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Resilient nations.*



Rapid Market Assessments (RMA) of IDPs, returnees and host communities in Salah Al-Din Governorate (Baiji and Shirqat) – September 2020



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1. INTRODUCTION

The situation in Iraq remains unstable with widespread humanitarian concerns. Years of conflict uprooted millions of people, eroded social cohesion, disrupted access to basic services, destroyed livelihoods and led to increased protection risks. With weak central governance and limited progress towards recovery and development, the situation has become protracted and millions of people across Iraq remain in need of humanitarian assistance.

In 2020, Iraq is simultaneously categorized as an upper-middle-income country and one that INFORM's Global Risk Index labels as "very high risk" of a humanitarian crisis. More than two years after Iraq's military operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) ended, social, ethnic and sectarian tensions persist on multiple fronts. Political uncertainty and natural disasters continue to intensify humanitarian needs. In October 2019, protests against the recently-elected federal government erupted in Baghdad and other governorates, threatening the fledgling stability and narrowing the national focus.

Through a multi-sectoral and integrated approach, DCA aims to save lives, provide needs-based humanitarian assistance, enable recovery and enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable conflict-affected communities.

As a proud signatory of the Charter for Change, DCA works with local NGOs to enhance their capacity to enable a more locally-led response to the humanitarian needs. As well as providing technical expertise in programmatic areas, DCA provides training in organizational areas including strategy, vision and plan, policies and procedures, security and staff welfare, fundraising, proposal writing and reporting and AME.

As the humanitarian crisis in Iraq enters its sixth year, an estimated 6.7 million conflict-affected persons are expected to continuously require humanitarian assistance in 2020.

In order to understand the current situation concerning the Protection, GBV, Livelihood, Social cohesion, Economic recovery and COVID-19 pandemic impact on the communities in Salah Al-din governorate especially Baiji and Shirqat districts. DCA in cooperation with the Mercy hands NGO in Iraq has conducted rapid Market assessment in Baiji and Shirqat district on 13 Sep 2020.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Assessment will utilise mixed methodologies for collecting quantitative (HH survey) and qualitative data (KII and FGDs) for the rapid market assessment.

It was determined that Key informant Interviews (KIIs) with local authorities, business owners, community representatives, local economic representatives and labor union practitioners in the selected area. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with youths will also be carried out. Household (HH) survey sampling was 50% female and 50% male. In total 500 HH were surveyed.

The assessment has been conducted by Mercy hands M&E staff in the field, then shared with the DCA Protection Officer for overview with analysis provided by DCA's MEAL consultant.

The survey took place from 27th of August to 1st of September 2020. FGDs and KII's were conducted on 13th Sep 2020 by the Mercy hands field enumerators. The methodology combines a quantitative and qualitative approach to support a more holistic understanding of all community levels and gain a deeper analysis of the target communities market landscape.

2.1 Study area:

HH assessment surveys, FGD's and KII's sessions were conducted in two locations: Baiji and Shirqat within Salah Aldin District. 3 FGD's took place in Baiji (6 female and 12 male) and 4 FGDs in Shirqat (14 Female and 10 Male).

For FGDs with the Ministry for Social Affairs and Labor, one session was conducted in Shirqat with 1 male participant, while 5 sessions were conducted in Baiji with 4 male participants and 1 female.

3 KII's were conducted with 3 male participants in Shirqat district, while 4 sessions were conducted in Baiji District with 1 male participant.

Table 2.1: Below shows the breakdown of the respondents' gender, age disaggregation and location:

Location	Total Participants	Female	Male
Baiji	250	56	194
Shirqat	250	77	173

**The average age of the respondents is 38 years.*

Table 2.2: Below shows the breakdown of FGD participants in both locations:

Location	Total Participants	Female	Male
Baiji	18	6	12
Shirqat	24	14	10

Table 2.3: Below shows the breakdown of the KIIs participants in both locations.

Location	Total Participants	Business owner	Social affairs office
Baiji	9	4	5
Shirqat	4	3	1

3. LIMITATIONS

Most challenges were faced in preparing the report for FGDs sessions including incomplete participant answers, answers not related to the question or no answer at all. All of these challenges impact the accuracy of this assessment.

