradi'yah 20% of the answer stated that they wanted to develop their business in other sectors. Most of these other occupations referred to barber, hairdresser, blacksmith, English language and hairdressing.



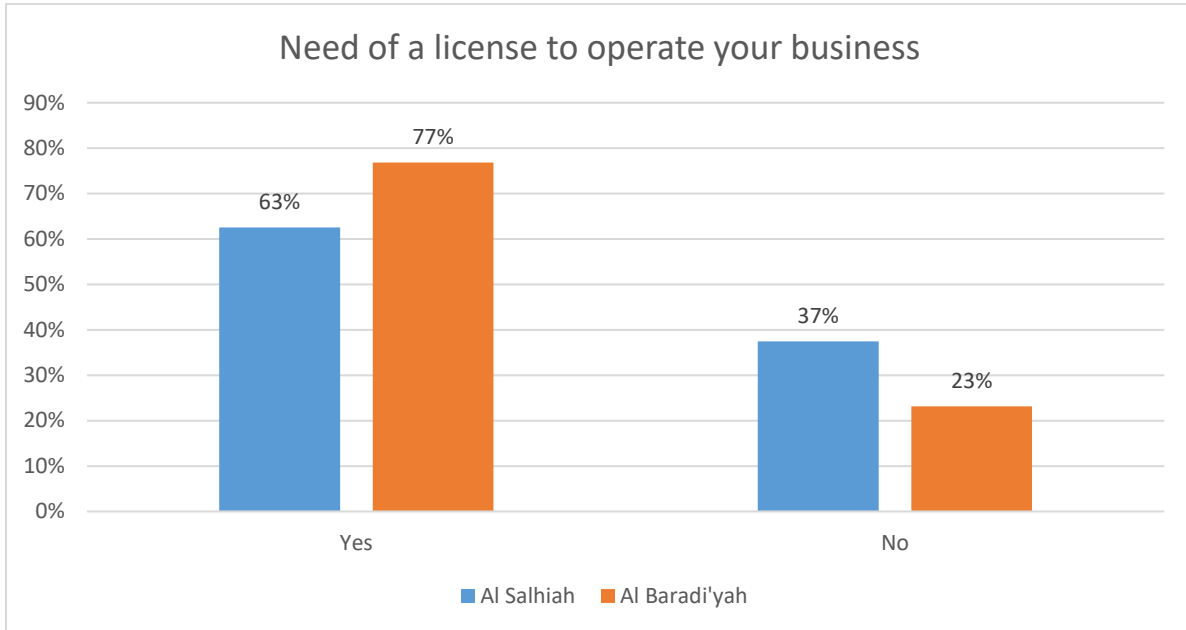
8. BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO ACCESS EMPLOYMENT

Regarding what kind of barriers and challenges are to access of employment, in both locations most of the answers focused on **“Lack of job opportunities”** at 51% in Al Salhiah and 50% in Al Baradi’yah. Closely followed by **“Lack of training”** with 40% in Al Salhiah and 43% in Al Baradi’yah.

