

Impact Assessment Survey report of Private
Sector Development project implementing
partners' activities in Southern Iraq.



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**Better Data
Better Decisions
Better Outcomes**

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Abbreviations

AMAR: The AMAR Foundation

BMZ: The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

BEE: Business Enterprise Establishment

BROB: Bent Al-Rafedain Organization

C.V: Curriculum Vitae

CCNA: Cisco Certified Network Associate

EU: European Union

GIZ: The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH

MoLSA: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

NRC: Norwegian Refugees Council

SME: Small-Medium Sized Enterprise

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Training

SQL: Structured Query Language Training

TAJDID: TAJDID Iraq Foundation for Economic Development

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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Executive summary

Post Assessment survey:

The post-assessment survey was designed to support GIZ and its implementing partners in measuring the impact of private sector development activities on the employment status of beneficiaries, following completion of project activities. An assessment of the project outcomes will provide an improved understanding of any relation between the activities implemented and the capacity of the beneficiaries to better access job opportunities and/or grow their own business. The assessment focused on the southern region of Iraq (Baghdad, Basra, and Diwanyah) by conducting phone surveys with over 2000 beneficiaries of four implementing partners, namely NRC, AMAR, TAJDID and BROB. The implementing partners provided support for local communities in these locations between 2018-2021 by providing vocational training, internship opportunities, business entrepreneurship training and toolkits. The implementing partners' activities covered various sets of complementary skills that were aimed to increase the beneficiaries' abilities to navigate their way into the labour market and to be able to develop their own business initiatives. To this end, the training aimed to improve technical and theoretical knowledge in the following areas; industrial skills, computer skills, as well as agricultural, livestock and hospitality services.

Methodology:

The post-assessment survey report was developed in three phases. During Phase 1, the GIZ's Monitoring and Reporting team developed two survey questionnaires, which focused on changes in employment status and changes in product/ business status. The questionnaires can be found in this report (Annex 1 & Annex 2). During Phase 2, iMMAP targeted 2717 beneficiaries, from which 1889 surveys were completed. One challenge faced by iMMAP was the high number of phone numbers which were disabled, due to the duration elapsed between the end of the activities and the survey. The phone surveys were conducted from 12 March to 29 May 2022 by five enumerators. During Phase 3, iMMAP conducted verification of the survey data, with a specific focus on the following five pillars;

- Beneficiaries' ability to find a job is measured by the change in employment status after the interventions.
- Jobs creations by measuring the hiring abilities of small business owners after the interventions.
- Development of Labor market skills measured by the change in job-searching approaches.
- Improvement of the work skills after the completion of the training and receiving the service.
- Change in product quality and production measures by the growth of farming businesses.

Limitations:

Despite the large beneficiary sample size provided by GIZ, the beneficiaries were divided across multiple implementing partners, with a limited sample provided for some partners. The lack of a prior desk review and engagement with implementing partners, as well as the limited engagement of iMMAP in the development of the survey questions placed a limitation on iMMAP's understanding and contextualization of the survey data. It is important to note that this report does not cover or measure the correlation between the quality of the intervention and its impact, as there are many variables that affected the change in employment status. The survey methodology imposed a limitation in understanding how these variables contributed to the change in employment status. Furthermore, the verification of survey data was not possible through phone interviews,

as many beneficiaries demonstrated a level of confusion or provided misinformation related to the interventions. This may be a result of the duration elapsed between the intervention and the survey, or as a result of some errors in the records of the implementing partners. These points should be taken into consideration when reviewing the report and servers to contextualize some contradictory findings.

Key Findings:

- A significant improvement in employment status occurred during the first three months following completion of activities. An impact evaluation is advised to be conducted 2-6 months after the intervention.
- There are multiple external factors that impacted the beneficiary’s abilities to access the labour market and therefore, a more holistic approach to map out the multiple variables in relation to the interventions is necessary to comprehensively measure impact.
- The majority of targeted businesses are not officially registered, limiting their ability to sustain job creation.
- A labour market assessment at the governorate level would benefit the implementing partners by enabling them to design their programs in a more sustainable way.
- The majority of agriculture-related businesses are owned and managed by older age groups; hence, more activities could target youth engagement in agriculture practices.
- Beneficiaries that were students showed limited interest in pursuing any engagement in the private sector after the completion of activities and preferentially prioritized higher education.
- Certain vocational training skills require longer training and internship periods, before the skills of the beneficiary can match the labour market demands.
- The environmental conditions (high salinity in water and soil) of agricultural lands in Basra governorate affected the success of the intervention, as these are not favorable for agricultural activities.

Numerical key findings summary:

This post-assessment report provides an in-depth analysis of various employment aspects, and their relation to the implementing activities. However, to aid the reader to extract specific numerical information, the below tables provide a summary of the key findings summarized in the previous paragraph.

Table 01: Overall positive employment status change as a direct or indirect result of the intervention

	Yes	No
Employment changed linked to the service received	834 (49.6%)	846 (50.4%)

Note that a total of 234 respondents (13.9%) reported employment status change linked directly to the intervention

Table 02: Respondents work sector before and after receiving the service

	Before intervention	After intervention
Private work sector	215	341
Public work sector	60	83

Table 03: Business development related to agricultural intervention (NRC only)

Developed a product	Work from home	Opened a business	Opened selling portal	Others
40	6	372	0	118

Table 04: Work development for non-agricultural intervention by (AMAR, BROB, TAJDID)

Work from home and online	Work from home	Opened business with a partner	Opened selling portal	Others
12	43	10	37	15

Table 05: Respondents reporting improvement of employment aspects.

	(0-20) %	(21-40) %	(41-60) %	(61-80) %	(81-100) %
Employment aspect improvement	1044	194	117	471	16

Table 06: Respondents reporting that the training provided was sufficient.

	No	Yes, Was enough	No, respondents not interested	Respondent Don't have time	Participated in other trainings
Training provided was sufficient	3	786	24	77	93

This report provides further detailed information on the various employment aspects covered above and their relation to the services provided.

Conclusion:

The post-assessment survey highlighted multiple successes of the private sector development activities, as many beneficiaries were able to change their employment status and expand their businesses after participating in the private sector development activities. However, it also highlighted the complex factors which affect private sector development and job creation, as many beneficiaries indicated through the surveys. Short-term interventions or less comprehensive activities could limit the beneficiaries' skills development. The assessment demonstrated that labour market assessment and environmental considerations are crucial for the success of the interventions, as well as the selection of targeted groups. Finally, the report shows the importance of a desk review prior to undertaking any survey, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the activities conducted by implementing partners. This will serve to support the verification of beneficiary data and allow for a deeper analysis of the relationship between the activities and changes in employment status.

Background

Iraqi Economic Context

More than four years on from the Government of Iraq's official announcement of victory over the Islamic State's presence in the country, many people remain internally displaced, while the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic crisis have, in parallel, increased pressure on the public system. The instability of oil prices and the pandemic in 2020 have both amplified Iraq's economic crisis. The existing economic and social fragilities have deepened, and the incapacity of the state to mobilize financial resources to boost the recovery and maintain social assistance has increased the vulnerability of its population. Economic growth is vital to ensuring long-term prosperity for all Iraqis and promoting greater self-reliance. While the private sector has the potential of becoming a source of important growth for the Iraqi economy, lack of access to private investment capital, insufficient financial and institutional support, and political instability hamper its development. Employing around 60% of the workforce (World Bank), the Iraqi state is trapped in a vicious spiral of debts and devaluation and has therefore made the strengthening of the private sector and employment one of its priorities. The lack of economic reforms has kept the private sector in a relatively weak state, while the labour market has lost its efficiency in connecting businesses and job seekers.

GIZ Participation in the Development of Iraq's Private Sector

To support the Government of Iraq and to create opportunities for the Iraqi people, the Private Sector Development & Employment Promotion (PSD) Project has been commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-funded by the European Union (EU). The project relies on a multi-level approach that interlinks policy/network

level with institutional development of key partners and capacity development. Enabling vulnerable groups such as women and returnees is imperative to the implementation approach of the project. Furthermore, special attention is given to sectors with a strong potential for growth such as agribusiness, solar energy, waste management, and hospitality, with a regional focus on Baghdad, Basra, Diwaniyah, Diyala, Erbil and Mosul. The PSD project divides its fields of action into two main approaches:

Investments Build Jobs: The project strengthens the capabilities of the government partners to develop fact-based economic policies and strategies, fostering public-private dialogues, engaging civil society organizations and academia, and promoting business integrity to improve economic policy conditions for a growth-oriented business and investment climate.

Jobs Build Futures: The project improves employment prospects in the private sector for young Iraqis, especially women and returnees, following an integrated approach that combines labour market-driven skills development and job placement measures as well as entrepreneurship development, and advisory services for MSMEs. The project supports local education providers, businesses, and civil society groups in providing new self-employment and business opportunities to give them a perspective.