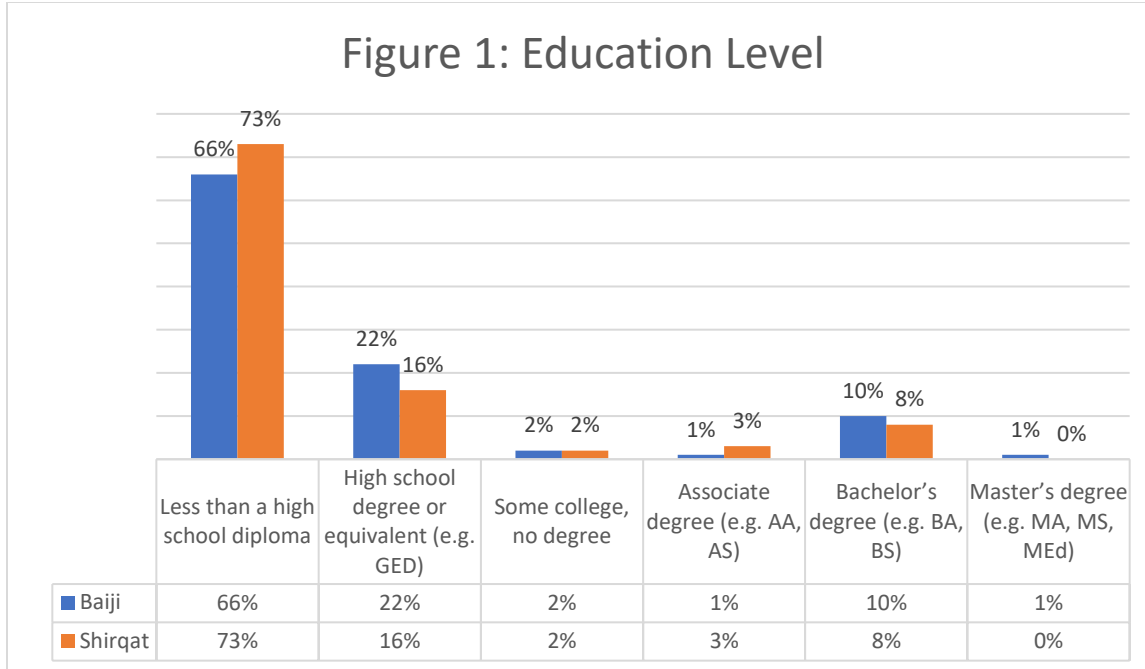
In future, Enumerators should be more patient with the respondents to ensure participants understand the questions and are therefore able to give further information. If necessary, the enumerators should rephrase the question to ensure the participant understands.

4. FINDINGS

1. EDUCATION AND JOB HISTORY

In terms of education, 66% of respondents in Baiji and 73% In Shirqat reported having less than a high school diploma and only 1% reported having a Master's degree. Thus, the education level of

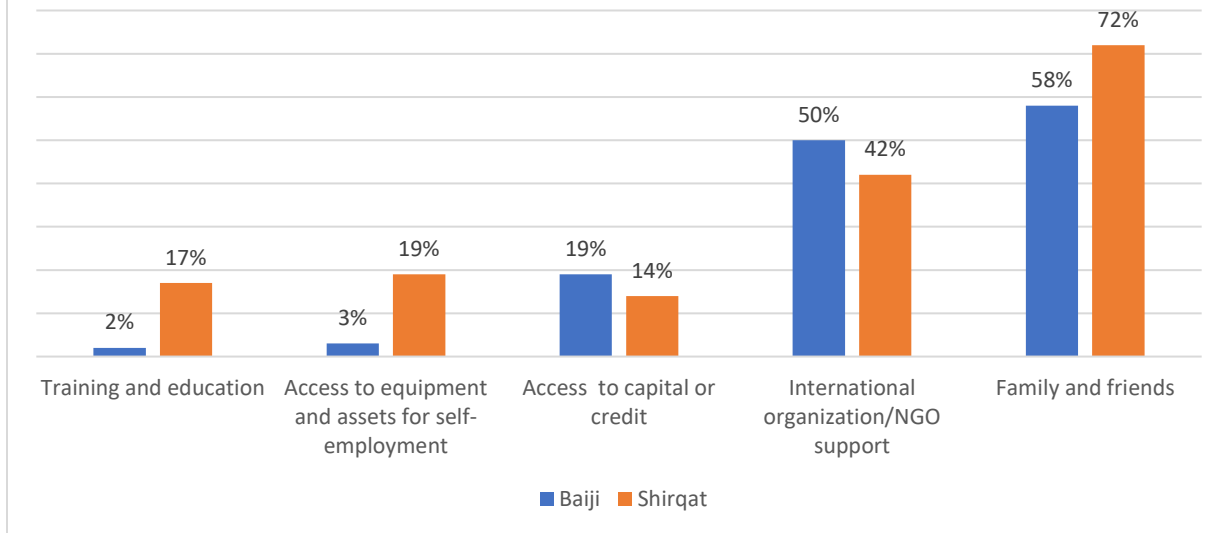
respondents is low in Baiji and Shirqat district. Despite this, the vast majority speak Arabic (99%) as a first language, while only 1% speak Kurdish and 5% speak English. Among women, there is a statistically insignificant difference regarding education and language.



In terms of primary livelihoods, 29% of the respondents have stated that they have changed their primary livelihood since the last displacement. 82% of respondents that stated they have changed their primary livelihood indicated that this was due to the loss of assets. 55% declared that the business landscape has changed and the number of customers has decreased significantly.

Furthermore, 24% of respondents have indicated that they have received help/support to adapt the livelihood source.

