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# List of acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLIC</td>
<td>Canadian Leaders in International Consulting Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key informant interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KR</td>
<td>Kurdistan Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMA</td>
<td>Labour market assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoLSA</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSME</td>
<td>Micro, small &amp; medium enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>Norwegian Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical vocational and education training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTC</td>
<td>Vocational training centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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This study was commissioned to Canadian Leaders in International Consulting (CLIC). The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or UN Member States.
Executive summary

Canadian Leaders in International Consulting (CLIC) was contracted by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to conduct a labour market assessment for Basra and Al-Qurna cities in the Governorate of Basra. The Emergency Livelihood Project, supported by UNDP with generous funding from the Government of Japan, aims to train female and male youth in skills for employment and to assist them in finding employment during and/or after training. The aim of the labour market assessment was to map out supply and demand in the local labour market and to assess the scope of MSME scale-up and start-up opportunities.

The assessment had two specific objectives:

1. To assess markets (both supply and demand) in selected sectors with the potential for growth and promising income earning opportunities, including the business climate and potential for start-up and scale-up of MSMEs.

2. To assess the supply and demand sides of the labour market in both the private and public sector, including the identification of skills gaps and training needs among vulnerable youth and women from poor households, rural-to-urban-migrant families, IDPs and minority communities.

CLIC, referred to as the Consultant in this report, used applied a mixed methods approach for the assessment, utilizing quantitative surveys with youth job seekers and business owners/managers, and qualitative KII s and FGDs targeting female and male youth job seekers, key government representatives, and employers. Field observations and secondary literature supported the primary data collection, and the general findings from the assessment were validated with the Emergency Livelihoods Cluster on November 28, 2019 in Erbil, KRG.

Twenty representatives from employers participated in the business survey and 40 youth participated in the job seekers survey. In addition, youth were engaged in two FGDs (one each with female and male youth) to provide contextual information for the survey results. Employers were also engaged through an FGD and key informants from government and business institutions were engaged through interviews, providing contextual information for the employer survey results. All data collection was conducted with a gender lens; separate focus groups were conducted with female and male youth of 15-34 years of age and female enumerators and researchers were employed to collect information from female respondents.

Data collection for the assessment was conducted during a very challenging period in the history of Iraq, in the South and in Basra there were violent demonstrations which led to the shutdown of government agencies and the establishment of checkpoints throughout the area which limited the mobility of the Consultant’s team and as such, the assignment took longer than expected. Over the last eight years, the city of Basra and the Governorate of Basra have experienced many demonstrations and disturbances due people’s dissatisfaction with the worsening economic situation in the area. In 2017, violent clashes took place in Basra when electricity was cut off for many days and water containing oil was recorded reaching households in the city. In 2019, youth in Basra participated in country-wide some of which some turned violent.

Labor market assessment Basra City 5
Main Findings

i. Employers in Basra reported that the lack of technical skills and experience among youth and adults, employees’ salary expectations, and employees’ lack of communication skills were the main challenges they faced when hiring employees.

ii. Employers demonstrated a positive perception of youth in general and a lack of differentiation between genders when considering applicants for employment. Employers showed interest in hiring interns or on-the-job trainees, and willingness to recruit female employees. Employers reported that they would be interested in hiring someone who had undergone vocational training.

iii. Vocational training in Basra is insufficient to address the current needs of the market. According to key informants interviewed, there are few humanitarian and development actors who are making an effort to close the skills gap and the high unemployment rate. Key informants provided several examples of relevant training programs in the area however, youth also reported that they lack the information and awareness of the centers that provide technical trainings, resulting in lack of skills and opportunities to enter the job market.

iv. Many youth respondents reported that they felt corruption was a major factor in their inability to get employment. It is important to note to culturally interrelated perceptions in Iraq about what constitutes jobs and corruption:

v. The employers reported several challenges limiting their ability to grow including lack of access to credit high cost of rent, and lack of government support. Business owners and representatives from business institutions also reported that business profits were also shrinking reducing savings that could be invested in growth activities.

vi. Most youth and business participants indicated their knowledge of and preference for cash transactions and Hawala Offices as the most efficient method of grant making, youth reported that they prefer cash of Hawala transfers because to them it’s easier to deal with and that they least prefer banks due to the long process that banks take to transfer money.

vii. Iraq is experiencing tremendous growth in online shopping through the utilization of financial services offered by some banks and in particular the telecommunications industry such as Zain, Korek and Asia Cell.

viii. Female youth in Basra expressed a strong preference for employment in tailoring, dressmaking, beauty, education (teaching) and food production sectors. Business owners from the retail industry also reported that sales and marketing were good opportunities for female job seekers.

ix. For women working from home, the findings indicate that social media marketing are increasing in Basra in general, and this new sector represents an opportunity for women to earn an income while working within some of the social norms. This sector requires learning new skills sets such as graphic design and photography, some English language skills, and an entrepreneurial skill set.
For young men with certain some levels of education (bachelors or secondary school), working in mobile computer repair shops is a growing trend and represents an opportunity for male youth.

**Recommendations**

The main recommendation of the study is for NRC to focus its livelihood support to the provision of training for job seekers to meet the needs of micro and small enterprises as they represent the largest growth in Iraq, and in Basra in particular. In addition, connections should be made between livelihoods actors in the area including VTCs, employers, government agencies, business institutions, and NGOs in order to promote a coordinated response to the need for employment among youth and the need among employers for skills employees.

1. Provide skills training for male and female youth in electrical and electronics repair, carpentry, and E-marketing skills through the existing VTCs managed by MoLSA.

2. Integrate soft and employability skills training into exiting VTC syllabus including life skills, communication, self-confidence skills, critical thinking skills to increase employability and job retention.

3. Support existing micro, small, and medium scale businesses in the mechanical, electrical tourism, and hospitality sectors via cash grants to scale up their businesses.

