

RAPID LABOR MARKET ASSESSMENT RESULTS

SOUTHERN IRAQ JOBS PROGRAM / BAWSALA CAREER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM IRAQ 2019-2020

A program funded by US Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq and implemented by World Learning Inc



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	3
Background and Purpose.....	4
Logistics and Sampling Strategy.....	4
Phase 1: Background meetings.....	5
Phase 1b: Literature Review and online job boards.....	6
Phase 2: Surveys in the four sites.....	6
Phase 3: Data entry and analysis.....	9
I. Employment and Business Opportunities for Youth.....	10
Likely Employment Opportunities.....	10
Likely Business Opportunities.....	14
II. Skills Requirements.....	15
Soft Skills Gaps.....	15
Recommendations for Soft Skills.....	17
Technical, Functional, and Occupational Skills Gaps.....	18
Recommendations for functional skills.....	19
Business Skill Gaps.....	19
Recommendations for Business Skills.....	20
III. Enabling Environment.....	21
Policies and Programs.....	21
Interviewees’ Offers of Support.....	21
IV. Summary of Recommendations.....	23
References.....	26
Annex 1: RLMA Employer/Stakeholder Survey (English).....	27
Annex III: Soft Skills Definitions.....	34

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Southern Iraq is a particularly challenging context for youth participation in the labor market. While Basra has fairly diverse work opportunities—albeit still reliant on the petrochemicals sector and suffering declining agricultural production¹—the neighboring governorates of Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Muthanna offer much more limited options. Despite its rich oil fields, the region has the highest poverty rate in the country² and continues to be affected by social unrest, as issues such as water shortages, insufficient social services, a weak economy, and other concerns have provoked protests since mid-2018. These protests have escalated since October 2019 as citizens—with large-scale participation from youth—demand government change.

The Southern Iraq Job Skills program, funded by the US Embassy in Iraq, is intended to increase the ability of youth in Southern Iraq to find or create employment in the private sector and serve as positive influences in their communities. In order to reach this goal, the project will match at least 60 university and vocational students aged 19-22 who are not currently employed, with local private sector leaders for a one-year mentorship program, recruiting local business professionals to work with a diverse group of youth to build leadership and professional skills.

To better target program activities, at the start-up of this project World Learning has conducted a rapid labor market assessment (RLMA) and community mapping exercise in each city. This RLMA was designed to:

1. Identify growing areas of the private sector to help target market-relevant mentor recruitment, and to help lay the foundations for planned job-shadowing/internship activities for youth
2. Identify demand-driven soft skills and employability skills youth need to develop, including confirming or revising the list of 12 focus soft skills and additional functional skills already included in World Learning’s WorkLinks Launch and JobLink curricula
3. Identify other private sector partners and coordinating institutions such as chambers of commerce, as well as existing youth-serving organizations and educational institutions to help with program recruitment, hosting activities, and building a broader enabling environment for youth employment/entrepreneurship

Overall, this research included interviews with a total of 34 key stakeholders, and 1 youth focus group discussion. Additional youth focus group discussions were planned in each city; however, it proved impossible to gather youth safely given the month’s broader context of large-scale public protests. In accordance with its rapid methodology, the research was completed within one month.

The following sections outline the research methodology employed, as well as the primary findings.

LOGISTICS AND SAMPLING STRATEGY

¹ [Livelihoods and Market Assessment: Basra, Iraq](#), 2018, Norwegian Refugee Council

² [Republic of Iraq Monthly Economic Update, April 2019](#), World Bank

This RLMA was conducted in three phases: background meetings, surveys in the four sites, and the completion of data entry and analysis.

PHASE 1: BACKGROUND MEETINGS

Phase 1 involved conducting eight (8) out of a planned 10 background interviews with a core set of knowledgeable stakeholders in Basra, targeting the Chamber of Commerce, industry associations, and any organizations or institutions that have recently implemented youth employment, entrepreneurship, or economic growth projects in the area.. Interviewees included representatives of the following:

- Basra Chamber of Commerce
- Professional Training Center of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- Iraqi Businesswomen’s Union
- Iraqi Businessmen’s Union and Al-Fayaha’a Center for Strategic Studies and Youth Employment
- Al-Salam Institute for Strategic Studies
- Lugal Events Management (business)
- Basryatha Restaurant and Cultural Centre (business)
- Ana Basri (“I am Basrawi”, civil society organization)

Interviews employed open-ended questions based on the three purposes of the RLMA outlined above, to lay the foundation for later structured interviews. Following are the interview questions employed:

- Market Demand:
 - Which industries and occupations are currently experiencing growth in employment, or might grow in the near future, in Basra, Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Muthanna?
 - Of these, which kinds of jobs are most open to young people with university degrees? Which degrees are preferred?
 - What do you see as some business areas with growing demand in this region, where youth could be successful in starting small enterprises?
- Skills:
 - What skills are youth with university degrees often lacking, which prevents employers from wanting to hire them? I’m interested in both “soft skills” (like personal qualities, social skills, and cognitive skills) as well as specific technical or work-related skills.
 - What skills are youth who want to start businesses often lacking, which prevents them from succeeding in their business activities?
- Do you know of any recent labor market analyses or other published research like employer surveys that I should read for more background information?
- Contacts and introductions
 - Do you have contacts in some companies in Basra, Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Muthanna, whom I could contact to learn more about these industry sectors and employment opportunities?

- Do you have contacts at some finance institutions where they have helped youth obtain business start-up support?
- Do you have contacts at other organizations that are working on youth employment issues, like NGOs, university career centers, or others?

World Learning's lead researcher in Iraq transmitted complete written notes of these interviews.

PHASE 1B: LITERATURE REVIEW AND ONLINE JOB BOARDS

Interestingly, the background interviews revealed little familiarity with any locally- or regionally-relevant reports on youth employment issues and opportunities. Respondents unanimously stated that such reports do not exist. Through other sources, World Learning was only able to identify a handful of recent studies and reports relevant to understanding the employment context of Basra and the surrounding region:

- The Politics of Unemployment in Basra: Spotlight on the Oil Sector. IRIS Policy Report, 2019.
- Labour Market Opportunities and Challenges: Basra District, Basra Governorate. IOM, 2019.
- Livelihoods and Market Assessment: Basra, Iraq. Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018.
- Labor Market Report: University Linkages Program. IREX, 2017
- Youth Livelihoods Development Project description. Save the Children, 2013. Note: a labor market assessment was planned as part of this project but is not readily available online.

Observations from these documents have been taken into account in the later sections of this report.

For triangulation of data on available jobs, we also reviewed trends in postings on four online job boards:

- Foras <https://jobs.foras-iq.ta3mal.com/>
- Kodo Jobs <http://www.kodojobs.com/iraq-jobs/>
- Bayt.com Iraq <https://www.bayt.com/en/iraq/>
- Tanqeeb Iraq https://iraq.tanqeeb.com/en?change_lang=1

However, our field research team indicated that not all types of companies post positions on these websites, and that the governorates outside of Basra city are particularly not well-represented. Internet-based information on jobs is diffuse across these settings, including postings company-specific Facebook and Instagram pages. Furthermore, word of mouth and personal connections continue to be widely used means for companies to convey their recruitment needs. Therefore, our primary data collection is likely to offer a more complete picture than can be obtained from review of online job boards alone.