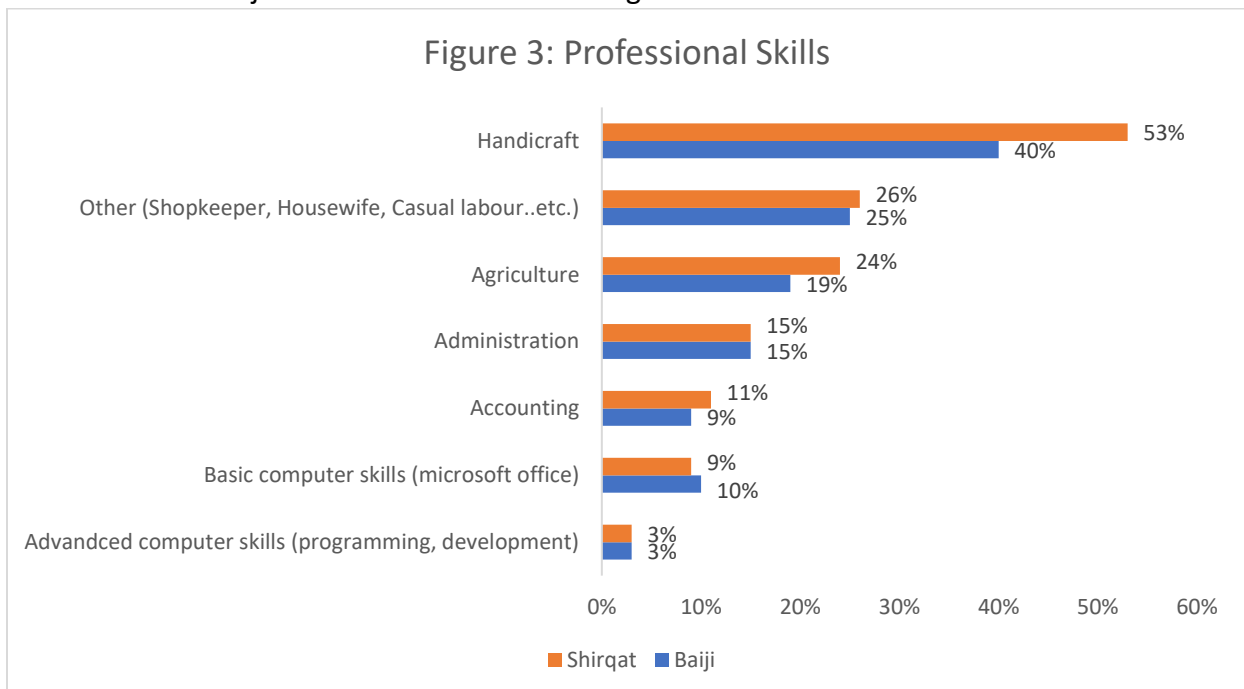
Figure 2: Kind of help provided to respondents in terms of livelihood source



2.PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

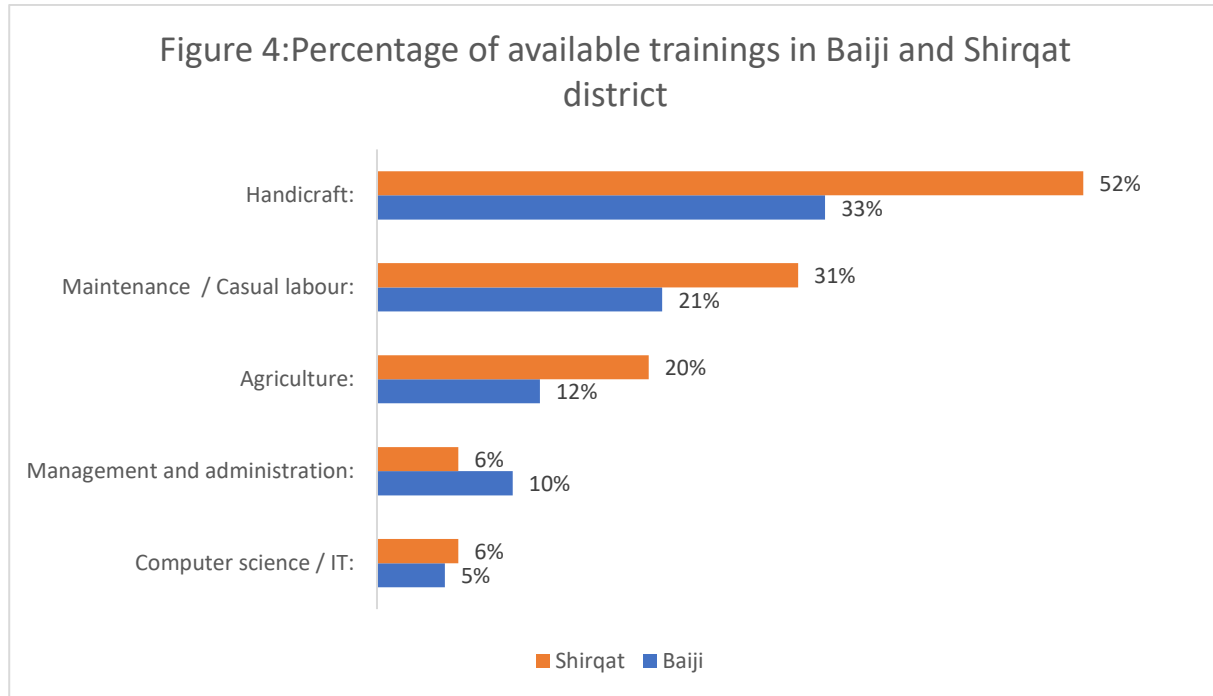
As shown in Figure 3, handicraft (53%) in Shirqat and (40%) in Baiji is the most prevalent professional skill for respondents. This is followed by being a Shopkeeper, Housewife and casual labourer. However, (6%) of respondents replied they had no professional skills suggesting that trainings can lead to favourable job outcomes if those trainings are in line with the labour market's needs.