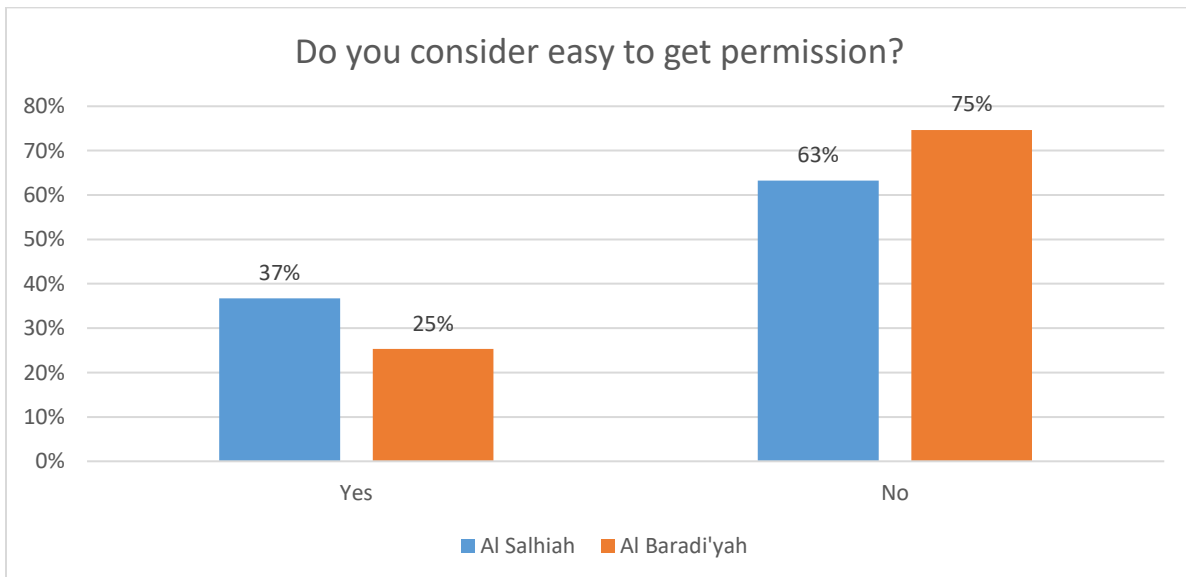


When the same question is filtered by female only answers. There is no significant change on the answers. In this way, female respondents face the same level of lack of job opportunities and lack of training as the male respondents.

The majority of respondents in both locations stated that a **license is needed to operate** their **businesses**, with a 63% in Al Salhiah and 77% in Al Baradi'yah.

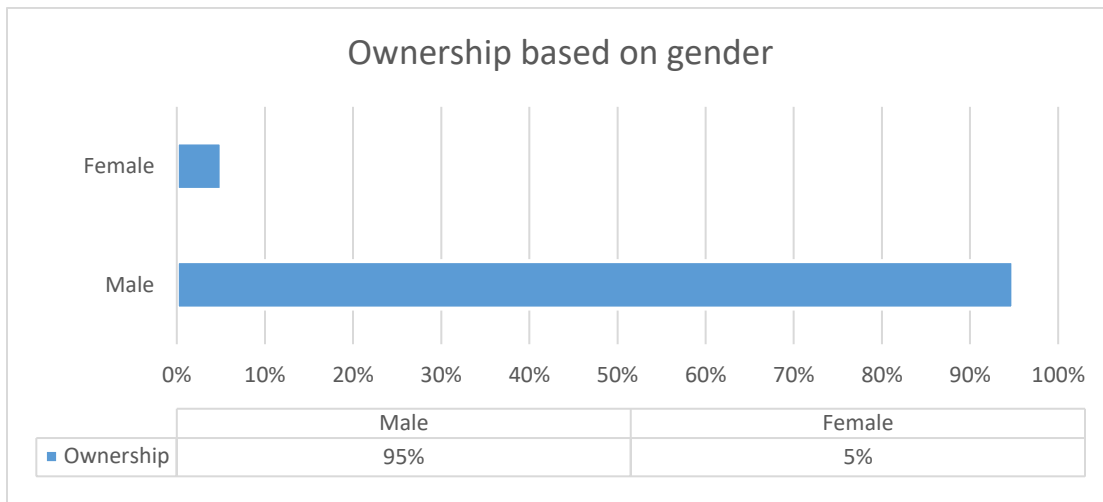


At the same time, to the question “Do you consider easy to get a permission?”, most of the respondents in both locations stated that there were **difficulties to access** such **permission** and that it was **not easy**.



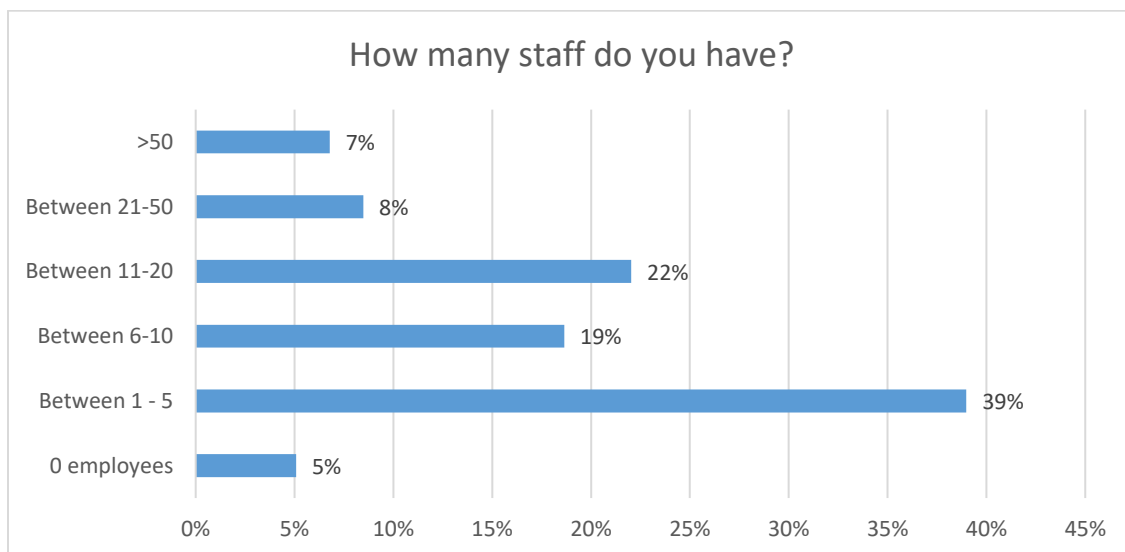
5. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS FINDINGS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