4. Provide training and support to employers and business stakeholders on gender-sensitive workplaces and labour codes, along with community sensitization sessions that promote the rights of women and the importance of women as income earners and decision makers in the household.

5. Work with VTCs and existing training providers to identify adapted training schedules that will allow flexibility for individuals with household or income earning responsibilities. Schedules can be adapted to half day or evening classes, to allow individuals to work during the day and attend classes in the evenings.

6. Work with VTCs to provide supports for vulnerable or marginalized individuals in the community to allow them to participate in the training programmes. For example, providing childcare to allow mothers to attend classes or providing transportation supports for individuals living far from the centres or unable to afford the costs of transportation.

7. Promote private sector engagement and partnerships with social security institutions and insurance companies for the provision of social security and health insurance for workers in the private sector, increasing interest in employment in the private sector.

8. Provide training to MSMEs to increase their use of best practice for business including strengthening administrative, financial, and human resources practices to make them more desirable options for employment.
9. Support youth interested in opening their own businesses via partnerships with existing financial institutions such as the cooperative housing institution and MoSLA for provision of loans (cash-in-hand or through hawala) with low rates.

10. Develop apprenticeships/internships/on-the-job training programs for youth and adults in order to gain the necessary skills and experience required in the job market. This will require financial and business training support for businesses that participate and accept trainees, ensuring a safe workplace for training participants.

11. Work with MSMEs, training centres, government, and other stakeholders to advertise jobs and trainings available through job campaigns, employment fairs and social media. Work with stakeholders to utilize existing professional platforms for identification of candidates and to improve articulation of available jobs to the general public.

Conclusion

The recommendations presented here are specific to the city of Basra, they were drawn to identify the sectors and sub-sectors that represent opportunity for employment of numerous youth. The findings indicate that growth areas are within construction, online and retail business, hairdressing, and food production. Due to some families’ restrictions on what is appropriate employment for women, specific opportunities have been identified that take this constraint into consideration. The study also identified micro and small size companies in the retail, hospitality, IT and mobile sectors as providing the greatest opportunity for employment for youth. However, MSMEs face a variety of challenges to their growth, which limits their ability to hire additional employees.
1 Introduction

1.1 Context

According to the Central Statistical Organization of Iraq, the population of Basra is 2,908,491 (2018) and has a recorded population growth of 2.1%. Basra is the southernmost governorate of Iraq and borders Iran, Kuwait and Saudi-Arabia. In the south, the governorate is made up of a vast desert plain, intersected by the Shatt Al-Arab waterway which is formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers at Al-Qurnah and empties into the Persian Gulf. Around Al-Qurnah and Al-Medina a number of lakes can be found, while marshland stretches from the north of the governorate into the neighboring governorates of Thi-Qar and Missan. The governorate is Iraq’s only access to the sea. Basra and its governorate are considered the economic heart of Iraq as the Governorate of Basra produces most of Iraq’s oil and it is home to the country’s main port, Shat Al Arab.

Basra exemplifies all of the problems faced by Iraq, a land rich with oil and natural resources as well as fertile agricultural lands and water. The biggest challenge facing the Governorate of Basra is the significant discontent amongst its people, in particular amongst its youth. Over the last eight years, the people of Basra have demonstrated in the streets protesting the lack of services and employment opportunities, causing the closure the city.

Basra has seen some growth, but Basra’s economic engine is yet to see real progress in terms of ability to deliver services, reduced corruption levels, establishment of a realistic economic plan for the governorate, and to follow through on building the infrastructure to spur growth. In Basra, in 2017 the private sector contributed 25.6% of the GDP and the GDP growth of the private sector was -3.6.1

Women’s participation in the private sector labor market in Iraq is one of the lowest amongst the countries in the region, while women in the public sector are well represented and have many protections under the law.2 There are many factors affecting this low level of participation, for example the private sector is a new sector in Iraq and does not provide the job security and flexibility that Iraqis expect for employment of women. “In

1 Central Statistical Organization, Iraq
2016, about 27 percent of women of all ages were unemployed, compared to 14 percent of men; among youth, 65 percent of young women were unemployed compared to 32 percent of young men.”

The World Bank highlights the following three key themes or areas for concern for economic recovery and job creation in Iraq:

1) Business climate reforms must begin now, but private sector job creation is a longer-term agenda;
2) Public investment can lead a recovery that creates jobs, but should also lay the foundation for private sector growth; and
3) The weak skills base will exclude many young Iraqis from opportunities, and may eventually begin to hamper reconstruction.

1.2 Assessment Aim and Objectives

Main Objective

The main objective was to carry out market assessment (in Basra city) to map out supply and demand in the local labour market and assess the scope of MSME scale-up and start-up.

Specific objectives:

1. To assess markets (both supply and demand) in selected sectors with the potential for growth and promising income earning opportunities, including the business climate and potential for start-up and scale-up of MSMEs.

2. To assess the supply and demand sides of the labour market in both the private and public sector, including the identification of skills gaps and training needs among vulnerable youth and women from poor households, rural-to-urban-migrant families, IDPs, and minority communities.

__________________________


4 Jobs in Iraq: A Primer on Job Creation in the Short-Term, World Bank, Luca Bandiera et al. Jobs Working Paper issue
2 Labour Market Assessment Methodology

2.1.1 Overall Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this assessment, CLIC utilized a mixed methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection to provide a complete overview of the labour market in both the private and public sector, including the identification of skills gaps and training needs among vulnerable youth and women from poor households, rural-to-urban-migrant families, IDPs, and minority communities. The data collected was also analyzed to provide recommendations of selected sectors with the potential for growth and promising income earning opportunities, including the business climate and potential for start-up and scale-up of MSMEs. Triangulation of data was conducted through the various methods described in the table below to ensure quality and accuracy of findings.