Figure 3: Professional Skills



3.AVAILABILITY OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

33% of respondents in Baiji district and 52% in Shirqat district declared that handicraft (sewing/embroidery, hair dressing/barber and carpet making) is the most common vocational training currently available.

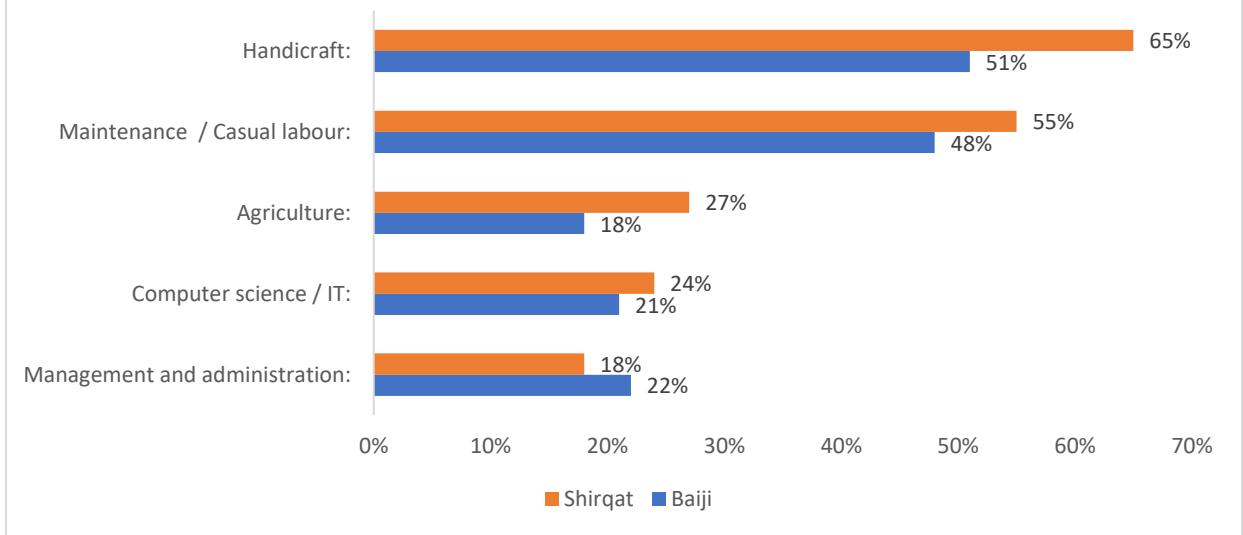


22% of respondents stated that trainings are accessible for both men and women. The respondents also mentioned that handicrafts are the most accessible vocational training for women. Furthermore, 74% of respondents declared that there are not enough vocational trainings available for women in the area as well and 63% stated that there were not enough trainings available for youth.

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. 51% of respondents in Baiji district and 65% in Shirqat district were interested in handicraft (sewing/embroidery, hair dressing/barber and carpet making). As for the second interest, 48% of respondents in Baiji district and 55% in Shirqat district were interested in TVET for topics such as plumbing, electrical wiring, flooring and welding. Computer repair training was also highlighted as popular.