GIZ-funded activities focused on the development of the private sector by supporting micro and small businesses as well as activities aiming at providing youth with the most demanded skills by the private sector to increase their abilities and engagement with the local market. iMMAP survey focused on four implementing partners (AMAR, TAJDID, Bent Al Rafedain and the Norwegian Refugee Council) operating in Baghdad, Basra and Diwaniya governorates.

The table below provides a summary of the implementing partners whose beneficiaries were targeted as part of this impact assessment survey.

Table 07: Summary of implementing partners' activities 

Implementing Partner	The AMAR Foundation (AMAR)
Implementation Period	2018-2020
Area of Implementation	Basra and Baghdad
Intervention Description	Youth employment promotion for job seekers in Basra and Baghdad through professional and online courses such as hairdressing, computers, sewing, web design and database management.
Activities overview	Information management skills including (SQL, Data analysis and computer skills)
Implementation Partner	TAJDID Iraq Foundation for Economic Development (TAJDID)
Implementation Period	2019-2020
Area of Implementation	Baghdad
Intervention Description	Improving the qualifications of 1,100 youth in Baghdad through market-oriented vocational training and with a special focus on the tourism sector, also providing online capacity-building training, and internships.
Activities overview	Vocational training and labour market skills development
Implementation Partner	Bent Al-Rafedain Organization (BROB)
Implementation Period	2020-2021
Area of Implementation	Baghdad and Diwaniyah
Intervention Description	The project aimed to decrease the unemployment rate in Baghdad and Diwaniyah and improve the social cohesion of the community by supporting social and economic development centres that provide young people with tools and skills to enter the labour market, as well as social cohesion activities.
Activities overview	Business entrepreneurship and computer skills
Implementation Partner	Norwegian Refugees Council (NRC)
Implementation Period	Dec-2019 to Mar-2021
Intervention Description	Resilience building livelihoods project in Basra governorate, in southern Iraq, entitled "Building Resilience through Entrepreneurship, Agricultural Support and Job Placement for Vulnerable Communities in Basra Governorate". The project was implemented from 1st December 2019 to 31st March 2021 in Basra city/district and six selected villages in the Al Nashwa sub-district, Shatt-Al Arab district.
Activities overview	Agriculture vocational training and business development grants for farmers.

Survey methodology

Survey Focus

The methodology was based on an approach that combines analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data collected through a survey developed by the Monitoring and Evaluation team of GIZ. The surveys were conducted via phone, targeting beneficiaries of private

sector development projects implemented by GIZ partners. The sample size was proposed by GIZ, based on the beneficiary databases provided by implementing partners. IMMAP later increased the sample size to ensure

a representative sample of interviews across the different partners and locations. For the purpose of this survey, IMMAP was not provided with project information, beyond the general description of the various projects and types of activities. IMMAP had no direct contact with implementing partners at any stage of the survey and ensured the fair sampling of beneficiaries based on the required sample size.

The Private Sector Development project is focused on increasing employment prospects

for Iraqis through job and business creation and development activities. The survey questions were therefore designed to measure specific changes in employment-related skills and employment status, as well as the ability of beneficiaries to enter the labour force as employees and business owners. The questionnaires are annexed to this report.

Data Collection:

Due to the nature and purpose of the survey, no field data collection was possible during the data collection process. Instead, IMMAP conducted the data collection via phone through a team of five data collectors. IMMAP used Kobo toolbox as the main data collection tool, due to its efficiency and availability. IMMAP ensured that the data was stored on a secure server and only accessed by the relevant team members, according to IMMAP's data protection policy. The surveys took place between March 12 and May 29, 2022. In total, IMMAP contacted 2,771 beneficiaries and completed 1,839 surveys. The table below provides a breakdown of beneficiaries reached per implementing partner.

Table 08: Total number of beneficiaries reached per implementing partner.

Implementation Partner	Total Number of participants in project activities	Representative Sample defined by GIZ	Calls conducted	Beneficiaries reached
AMAR	469	380	421	285
TAJDID	1100	500	640	429
BROB	955	507	541	366
NRC	1115	620	1115	759
Total	3639	2007	2717	1839

Data Quality Assurance

Data collection through phone interviews posed a challenge to ensure data quality and accuracy, especially considering the interviews were conducted at least six months after completion of the interventions. That said, iMMAP took all necessary measures to ensure the quality of the data quality, which included;

- Reminding each beneficiary of the intervention and using a semi-structured approach for the interview.
- Adapted the threshold of six contact attempts to ensure the completion of the surveys, based on the availability and ability of the beneficiaries to respond.
- Provided the data collection team with two data quality trainings focused on the following data quality attributes; accuracy, completeness, consistency, reliability and timebound.

Methodological Constraints Faced by the iMMAP Team

The types of activities implemented under the private sector development project for the targeted sample were complex and divided between multiple sectors, locations, and demographic groups. This complexity necessitated a more in-depth understanding of the correlation between the activities and the change in employment status as a result of the labour market skills gained, which wasn't possible through the survey questionnaire alone. iMMAP therefore faced some challenges in data analysis, which required it to redefine the scope of the impact assessment.

In general, the responses to the surveys were not always accurate or consistent, which is expected in this type of survey and were further perturbed by the amount of time elapsed since the completion of activities. For this reason, many beneficiaries showed a high level of confusion and lack of interest in providing precise information related to employment status and income. Due to the limited interview time, it was also challenging to repeat certain questions and use a more conversation-oriented approach to ensure

the accuracy of information. Furthermore, there was a high ratio of non-respondents due to disconnected or change of phone numbers.

Based on the lessons learned within this first round of data collection, IMMAP will develop a mechanism to overcome these constraints and explore different means of communication and the concept of semi-structured open discussions with beneficiaries to increase their response rate and data accuracy.

Surveyed Sample Information

The survey targeted the beneficiaries of four implementing partners of the PSD project. The partners were selected by GIZ based on their activity's timeline and focus. All targeted partners completed their activities and services during the period 2018-2021. The implementing partners' activities were a combination of vocational training, online training, on-job training, internships, as well as toolkit, seed and voucher provision. All partners worked in the central urban areas of southern Iraq, which suffers from high unemployment rates and economic hardship, as well as a multitude of environmental constraints that affect agricultural practices.

IMMAP completed 1839 interviews from the 2717 beneficiaries contacted. The main reason for the high variation in response rate was invalid contact information from implementing partners. The following graphs and tables provide a demographic overview of the targeted beneficiaries and the services provided by each partner:

Figure 01: Survey Respondents by Gender.

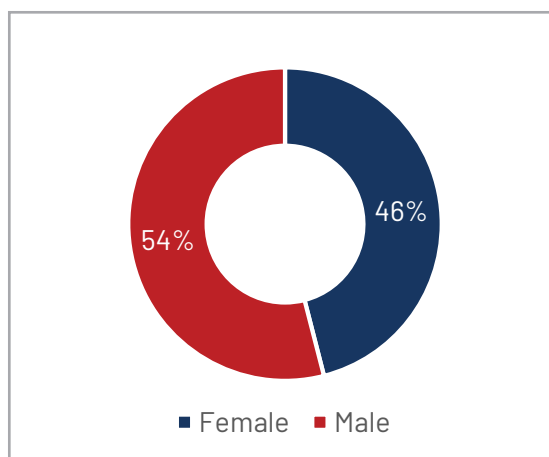
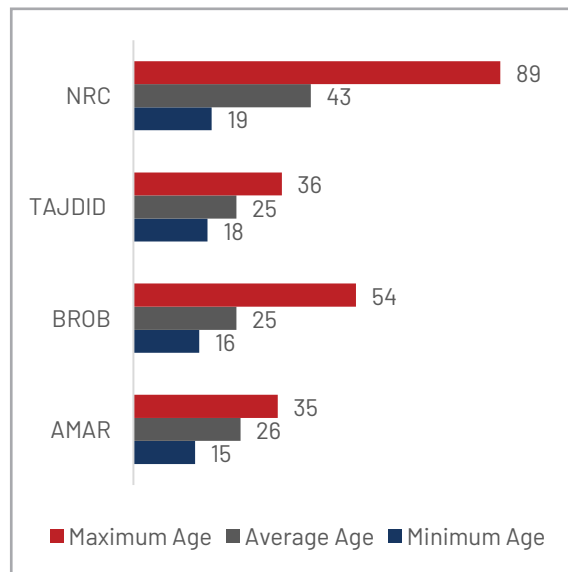


Figure 02: Survey respondents average age



As shown in Figure 01. Gender plays an important role in the sampling of the survey, access to female beneficiaries was challenging due to cultural barriers as well as sharing the contact details of a male family member. Therefore, a deliberate increase in the sample was done to ensure an adequate representation.