PHASE 2: SURVEYS IN THE FOUR SITES

Following the background interviews, a more formal survey (see [Annex I](#)) was finalized and translated into Arabic through coordination between World Learning's home office and Iraq-based field team. The same was done with a youth focus group discussion protocol ([Annex II](#)). Both instruments (survey and FGD protocol) were intended to be delivered orally to research participants, with the researchers recording verbal responses on behalf of the interviewees.

The target sample was a total of approximately 40 interviews (10 per city), plus four youth focus group discussions (1 per city), as specified below:

- 5-8 representatives of employers in growing industries in each city (industries to be identified based on Phase 1 consultations).
- 3-5 other stakeholders supporting youth employment or economic growth (including projects, NGOs, business finance institutions, government agencies, university career centers, etc) in each city, for a total of 12 to 20 other stakeholders
- 1 youth focus group discussion that includes both employed and unemployed youth, male and female, with a minimum of 8 participants.³

During the implementation of this sampling strategy, World Learning's lead field researcher and her assistants were faced with a very difficult situation of social unrest which prevented the team from reaching all interview targets, particularly in the governorates outside of Basra. Gathering youth for focus group discussions proved to be particularly difficult and unsafe, and so was not implemented outside of the initial youth FGD in Basra. The final survey sample included 26 individual survey interviews and 1 youth FGD:

- Basra: 10 survey interviews and 1 youth focus group discussion
- Maysan: 9 survey interviews
- Dhi Qar: 4 survey interviews
- Muthanna: 3 survey interviews

The single youth FGD, held in Basra, included 8 participants: 4 women and 4 men; 4 unemployed, 2 part time employed, and 2 full time employed.

By stakeholder type, the survey interviewees included:

- 19 employer representatives, divided among the following industry sectors, using ISIC classifications:
- 2 government agency representatives
- 5 NGOs or civil society organizations

Using ISIC industry classifications, these interviewees were divided among the following sectors:

- 12 in mining and quarrying (petroleum and natural gas extraction companies)
- 1 in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- 1 in construction
- 1 in wholesale and retail trade (local and international marketing of crafts products)
- 1 in information and communication
- 1 in professional, scientific, and technical activities (engineering consulting firm)

³ In more extensive studies, we would conduct at least 4 separate FGDs, one with each of these categories, in each site; however for this rapid assessment we envisioned interviewing a mixed group.

- 2 in administrative and support service activities (a human resources consulting firm and a marketing firm)
- 2 in education
- 3 in human health and social work activities
- 1 in other service activities (a professional association)
- 1 extraterritorial organization (GIZ)

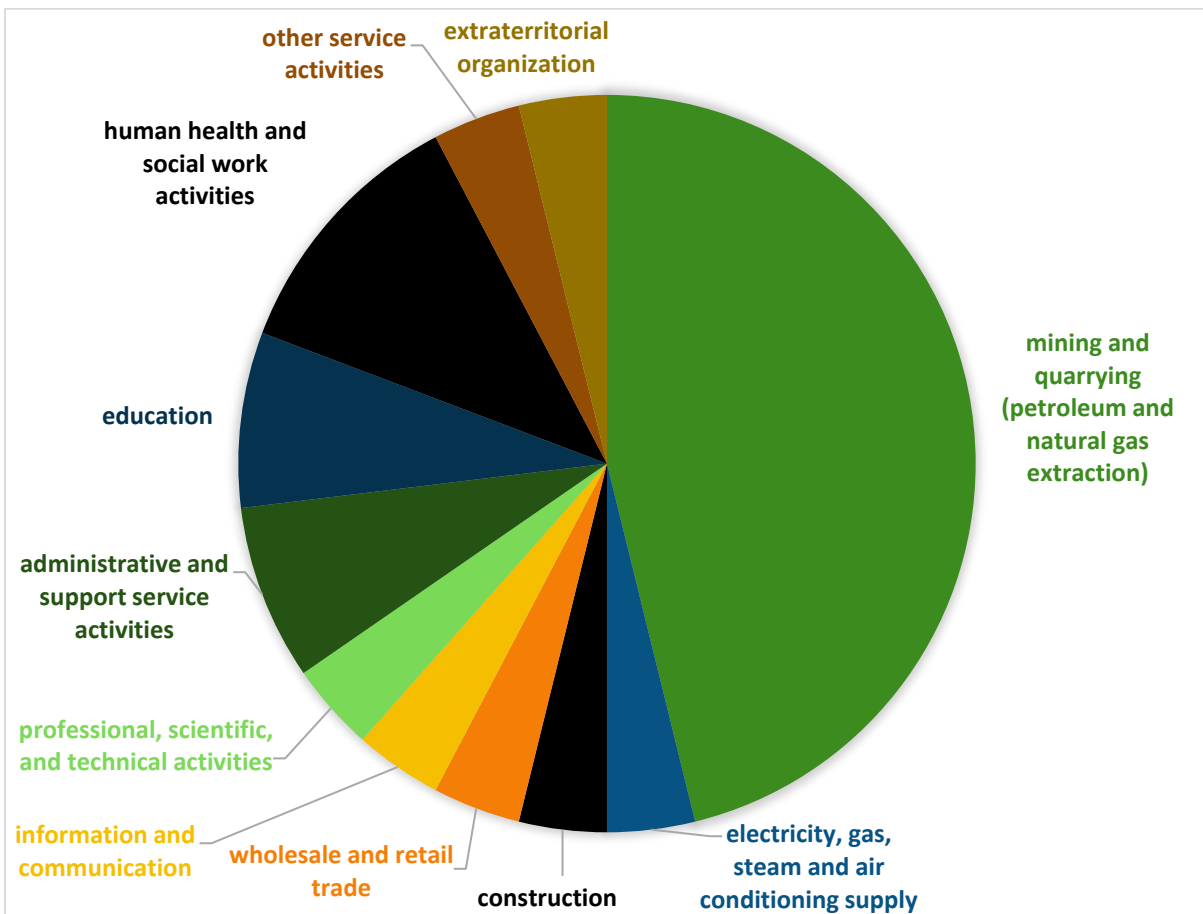


Figure 1: Industry sectors represented among interviewees, by frequency

Interviewee titles included Administrative Manager, Advisor (regional), CEO, Chairman/woman, Chemical Engineer, Co-Founder, Deputy Manager, Drilling Officer/Engineer, Employee Relations Assistant, HR Executive/Officer/Supervisor/Business Partner, Maintenance Engineer, Manager, Project Manager, Recruiter, Sales Manager, Supervisor, and Team Leader.

Overall, this research therefore takes into account the perspective of 34 adult stakeholders (including background interviews and survey interviews) and 8 youth. As a rapid analysis, the intent of the study is not to generate statistically representative data, but rather to detect broad trends in opinions on the ground, in a context that is rapidly evolving due to the deteriorating security situation and corresponding blockages to transport and trade. Due to the smaller than intended sample in two of

the governorates, however, the analysis presented in this report focuses on region-wide conclusions with only limited discussion of differences among the governorates.