Below shows a breakdown of the business ownership based on gender. As it can be appreciated, most of the businesses interviewed are owned by men.



It is worth mentioning that most of the businesses responded that they do **not have more than 5 employees**. Being this number 44%. It is worth mentioning that there a big part of them are middle size businesses with **employees between 6 and 50** (49%).

Also, there was recorded one business with over 5000 employees.

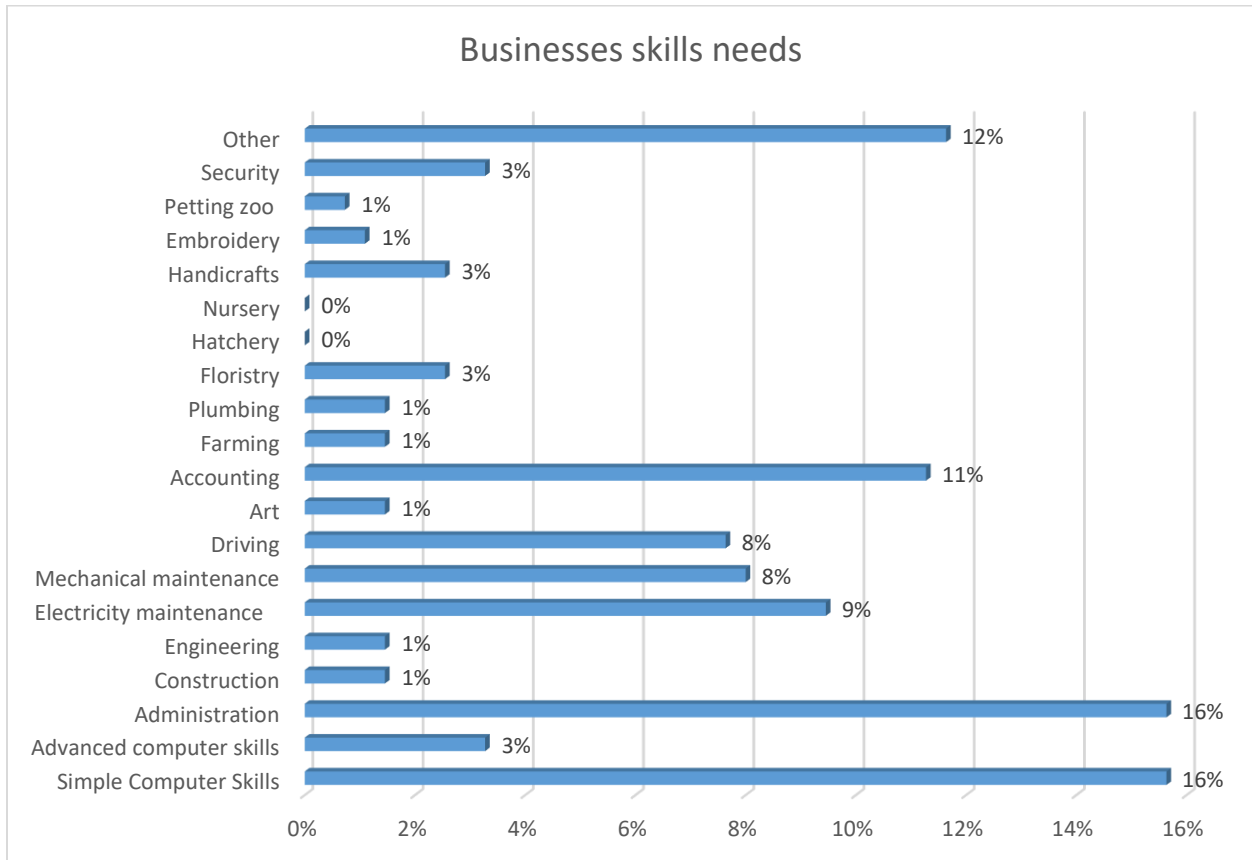


When the same question was asked to the female owners. The numbers remain similar (47% between 1-5), with the difference that 38% of them has 0 employees.