The average age of respondents for TAJDID, BROB and AMAR was 25 years old, which is a representative age group of jobseekers in Iraq and co-relate with the services provided by the implementing partners. For NRC, the average age is 42 years old, it was noted that most NRC beneficiaries are of older age. This could be justified in relation to the nature of the farming industry in Basra, landownership and the type of activities provided under the project framework. There is not enough evidence to further analyze the variables affecting youth engagement in agricultural activities; However, it is advised to be further investigated.

Figure 03 represents the geographical distribution of survey respondents for all implementing partners combined in Baghdad, Basra, and Diwanyah. The sample was representative geographically with reference to the population density in those urban centres

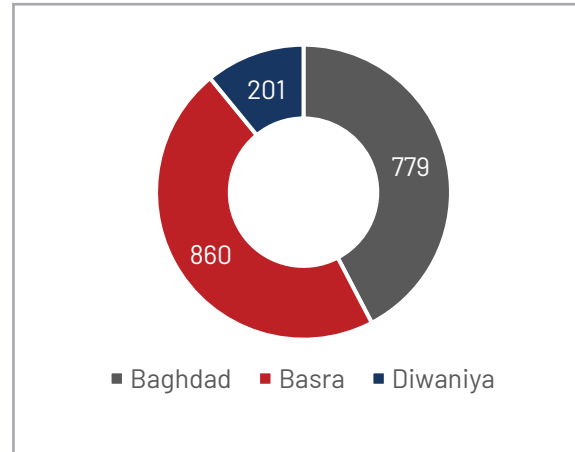


Figure 03: Geographic Distribution of survey respondents

Implementing Partners Activities

This survey is not meant to focus on evaluating the activities and services of the PSD implementing partners. the survey questionnaire placed a greater emphasis on the change in employment status, rather than connecting that change with the specific training provided by the implementing partner. However, the post-assessment survey focused on understanding the overall impact of participating in the PSD programs in general. It is important to keep this remark in mind while reading the report, that IMMAP didn't have any contact with the implementing partners. the following tables show the number of respondents per intervention by a partner:

Table 09: Number of beneficiaries interviewed, per activity and implementing partner. 

Implementing partner	Service	Number on interviewed beneficiaries	Implementing partner	Service	Number on interviewed beneficiaries
BROB	BEE	126	NRC	Agricultural	561
	Internship	5		Start-up Kits	65
	TVET	235		Value	133
AMAR	SQL Server	17	TAJDID	Hospitality	119
	Statistical analysis(SPSS)	16		Tourism	110
	CCNA 200-301	36		Vocational	181
	Mobile App	26		Capacity	19
	Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point,	36			
	Web Development	30			
	Photoshop	32			
	AutoCAD	32			
	English Language	60			

Key Findings on Employment Activities

The data was analyzed to focus on specific indicators and divided into two groups of focus. AMAR, BROB and TAJDID analyses were combined since their activities are more focused on the employment scenarios in similar sectors. However, NRC interventions had an additional focus on business/product development in agriculture practices. The key indicators to be measured from the survey are as follows;

- Change in employment status
- Improvement of employment prospects.
- Date of employment status change
- Overall gained labour market-related skills.
- Change in business status
- Improvement of product quality for SMEs.
- Job creation and the increased ability of job owners to employ.
- Improvement in business management skills

Change in employment status

A change in employment status includes any change in the employment status of the beneficiaries where the change happens for a certain period after participating in any of the services provided by the implementing partners. Temporary changes could be considered valid if the impact of these temporary employment changes has led to a change in the financial and social status of the beneficiary. The change in employment status doesn't necessary means improvement and this report covered various option for change such as employment, part-time employment-day worker- seasonal worker, business partner and business owner.

As shown in Figure 04, there is a notable change in employment status towards improvement as well as an increase in employment due to the interventions of PSD

project partners in all targeted locations. The below graph shows the responses of 1676 beneficiaries only, as 163 beneficiaries refrained from answering the question or didn't provide clear information.

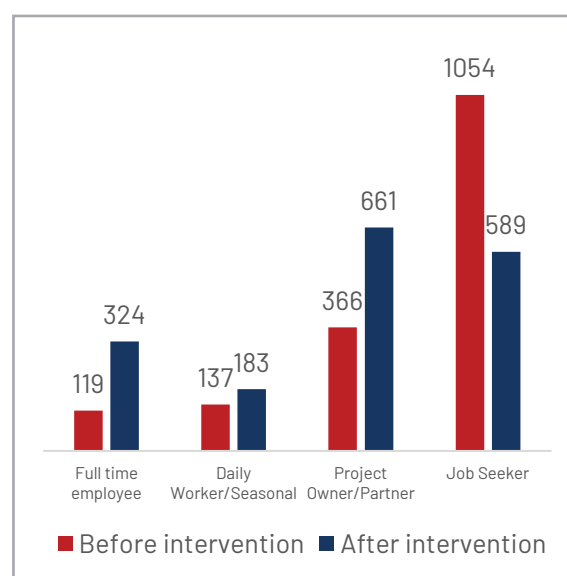


Figure 04: Beneficiaries' employment status before and after the intervention.

The following figure shows the current employment status of the beneficiaries at the time of the survey, disaggregated by implementing partner. The variation in employment status between the partners is correlated with their activities. For example, NRC had the highest numbers of project owners/partners since their interventions focused on job creation and business owners, compared to AMAR which focused on computer and information management skill development.

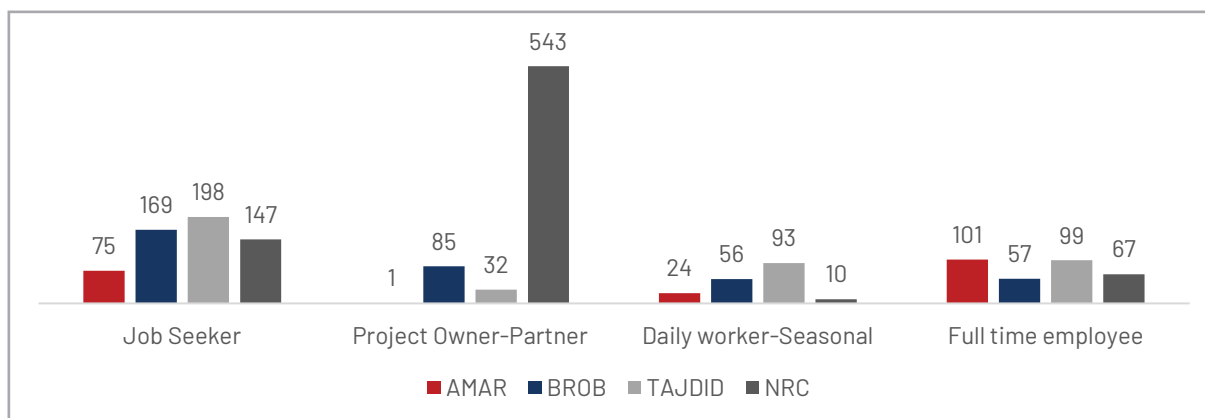


Figure 05: Respondents' current employment status after receiving the service, disaggregated by Implementing partner

Overall Change in Employment Status

Figures 06 and 07 show the response of the beneficiaries, when asked if any change in their employment status has occurred since participating in the project activities or not. The question did not link the change directly with the activities. The following figures cover 1680 respondents who provided a response to this question, from the total of 1839 respondents.

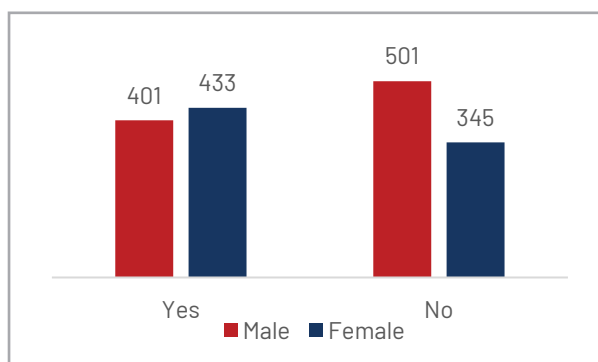


Figure 06: Total number of respondents stating a change in employment status since the end of activities.