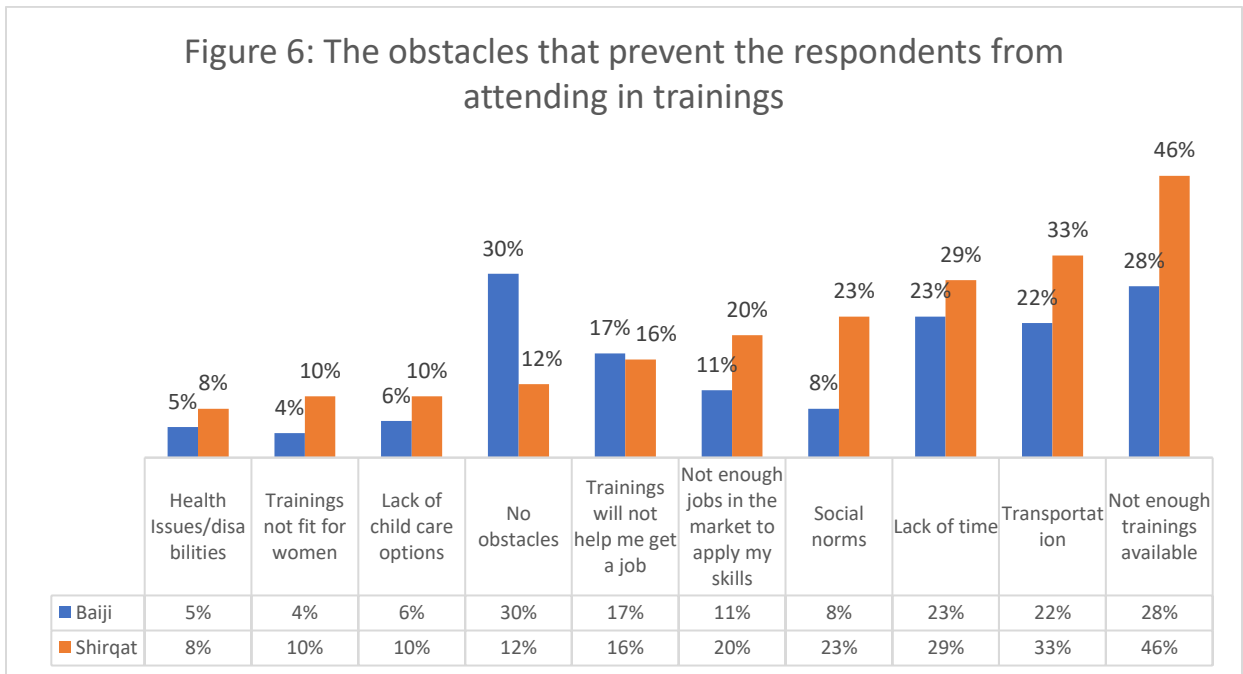
Figure 5: Percentage of respondents interested in the following trainings



5. BARRIERS FOR LIVELIHOODS AND ATTENDING VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

In terms of the obstacles that prevent respondents from participating in trainings, 46% of the respondent in Shirqat and 28% in Baiji stated that not enough trainings were available in the area.

Figure 6: The obstacles that prevent the respondents from attending in trainings

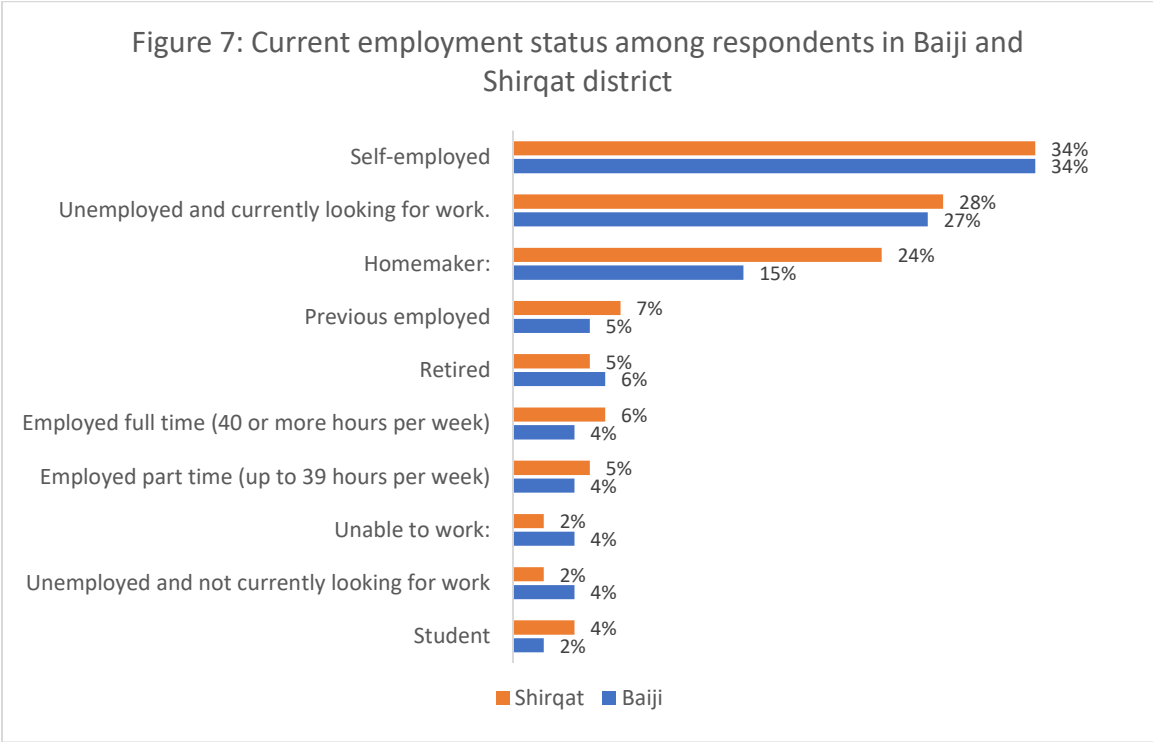


For those respondents who stated that the obstacle to participating in training was due to social norms, they explained that the women are busy with looking after the home and child care and therefore cannot work outside of their home.