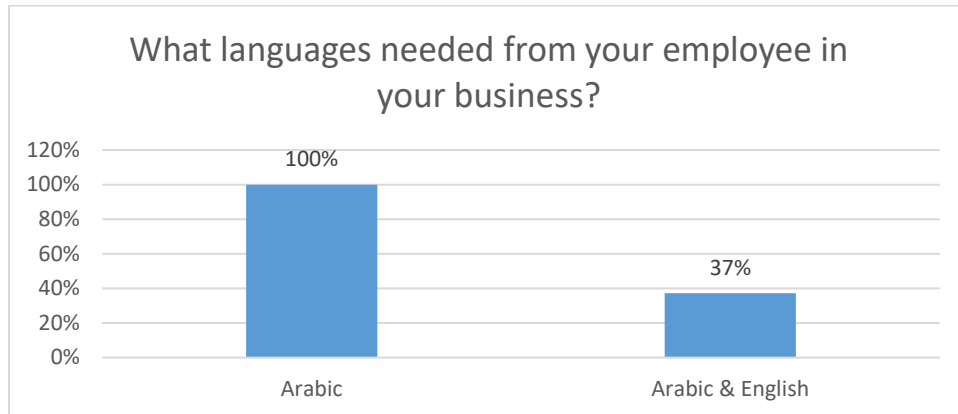
Note that the low number of female owners interviewed could make this representation not completely accurate with reality.

Regarding the type of skill needs for the businesses, **Simple Computer Skills** (16%), **Administration** (16%) and **Accounting** (11%) were the ones with the highest number of responses.

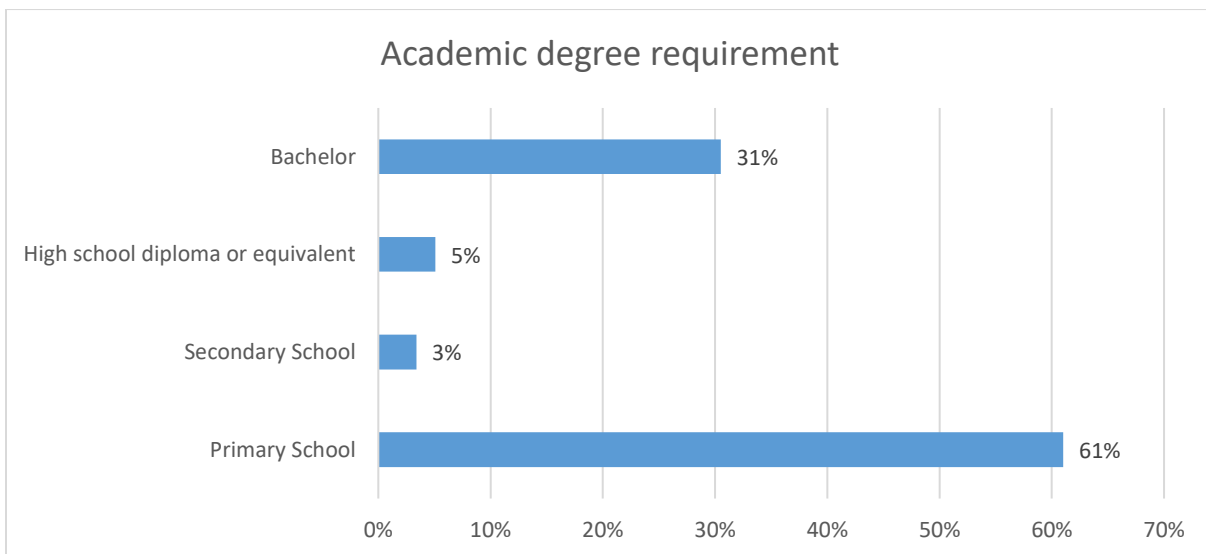
It is worth mentioning that there were “Other” business skills needed by the owners. These other skills went from a different range of options, from graphic designer to store keeper.