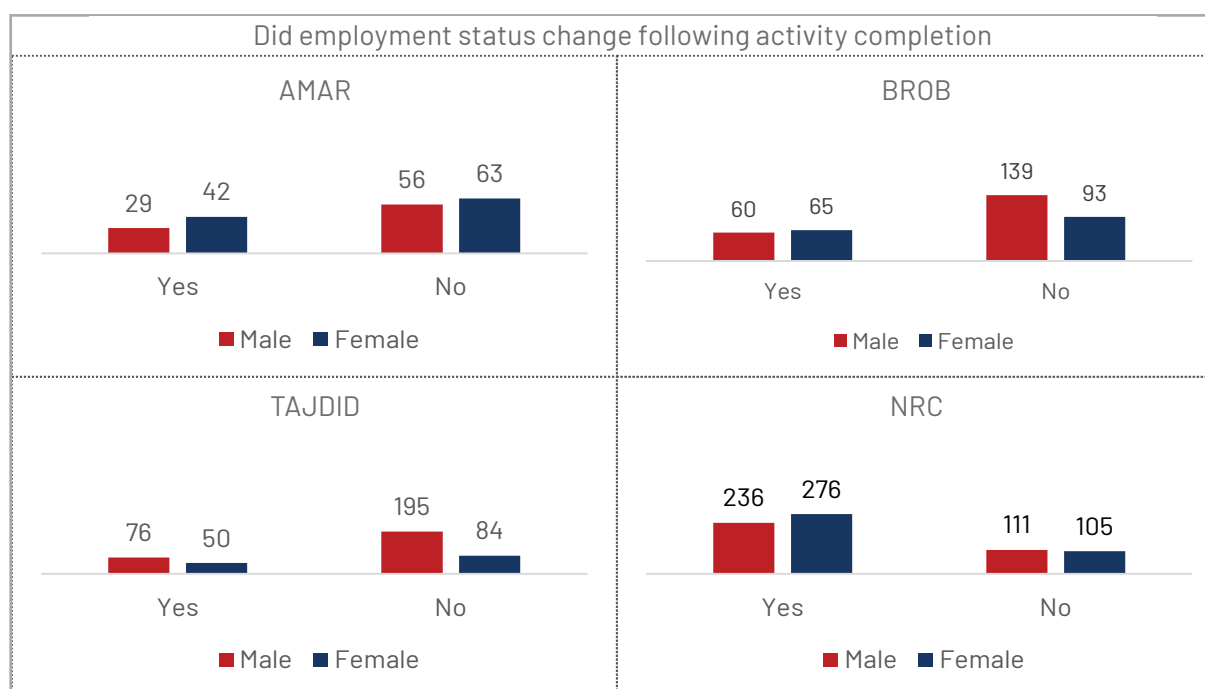


Figure 07: Respondents who reported a change in their employment status following completion of the activities, per implementing partner.

The South and Central regions of Iraq did not face high levels of displacement, compared to the governorates under the occupation of ISIS. However, some community members moved to other locations due to the deteriorating economic situation, low job opportunities, and possibly security and safety threats.

Figure 08 shows the number of returnees reporting a change in their employment status.

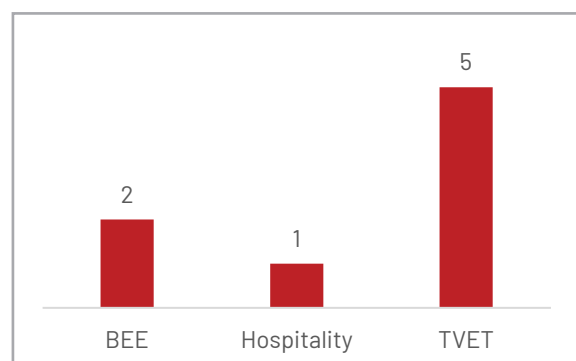


Figure 08: Returnees stating employment status change since the end of activities.

Despite the high positive response rate to this question, these outcomes aren't necessarily the sole or direct result of the interventions. The activities conducted by the

implementing partners could be considered as one contributing factor to the overall change in employment status after completion of the implementation.

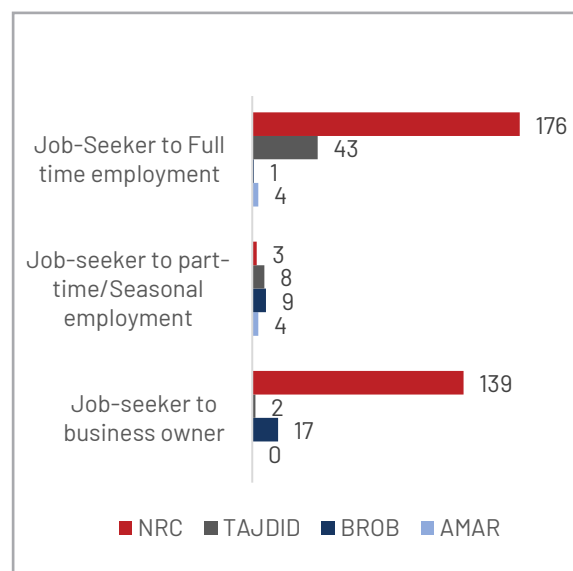


Figure 09: Respondents stating that their change in employment status was strongly linked to the interventions.

		AMAR	BROB	TAJDID	NRC
Jobseeker to business owner/partner	Male	0	9	2	25
	Female	0	8	0	114
Jobseeker to part-time/seasonal worker	Male	3	1	4	1
	Female	1	3	4	2
Jobseeker to full-time employee	Male	3	0	7	3
	Female	1	1	13	2
Total		8	22	30	174

Table 10: Respondents stating that their change of employment status was strongly linked to the Interventions, disaggregated by gender.

Date of Change in Employment Status:

To measure the timeframe of changes in employment status, NRC beneficiaries were asked to specify when the change occurred, in relation to completion of the activities. As shown in Figure 10, 61% of the responding beneficiaries managed to change their status within the first three months after the support was provided, while their employment prospects gradually reduced six months or more after the intervention. This indicates that the labor market skills earned, as well as the motivation for job seeking are best invested within the first six months following the intervention.

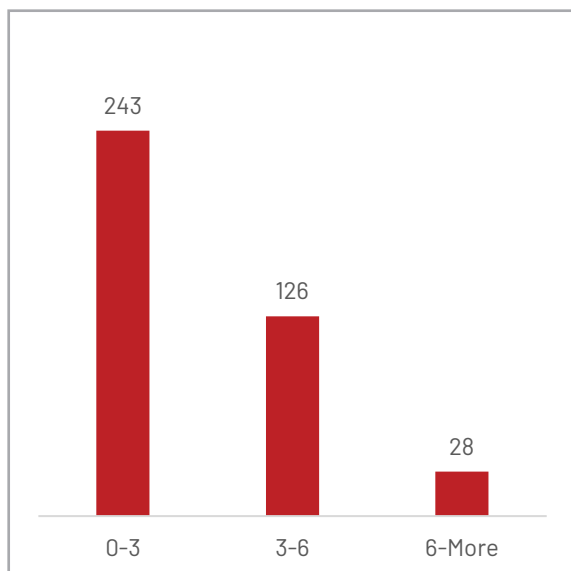


Figure 10: Employment change by months elapsed after the interventions ended.

Job-seeking Channels:

The job-seeking channels are the means and channels by which the project beneficiaries try to find new opportunities and improve their employment prospects. Some of the implementing partners have provided the beneficiaries with the necessary skills to support their job-seeking efforts, while others focused more on technical training. A total of 583 beneficiaries reported a notable improvement in their knowledge of job-seeking channels.

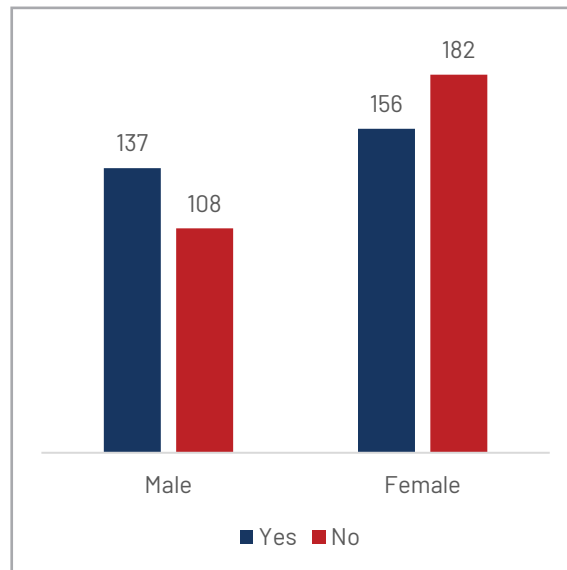


Figure 11: Respondents who report increased knowledge about new job-seeking channels

As shown in Figure 12, the most common job-seeking channel is social media, followed by friends and relatives and direct contacts. This indicates that there is more reliance on social networks for job-searching than other means. It is also notable that women placed more effort into job-searching than men. Further increase of knowledge and awareness of job-seeking channels could be beneficial in future interventions.

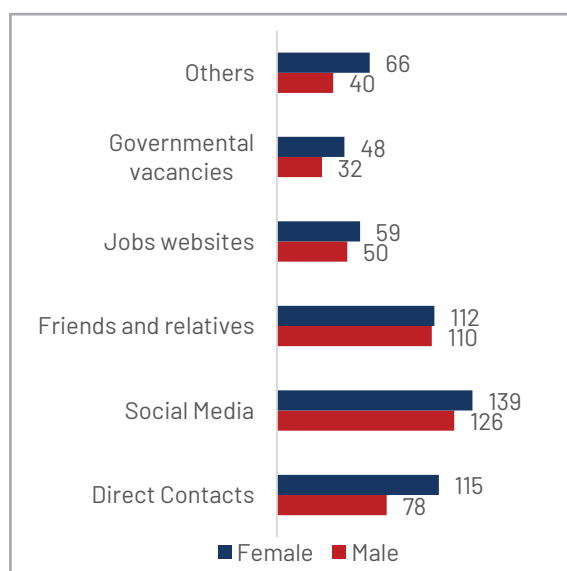


Figure 12: Job-seeking channels utilized by beneficiaries.