Through the quantitative youth survey, a total of 40 youth that were unemployed or seeking employment at the time of data collection were surveyed. In addition, 20 business surveys were conducted with employers of local businesses. Qualitative data was collected through three focus group discussions (one each with female and male youth, and one with local employers) and 20 key informant interviews with stakeholders in the local economy and business sector. Approach involved focus group discussions (FGDs) with male and female youth and an employer where a total of 3 focus group discussions were conducted. Furthermore, 20 KIs were conducted with:

- Chairman of Basra chamber of commerce
- Head of Basra investment commission
- Director of Basra chamber of commerce
- Director of the development bank
- Director of the businessmen union
- Director of the federation of trade unions in Basra
- Director of the southern businesswomen association
- Chairman of the planning committee of the Basra provincial council
- Director of Basra chamber of industry
- Director of Basra youth and sports directorate
- and other relevant stakeholders.

In addition, two case studies were reviewed of successful female MSME owners. The mix of the methodology used provided a better triangulation of the findings. The table below provides an overview of which data collection tools was used for this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Targeted Respondents</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Survey</td>
<td>Youth survey</td>
<td>Vulnerable youth whose livelihoods are under pressure and with limited income generating opportunities (male)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vulnerable youth whose livelihoods are under pressure and with limited income generating opportunities (female)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.1.2 Quantitative Data Collection

The quantitative survey was administered to 20 business owners in order to explore multiple aspects of employment in Basra. This survey covered the overall business sector; assessed bottlenecks/challenges facing the business sector; identified opportunities and interests for mentorships, apprenticeships, and job placements; businesses’ perceptions of job seekers; constraints to starting or expanding business; and skills (both soft skills and technical skills) and characteristics most desired by employers versus the existing skills and characteristics of current employees. Furthermore, 40 female and male youth were interviewed to assess their skills gaps and understand their preferred technical and vocational courses and sectors of employment.

### 2.1.3 Qualitative Data Collection

To triangulate data collected, CLIC conducted two different types of qualitative interviews: 20 key informant interviews relevant stakeholders in the city and 3 focus groups discussions (one each with female and male youth, and with employers) and two case studies/ success stories with businesses employers. The youth FGDs were conducted by identifying female and male members of each of the studied communities in Basra, between the ages of 15 and 25, and aimed to include youth from different socioeconomic groups and levels of education. These sources provided information to triangulate and contextualize the findings from the quantitative data collected via surveys with employers and youth.

### 2.1.4 Method of Interviewing

#### Quantitative Survey

The Consultant used a standard face-to-face data collection method, with responses recorded through mobile data collection (KOBO platform). The goal of 50% female respondents for the business survey was not achieved as most of the traders in the market were men.
During data collection for the business survey, the enumerators started from a common landmark in each of the districts, such as the mosque, the square or the main street. The interviewers adopted a simple walking and systematic sampling method; they selected one out of 20 businesses or population for the survey until the total sample size was reached. In addition, for the business survey, the owners of the businesses or director or permanent worker were prioritized for the interview in order to provide sufficient information regarding hiring practices and other aspects of the survey.

If the randomly selected business owner did not want to participate on the survey, the next business immediately to the right was selected. However, in case the alternative business to the right also did not want to participate, the next business or household immediately to the left of the original business was selected.

**Sampling methodology**

Forty unemployed youth were randomly selected from lists provided by community based organizations in Basra engaged with unemployed and vulnerable youth in the area. A simple random sample was drawn from the lists, with enumerators contacting youth until the sample size of 40 surveys were completed. Youth were selected based on employment status (unemployed) or participate in a part-time job, type of shelter and living conditions. Prior to each interview, an informed consent statement was read and agreed to by the respondent.

The CLIC field team conducted quantitative data collection for the assessment between October 26th and November 19th, 2019. The team consisted of two field workers under the overall supervision of the CLIC Team Leader.

**Qualitative Data collection**

**Focus Group Discussions**

The CLIC field team conducted three focus group discussions between November 2nd and 19th with a total of 27 participants. Participants in the youth FGDs were mainly between the ages of 15 and 35 years and were separated by gender, facilitators were selected to match accordingly. The following table outlines the breakdown for the FGDs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business Employers (male and female)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Informant Interviews**
The CLIC team conducted five key informant interviews (KII) with 20 participants between November 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 14\textsuperscript{th}, 2019 with local and national key informants and relevant stakeholders. The key informants were selected using a purposive or two-stage purposive-snowball sampling approach. The most important consideration in the selection of the key informant was their intimate knowledge on the subject matter and their ideas and insights added value to the assessment.

2.1.5 Surveys – Constraints & Limitations

1. The movement of team members and respondents was limited throughout the period of data collection as main streets were blocked due to demonstrations and tribal conflict. In addition, internet cuts by the government of Iraq made it challenging to communicate with government parties and stakeholders.

2. Some government parties refused to give documents or statistical information related to the percentage of unemployment or any relevant information, limiting the information available for triangulation and analysis for this assessment report.
3 Main Findings

3.1 Key Findings - Business Survey

3.1.1 Demographics

Overall, very few respondents in the quantitative business survey were women (20%). Of the employers interviewed, 73% were the business owners and 23% were managers of the businesses. The survey also showed that employers were equal in terms of hiring based on gender and that the majority of employees were between 18 – 35 years old. 57% of employers reported that they reduced their staff size compared to the previous year, while 27% reported having the same number of employees as the previous year and the remaining 20% reported that they had increased the number employees compared to last year.

In addition to the business survey, one focus group discussion was held with 9 employers composed of a mix of female and male individuals in Basra on November 14th, 2019. The aim of this discussion was to provide additional contextual information to understand hiring practices and job opportunities.

Respondents in the business survey were asked how many years their business was operating, 47% of respondents reported that their business was 2 to 5 years old, 33% that their businesses was more than 10 years old, 13% that their business had been running for a year or less, and 7% had their business was between 6 to 10 years old.

3.1.2 Business profile in Basra city

80% of the employers interviewed in the business survey reported the main sector providing employment in Basra was the private sector, while 20% reported the government sector was the main sector. 60% reported the main type of business in
Basra was commerce/trading, and 7% each reported basic metal production, forestry wood, health, mechanical and electric engineering oil and gas production, and oil refining and services sectors as main business types in Basra.