PHASE 3: DATA ENTRY AND ANALYSIS

Following the completion of these interviews, research assistants transferred their data in Arabic to the lead field researcher, who translated all responses while entering the data into a customized spreadsheet. Fundamental data cleaning, including corrections of category assignments, was completed prior to analysis. The following pages present the results of analyzing this data.

The report is organized according to the following sections:

- I. Employment and Business Opportunities for Youth
- II. Skills Requirements
- III. Enabling Environment

A conclusion summarizes core recommendations applicable to the Southern Iraq Job Skills Project, also known as the Bawsala Mentorship Program.

I. EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

LIKELY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

All survey interviewees, regardless of their industry sector, were asked which occupations they thought were most likely to have more current openings for young people with a university or TVET degree in their governorate.

Interviewees were offered 28 selected classifications from the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) of the ILO, using more specific classifications for occupational fields that are well-represented in the region, as well as an “other” category. For six occupational categories (science and engineering, health, teaching, business, ICT, and legal/social), respondents were offered two different professional levels each, corresponding to 4+ years or 2+ years of post-secondary education, respectively. As “other” responses did not fit within ISCO classifications, we manually re-classified them according to the appropriate categories. Interviewees could cite as many categories as they wished, and on average they named 9 occupations each.

Half or more of the respondents (13-19 out of 26) cited five occupational categories as those with the greatest number of current job opportunities for young people:

1. Business, finance, marketing, and administration professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications)
2. Science/engineering professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications)
3. Science/engineering technicians/associate professionals (TVET or 2-year degree)
4. Building and construction workers
5. Plant and machine operators

Over two-fifths of respondents (11-12 out of 26) cited another five occupational categories, as follows:

6. Personal service workers or personal care workers including cooks, waiters, beauticians, childcare, and personal health workers
7. Sales workers (e.g. retail)
8. Health associate professionals (TVET or 2-year degree)
9. Information and communications technology professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications)
10. Drivers

Other occupations mentioned by slightly fewer respondents (8-10 out of 26) included: Health professionals (4 year degree +), Clerical support workers (secretary, teller), Electrical and electronics workers, Metal and machinery workers, Food processing workers, and Lower level workers like cleaners, laborers, assistants, street vending, and refuse workers.

Examining only the data from outside Basra, considering that Basra is the region’s largest city, there is a similar consensus on most of the top occupational categories. However, in this case health professionals and associate professionals take on greater importance, and electrical and electronics workers appear on the list for the first time.

1. Business, finance, marketing, and administration professionals (4+ years)
2. Science/engineering professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications)
3. Health professionals (4 year degree +)
4. Health associate professionals (TVET/2ys)
5. Building and construction workers
6. Plant and machine operators
7. Personal service workers or personal care workers including cooks, waiters, beauticians, childcare, and personal health workers
8. Electrical and electronics workers
9. Drivers⁴

Overall, every occupational category included in the survey was cited by at least 2 respondents, except skilled agricultural workers, which was not mentioned. However, given the dominance of agriculture as a source of livelihoods in the region,⁵ this omission may be due to other causes, such as predicted contractions due to water shortages, low participation of skilled labor in these activities, or even interviewees' lack of familiarity with this sector. The availability of employment in the top ten occupational categories, however, is supported by enough consensus even with this small sample size to suggest that they are occupations that young Iraqis from this region might prioritize in their employment search.⁶

A number of background interview respondents—all of whom were from Basra—cited employment growth in mining and extraction (oil and gas), wholesale and retail commerce, food service, sales and marketing, construction, and tourism. Considering the recent security issues in the region, tourism seems to be an unlikely candidate for upcoming employment growth; however, there was consistent reference to the former five sectors areas of employment growth. A recent Basra-focused labor market analysis from the IOM confirms trade and construction as the main employers in the area, although respondents also felt these sectors were oversaturated; industry, construction, and agriculture were cited as poised to grow significantly.⁷

We also consulted four online job boards (Foras, Kodo, Bayt.com Iraq, and Tanqeeb Iraq) to triangulate this information on employment opportunities—with the understanding that not all of the project's governorates are represented on these job boards, nor are all industry sectors and types of jobs. Below is a summary of the information available from these job boards (excluding Kodo, which had no job postings in the project sites).

⁴ In 10th place by number of citations was a tie among six different occupations; as this does not represent significant consensus, they are not cited here.

⁵ Livelihoods and Market Assessment: Basra, Iraq. Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018, p. 3.

⁶ Note, however, that a report by IREX found that only administrative and clerical positions were forecasted to increase over all regions of Iraq. Labor Market Report: University Linkages Program. IREX, 2017

⁷ Labour Market Opportunities and Challenges: Basra District, Basra Governorate. IOM, 2019, p. 7.

Table 1: Summary of online job board postings

	Foras	Bayt.com Iraq	Tanqeeb Iraq
Project-relevant governorates with job postings	Basra, Muthanna	Basra	Basra, Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Maysan
# of postings in the above cities	17 (primarily in Basra)	62	550 (520 in Basra since Sept 2019; 30 in the other governorates combined)
Industry sectors	Public/government, Construction, Petrochemicals, Oil & gas, Financial services, Facilities and property management, NGO	Oil & gas (48 postings), Facilities and property management (8), Manufacturing, Metallurgy, Consulting, Translation, Financial services	Basra: Construction, Energy, Oil & Gas, Facilities and property management, NGOs, etc Outside Basra: Energy, Telecommunications, NGO, Construction materials, Health, Services
Example job titles/roles	Financial management advisor, Sales, Customer service/call center, Instrumentation engineer, Operations technician, Translation and document processing, Housekeeper, Chef, Laundry, Pest Control	Technicians and engineers (43 postings—various types of engineers, welding, construction supervisors, etc), Support services (6-housekeeper, laundry, chef etc), Management (4), Sales, R&D, Accounting, Quality control	Basra: Front desk, Sales, Customer service, Engineers (various), Operators, Welding, HR, Teachers, Inspectors, HSE, Project Managers, Supervisors, Risk Management, Executives, Logistics, Housekeeper/Cleaner, etc Outside Basra: Engineer, Sales, Monitoring, Chef, HSE

Taken together, the top areas for youth to investigate for current and growing employment opportunities, whether in Basra or the three other nearby governorates, are listed in the following table. 22 out of 26 respondents (85%) were also able to cite specific positions in their company or organization they expected to be open to young people in the coming year.⁸ Examples of these titles are listed to the right, linked to the corresponding sector and occupational categories; the majority indicated that these would be full-time positions. Finally, interviewees also gave information about

⁸ Note that while the question asked specifically about positions expected to be open to young people, some of the examples cited appear to be of a more senior level; these are still included for informational purposes.

businesses they knew to be expanding or additional hiring they expected in the near future; some of these represent niche opportunities summarized in the final row.