Job-seeking Skills – CV Development Skills:

To assess improvement in job-seeking skills and means, respondents were asked about any improvements in CV development and use.

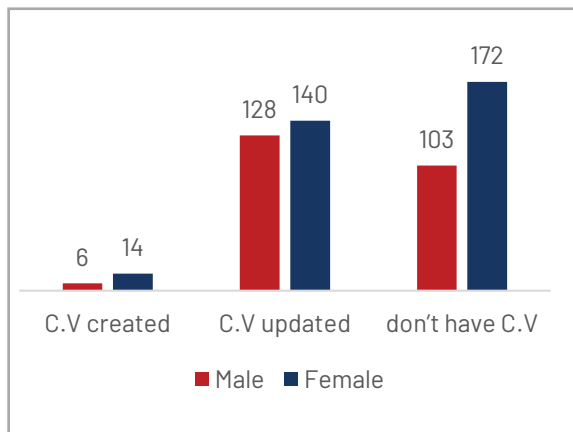


Figure 13: CV status for the job seekers

The above figure was based on the responses of 563 beneficiaries only. It is important to connect the low percentage of CV creation (4%) with the means used for job-searching listed in Figure 12, as well as contextualize the job-searching means and the suitable measure of skills representation in relation to the type of activities, skills, and sectors that jobseekers are engaging with. Hence, it is advised to contextualize this data and build a stronger connection with partners activities and sectors.

Beneficiaries feedback on the main reasons for not finding employment opportunities:

The respondents that did not secure employment reported several challenges that hindered their ability to change their employment status after receiving the services. The key challenges include;

- 1- Lack of job opportunities due to the relatively low number of companies and local private investment in the targeted locations.
- 2- Work environments aren't suitable for female workers in many locations.
- 3- Family obligations limit female beneficiaries' access to labour market.
- 4- Favoritism and nepotism demotivate and limit job-seekers access to private sector opportunities.

5- Working hours and the demands of the job do not match the salary.

6- Female respondents tend to look for jobs near their living location which limits their options. Due to cultural, safety and security factors, females do not feel safe working in other governorates or far from their household.

7- Inadequate response from recruiters in private sector companies.

8- Youth and fresh graduates lack the necessary skills for jobs, which require previous experience.

Employment modalities and contracts:

The following graph shows the employment modality of beneficiaries who secured employment. This data only represents 425 of the beneficiaries who received new employment after receiving trainings and support from AMAR, TAJDID and BROB.

A total of 206 beneficiaries indicated that contractual agreements could be written or verbal is 206/425 or 48% while 219/225 or 52% stated that they do not have a contract. Of the beneficiaries that received a contract, 185 (90%) indicated that the contract period was 6 months or more.

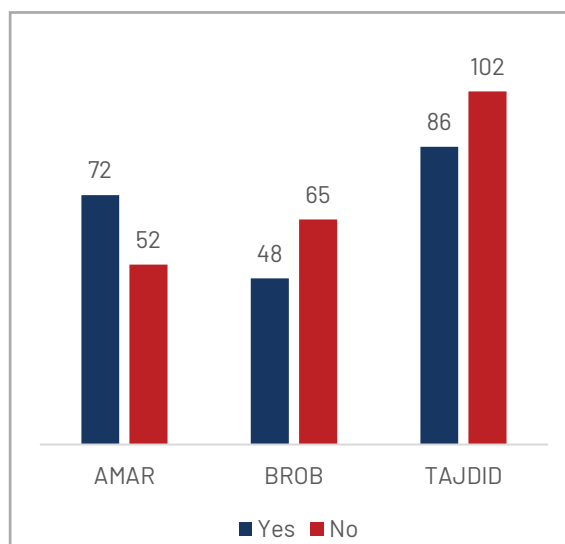


Figure 14: Respondents that received new employment who received a written or verbal contract.

Current work conditions and skills developed as a result of the intervention:

The figures and analysis presented in this section are divided between the NRC beneficiaries and the AMAR, BROB and TAJDID beneficiaries, due to the differences in the type of intervention provided. The first focused on business creation in agriculture practice and the later focused on building skills for employment.

Figure 11 summarizes developments in the work conditions of respondents benefiting from NRC's interventions. The highest responses indicated 69% of the beneficiaries are working from home. This is due to multiple factors related to the nature of the activities. For example, female small business owners tend to dedicate a small proportion of their household for business activities, while farmers and workers engaging in agriculture practices reside on the same land they regularly harvest. Product development shows positive improvement as farmers increased the variety types of plants grown within the new product category.

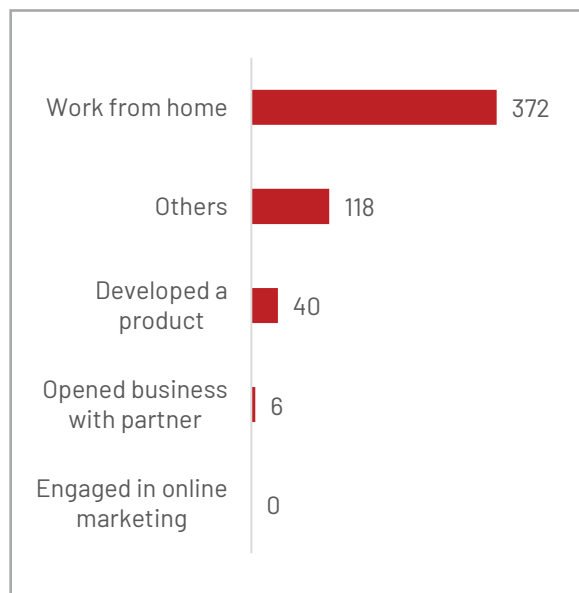


Figure 15: Work development for projects/businesses supported by implementing partner NRC

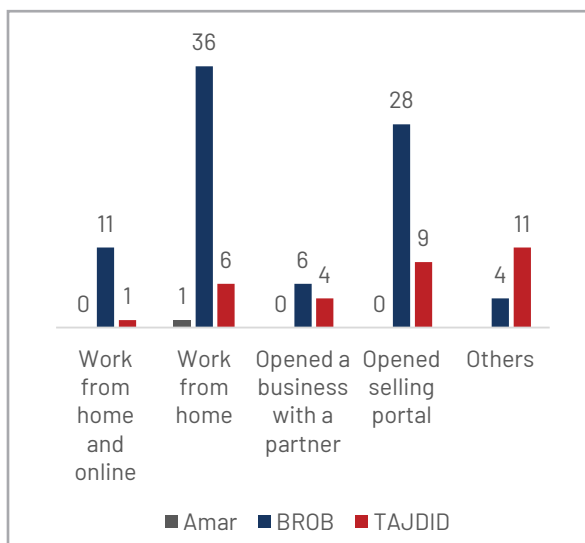


Figure 16: Work development for projects/businesses supported by implementing partners AMAR, BROB, and TAJDID.

Beyond conventional employment status, the data indicates that almost no beneficiaries from AMAR foundation and a very limited number of TAJDID beneficiaries developed their work conditions, which is highly likely to be related to the type of activities both organizations offered. However, as BROB

activities focused on business entrepreneurship and vocational training many beneficiaries managed to start small business from home.

It is noticeable that a very low number reported opening a business with a partner. Meanwhile, a higher number of respondents reported opening a sales portal, while working from home and online combined were the highest forms of changes in work conditions. No agricultural interventions led to online engagement.

Employees employment in the public or private sector:

This indicator aims to better understand the direction of the workforce, between both public sector and private sector. The survey focused on collecting the number of beneficiaries who responded to the question on employment sector before and after the intervention. There was no evidence, nor means of verification to determine if there had been any shift in the labour force between the private and public sectors within the targeted locations. forces between private and public sectors in the targeted locations.

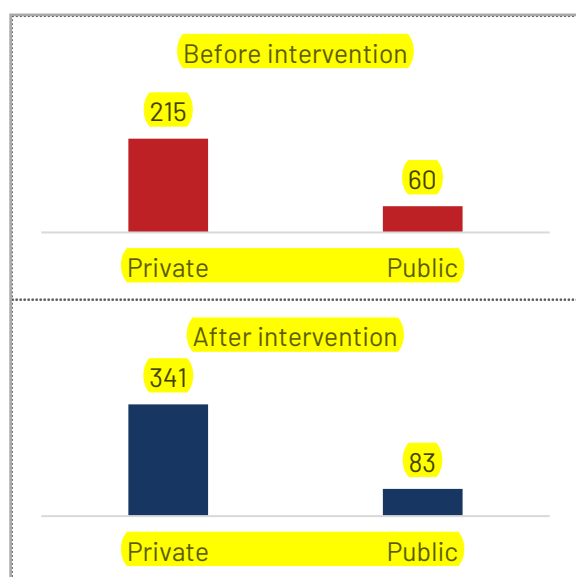



Figure 17: Proportion of employment within the private and public sectors, before and after intervention 

There was a noticeable increase in employment within the public and private sectors before and after the interventions. Of the beneficiaries that reported being in employment before the intervention, 20% were employed within the public sector. The number of opportunities within the public sector is low to fulfil the youth and other persons seeking employment within the job market.