FGD participants reported that employment in construction (i.e. carpentry or welding), e-marketing, handicrafts (specifically for women), food processing, and trading were the most promising sectors for employment in Basra.

### 3.1.3 Challenges Faced by Businesses

The assessment also aimed to understand what challenges employers face in running their businesses. 27% reported that the main challenge was lack of capital liquidity, followed by 22% reporting high cost of rent/taxes, 20% reporting political uncertainties, 7% security concerns, 7% lack of government support, 4% reported lack of electricity services, 4% reported high cost of paying wages, and 2% each reported corruption, access to technology, and the supply and cost of raw material as challenges faced in running their businesses.

#### MAIN TYPE OF BUSINESSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>7%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Wood</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical and Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and Gas Production; Oil Refining</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Metal Production</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### MAIN CHALLENGES IN RUNNING THE BUSINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costs of Raw Material</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Technology</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply of Raw Material</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Cost of Paying Human Resources</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Electricity Services</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Government Support</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Uncertainties</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Capital Liquidity</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Cost of Rent/Taxes</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
80% of employers interviewed in the business survey reported that they hired new staff within the last 6 months, while 20% said that they did not hire any new staff. Employers reported a number of reasons for the lack of hiring, 34% lacked sufficient profit to hire additional staff, 33% didn’t have any vacancies, 22% there were no skilled laborers in the market, and 11% reported that the available laborers were not willing to work due to low labor market rates and that they couldn’t find qualified staff.

3.1.4 Business Growth

To understand businesses growth, employer respondents in the business survey were asked if they were willing to hire in the next 6 months and if they were thinking to expand their business, 87% of the employers interviewed reported that they were willing to hire in the next 6 months, 13% reported they were not willing to hire any new staff in the coming 6 month. Of those willing to hire, all employers reported that they would be willing to hire youth up to 30 years of age. Employers looking to expand their businesses were also asked what growth activities they had planned, 38% reported thinking to open in another location, 33% reported that they wanted to add more products/services, 24% were thinking to hire more employees, and 5% reported other activities. While employers were looking to expand their businesses, they also reported numerous challenges they were facing in expanding. The main challenges reported were financial concerns, security concerns, and lack of government support.

![Employers Willingness to Expand and Hiring](image)

3.1.5 Finding New Employees

As part of the business survey, employers were asked about the arrangements they make with their employees, 33% of employers reported using weekly contracts, 20% used monthly and seasonal contracts, and 13% reported that they sign monthly or yearly contracts. Employers were also asked the methods they use to find new employees, 33% reported finding new employees through friends, 19% through relatives, and 15% through social media. Reporting rates for additional methods are shown in the graph below.
3.1.6 Preferences when Hiring New Employees

When asked about their preferences when hiring new employees, 40% of employers in Basra reported that they prefer to hire female over male employees and 13% prefer to hire male employees, while the majority (47%) had no preference. The majority of employers (67%) also reported that they preferred to hire employees between 26 to 35 years old, 20% had no preference, and 13% reported that they preferred to hire employees 25 years old and younger.

The majority of employers (53%) interviewed reported that they preferred to hire someone with some experience (1 to 4 years of experience), 33% of employers interviewed reported that they had no preference regarding the level of experience, and 13% reported that they would hire new employees with no experience. The majority of employers (80%) interviewed reported that they had no preference related to employees’ marital status, 13% reported preferring to hire unmarried employees, and 7% preferred hiring married employees.

Interestingly, all the Employers interviewed in the business survey reported having no preference related to the status of displacement. Employers were also asked about education levels for potential employees, 33% reported that they preferred to hire someone who knew how to write and read, and 33% reported that they
preferred to hire someone who had completed university or above, and 33% of employers reported having no preference for the level of education of potential employees.

Employer participants in the FGD reported that they preferred to recruit someone with some level of education (university degree), that they preferred to hire someone from the same geographic area as the business location, and that they had no preference regarding marital or displacement status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION PREFERENCE</th>
<th>LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed university or above</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know how to write and read</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some experience 1-4</td>
<td>New is fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No preference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.7 Challenges to Finding New Employees

The business survey also aimed to understand the challenges employers faced when hiring new employees. 31% of employer respondents reported that the main challenges they faced were the lack of technical skills or experience available among applicants (42%), high salary/remuneration expectations of potential staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES WHEN HIRING NEW EMPLOYEES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WORKERS LACK TRUSTWORTHINESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THERE ARE SKILLED WORKERS BUT THE DEMAND FOR THESE SKILLED WORKERS IS HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKERS LACK ADAPTABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKERS LACK COMMUNICATION SKILLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKERS DEMAND HIGH SALARY/REMUNERATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THERE ARE FEW WORKERS WITH THE RIGHT TECHNICAL SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE AVAILABLE IN THIS AREA (SHORTAGE OF SUPPLY)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(20%), lack of communication skills (18%), lack of adaptability among potential staff (16%), demand for the limited number of skilled workers is high (11%), lack of trustworthiness among potential employees (4%).

3.1.8 Perceptions about Youth

Employers in the business survey were asked about their overall perceptions about youth. All of the business employers (100%) interviewed reported perceiving youth as reliable employees, 93% perceived youth as hard working, 87% perceived youth as professional employees, 67% perceived youth as having skills and experience, and 80% reported that youth were agreeable in dealing with issues. These findings correspond with other findings indicating an openness to hiring employees under 30 years of age.

Similarly, employer participants in the FDG also reported that youth were hard-working employees, that they perceive them to be committed employees, and that youth have the ability to handle work pressure well.