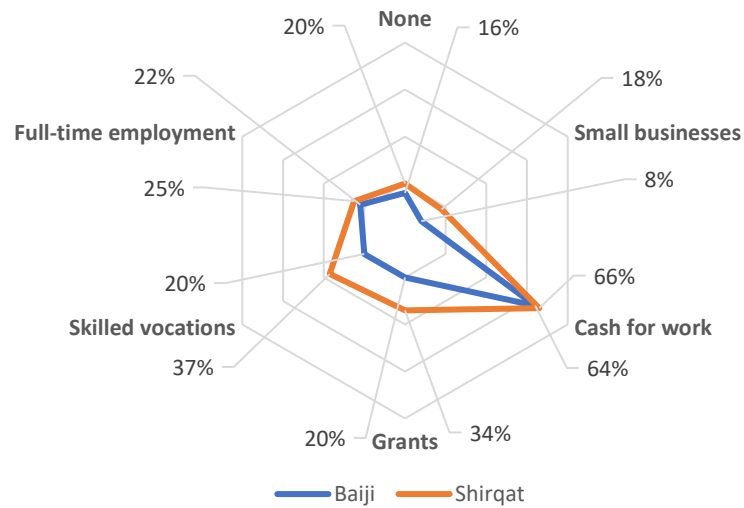
Finally, 84% of respondents indicated that it would be useful to have mobile trainings in Baiji and Shirqat districts.

6.OVERVIEW OF JOB OPPURTUNITIES AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employment remains low for respondents as only 39% declared being employed (5% employed + 34% self-employed). When asked about the job sectors that are currently hiring, 64% in Baiji and 66% in Shirqat engage in cash for work, small shop-keeping and handicraft making. See figure 7 and 8 for a full breakdown of employment status.



Figures 8: The most job sectors that currently hiring in Baiji and Shirqat district



When asked about hiring, only 24% of the respondents in Baiji and Shirqat stated that there is equal opportunity for both men and women, while 39% stated that there is equal opportunity but that males are favored. This highlights that the respondents may not understand what the enumerators defined as equal opportunity.

In terms of types of job sectors that respondents would like to be available in Baiji and Shirqat district, 65% referred to cash for work provided by NGO and 59% would like to receive a grant to establish their own business. Furthermore, 43% of those respondents stated that they preferred the job sector to be in small shop and to offer a technical service (electrician, mechanics, etc.). 37% mentioned tailoring and 33% mentioned handicraft.

7.SELF-EMPLOYMENT

34% of respondents declared being self-employed. Sectors of self-employment include: small shop-keeping, technical services (electrician, mechanic, etc.), handicrafts, restaurants, and hair salons. 25% of those self-employed respondents worked from home and declared themselves being self-employed. 48% of those who were self-employed hired other workers.

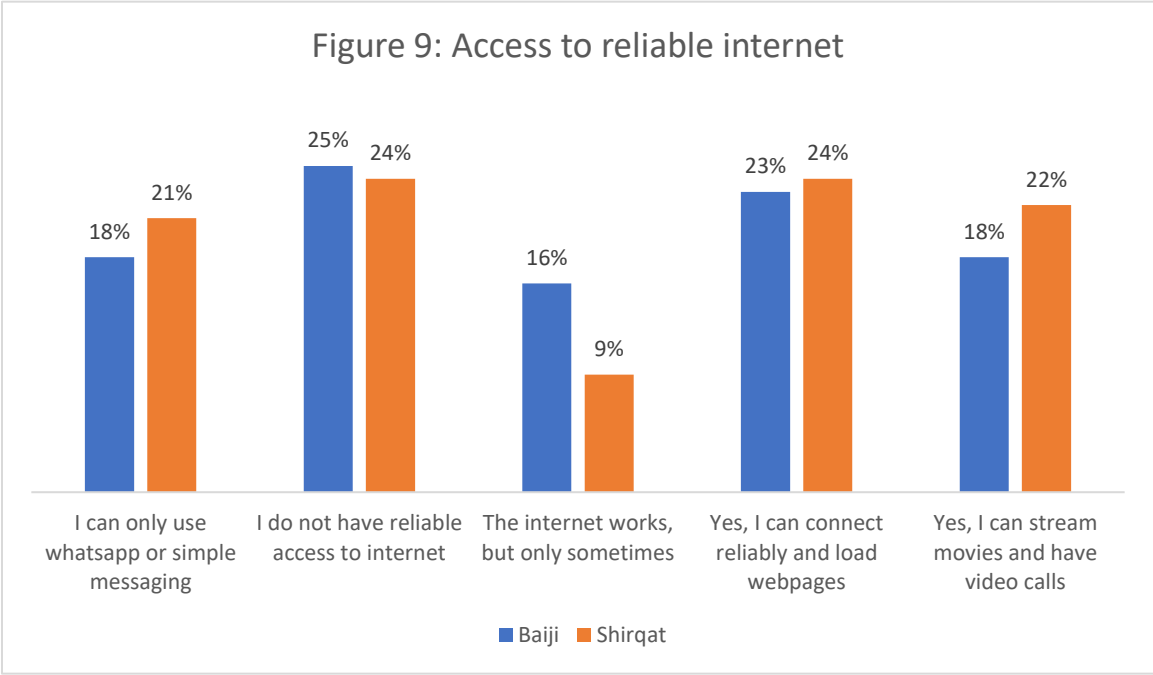
8.BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO ACCESS (SELF-)EMPLOYMENT

34% of respondents stated that they need permission to work for the local authorities and they explained that the permission process takes between one week and two months to acquire. Of those respondents, 82% mentioned that they do eventually receive permission.