A high level of frustration was observed among beneficiaries that failed to find suitable job opportunities. However, it is unlikely that the public sector can accommodate the high numbers of persons demanding job opportunities unless the private sector is more supported and developed. Despite the efforts from civil society, the private sector is still facing many challenges which prevent it from accommodating the currently high numbers of unemployed persons.

Skills gained due to the intervention:

To measure the skills gained through the training activities, the change of employment status among beneficiaries was examined and the following logic applied; If the employment status changed for the better, in most cases it indicates that a new skill was developed or improved which resulted in this change. However, this does not eliminate the possibility that other factors caused or contributed to these changes. However, this was not possible to measure, due to the limitation of the survey. That said, a weighting was assigned to each employment status change and, depending on the difference in value between the before and after intervention employment status, the skills gained is reflected. The weight of each employment status is shown in Table 11.

Employment Status	Weight	Difference before/after	Improvement Percentage
Job Seeker	1	1 to 1.5	(0-20)%
Daily/Seasonal Employee	3	2 to 2.5	(21-40)%
Project Partner	4	3 to 3.5	(41-60)%
Full-time Employee	4.5	4	(61-80)%
Project Owner	5	5	(81-100)%

Table 11: Proxy measurement of skills gained using the weighted value of employment status change. By using the above scoring methodology, the results of skills improvement are highlighted in Figure 16.

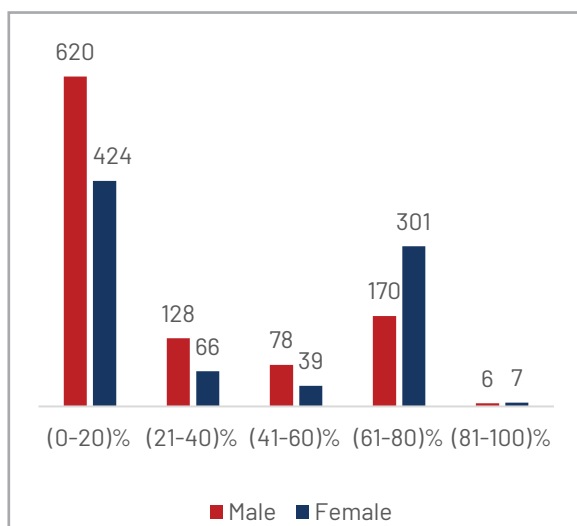


Figure 18: Total skills gained after the intervention.

The majority of the beneficiaries' gained skills within the 0-20% bracket, implying limited improvement of skills as a result of the interventions. This is coherent with the CV status and update findings, as the beneficiaries with no existing skills showed minimum improvement, while the ones with a moderate level showed improvement to a higher percentage bracket. It is also highly unlikely for a beneficiary within a pre-existing band 1 (0-20%) skill level bracket to increase to the band 4 or 5 bracket through a short-term intervention, while there is an increased likelihood that a person within the band 3 bracket could improve to a band 4 bracket. This is supported by the results of the CV update, as the respondents with an existing CV were likely to improve or update it following the intervention, while respondents with no preexisting CV appeared to face challenges, as the number of respondents without a CV that then created one was very low compared to those that had a preexisting CV and updated it. This indicates that short-term intensive trainings have a limited impact on knowledge development. This should be taken into consideration for development of future trainings programs, by taking a combined approach of trainings with follow up internship and on-job skills development activities, to support individual capacity building for a more sustainable approach.

The following figures show the skills development ratio per activity and service,

per partner. This information would support implementing partners in better defining future interventions to achieve higher and long lasting impact on beneficiaries' employment prospects.

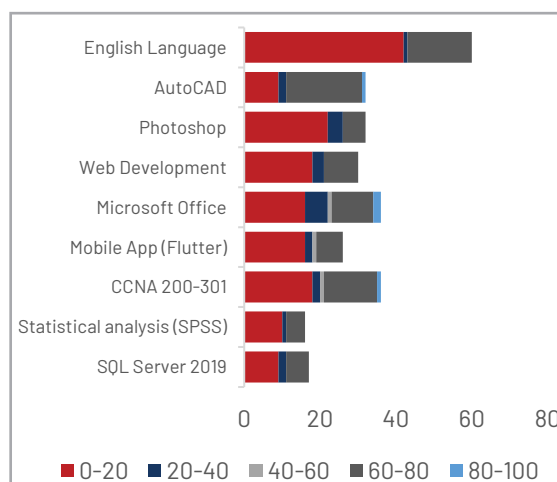


Figure 19: Employment skills improvement per activity type by AMAR

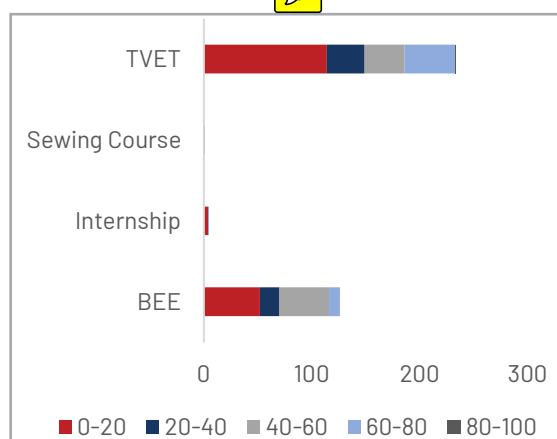


Figure 20: Employment skills improvement per activity type by BROB

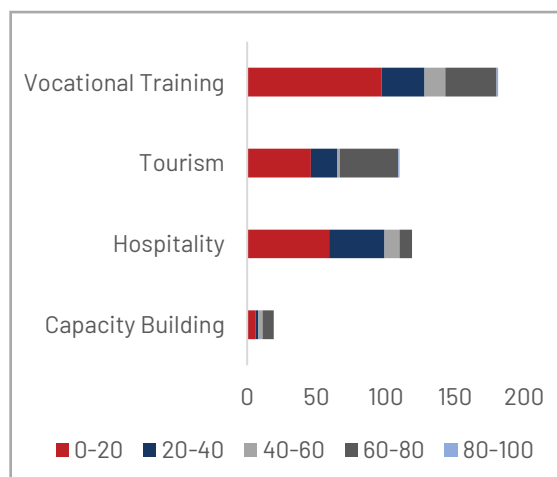


Figure 21: Employment skills improvement per activity type by TAJDID

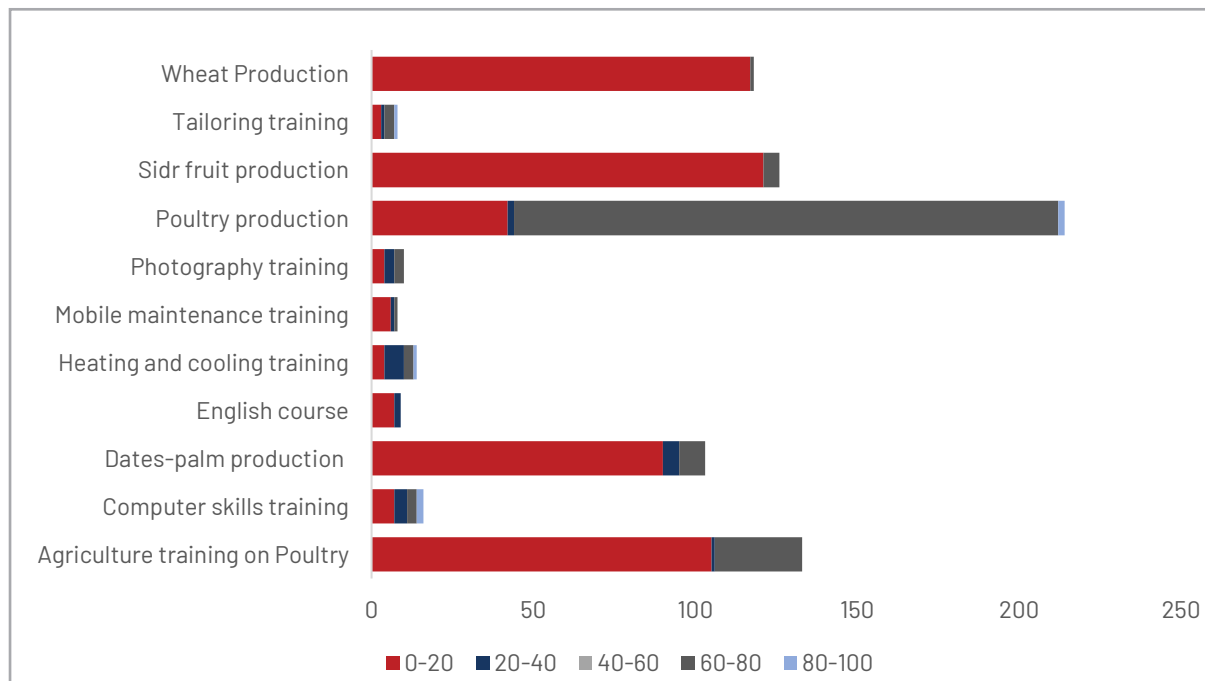


Figure 22: Employment skills improvement per activity type by NRC

It is strongly recommended to analyze the trainings with the highest skills development rate to better comprehend labour market demands and jobs prospects. There are multiple factors that are likely to affect the skills development ratio, which were not possible to measure within the scope of this assessment. However, the above indicators could be considered as a valuable baseline for planning future activities.