3.1.9 Youth Skills

Based on past experience, general perceptions, and personal opinion, employer respondents in the business survey were asked to rate the importance of youth’s skills when recruiting an employee (1= not important, 2=somehow important, and 3= very important). The findings from these questions are displayed in the tables below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic literacy skills</th>
<th>Past Training skills</th>
<th>Communication skills</th>
<th>Technical skills</th>
<th>English language knowledge</th>
<th>Interpersonal skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employer participants in the FGD also reported that they preferred to recruit someone with technical skills such as computer, email, and management skills. They also reported that they prioritized recruit someone able to work under pressure, with good communication skills, and who has problem solving skills.

### 3.1.10 Training Opportunities

In the business survey, employers were asked if they were willing to take on interns or on-the-job trainees. 93% of employers interviewed reported that they were willing to take on interns or on-the-job-trainees, and 7% reported that they would not. Those who were not willing to hire interns or on-the-job-trainees reported several reasons for this preference including that they have insufficient profit to hire extra staff (33%), have no vacancies to accept more employees (33%), no skilled laborers in the market (22%), and that the available laborers are not willing to work due to low labor market rates (11%).

The business survey also sought to understand employers’ willingness to hire female interns or employees. 73% of employer respondents reported that they were willing to recruit female employees, compared with 27% of employers who were not willing to hire female employees. 60% of employers reported that they have hired interns before, with 44% reporting that they do not pay interns or that they only provided them with tips/benefits, and only 11% of employers
reported that they pay more than 30,000 IQD per week. All of the employers (100%) said that they were interested in hiring someone who has just undergone vocational training.

3.2 Key Findings – Job Seekers (Youth) Survey

3.2.1 Demographics

40 youth were interviewed using the job seekers survey, of which 38% were female and 62% were male. 45% of the job seekers interviewed were between the ages of 20 to 29, 28% were between 30 to 34, 18% between 20 to 24, and 10% between 15 to 19 years of age.

Of the 40 job seekers interviewed, 80% of males surveyed were the head of their household while 20% were female head of their household. 55% of the interviewed youth were unmarried, 38% were married, and the remaining were either separated or divorced.

Job seekers were asked about their main source of income, 38% reported relying on their parents/relatives, 30% relied on part-time jobs, 18% reported that they had no income resources, 13% had a full time job, and 3% relied on humanitarian aid. Youth respondents in the job seekers survey were also asked about their education status. 35% of the interviewed youth had a high school certificate, 20% had a bachelor’s degree, 15% had an intermediate school certificate, and 15% had a primary school certificate.

Living standards of the assessed job seekers were also examined during the survey, revealing that 68% of respondents lived in regular shelters, 20% lived in tents, and 10% lived in an unfinished building.
3.2.2 Youth employment status

The assessment also aimed to understand the current employment status of the youth in Basra city and their average monthly income. Findings revealed that 70% of youth interviewed in Basra, do not have permanent employment and only participate in part-time temporary employment.

36% of youth respondents reported a monthly income between 200,000IQD and 399,000IQD, 27% earned between 400,000IQD and 499,999IQD per month, 9% earned between 100,000IQD and 199,999IQD, 9% earned between 500,000IQD and 599,999IQD, and 9% earned between 600,000IQD and 699,999IQD. 60% of youth respondents reported that their monthly income amount was less than the usual amount they would normally earn.

45% of youth interviewed had no debt, while 20% had debt between 1 and 99,999IQD, 10% had between 200,000IQD and 299,999IQD of debt, 10% had more than 500,000IQD of debt, 8% had between 300,000-399,999IDQ of debt, and 8% had between 100,000-199,999IDQ of debt.
3.2.3 Sources of Information about Work

The survey also asked youth about how they find information work opportunities. 65% of youth reported learning about work opportunities via word of mouth (i.e. family, friends), 23% through social media, and 13% via referrals.

![HOW DO YOU FIND INFORMATION ABOUT WORK](chart)

3.2.4 Youth Attitudes and Commitment towards Work

Youth respondents in the job seekers survey were asked a series of questions related to their attitudes and commitment to work. Respondents were asked to rank the statements where 1 means strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree to disagree, 4 means agree, 5 means strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am not quite ready to handle a part-time job</th>
<th>Most jobs are dull and boring</th>
<th>It is OK to be unemployed even when there is a job available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know I can succeed at work</th>
<th>Working hard at a job will pay off in the end</th>
<th>I am/was rewarded/recognized for good work</th>
<th>can balance work with my personal life</th>
<th>I am/was recognized for meeting deadlines</th>
<th>I am/was recognized for arriving to work on time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of the youth FGDs, female and male participants were asked their motivation and commitment to work. The majority of youth reported that they were committed and hard-working employees. Youth FGD participants also felt that commitment could be measured by the individuals' need for the job/employment, and that this could cause variation between youth in their commitment to the work.
3.2.5 Market and Employment Opportunities

The majority of job seekers (64%) surveyed reported that the private sector was the main employer in Basra, 18% reported that they did not know which sector is the main sector, 13% reported that the government sector was the main sector, and 3% reported that the non-formal sector was the main employer. 65% of youth survey participants reported that they prefer to work in a government job rather than to work in the private sector, and 35% said that they prefer to work in the private sector.

25% of youth interviewed using the job seekers survey said that they were interested in finding employment in commerce/trading, 18% preferred to work in education (i.e. schools and universities), 10% preferred to work in oil and gas production, 8% preferred to work in information and communication, 8% preferred to work in agriculture and livestock, 5% preferred to work in services, 5% in mechanical and electrical engineering, 5% in construction, 5% in basic metal production, and the lease desirable sectors were transportation, manufacturing/processing, health, and finance (3% each). The majority (38%) of youth interviewed.
As part of the job seekers survey, youth were asked if their families pressure or encourage them to work in specific jobs or sectors. 33% of youth reported that their family pressured them to work in certain jobs. Male youth respondents reported that their family preferred if they worked in the government, education, or oil sectors. Female respondents reported that their families encouraged them to work in education, or do flexible work or home-based businesses such as beauty, teaching, and sales through social media.