In terms of access to credit, land, relevant equipment and reliable access to internet, 31% indicated that they have access to credit from banks and government agencies and there are no obstacles but mentioned that the process will take a few months.

Only 25% of respondents mentioned that they have access to lands to establish farming activity and up to 70% of those respondents own these lands.

The 82% of respondents declared that they have access to relevant equipment but the respondents explained that they cannot cover the cost of this equipment.



9.FGD & KII FINDINGS:

As an overall result, weak governmental support and vocational training has been highlighted as a critical need in both districts. Participants in both locations stated that they would like to receive vocational training for both genders. Focusing on knitting, sewing, cooking and hair dressing for females and blacksmith, carpentry and business management for men. The below table includes a further analysis of the results of this data presented in this assessment broken down by area.

Baiji FGDs**Shirqat FGDs****Overview of the economic situation**

At the beginning of the sessions, several questions were asked to respondents to gain an overview of the economic situation of the people living in the area to understand the challenges and difficulties. Varying percentages of families have regular sources of income. Most of the respondents stated that between 30% to 45% do have an income as they stated that the main source of income is the governmental employment, owning a business, occupational crafts, daily laborer. Respondents prefer to hire the most vulnerable people in their communities including male youths and people with limited sources of income, most of the youth seasonally migrate from rural to urban areas.

40% of the families in Shirqat district have regular sources of income. Governmental employment is the main source. The second most common is NGO support, the third most common is daily labor and the fourth is handcraft making. Employers in this district prefer to hire people with limited sources of income. In general, members of this district are migrating from rural to urban areas and there is no correlation between migration and gender or age.

Vocational training opportunities

This section is designed to explore the availability of vocational training and who is providing this activity. Youth are going to governmental institution and universities to have a certificate or degree. The majority Respondents stated that there are no NGOs in this district that they are aware of. Most of the females in this district are not allowed to participate in vocational activities, while others can only participate in female activities (sewing, knitting, and hair dressing). Participants stated that they are not satisfied with the quality of the training in this district and that access to those trainings is very limited. The main priorities for now are opening vocational training centers and providing governmental and non-governmental support.

People of Shirqat district are traveling to the city center to have vocational training because it's not available in their area and they are not aware of NGO's offering trainings. Females are discouraged from working in this district or participating in any vocational training because of the social barriers surrounding gender norms. Participants stated that they would be satisfied with this kind of training if its available and they hope they can have access to vocational training in future.

Over view of business environment

Multiple questions were asked to the participants to have an overview of the industrial sectors currently hiring. Factories and the public sector are not currently hiring and people are facing challenges in

The public sector in this district is hiring youths for cleaning streets. The most common challenges faced by communities are availability of tools and materials, cash,

establishing a business because of expensive rent cost, social barriers for females and limited source of income.	the transportation cost of the raw materials and lack of experience.
Barriers and opportunities for employment and enterprise	
Participants stated that female dominated the hair dressing, knitting and cooking, while male dominated the heavy works Ex. Blacksmith, carpenter... And the most barriers of having jobs are the corruption, female are supported to work but only in female centers (knitting, hair dressing and stitching), members of other sectors must have permits to work in this district.	Several questions asked to the participants to explore the most common barriers in the district in having works. Female are working only at home in knitting, and livestock and some sectors are dominated by men like the heavy works. Members of other sub-sector must apply for permits to work in this area.

SOCIAL AND
LABOR

AFFAIRS MINISTRY:

Baiji	Shirqat
Introduction and context	
Participants provided several thoughts about the most pressing issues for business owners. This included the negative effects of Covid-19, expensive shops rental, lack of governmental cash support and unemployment. This is further compounded by the disposable income in the area due to Ngo and the government downsizing due to COVID-19. The ministry provides small loans to support the private sector, free health checks and vocational training in some areas. The ministry is working on annual plans to improve the situation.	Several questions asked to the participants, to explore the context of the ministries role and how it can provide support to the members of this district. Participants stated that the most pressing issues for business owners small daily wage and COVID-19 restrictions continuing to affect the lack of employment in the area. The ministry is providing skills development, courses and Vocational training. The ministry increased social assistances to 450,000 IQD and increased social benefits for people with disabilities and the elderly.
Sectors	
Several questions on different subjects were asked to the participants to gain an overview of the market situation and segments. Food is the most common market segment in this district. Restaurants and coffee shops are underdeveloped in this district. Handcrafts, small shops like sweet shops and vegetable shops are becoming more popular in the district.	Participants stated that the largest market segment in this district is food sector. There is no potential for growth for underdeveloped markets due to the lack of support.
Training	

<p>The ministry of Baiji is providing vocational training including hair dressing for female and carpentry, blacksmithing and welding for males. Apprenticeships appear to be successful in securing jobs for youth. Most of the participants can find a job according to the FGDs.</p>	<p>Participants of the sessions stated that the ministry is providing vocational training for youth in this district including carpentry, aluminum manufacturing and blacksmithing. Participants stated that apprenticeships are not very effective in securing jobs for youth and only 25% of them can find a job.</p>
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KII WITH BUSINESS OWNER:

Baiji	Shirqat
Introduction and convenience	
<p>Two questions were asked to explore how much purchasing power the civilians of this area have and what are the most common items they are spending their money on. People in this district have minimal purchasing power and the spend most of their income on food, medical items and rent. They are not able to have any savings and they can't afford the price of many items they need.</p>	<p>Participants shared their thoughts of the purchasing power of the community which they believed was poor. People spend the money mainly on food and house items. Most of the families in this district can't have savings and they can't buy items because they can't afford the cost of it.</p>
Self employed labour	
<p>Participants shared information to inform a further understanding of the work type and main challenges in the district. Most of the participants are hiring staff for work. Employees work a 12-hour working day. All of the participants are buying items for their work like tools and materials, food products and medicines. They spend 700 \$ every month as an average amount to buy items. The raw materials are expensive and they can't afford it. The most common challenges are the high price of transportation, electricity and the that prices of the raw materials are not fixed. Most of obstacles preventing them from earning more money are taxes and expensive prices of the raw materials.</p>	<p>Participants work as freelance workers and they described it as physically hard. They work for 12 hours per day and they work under supervision. All of the participants are buying raw materials for the work and they face difficulties in securing it – items include steel cutters, raw glass, aluminum and they pay around \$500 per month for those materials. Transportation cost of those materials are also expensive. All participants are preparing their products for sale and they are satisfied with the prices. If the quality is high, they can charge more. The most common challenges are the risks associated with physical work and losing electricity. Most of the obstacles preventing participants from earning more money is the</p>

	limited purchasing power of customers exacerbated by COVID-19.
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Training

<p>Most of the participants stated that there are limited possibilities to have training in the vocational skills because schools and institutions do not exist in the district. Some of the business owners received training for their jobs, while the others did not. Training for customer service, management, preparing food were highlighted as key for businesses. All the business owners stated they are preferring to hire people that they are honest, loyal and have experience as those skills make their business more competitive. Most of the employees did not receive any training.</p>	<p>It's not possible to have vocational training because it's not available in this district and the government doesn't provide any support.</p> <p>Most of the participants received training and learned how to do it when they start working.</p> <p>They look for skills like how to use CNC machine and strong customer service skills. Those skills help in improving the business and it's hard to find employees with those skills. No training has been provided to the workers they currently employ.</p> <p>All participants are keen to hire trained workers.</p>
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Loans and credit

<p>Several questions were asked to see if people have access to loans.</p> <p>None of the participants have access to loans. It's only available for governmental employees. People with limited sources of income can't access these loans and they therefore borrow money from their friends and relatives when they can. None of the participants obtained a loan or credit for the purpose of investing in a business.</p>	<p>All of the participants stated they do not have access to loans and credit because they are not governmental employees. They borrow money from their relatives and friends when they can. None of the participants obtained a loan or credit for the purpose of investing in a business.</p>
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5. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the economic downturn, COVID-19 and an ongoing lack of employment opportunities, livelihoods support remains complex and challenging for respondents in Baiji and Shirqat. The findings were able to identify several links between beneficiary capacities and the market in which they live.

Firstly, livelihoods activities that have traditionally been conducted by NGOs have largely focused on low-skilled activities for minimal durations, such as weeklong trainings in handicraft or sewing. Despite these initiatives, the employment situation for respondents in Baiji and Shirqat districts does not seem to have improved in the last years.

In order to support vulnerable households in developing profitable livelihoods activities, the following actions are recommended:

- General trainings in basic English, marketing, business plan design, accountancy, job-seeking, and general **soft skills trainings**. These can be complemented through trainings in digital literacy, particularly targeting sectors such as the retail sector.
 - These soft skills trainings were especially requested by respondents during the HH survey, with a particular focus on English literacy. The studies suggest this will further aid in the employability of young community members into the Saladin job market.
- Trainings in **mechatronics/white goods repair** in collaboration with existing vocational training programs.
 - This can be for use in **computer repair, A/C and refrigerator repair or construction equipment repair**.
- Trainings in **construction/electrical technicians** in collaboration with existing VT programs
- Market-driven internship opportunities in key industries.
- Conduct a thorough market investigation of potential public-private partnerships in order to place interns.
- Day-care centres for women and children to support their ability to attend trainings and gain employment.
- Trainings should have the potential to lead directly to employment, and as much as possible stress the **quality over quantity** of trainings.
- Job counselling and access to opportunities in the job market through providing beneficiaries a list of companies currently hiring employees and supporting beneficiaries with career skills and throughout the job application process.

6. ANNEXES

- Livelihood Needs Assessment Survey Kobo link:
<https://ee.humanitarianresponse.info/x/ECvp7Pw3>
- FGDs, KII business owner:



KII business.docx

- FGD, ministry of labor.



Ministry of
labor.docx

- FGD, Market Assessment.



Market Assessment
FGD..docx