Table 2: Top prospects for youth employment growth

Sector	Occupations with growing employment	Specific job openings predicted in interviewees' companies
Mining/extraction: Oil & gas Electricity and gas supply Note: nationalization policies are leading to more job openings for Iraqis. Expanding companies include ENI, Bonatti, Wood PLC, Petrochina, and Siemens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science/engineering professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications) • Science/engineering technicians/associate professionals (TVET or 2-year degree) • Plant and machine operators • Electrical and electronics workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineers, Commissioning Engineer, Drilling Engineer, Geologist, Electrical Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, Precision Machinery Engineer, Civil Engineer • Project Managers • Mechanical Technicians, Valve Technicians, Senior Technicians, Instrument Specialists • Drilling workers • Mechanical Supervisor, Workshop Supervisor. • Rotating Equipment Sales Engineer, Tendering Engineer, Contracts Engineer • Heavy Equipment Advisor • Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) Coach/Manager • Firefighters • Skilled laborers, Operators, Well drillers • Site Managers, Station Operators • Heavy equipment operators
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and construction workers • Electrical and electronics workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil engineers, Electrical engineers, Mechanical engineers • Construction workers, Woodworkers, Metal workers • Planning engineer, Safety engineer, Site engineer
Wholesale and Retail Accommodation and Food Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal service workers or personal care workers including cooks, waiters, beauticians, childcare, and personal health workers • Sales workers (e.g. retail) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food suppliers (to oil & gas companies) • Cleaners (to oil & gas companies) • Restaurant workers • Sales workers (including in clothes, electrical equipment, food, and cosmetics) • Buyer, Warehouse Supervisor, Storekeeper, Supply Chain Lead. • Monitors of craftworker teams
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health professionals (4 year degree +) • Health associate professionals (TVET/2ys) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical devices engineer, Life medicine engineer • Pharmaceutical sales • [Interviewees also cited increased numbers of private hospitals and clinics and corresponding hiring]
Cross-cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers • Business, finance, marketing, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers listed in relation to oil & gas companies • Administration employees/specialists, Business Managers, Office manager

	<p>administration professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and communications technology professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Assistant, HR Coordinator, Travel Coordinator Copywriters, Local Content Advisor, Document Control Accountants, Finance Marketing, Online marketing Videographers, Photographers, Graphics designers Ethics and Compliance Specialist Purchasing; Requisition to Pay (RTP/procurement) Analyst Systems, Applications, and Products (SAP) Reporting Analyst (specific business analytic software) IT employees, IT Engineers Data entry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niche employment growth opportunities also identified by respondents 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitness centers Barhya start-up (exporting Iraqi dates) Teachers in private schools and kindergartens “There is a project I cannot disclose [that] will start up soon in the city (Muthanna) and will provide many jobs for young people.”

Interviewees representing organizations in the social and education sectors also cited roles they planned to hire for, though these may not reflect broader employment growth trends. These included trainers/educators in English, soft skills, and employment skills; social researchers; social worker; psychologist; and program coordinator roles.

LIKELY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

In our background interviews, we also asked an open-ended question about business areas with growing demand in the region, where youth could be successful in starting small enterprises. Many respondents mentioned that youth lack the skills needed to run a business, largely because they have little experience to draw on at a young age. However, some also suggested business types that may be promising, including:

- Trade and retail sales (provided a youth has the capital to buy inventory)
- Restaurants and coffee shops (described as “easier” than other types of businesses)
- Construction (cited as an area of growing demand, so new business start-up could also be feasible; presumably this may include retail of construction materials, as well as specialized services)

One interviewee, however, elaborated that the above choices, particularly the first two, are related primarily to youth capacity and interests, and are not necessarily the best options in terms of demand: “The problem is there is a demand in the market for different sorts of small businesses but the young people can’t answer this demand simply because they don’t have practical ideas and also because they only focus on making fast profit. Thus, we see most of them prefers starting a restaurant or a coffee shop because they are the simplest to run and their revenues are fast.”

II. SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

We asked all interviewees to comment on the most important characteristics they look for in an entry-level candidate, as well as to identify specific soft skills and technical skills gaps they often notice.

Interviewees commented that a candidate's skills are more important than their degree, particularly foundational skills in English, computers, and professionalism: "Companies look for young people who can speak English, use computers, and operate professionally in their work regardless of their field of study," one said. Others emphasized flexibility, creativity, and enthusiasm: "Business owners prefer those who show enthusiasm to work in different tasks" and many talked about the importance of being "eager to learn and develop".

Other preferences mentioned by several interviewees included "knowledge of the job's requirements", "basic administrative skills" including planning and writing emails and reports, communication and teamwork skills including managing conflict, goal-setting, "the ability to solve problems", and being "open-minded...and able to overcome traditional obstacles" (specifically in relation to female employees). Understanding how to do an interview and prepare a resume was also important to some employers in giving a good first impression—and they indicated that a significant proportion of youth do not have this foundational background.

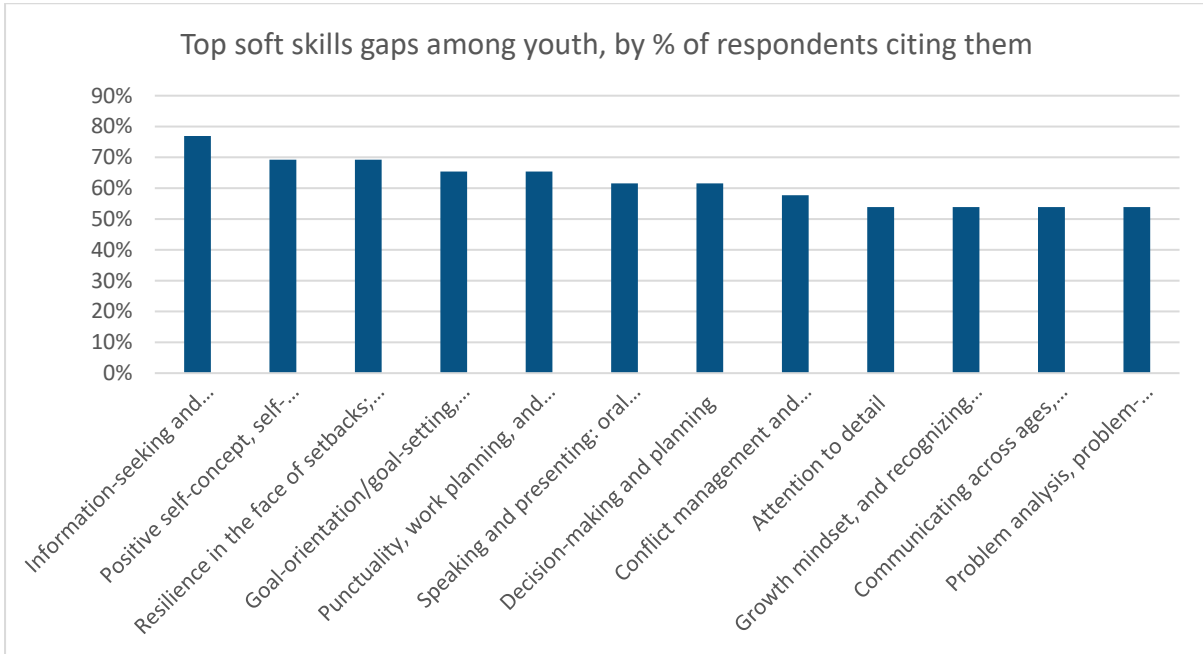
SOFT SKILLS GAPS

The above open-ended responses were reflected in the quantitative data about soft skills gaps that the interviewees found were often missing in young candidates. World Learning defines "soft skills" as including intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, and cognitive or higher-order thinking skills. Interviewers presented research participants with a table listing 34 soft skills from an inventory developed by World Learning following an international literature review of soft skills terminology.⁹