3.2.6 Challenges and Barriers to Employment

The assessment also sought to identify challenges and barriers to youth employment in Basra city. Youth respondents of the job seekers survey reported that the main challenges to youth employment were corruption (34%), lack of employment opportunities (20%), employers’ preference to hire foreign workers to nationals in the private sector (18%), lack of experience and skills among youth (9%), customs and traditions (5%) and lack of national production (14%).

55% of youth interviewed in Basra said that there were some jobs that they would not do. Male youth reported that they were not interested in working in construction, education or health sectors. Female youth reported that they preferred not to work in the private sector in general due to social norms and culture, while 45% of female youth respondents reported that they were open to working in any sector.

Male youth reported that the main reason they do not like to work in jobs such a construction or jobs that require a physical ability was because these jobs require to carry heavy materials and they are not able to do these jobs. Female youth respondents that did not want to work in the private sector explained that they face sexual harassment and discrimination by the society in these types of positions and do not want to be put in those situations.
Youth respondents in the job seekers survey were asked if they felt disadvantaged in accessing work due to their age, gender, and/or ethnicity. 25% of youth interviewed said yes they felt disadvantaged in their job search because of these biases, while 75% felt there was no discrimination. Youth that reported feeling disadvantaged in accessing work due to age, gender or ethnicity said that the main reason for this discrimination was due to corruption and “Wasta” (favoritism). In addition, male youth reported that employers prefer to hire female applicants rather than male applicants, yet this assessment found that employers reported an interest in hiring both female and male employees. Female youth reported that the main reasons for disadvantages they faced were related to traditions and customs, discrimination, and sexual abuse.

3.2.7 Training Opportunities

63% of youth interviewed in the job seekers survey reported they had never received vocational training, while 38% said that they had received some form of vocational training. Of those that reported receiving vocational training, 87% completed the full length of the training programme and 13% did not complete the full length of the training programme due to financial constraints or the training programme timing.

88% of youth interviewed in the job seekers survey reported that they were interested in participating vocational training and 13% were not interested in training. These findings coincide with employer feedback in the business survey, as employers reported an interest in hiring youth that had received vocational training.

When asked about the type of training they are seeking, male youth expressed interest in carpentry, computer, electrical and electronic repair and E-marketing, while female youth expressed interest in tailoring, dressmaking, beauty, education (teaching), and pastry (food industry).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry courses</td>
<td>Tailoring, dressmaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Numerical Control (CNC)</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical and electronics repair</td>
<td>Education (Teaching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Marketing</td>
<td>Pastry and food industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith sessions</td>
<td>Computer skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber sessions</td>
<td>English language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary ceilings</td>
<td>Writing skills in Arabic and English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.8 Youth Skills

Youth respondents in the job seekers survey were asked about their perceived personal and the technical skills. 32% of youth interviewed had basic literacy skills, 25% had interpersonal skills, 21% had communication skills, 12% had leadership skills, and 8% had problem-solving/decision-making skills. 20% of youth interviewed reported that they had marketing skills, 19% had computer skills, 9% had skills in finance, 9% in photography, 9% in hairdressing, 8% had English language skills, 6% had skills in design and tailoring, 6% skills in automobile maintenance, and 3% had skills in welding and electrical and mechanical repair.

Youth respondents in the job seekers survey were asked to rate the perceived skill levels of youth for a series of both hard and soft skills, where 1 means very poor skills, 2 means poor skills, 3 means acceptable, 4 means good skills, 5 means very good skills. The table below outlines the findings from these questions.
### 3.2.9 Establishing a Business

Youth respondents in the job seekers survey were asked if local businesses and financial institutions in the district supported youth to engage in new business ideas. The majority of youth (73%) reported that there was no support from these groups, while 28% reported that local banks and institution provided loans that supported youth in starting a business. Some of the supportive groups listed by respondents included the housing cooperative, Emaar women economic empowerment project, and the development bank. Youth were also asked if they have access to information on how they can get money to start a business or run a business. 43% of youth interviewed in the job seekers survey reported that they received money through bank/company loans, 43% also reported that they received money through borrowing money from relatives/friends, 8% reported they either don’t know how to apply for loans, and 5% use their own savings to start a business.

The survey also asked youth about their preferred mechanism for receipt of cash grants to start and support their businesses. The majority of youth (83%) interviewed in the job seekers survey reported that they preferred cash in hand, 15% preferred hawala (money transfer offices), and 3% preferred bank transfers. The lack of preference for bank transfers was reported as being due to lengthy procedures and requirements in place at the banks.
3.3 Key Findings – Key Informant Interviews

3.3.1 Main and Active Sectors
The KIIIs sought to understand the most promising sectors with potential of growth and generating income and employment opportunities for the youth and adults in Basra city. Interview participants from different sectors and departments of government bodies reported that the commerce/trading, oil, construction, agriculture, transportation, and tourism sectors were the most active sectors in the district and have high potential of expanding and generating income and employment opportunities for youth in Basra city. In addition, micro and small enterprises (i.e. E-marketing, food processing, home and electrical appliances) were mentioned as sectors with a high potential of expanding and generating income and employment opportunities for the youth in Basra.

The Director of the Basra Chamber of Commerce also mentioned that malls and stores were another area of growth, as businesses are the main recipients of private investments. The Time Square Mall in particular was highlighted as a location with many businesses and employment opportunities. The Director also reported that telecommunication companies (i.e Zain, Asia Cell and Korek) were the most profit businesses for businessmen in Basra, and he reported that investment in the industrial sector could help decrease unemployment in Basra.

The Director of Basra Chamber of Industry reported that there were no investments in any sector other than the oil sector due to the unstable security situation, and that government and foreign investors were now focusing on investing in the construction sector above other sectors.

3.3.2 Government Actions to Promote Employment Opportunities
Interview participants were further asked about the efforts being made by the government to promote livelihoods opportunities for youth and adults in Basra. The Director of the Businessmen Union revealed that there are no real and realistic initiatives to promote employment opportunities in general, due to lack of planning. He also mentioned that even if there are initiatives available through the government, no discussions had occurred with businesses and job seekers due administrative and financial difficulties within the relevant government bodies.