Key Findings on Agriculture Development Activities

The following section will focus on product development and business development for beneficiaries of NRC interventions.

NRC focused on supporting farmers and small farming/livestock business owners in Basra. The organization supported them through vocational training, technical support and provision of start-up kits and value vouchers.

Overall change in status with focus on financial status, production quantity, products quality, and customer reach:

Figure 23 summarizes the improvements of beneficiaries in areas related to product and business development, following the intervention. Overall, improvements were observed across all attributes.

However, a degradation of status was observed, with respect to financial and quantity aspects of agricultural production. A total of 230 respondents highlighted a challenge with regards to water availability and high salinity of water which was pushed back from Arab Gulf, due to the reduced flow of the Euphrates river, which negatively impacted farmers in the affected areas.



Figure 23: NRC beneficiaries reporting reduction or improvement with regards to financial, quantity, quality and customer reach of their product.

Scoring NRC beneficiaries' businesses product improvement, with regards to financial, quality, quantity and competition aspects

Respondents reported on financial, quality, quantity, competition, or customer reach aspects before and after intervention. To calculate the overall improvement for those respondents that cited any improvement, each aspect was graded from low to high (0-20 %, 21-40 %, 41- 60 %, 61-80 %, 81-100 %). The overall improvement in each aspect was calculated by subtracting the before and after values, summarized in Figure 24. Overall, the improvement mostly falls within the 21-40% rate, while the second highest level of observed at the 41-60% rate.

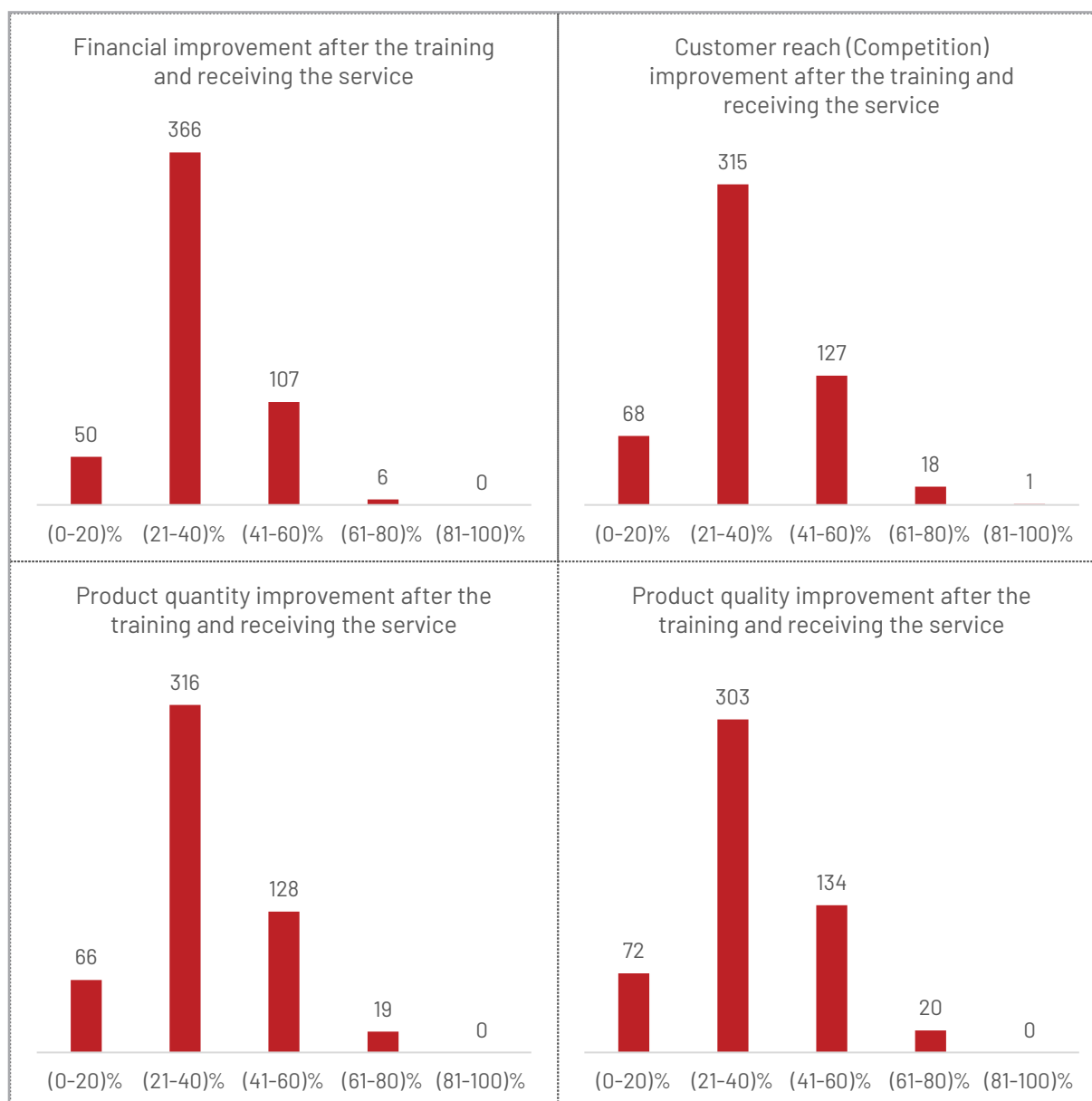


Figure 24: Scoring of improvement in project/business product following the intervention

In contrast to the skills improvement scored for beneficiaries benefiting from the activities of other organizations, it appeared that the group targeted by NRC had previous experience in farming and therefore the activities focused on skill development, rather than skill building. This is reflected in the higher level of improvement observed within this group, suggesting that NRC's activities had a higher level of impact than those conducted by other organizations.

Change in beneficiaries' product status after the intervention, related to financial, quantity, quality, customer reach aspects:

A product is classified as any type of produce which is produced as a result of the intervention, which can include crops, honey, eggs, etc. The following analysis focused on product development by investigating product quality, quantity, generated income and customer desire for purchase. Figure 25 highlights a notable change in product status as a result of the intervention, indicating a high improvement ratio.



Figure 25: Product improvement with regards to financial, quantity, quality, customer reach before and after the intervention.

Beneficiaries' feedback on the main improvements related to the agricultural intervention:

To investigate which agricultural activities conducted by NRC (agricultural inputs, poultry, start-up toolkit) resulted in the most significant improvements after the intervention, respondents were asked to answer an open-ended questions with relation to the following;

1- Poultry Intervention:

- A proportion of beneficiaries stated that chicken farms were a convenient livelihood option and that these activities developed their skills in how to raise chickens and take care of them. As a result, they were able to generate a small income and cover their household needs.
- Another proportion of respondents reported that while the poultry intervention created a sustainable income for a period

of two to eight months, they then faced challenges due to poultry diseases that caused them to lose part of or their entire poultry stock.

- Female beneficiaries showed a high level of benefit from the poultry-related intervention, as it enabled them to generate a small income from their home.

2- Wheat production and sidir fruit production

- A high number of respondents reported that the training provided them with knowledge of modern farming techniques that are more efficient and increased their production rates, as well as production quality.
- A high number of respondents reported that they expanded their projects as a result of the support provided.
- Some of the respondents reported that the training and support enabled them to have a more sustainable source of work and income.

3- Start-up kits and skills training

- A good number of beneficiaries reported that they benefited from the training received, as it increased their knowledge and enabled them to gain a certificate, which in return increased their employment opportunities
- A good number of beneficiaries reported that they opened a small project which generates income. The beneficiaries that received air conditioning unit heating and cooling training and received a toolkit had a sustained and operational business.
- A good number of project participants created a CV or updated their preexisting CV, in order to apply for available job opportunities.

To measure the skills improvement of the NRC beneficiaries across the different intervention types, different questions were asked in respective to different employment scenarios.