Regarding language skills, **100%** of the owners answer that their employees would need **Arabic** for being able to perform their jobs, while **37%** answer that **Arabic & English** would be needed.

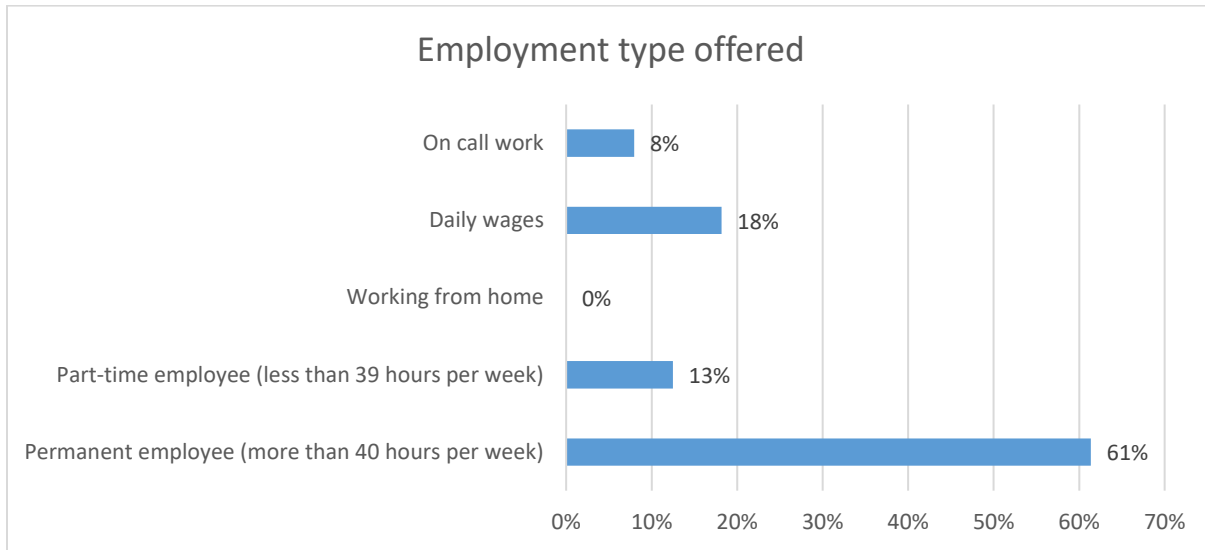


About the academic degree required from the employer to join their business, the majority of them responded **Primary school** (61%) was needed. Followed by Bachelor studies (31%). This shows us a need either for qualified personnel or personnel with only Primary School.