3.3.3 Income Generation Activities for Female Youth
In order to understand the job opportunities for women in Basra, interview participants were asked about initiatives promoting income generation for young women in the district. The Director of Chamber of Commerce revealed that there were several efforts to enhance livelihood opportunities for female youth. For example, the Basra Chamber of Commerce and the Development Center had established several courses, including aesthetics training for female youth, but a lack of information and advertisement about the training decreased attendance in the courses.

The Director of the Businessmen Union revealed that INGOs and NGOs had implemented income generating initiatives for female youth such as the Al-Falha’a Center, the Business Women Center of the Businessmen Union, and several international organizations had provided courses in hairdressing, sewing, computer use, English, and writing skills for female youth. The Director of the Basra Investment Commission...
also reported that businesses such as Time Square Mall provided almost 2000 job opportunities, most of which were available to women.

3.3.4 Unemployment Rate

Interview participants were also asked about the current unemployment rate in Basra, however the responses provided were only estimates based on individual observation and were not on formal data collection. The Director of the Chamber of Commerce reported that the unemployment rate in Basra exceeded 45%, with higher rates of unemployment in villages and rural areas (i.e. Shatt al-Arab, Faw, Siba and Zubair). The Director of Basra Chamber of Industry also reported an unemployment rate between 60% and 70%. He also reported that there was no statistical information available in Basra related to employment, and that the numbers are estimated based on the opinions of business owners he had spoke with. He also mentioned that youth employed in the private sector do not consider themselves employed unless they work in a governmental job, therefore youth may report being unemployed because they do not work for government but may have a job with an private company.

3.3.5 Barriers to Employment

Interview participants reported a variety of challenges faced by youth and adults seeking employment in Basra including lack of job opportunities, corruption (favoritism), lack of skills among applicants, lack of education and training opportunities to develop the capabilities and skills of unemployed youth, lack of financial support for young people, and limited access to loans (with available loans having very high interest rates). Interview participants also mentioned that customs, traditions, and discrimination can hinder employment opportunities of young women in Al Basra and in Iraq in general. This finding was reflected in the responses from youth participants in the job seekers survey, however employers reported a preference for hiring both female and male employees.

3.3.6 Training Opportunities and Services Available

Interview participants were asked what kind of trainings were needed for youth and adults to increase their employability. It was reported that increasing basic numeracy and literacy skills among youth in Basra would enable them enhance their livelihoods opportunities greatly. The Director of the Chamber of Commerce and the Chairman of the Planning Committee of Basra Provincial Council revealed that vocational training was already available for youth through the Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, NGOs, and private training companies in Basra. However, information about these trainings is not well distributed to those youth that would be most interested and who would benefit most from the trainings.

Vocational training is available through NGOs such as the Ammar Foundation, Al-Surour organization, Al-Manahel Association, the Iraqi Development Center, the Peace Center for Strategic Studies and Research, and Ameen Society for Relief and Development. In addition, private training companies such as Advance for Languages, Injaz Engineering Company for Training and Development, Al-Faihaa Center for Training Development and Youth Employment, and Al Ebda’a Company provide vocational training opportunities, However, youth have barriers to attend these courses as they may not be able to afford the course fees. In addition, youth mentioned they prefer to attend courses in the evening to be able to accommodate employment in the mornings.
3.4 Key Findings – Focus Group Discussions

The youth focus group discussions were designed to identify challenges and bottlenecks to youth employment in Basra city, youth skills, and training preferences. Youth identified several sectors they felt would be promising to generate income for youth including telecommunications, agriculture and livestock, tourism, and transportation. Youth also reported that food processing, blacksmithing, decorations, construction, electronic repair, and central markets (i.e. Times Square Mall) were the most profitable jobs for youth. In comparison, interview participants specified that tourism, agriculture and oil as the sectors with a high potential of expanding and generating income and employment opportunities for youth in Basra.

Youth participants of the FGDs reported facing several challenges in their pursuit of employment in Basra including lack of job opportunities, corruption, lack of planning to cover the gap between unemployment and the number or graduates, lack of financial support (from the government or others), lack of training courses, increased foreign labor, and absence of local national production. While cultural norms and traditions were mentioned by female youth as main barriers that have reduced women's employment opportunities and participation in the labor market. In comparison, the job seekers survey findings showed the main challenges to youth employment were corruption (favoritism), lack of employment opportunities, and a preference to hire foreign workers over national workers. Youth FGD participants were also asked what skills were needed by male and female youth to increase employability in the above stated sectors. Youth FGD participants mentioned computer skills, English language skills, technical experience, skills in marketing, and soft skills such as communication and self-confidence skills.

Employers accept females based on the appearance and not her experience, or education. We face sexual harassment once we do not agree on it, and we wouldn't be accepted for the job.

Female youth, Al Basra

The youth FGDs also aimed to understand how the lack of job opportunities affected youth behavior in the community. Youth participants reported that the lack of job opportunities had a negative impact on young people and led drug use, fraud, suicides, family problems, and administrative and financial corruption.
4 General Recommendations

The findings indicate that oil, services and construction were promising sectors in Basra city, and that agriculture and tourism were active sectors that have high potential of expanding and generating income and employment opportunities for youth in Basra. Youth interviewed in Basra showed lack of interest in the private sector as they consider it a temporary and an unstable employment. They mentioned that the reason is that labor laws, social security and health insurance are not provided or activated in the private sector. Income generation and training initiatives must consider these competing perspectives in order to stabilize private sector work and create more interest among youth for work in these sectors.

As indicated by the World Bank, Iraq’s growth in 2020 is slowing. The evidence from primary data collection for this assessment indicates that employers have lowered their human resources numbers. Large companies have scaled down and according to those interviewed, big business outside of the oil sector have not been faring well except in the retail sector such as malls and construction companies.