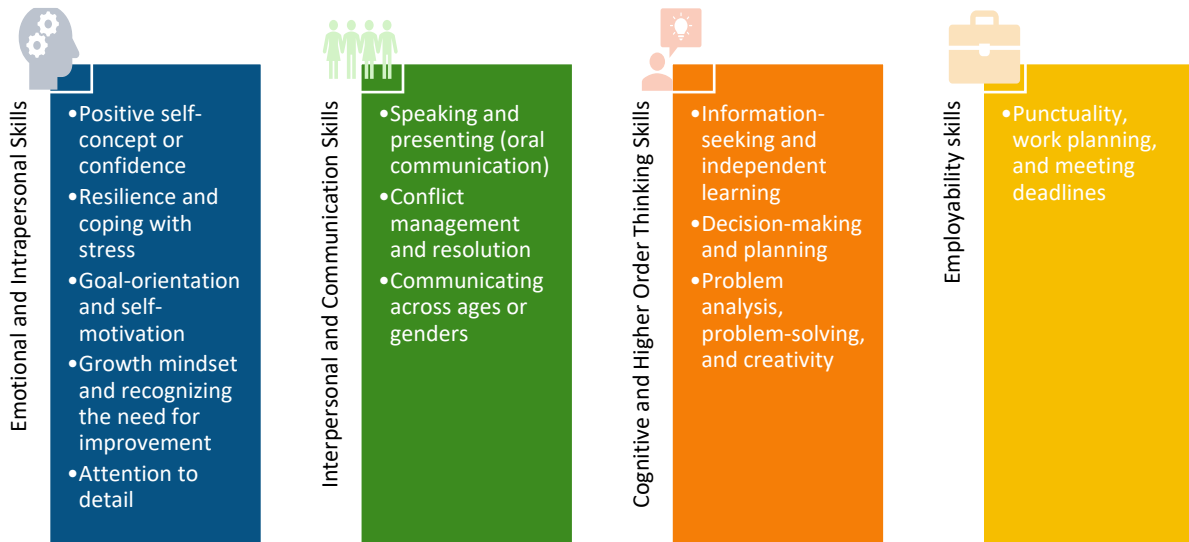
Every one of the listed skills was identified as a gap by at least a few respondents—on average, each respondent mentioned 15-16 soft skills that youth are weak in. However, there was a stronger consensus on 12 soft skills that over 50% of respondents identified as commonly lacking among youth they had interviewed or hired. Those highlighted by two-thirds of respondents included: information-seeking and independent learning, positive self-concept or confidence, resilience and coping with stress, goal-orientation and self-motivation, and punctuality and meeting deadlines. Also in the top list, though with slightly less consensus, were speaking and presenting (oral communication), decision-making and planning, conflict management and resolution, attention to detail, growth mindset and

⁹ See Honeyman, Catherine. 2018. Soft Skills Development: Guiding notes for project and curriculum design and evaluation. <https://www.youthpower.org/resources/soft-skills-development-guiding-notes-project-and-curriculum-design-and-evaluation>

recognizing the need for improvement, communicating across ages, genders or cultures/languages, and problem-analysis/problem-solving and creativity.¹⁰



Organized by broad category or type of skill, these 12 skills appear as follows:



Half of respondents (50%) also cited six more common gaps in soft skills: emotional intelligence or managing emotions, conscientiousness and reliability/responsibility, valuing diversity of perspectives,

¹⁰ A report by IREX found that critical thinking and problem-solving were the soft skills gaps most cited by employers, among the options offered. Labor Market Report: University Linkages Program. IREX, 2017

effective listening and understanding others' perspectives, critical thinking and evaluation, and navigating workplace roles and relationships.

While “navigating workplace roles and relationships” did not appear among the top few skills gaps, its importance as an issue was underlined in open-ended statements in many interviews, particularly in the background interviews with industry and sector leaders. Interviewees commented, for example:

1. “Young people need to be taught how to act within a team, how to interact with the chain of hierarchy.”
2. “They are not prepared to deal with the work environment, i.e. they are unable to work with others, solve problems, and make decisions.”
3. “They need to be trained in how to be part of the work family, because most of them don't want to be an effective part, they only seek to be leaders and managers.”
4. “Youth only believe in horizontal leadership, i.e. each one of them aspires to be a leader without taking into consideration leadership skills that they may be lacking.”
5. “In my experience in hiring graduates, I found most of them unable to be part of the work environment. They don't know how to work with a team because each one of them wants to be the boss. They also can't face work problems or solve issues. Instead, they tend to blame each other.”

In combination with the moderate consensus on other related skills gaps, including conflict management and communicating between ages, genders, and cultures/languages, there is a suggestion that Southern Iraqi youth do need some additional preparation regarding workplace roles and relationships.

Interestingly, one interviewee stated that he had interviewed two candidates from a previous implementation of this mentorship program: “They were qualified and enjoyed excellent skills but they were over-confident. The program should teach them self-confidence, but it should also teach them not to overestimate themselves.” He stated that the two applicants rejected his job offer “because they thought that they deserve a huge salary, such as [what is offered] in the oil business,” although a start-up like his cannot afford such high salaries. This comment suggests that we may also need to incorporate additional elements into the program that teach participants to research the real job market around them, including becoming more familiar with the range of available salaries in different fields.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOFT SKILLS

World Learning's experiential training methodology, with its focus on learner-centered activities and group discussion, has been shown to effectively develop social skills and communication skills through meaningful practice over time.¹¹ Our methods also already include core functional job search skills such as networking and professional branding online, preparing CVs, and participating in interviews. As an addition to that core methodology, based on the findings of this RLMA and the high degree of

¹¹ Honeyman, Catherine (2018). [Soft Skills for Youth Employment in Algeria: Qualitative Research Report](#). World Learning.

consensus around certain skills gaps, it is recommended to add specific activities and methods to the Bawsala mentorship curriculum that will build the following skills needed by Southern Iraqi youth, as follows:

Soft Skill	Activities and Methods to add
1. Information-seeking and independent learning—which World Learning includes within a broader category of Thinking Skills that includes critical thinking, problem-solving, and learning from experience	Augment the existing self-study approach with two to three more activities that emphasize an independent search for information. One possibility is to include Activities 7 and 8 from WorkLinks Launch, Module 3.
2. Positive self-concept, self-efficacy, and confidence	Add activities from WorkLinks Launch, Module 2: Activities 10, 8, and 7.
3. Resilience in the face of setbacks, coping with stress—which World Learning includes within the broader skill of Managing Emotions/Self-Control	Add the In Charge of Myself activities from the WorkLinks Launch course, also excerpted in the Short Course on Resilience and Managing Stress
4. Goal-orientation/goal-setting and self-motivation	Add Activities 2 and 3 from WorkLinks Launch Module 1
5. Punctuality, work planning, and meeting deadlines	Add Activities 11 and 12 from JobLink Module 1
6. Navigating workplace roles and relationships	Add Activities 1 and 6 from JobLink Module 5. Also consider adding Activity 10.
7. Communication skills	Already built through World Learning’s learner-centered experiential approach
8. Social skills	Already built through World Learning’s learner-centered experiential approach

Also ensure that the curriculum follows other best practices for soft skills development, including experiential activities and explicitly naming and defining the skill, to aid participants in understanding what skills they are developing and why. Definitions for the above focus soft skills are provided in [Annex III](#).