Business development and job creation:

The respondents were asked direct close-ended questions to determine if their employment ability had improved after the intervention. The responses summarized in Figure 26 show that 50% of the respondents reported that their employment ability improved. This suggests that the intervention succeeded in supporting business development and job creation.

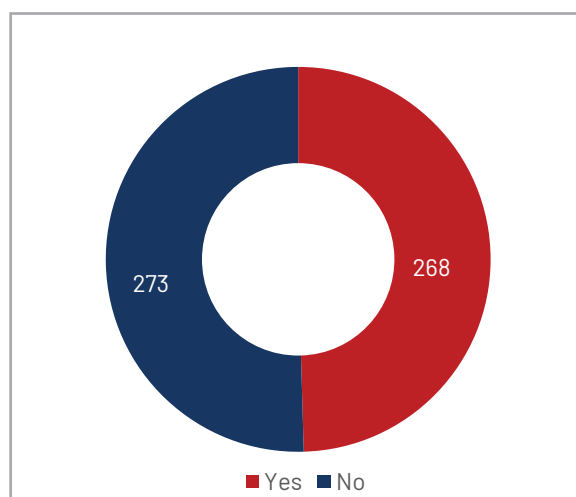




Figure 26. Responses of participants participating in agricultural interventions to determine if their employment ability had improved. 

Agriculture training benefits for beneficiaries:

Respondents were asked multiple choice questions to determine how they had benefited from the training, including receiving a certificate, managing workplace safety, increasing employment ability, as well as others. The results are summarized in Figure 27.



Figure 27. Measure of how beneficiaries benefited from agricultural interventions to manage their business. 

Work safety is not considered intensively within the local context of Iraq other than specific fields that operate on a large scale. Therefore, a noticeable increase with regards to managing work safety can be seen compared to other attributes. On the other hand, increasing employment ability for businesses is low despite the support, as the businesses are still operating on a small scale which prevent them to invest into recruiting more members.

The land benefited from the agricultural intervention support:

To assess how farms benefited from special products and services to manage crop planting, an indicator was used to measure the area planted with products provided by NRC, in comparison to the total agricultural land in operation. The sum of the total area benefitting from the products is 2,950,000 m² while the total area planted by the beneficiaries was 10,172,500 m². This indicates that the land which benefited from this intervention is approximately 29% of the actual land owned and harvested by the beneficiaries.

Key Findings on PSD Outcomes of Partners' Activities

The training provided is sufficient:

With regards to the training provided, the respondents were asked if they were interested to participate in another training. As shown in Figure 28, 79% of participants found the training to be sufficient and useful. However, based on the previous analysis of the skills improvement, it is still valid to consider the correlation between the training period and the desired skills development to ensure maximum benefits.

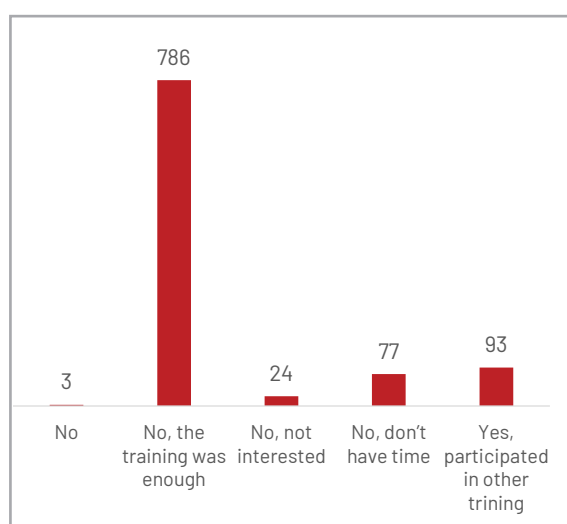


Figure 28: Respondents that found the training sufficient or not.

Did the intervention aid the participants to have income generation activities:

The results of respondents stating if the service received aided them to have income generation activities shows low impact and connection between the training or activities provided by implementing partners and increase of income. It is important to note that some of these indicators might contradict with the change in employment status. Furthermore, it was observed during the surveys that beneficiaries were very hesitant to share information about their income.

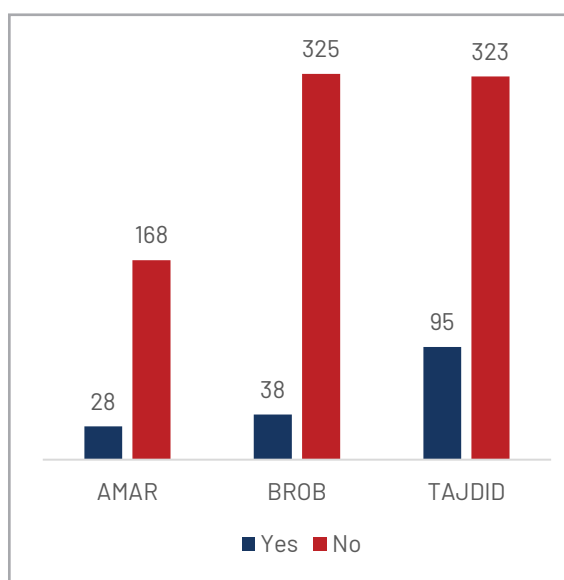


Figure 29: Did the intervention aid the participants to have income generating activities

New businesses/projects official registration:

114 of 159 business owners' interviews reported that their business is formally registered. It was noted that many beneficiaries were hesitant to speak about registration and there is a very high possibility that some respondents did not give accurate information about the registration status of their businesses. Therefore, further investigation is required to conclude on the business registration status.

Small business monthly income:

Most of the respondents strongly refrained from reporting their monthly income. As a result, the question about income was rephrased to provide some indicators around; 'Is the monthly income enough to cover personal expenses, not enough, or more than enough'. Of the 159 projects/business owners, a total of 84 provided feedback to this question, as shown in Figure 30.

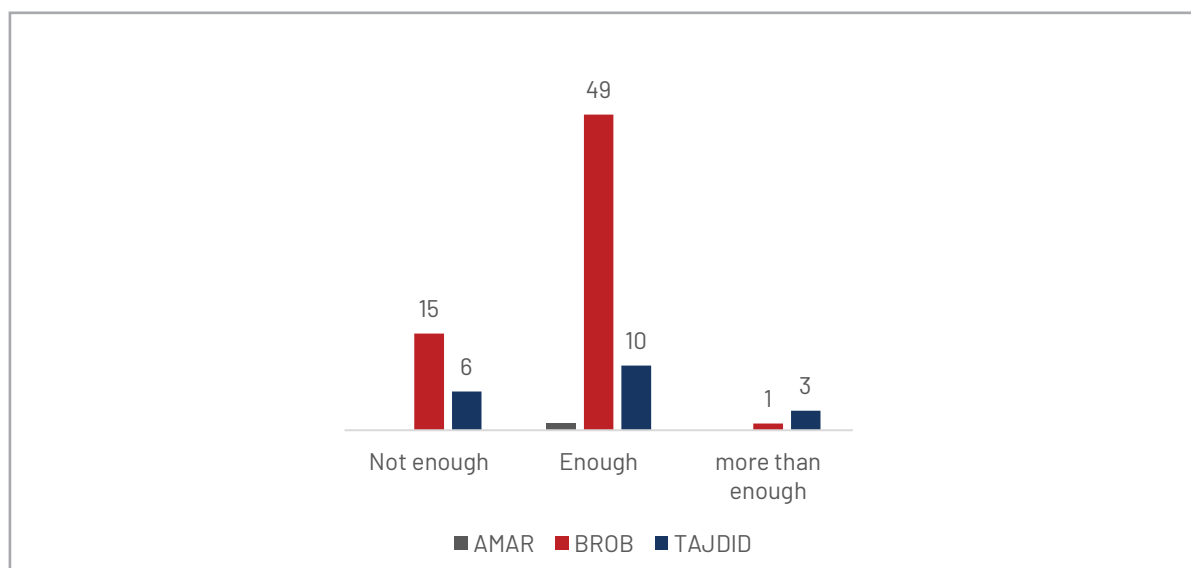


Figure 30: Monthly income stated by projects business owners.

Conclusion

- 1- Multiple factors could affect change in employment status beyond the partners' interventions. A more holistic assessment approach is essential to better understand the employability prospects in the targeted locations.
- 2- Implementing partners could benefit from a labor market assessment in order to ensure compatibility between the activities and labour market demands.
- 3- A better understanding of the correlation between skills development and duration of the training could be beneficial to ensure capacity building is effective and match the level of labour market demands.

- 4- Food security related trainings and interventions seems to be more successful and much needed in the southern region of Iraq. However, the implementing partners shall take into consideration the environmental conditions, including the high salinity of the soil and scarcity of water.
- 5- The major changes observed took a place within the first three months following the intervention. Therefore, an evaluation would be more effective if conducted within this period.
- 6- Further interventions to promote business registration could be beneficial to connect SME with the government.



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Better Outcomes**



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