



Syrian Refugees, Displaced and Host Communities in Iraq Graduate from IOM Vocational Training

05/29/18

Erbil – Throughout May, students in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah governorates of Iraq celebrated their graduation from different vocational training courses run by IOM, the UN Migration Agency.

A total of 273 graduates – including Syrian refugees, displaced Iraqi and host community members – completed courses in information technology, English language, mobile phone maintenance, small engine repair and tailoring. Each course lasted between four and eight weeks.

“These vocational trainings offer young people the opportunity to enhance their skills through market-driven training programmes,” said Gerard Waite, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission. “These trainings are targeted at young adults with secondary education, who want to develop technical skills, or those who are skilled and are looking to enhance their knowledge,” added Waite.

Online English courses were conducted in four refugee camps around Erbil, while vocational trainings took place at the Swedish Academy Training Centre in Erbil, which is supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Participants received graduation certificates and start-up packages, such as tablets, mechanic toolkits, and mobile repair equipment, to help them seek employment or start their own business.

“In Syria, I was an interior designer. After we fled to Iraq, I worked as a designer, but unfortunately business slowed down and I lost my job. Now, paying rent is difficult,” said Nashwan, who left Syria with his family of five in 2012.

“I have a diploma in computers and IT, so I participated in the vocational training on mobile phone maintenance. I learned a lot about both software and hardware. The training had a positive impact on my mental state because I was able to meet and communicate with new people. After being unemployed for a long time, I finally feel confident that I can earn a living. I am even thinking of opening a business,” Nashwan added.

Ahmed Salah was displaced from Salah al-Din in 2014 when ISIL attacked his town. He completed the vocational training for English language in Erbil. “I have a Master’s degree in electrical engineering. I would like to apply for scholarships for further studies, but first I

need to improve my English. Learning another language is not easy, but I challenged myself and overcame my psychological barrier in order to find work,” said Ahmed.

Rojin Abdulla is a Syrian refugee who lives with her four children in Dohuk. “In Syria we used to live with dignity but because of the war, we are now refugees. I left Syria with my children in the summer of 2014 and joined my husband who came before us. One of my friends told me about this tailoring course; it was like a dream come true. I always wanted to learn sewing. The training was useful and fun, and I made a lot of friends,” said Rojin. “Sewing is both a science and art. I can’t wait to start tailoring.”

IOM Iraq’s Regional Refugee and Resilience Programme (3RP) aims to provide Syrian refugees, Iraqi internally displaced persons and vulnerable host communities with access to education and employment opportunities. The programme contributes to the long-term self-reliance of individuals and communities and to strengthening the role of the Government in delivering basic services to refugees and host communities. Through efforts to enhance human capital and support local economies, the programme contributes to improving social cohesion in the communities hosting Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northern Iraq.

Statistics from the recent programme evaluation report show that the employment rate of former graduates has increased from 20 to 44 per cent. Meanwhile, around 47 per cent of the former beneficiaries of training courses reported an increase in their income.

In 2016 and 2017, more than 1,300 beneficiaries including refugees, IDPs and host community members received livelihood support, including small business support, employability training, business associations, greenhouse activities and cash-for-work.

The 3RP is funded by the US State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM).

For more information, please contact Sandra Black at IOM Iraq, Tel: +964 751 234 2550, Email: sblack@iom.int