Vocational training and education in Basra city was reported as lacking or outdated to address the needs of the market. According to those interviewed, there were few humanitarian and development actors who are making an effort to close the skills gap and address the high unemployment rate. However, the need is significant. Youth also indicated that they lack the information and awareness of the centers that provide technical trainings. A well-planned and organized vocational training campaign is required in the channels and platforms used by youths would be important. A cursory look at advertising of training by VTCs indicates a major gap in information and tools.

Most participants indicated that corruption was a major factor in their inability to get employment. It is important to note to culturally interrelated perceptions in Iraq about what constitutes jobs and corruption:

xi. A “job” is only a Government position and not a job in the private sector. As well, the job in the private sector is called (Kassab) which literally means earner or can be interpreted as daily earner. It does not have conjure up the same respect as having a government “job” which entails security and respectability;

xii. Corruption is perceived to include more than receiving bribes to achieving employment, it includes belonging to a political party and being in relation with influential people who can guarantee a job. Most of the youth indicated corruption to be a major factor in their inability to get jobs in government. People use corruption colloquially to indicate everything that is wrong with government ability to provide jobs, funds, services, etc.

The business survey showed that businesses growth is expected to slow. The business survey also reported lack of access to credit as one of the bigger challenges to business. In addition, the high cost of rent and a perceived lack of government support were identified as challenges to the scale up businesses. Business leaders interviewed indicated that profits were also shrinking which led to their changing their growth plans.

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There is a desire among business owners to grow their business and to employ trained youth, however they lack the financial means to expand their businesses.

The assessment also aimed to understand potential business grants/cash payment mechanisms (hawala, banks, mobile money, etc.) in the targeted areas. Most youth participants indicated their knowledge of and preference for cash transactions and hawala offices as the most efficient way to transfer funds. This preference stems from the complicated procedures and requirements at the banks for account opening and for transfers. There is also lack of trust in the banking system especially the private banking. The hawala system is recognized as the most efficient way to transfer funds because it does not require the rigorous process that is very intrusive and requires many documents. However, it does provide for transactional records and tracing system. For example, MoLSA and now the Governorates’ Vocational Training Centre have funding programs that are difficult to access because of the requirements imposed by the Government for disbursement. Programming must consider a compromise between the current financial processes used by youth and the need for financial record keeping. A potential solution could be a financial literacy training to help youth understand the banking system and to support them in their account set-up to be able to access funds for training programs and for future loans to launch their businesses.

Male youth expressed an interest in carpentry and electrical and electronics repair (including computers and small electronic devices). Iraq is experiencing tremendous growth in online shopping through the utilization of financial services offered by some banks and in particular the telecommunications industry such as Zain, Korek and Asia Cell. Many youth respondents referenced E-marketing as having tremendous growth as a sector, with few opportunities to learn the required skills in Basra and other places. Female youth in Basra expressed a strong preference in E-Makreting, beauty, education (teaching) and food production. In addition, the retail industry including sales and marketing could be an opportunity for self-employment and general employment for women as there is ongoing demand.

There are limitations or challenges for women to own business and there continues to be a preference for “jobs appropriate for women” such as food production, retail, and education. For women working from home, the findings indicate that social media marketing and sales have increasing opportunities in Basra and this new sector represents an opportunity for women to earn an income while respecting some of the social norms applied to them. However, this sector requires learning new skills sets such as graphic design and photography, English language skills, and entrepreneurial skills.
5 Specific Recommendations

1. Provide skills training for male and female youth in electrical and electronics repair, carpentry, and E-marketing skills through the existing VTCs managed by MoLSA.

2. Integrate soft and employability skills training into exiting VTC syllabus including life skills, communication, self-confidence skills, critical thinking skills to increase employability and job retention.

3. Support existing micro, small, and medium scale businesses in the mechanical, electrical tourism, and hospitality sectors via cash grants to scale up their businesses.

4. Provide training and support to employers and business stakeholders on gender-sensitive workplaces and labour codes, along with community sensitization sessions that promote the rights of women and the importance of women as income earners and decision makers in the household.

5. Work with VTCs and existing training providers to identify adapted training schedules that will allow flexibility for individuals with household or income earning responsibilities. Schedules can be adapted to half day or evening classes, to allow individuals to work during the day and attend classes in the evenings.

6. Work with VTCs to provide supports for vulnerable or marginalized individuals in the community to allow them to participate in the training programmes. For example, providing childcare to allow mothers to attend classes or providing transportation supports for individuals living far from the centres or unable to afford the costs of transportation.

7. Promote private sector engagement and partnerships with social security institutions and insurance companies for the provision of social security and health insurance for workers in the private sector, increasing interest in employment in the private sector.

8. Provide training to MSMEs to increase their use of best practice for business including strengthening administrative, financial, and human resources practices to make them more desirable options for employment.

9. Support youth interested in opening their own businesses via partnerships with existing financial institutions such as the cooperative housing institution and MoSLA for provision of loans (cash-in-hand or through hawala) with low rates.

10. Develop apprenticeships/internships/on-the-job training programs for youth and adults in order to gain the necessary skills and experience required in the job market. This will require financial and business training support for businesses that participate and accept trainees, ensuring a safe workplace for training participants.

11. Work with MSMEs, training centres, government, and other stakeholders to advertise jobs and trainings available through job campaigns, employment fairs and social media. Work with stakeholders
to utilize existing professional platforms for identification of candidates and to improve articulation of available jobs to the general public.
6 ANNEXES

Annex 1  UNEMPLOYED YOUTH SURVEY – LMA

Annex 2  EMPLOYERS SURVEY – LMA

Annex 3  FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR YOUTH – LMA

Annex 4  FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR EMPLOYERS – LMA

Annex 5  KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWS (KII)s DISCUSSION GUIDE – LMA

Annex 6  CASE STUDY 1

Annex 7  CASE STUDY 2