TECHNICAL, FUNCTIONAL, AND OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS GAPS

Both the background interviews and survey interviews confirmed nearly unanimous consensus on young people’s inadequate functional skills in two areas: English communications, and mastery of computer skills—including both foundational skills and occupation-specific software. English was cited as a need across the board, whether for high or low-skilled positions. “Sometimes we interview a very qualified youth,” said one interviewee, “but we reject them because they don’t speak English.” Another commented, “Even the simple workers should know English”. In general, they also commented that young university graduates lack any practical experience, and that this significantly hinders their integration into even entry-level jobs. A recent labor market report by IREX also found

that English language skills were cited as “most needed” more than twice as much as any other knowledge or skill area, and also confirmed employers’ view that recent graduates have inadequate computer skills.¹²

Other labor market analyses for the region have focused more on technical and vocational skills. A report from the IOM, for example, cites oversaturation in training courses for hairdressing and carpentry, but a need for more offerings in computer software and repair, HVAC (heating and cooling), metal work, painting, tailoring, and photography.¹³

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Based on these findings, the mentorship programming and curriculum, should build certain functional employability skills as follows:

1. **Job Search Skills:** Core functional job search skills such as networking and professional branding online, preparing CVs, and participating in interviews, as stated previously and already part of our model
2. **English:** Encourage the use of English as the medium of discussion and writing for certain activities to provide opportunities to practice professional English. While Arabic will still remain the primary language of the program to avoid excluding participants, and all participants will receive an Arabic language version of the curriculum, using English for some activities can contribute much-needed English practice and familiarity with professional terms. This will also require careful recruiting of mentors who are able to foster the use of English within the groups.
3. **Computer Skills:** Make use of exercises that require computer usage to bolster participants’ core skills in this area, as is already planned within the Bawsala mentorship methodology. Identify any participants with weaker computer skills at the outset and ensure they are partnered with a peer who has greater computer access and familiarity, to help with skills transfer. Further encourage youth participants to become fully familiar with the specialized software that their occupational field may require, and to seek out independent opportunities to become trained in its use.
4. **Practical Experience:** Encourage micro job shadowing and other forms of practical worksite experience, again as is already planned within the Bawsala mentorship methodology.

BUSINESS SKILL GAPS

Interviewees also discussed the skills youth need in order to be more successful in starting businesses. While the Southern Iraq Jobs Program is intended to include encouragement towards business start-up, in addition to private sector employment, the project scope was not designed to include a full-

¹² Labor Market Report: University Linkages Program. IREX, 2017

¹³ Labour Market Opportunities and Challenges: Basra District, Basra Governorate. IOM, 2019, p. 7.

scale entrepreneurship incubation offering. Given this limitation, it is all the more important to target the most crucial skills within the limited time available. Skills interviewees mentioned included:

1. Knowing how to test out a business idea to see if it will be successful
2. Preparing a business plan, including a market study and financial projection scenarios
3. Knowing how to apply for a loan and manage their finances

Interviewees commented, overall, that youth's lack of practical experience in any workplace hinders their ability to start a business. One potential solution to this issue is to emphasize gaining employment experience as an important first step before starting an independent business. An interviewee also suggested specific training on some of these skills: "They must be trained before starting a business on leadership, decision making, and solving problems. Above all of course they should be trained to gain management skills."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESS SKILLS

The Bawsala mentorship program includes basic elements regarding entrepreneurship, including opportunity identification and business planning. Additional recommendations include:

1. Augment the opportunity identification activity with discussion of how to test the level of demand for one's product or service
2. Augment the business planning activity with core information about creating and managing a budget
3. Ensure that program participants complete World Learning's Entrepreneurial Aptitude Assessment, a self-evaluation tool.
 - a. For those who rate themselves highly on this tool, and wish to pursue an entrepreneurship path more seriously, ensure that they are connected to other existing programs or microfinance institutions that provide more in-depth entrepreneurship support.

III. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The majority of interviewees indicated that the government does not have concrete plans or policies in place to improve youth employment and entrepreneurship prospects. Further, many interviewees cited government as a main obstacle in these areas, with issues including corruption and bribes, difficult registration procedures, lack of support for small business, and challenges with hiring qualified personnel from different governorates. Research also suggests that employment offices are poorly run and do not achieve their objectives.¹⁴ Frustration with this state of affairs is partly at the root of Southern Iraq's recent wave of protests. However, some interviewees did indicate some government support in the form of:

1. Business loans (though they were described as difficult to access)
 - a. Note that the GIZ Al-Fayaha'a Center has established a collaboration with the Iraqi Central Bank to launch a loan program offering loans from 10-100 million Iraqi dinar.
2. Scholarships and training opportunities, including university opportunities and other trainings hosted by the governorate work office
3. Ministry of Labor and Social Justice:
 - a. Training centers and loans programs for youth
 - b. Requirement that companies hire at least 50% Iraqis (although one interviewee noted that many companies do not follow this law).

NGOs and international organizations were cited as offering more opportunities in these areas, including Ammar Foundation, Mercy Hands, IOM, UNICEF and the GIZ project al-Fayaha'a training center for unemployed youth. A representative of the company Lugal Events Management also commented that her company collaborates with the University of Basra to train young people who want to start a business. However, some interviewees also mentioned that NGOs offer entrepreneurship programs without tangible results at the end, and that more support is needed—particularly in access to financing as well as much more in-depth work on business skill-building—to really make a change in this area.

INTERVIEWEES' OFFERS OF SUPPORT

We also asked interviewees whether they would be able to provide different types of support to the project, with the following results:

- 18 of the 26 survey interviewees said they would be willing to host a youth from the program for a short internship or job shadowing experience, and an additional 6 stated that this might be possible. One more said she could not promise this, but the project could reach out to her company formally to request an internship position.
- 22 of the 26 survey interviewees said they would be willing to come speak to a group of youth and give them career advice, and the remaining 4 said this might be possible.

¹⁴ The Politics of Unemployment in Basra: Spotlight on the Oil Sector. IRIS Policy Report, 2019.

- 19 of the 26 survey interviewees said they would be willing to mentor a group of youth for several sessions, and the remaining 7 said this might be possible.

Background interviewees also offered significant support, including offering meeting space, computer lab access, internships, and further assistance contacting other stakeholders and support organizations.

IV. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this Rapid Labor Market Assessment (RLMA) in Basra, Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Muthanna governorates suggest the following recommendations for the Southern Iraq Job Skills Project.