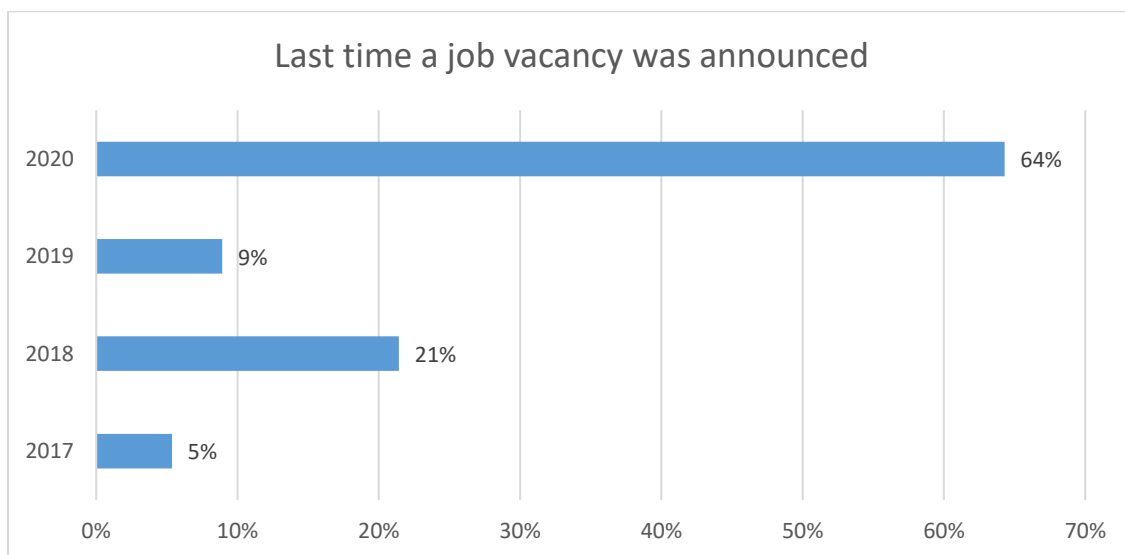


75% of the employers stated that they asked for previous trainings when they seek new employees. At the same time, 71% of them mentioned that they do not provide trainings for new employees.

Regarding the employment type offered, it is noted that “**Working from home**” was not chosen by any of the business owners. The majority of employees are looking for **Permanent employees** (61%). Followed by **Daily wages** (18%) and **Part-time employee** (13%).



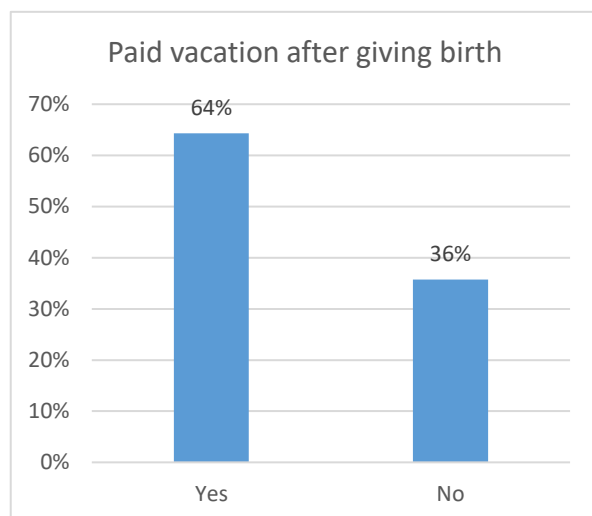
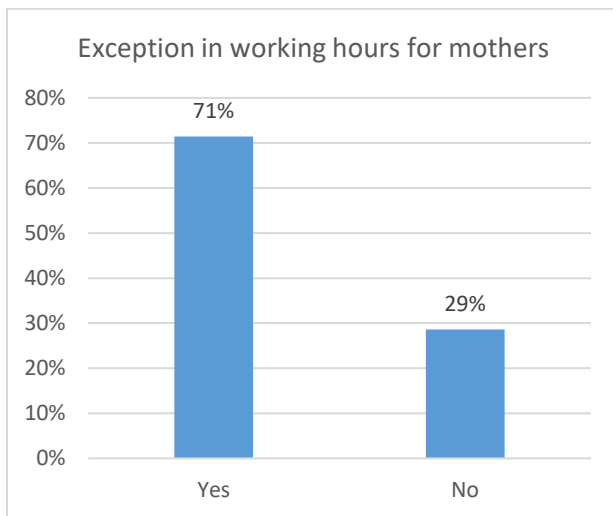
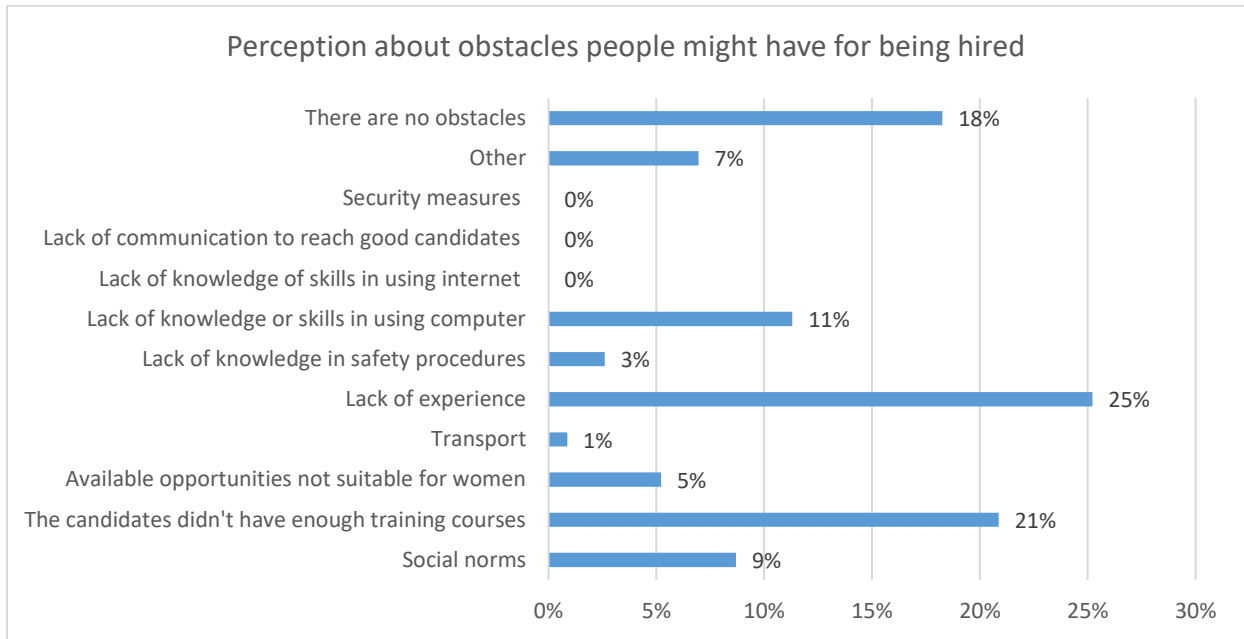
The majority of the business owners stated that the last time that they announced a vacancy was in 2020 (64%). Showing that there are **not lack of job offers in the market.**