1. **Employment Opportunities:** Encourage program participants to explore opportunities in the following sectors and occupational categories:

Sector	Occupations with growing employment
Mining/extraction: Oil & gas Electricity and gas supply Note: nationalization policies are leading to more job openings for Iraqis. Expanding companies include ENI, Bonatti, Wood PLC, Petrochina, and Siemens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science/engineering professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications) • Science/engineering technicians/associate professionals (TVET or 2-year degree) • Plant and machine operators • Electrical and electronics workers
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and construction workers • Electrical and electronics workers
Wholesale and Retail Accommodation and Food Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal service workers or personal care workers including cooks, waiters, beauticians, childcare, and personal health workers • Sales workers (e.g. retail)
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health professionals (4 year degree +) • Health associate professionals (TVET/2ys)
Cross-cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers • Business, finance, marketing, and administration professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications) • Information and communications technology professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications)
Niche employment growth opportunities also identified by respondents	

Further information on specific job titles with openings within each of these fields is available earlier in this document. However, since participants have already chosen their fields of studies, and some may not correspond with the above opportunities, the most important thing is for participants to learn to research job market opportunities themselves, so that they can find real employment options that match their own skills and interests.

2. **Business Opportunities:** Encourage youth to study their environment and determine real market demand for new products or services, rather than simply copying the ideas that many others have done.
3. **Soft Skills:** Add specific activities and methods to the Bawsala mentorship curriculum that will build the following soft skills needed by Southern Iraqi youth, as follows:

Soft Skill	Activities and Methods to add
1. Information-seeking and independent learning, as well as problem-solving (Thinking Skills)	Augment the existing self-study approach with two to three more activities that emphasize an independent search for information. One possibility is to include Activities 7 and 8 from WorkLinks Launch, Module 3.
2. Positive self-concept, self-efficacy, and confidence	Add activities from WorkLinks Launch, Module 2: Activities 10, 8, and 7.
3. Resilience in the face of setbacks, coping with stress (Managing Emotions/Self-Control)	Add the In Charge of Myself activities from the WorkLinks Launch course, also excerpted in the Short Course on Resilience and Managing Stress
4. Goal-orientation/goal-setting and self-motivation	Add Activities 2 and 3 from WorkLinks Launch Module 1
5. Punctuality, work planning, and meeting deadlines	Add Activities 11 and 12 from JobLink Module 1
6. Navigating workplace roles and relationships	Add Activities 1 and 6 from JobLink Module 5. Also consider adding Activity 10.
7. Communication skills	Already built through World Learning's learner-centered experiential approach
8. Social skills	Already built through World Learning's learner-centered experiential approach

Also ensure that the curriculum follows other best practices for soft skills development, including experiential activities and explicitly naming and defining the skill, to aid participants in understanding what skills they are developing and why. Definitions for the above focus soft skills are provided in [Annex III](#).

Building on past program experience, the curriculum should fit within the following structure of contact hours:

- a. Initial mentors' orientation: 2-4 hours. In the current project, this mentors' orientation will take place during the launch event, alongside other participant activities.
- b. Each subsequent meeting of mentors with mentees, to debrief on the past module and introduce the new one: 2 hours. In the current project, these meetings will happen on a monthly basis.
- c. Self-study time for participants between gatherings with mentors: 4 hours. This is to include individual activities as well as certain peer exchanges and online submissions or discussions.

4. **Technical and Occupational Skills:** Reinforce four core needed functional skills, as follows:

- a. **Job Search Skills:** Core functional job search skills such as networking and professional branding online, preparing CVs, and participating in interviews, as stated previously and already part of our model
 - b. **English:** Encourage the use of English as the medium of discussion and writing for certain activities to provide opportunities to practice professional English. While Arabic will still remain the primary language of the program to avoid excluding participants, and all participants will receive an Arabic language version of the curriculum, using English for some activities can contribute much-needed English practice and familiarity with professional terms. This will also require careful recruiting of mentors who are able to foster the use of English within the groups.
 - c. **Computer Skills:** Make use of exercises that require computer usage to bolster participants' core skills in this area, as is already planned within the Bawsala mentorship methodology. Identify any participants with weaker computer skills at the outset and ensure they are partnered with a peer who has greater computer access and familiarity, to help with skills transfer. Further encourage youth participants to become fully familiar with the specialized software that their occupational field may require, and to seek out independent opportunities to become trained in its use.
 - d. **Practical Experience:** Encourage micro job shadowing and other forms of practical worksite experience, again as is already planned within the Bawsala mentorship methodology.
5. **Business Skills:** Revise the existing mentorship curriculum to offer targeted additional support for a few core entrepreneurial skills, as follows:
- a. Augment the opportunity identification activity with discussion of how to test the level of demand for one's product or service
 - b. Augment the business planning activity with core information about creating and managing a budget
 - c. Ensure that program participants complete World Learning's Entrepreneurial Aptitude Assessment, a self-evaluation tool.
 - i. For those who rate themselves highly on this tool, and wish to pursue an entrepreneurship path more seriously, ensure that they are connected to other existing programs or microfinance institutions that provide more in-depth entrepreneurship support.
6. **Refine other aspects of the mentorship curriculum:** Formalize the initial mentor's training guide, revise all existing mentorship modules to take into account lessons learned from past implementation experiences as well as any new insights from the WorkLinks Launch and JobLink materials development, and ensure activities can be implemented across countries, or include recommendations for how to adapt them to a new context.
7. **Draw on offers of support:** Ensure program participants benefit from the initial connections made through this RLMA, including the many concrete offers of support.

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ANNEX 1: RLMA EMPLOYER/STAKEHOLDER SURVEY (ENGLISH)

Researcher Name: _____ **Governorate:** _____ **Date:** _____

Type of interviewee: Employer Other Stakeholder type (specify): _____

Read out loud to the Interviewee: We are starting up a new mentorship program to promote youth employment in this region and we would like to talk with you to make sure that our program responds to current economic needs and employment opportunities. We will not quote you by name in any project report, but will only use the information you and many others provide to arrive at some general conclusions. Do you agree to help us with this survey?

1. Interviewee Name: _____
2. Company or organization: _____ Industry Sector: _____
3. Position or title: _____
4. Contact information to invite you to project activities: _____
5. Which of the following occupations (types of jobs) do you think have more openings for young people with a university or TVET degree right now in this governorate? Select all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Managers	<input type="checkbox"/> Clerical support workers (secretary, teller)
<input type="checkbox"/> Science/engineering professionals (4-year degree or higher qualifications)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sales workers (e.g. retail)
<input type="checkbox"/> Science/engineering technicians/associate professionals (TVET or 2-year degree)	<input type="checkbox"/> Skilled agricultural workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Health professionals (4 year degree +)	<input type="checkbox"/> Building and construction workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Health associate professionals (TVET/2ys)	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal and machinery workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching professionals (4+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft and printing workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching assoc. professionals (TVET/2ys)	<input type="checkbox"/> Electrical and electronics workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Business, finance, marketing, and administration professionals (4+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food processing workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Business, finance, marketing, and admin. associate professionals (TVET/2ys)	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodworkers
<input type="checkbox"/> Information and communications technology professionals (4+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Garment and textile workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Information and communications technology professionals (TVET/2ys)	<input type="checkbox"/> Plant and machine operators
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal, social, or cultural professionals (4+ys)	<input type="checkbox"/> Drivers

<input type="checkbox"/> Legal, social, or cultural associate professionals (TVET/2ys)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower level workers like cleaners, laborers, assistants, street vending, and refuse workers
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal service workers or personal care workers including cooks, waiters, beauticians, childcare, and personal health workers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

6. What positions in your company do you expect to be open to young people in the coming year?

	Are these internships, part-time, full-time, or seasonal/irregular positions? (specify each)
--	--

7. What are the most important characteristics or skills you look for in an entry-level candidate?

8. Which of the following soft skills is usually missing from young people you have interviewed or hired? (Interviewer: You can show the list to the interviewee to help them select).

A. Psychosocial and Emotional Skills	D. Communication Skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-care (rest, nutrition, exercise); Making healthy choices	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective listening and understanding others' perspectives
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional intelligence; Managing emotions	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading and writing: written communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive self-concept, self-efficacy, confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaking and presenting: oral communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Resilience in the face of setbacks; Coping with stress	<input type="checkbox"/> Online and digital communication
B. Intra-personal Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of non-verbal communication norms and cues
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-control and self-discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicating across ages, genders, cultures, or identities
<input type="checkbox"/> Conscientiousness, reliability/dependability, responsibility	E. Cognitive and Higher-order Thinking Skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Truthfulness, honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness	<input type="checkbox"/> Attention, focus, memory, and concentration
<input type="checkbox"/> Attention to detail and/or Seeing the big picture (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking and evaluation
<input type="checkbox"/> Goal-orientation/goal-setting, self-motivation	<input type="checkbox"/> Information-seeking and independent learning
<input type="checkbox"/> Perseverance, determination, and grit	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem analysis, problem-solving, synthesis, creativity
<input type="checkbox"/> Growth mindset, and recognizing need for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision-making and planning
C. Inter-personal (Social) Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-reflection and learning from experience
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating context-appropriate behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial literacy, budgeting, and financial management
<input type="checkbox"/> Respecting and expressing appreciation for others	F. Employability Skills

<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy and ability to notice the effects on others	<input type="checkbox"/> Workplace-appropriate verbal and written communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Valuing diversity of perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigating workplace roles and relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict management and resolution; Fairness	<input type="checkbox"/> Judging appropriate styles of dress and grooming
<input type="checkbox"/> Agreeableness, flexibility, collaboration, and teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality, work planning, and meeting deadlines

9. What advice would you give to our project so that we can succeed in promoting employment for young university or TVET graduates from this governorate?

10. What advice would you give to our project regarding promoting entrepreneurship and business start-up among young university or TVET graduates from this governorate?

The following page contains optional questions that can be posed if the interviewee is willing to give additional time.

Optional Additional Questions

11. Have you heard about any business around here that is expanding, or any new start-ups that might be looking to hire soon?

12. Are there any government policies or other factors that are creating opportunities for new business growth in any sector?

13. Do you or other companies and organizations you know have any trouble finding candidates for entry-level positions? What obstacles do you/they face?

14. Would you be willing to:

a. Host a youth from our program for a short internship/job shadowing as short as one day long?

YES MAYBE NO

b. Come speak to a group of youth and give them career advice?

YES MAYBE NO

c. Mentor a group of youth for several sessions?

YES MAYBE NO

Thank you very much for participating in this interview!

Annex II: RLMA Youth Focus Group Discussion Protocol

Researcher Name: _____ **Governorate:** _____ **Date:** _____

Read out loud to the Youth Participants: “We are starting up a new mentorship program to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship in this region and we would like to talk with you to make sure that our program responds to youth needs and interests. We will not quote you by name in any project report, but will only use the information you and many others provide to arrive at some general conclusions. Do you agree to help us by discussing your experiences and opinions about youth employment and entrepreneurship?”

Obtain signatures from each participant [those who do not agree should be allowed to leave]:

Complete the following about each participant. Status=FT or PT employed/entrepreneur/unemployed

#	M/F	Age	Status
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

#	M/F	Age	Status
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

Instructions to Facilitator: For each of the following questions, record the participant’s number next to their answers. Not all participants have to respond to each question, but it is good practice to try to get responses from several diverse perspectives (male/female, employed/unemployed). Use the reverse of the page to record additional responses if needed—be sure to indicate the question #.

Question 1: What do you think are the major differences between employed and unemployed youth in this region?

#	Response

Question 2: Are there any personal weaknesses (skills or qualities that you lack), which have hindered you personally in searching for a job or trying to start a business?

#	Job/Business	Response

Question 3: Are there any other obstacles, external to your own skills or qualities, which have hindered you in searching for a job or trying to start a business?

#	Job/Business	Response

Question 4: What other support do you think youth with university or TVET qualifications need from a program like ours that intends to promote employment and entrepreneurship?

#	Job/Business	Response

ANNEX III: SOFT SKILLS DEFINITIONS

Soft Skills	Definition
Communication skills	“Communication skills include effective expression, transmission, understanding, and interpretation of knowledge and ideas.” (Lippman et al, 2015)
Goal-setting, Goal-orientation	Goal orientation is defined as the motivation and ability to make viable plans and take action toward desired goals (Lippman et al., 2014a). Goal orientation is closely tied with positive self-concept, since it relates to individuals’ beliefs about their abilities to accomplish specific goals. (Gates et al, 2016)
Managing emotions, Self-control	“Self-control refers to one’s ability to delay gratification, control impulses, direct and focus attention, manage emotions, and regulate behaviors. Someone with a high proficiency in self-control is able to focus on tasks and manage his/her behavior despite distractions or incentives to do otherwise. Self-control is foundational to social skills, communication, being hardworking and dependable, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making.” (Lippman et al, 2015)
Planning and Time management	Planning includes the “ability to form a plan, ability to work with a plan, planning with money, materials, and human resources, thrift, managing projects, efficiency, and time management.” Also, “The ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals.” (Lippman et al, 2015)
Positive self-concept	“Positive self-concept includes self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness and beliefs, as well as self-esteem and a sense of well-being and pride. These skills are foundational to a healthy identity and awareness and deployment of one’s strengths in the workforce. The emphasis is placed here on self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, rather than self-esteem, which has been well-measured and studied, yet is mixed in its relationship to outcomes.” (Lippman et al, 2015)
Social skills	“Social skills refer to a cluster of skills necessary to get along well with others. Social skills also include respecting others, using context appropriate behavior, and resolving conflict.” (Lippman et al, 2015). For the purposes of this research, “social skills” also includes teamwork, networking, and skills related to customer service. Navigating workplace roles and relationships is a subset or specific application of social skills. It involves understanding the social environment of the workplace in a particular context, including proper supervisor/employee relationships, customer and client relations, and

interactions with colleagues—including professional boundaries for male/female relationships in the workplace.

Thinking Skills

“Higher-order thinking consists of problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making, which have necessarily been combined here because the research literature reviewed often measured them together as one construct. Each of these skills may reflect the same underlying skill set of identifying an issue and taking in information from multiple sources to evaluate options in order to reach a reasonable conclusion (Stein, 2000).” (Lippman et al, 2015)