Also, the means of advertising these vacancies are mainly through social media and direct contact to known people regarding the job offers.

The main reason why owners think that people might have trouble for joining their business is mainly regarding lack of experience and lack of sufficient training courses.

It was also stated by 18% of the respondents that there are no obstacles to be hired in their business.



Regarding exceptions for mothers during the working hours, these exceptions are high, even though it was not recorded in which manner.

Paid vacation after giving birth was also stated in a high number, but with a 36% of answers was 'No'. This could force the working women to not being able to keep her job or loss of income due to the delivery.

6. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the economic downturn, COVID-19 and ongoing lack of employment opportunities, livelihoods support remains complex and challenging for respondents in Al Salhiah and Al Baradi'yah. The findings were able to identify several links between respondents' capacities, desires of trainings and the market in which they live.

Lack of trainings and job opportunities in these locations feeds directly the unemployment cycle in which individuals cannot access the job opportunities. In order to support vulnerable households in developing profitable livelihoods activities, the following actions are recommended:

- Some of the most present skills are Simple Computer Skills and Driving.
- Most of the available trainings in are in Computer Science / Information Technology, but at a very low number and only in Al Salhiah.
- Generally speaking, respondents are keen on following these trainings: **English language, simple computer skills, advanced computer skills, mechanical maintenance, electricity maintenance and administration.**
- For business owners, needs in **accounting, administration and simple computer skills**, are the main skills desired. To a lesser degree, but still highly requested, **driving, mechanical and electricity maintenance.**
- Therefore, trainings in **simple computer skills, administration, mechanical maintenance, electricity maintenance** are recommended; with possible mention on trainings in **advanced computers skills, accounting and driving.**
- **English language skills** were also requested from both respondents and business owners.
- **Recommendation about conducting a deeper market assessment for thoroughly address the needs of the business owners is recommended.**
- In both locations commitment to complete the trainings once given the opportunity of doing them is very high.
- General obstacles for attending the trainings were not observed. In any case, it was noted a lack of paid leaves for women after delivering. Day-care centres for women and children are recommended to be included, in order to support their ability to maintain their income and attend the trainings.
- The possibility of mobile trainings on site has been also very well received by the respondents.
- It is also worth mentioning obstacles regarding opening new businesses. In both location it was pointed out that obtaining a license was necessary, and also that obtaining it was a difficult process.
- The main obstacles seen by the business owners that do not allow them to hire someone is lack of experience and/or training, followed by the perception that there are no issues aside from these ones. Therefore, united that the majority of them have been posting jobs in the last year, corroborates the hypothesis of the gap on the trainings available.
- Trainings should have the potential to lead directly to employment, and as much as possible stress the **quality over quantity** of trainings

7. Annexes

- RMA for beneficiaries, survey kobo link

<https://kobo.humanitarianresponse.info/#/forms/aKrScMTDvdgJE7pXhq2MvC>

- RMA for business owners, survey kobo link

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