



International
Labour
Organization

PROSPECTS



Kingdom of the Netherlands

► Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS)

Creating opportunities and promoting decent work for all in Iraq



Since 2019, the "Improving Prospects for Host Communities and Forcibly Displaced Persons" (PROSPECTS) partnership has brought positive change to the lives of thousands of refugees and host community members in Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan, and Uganda.

Funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, PROSPECTS is implemented by the ILO, IFC, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Bank. The partners work closely with governments to support host communities and forcibly displaced persons by expanding access to socio-economic opportunities and rights, supporting inclusion in national systems, promoting self-reliance, and strengthening social cohesion. Interventions are organized around four key pillars. The specific pillars implemented vary across countries, depending on national priorities and needs.



ILO PROSPECTS in Iraq: Laying strong foundations...

During Phase 1 (2020–2024), the ILO PROSPECTS project in Iraq has worked to expand access to decent work for displaced populations, vulnerable host communities, and youth by strengthening employment services, vocational training, labour market policies and access to finance.

The ILO worked closely with national institutions, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs, and the private sector to build up institutional capacities, modernize vocational training, promote green jobs through infrastructure projects, and enhance entrepreneurship through tailored training and financial inclusion initiatives. Support was also extended to cooperative development. These efforts were also made possible through active engagement with host community members, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

...to create sustainable pathways for all moving forward

Building on lessons learned and stronger collaboration with PROSPECTS partners, in Phase 2 (2024–2027) the ILO continues to support both refugees and host communities in Iraq. By bridging policy reform with community-level action, ILO PROSPECTS is helping Iraq lay stronger foundations for inclusive employment. With continued cooperation across partner agencies, ministries, employers, training institutions, and civil society, the project remains focused on creating meaningful pathways to work for everyone.



In Phase 1, ILO PROSPECTS Iraq has strengthened education and training systems to better prepare young people and vulnerable groups for the labour market. In close collaboration with national institutions, the ILO supported the development of market-relevant skills training, enhanced career guidance services, and promoted work-based learning opportunities. These efforts aim to bridge the gap between education and employment, enhance employability, and empower individuals to access sustainable, decent work opportunities.

Results at a glance

- ▶ **750 beneficiaries** enrolled in formal or informal training successfully completed the programme with accreditation or certification, **including 525 host community and refugee members** who completed the ILO Work-Based Learning Programme
- ▶ **Around 100 staff** members from different institutional service providers received coaching to enhance and upgrade work-based learning programmes
- ▶ Support was provided to vocational training centres (VTC) to upgrade market-relevant competency-based training programmes and curricula
- ▶ Capacities of VTCs were built to help them deliver relevant vocational training programmes and offer improved career guidance services and job searching support



In Phase 2, PROSPECTS continues to build national capacity to deliver quality education and vocational training, and to facilitate the transition to work by:

- ▶ Supporting TVET reform and implementation of the National Education Strategy
- ▶ Strengthening TVET institutional capacity to identify skills demand, implement quality vocational training and work-based learning, and assess outcomes of skills delivery
- ▶ Expanding vocational training programs in Ninawa and Dohuk, with a focus on youth
- ▶ Expanding work-based learning programs with more engagement of the private sector
- ▶ Facilitating transition from training to both wage and self-employment



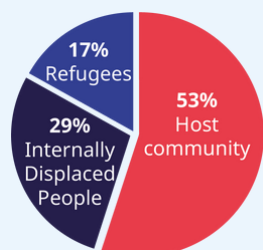
In Phase 1, ILO PROSPECTS Iraq advanced economic inclusion by strengthening labour market institutions, improving employment services, developing inclusive active labour market programmes, and supporting entrepreneurship and enterprise development for host communities and forcibly displaced people, with a focus on youth, women, and vulnerable groups. It also promoted enterprise development and financial inclusion by building the capacity of financial institutions, expanding access to credit and savings, and integrating financial literacy into employment and entrepreneurship programmes to help individuals start businesses, manage income, and secure livelihoods.



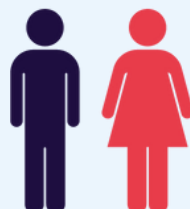
Results at a glance

- ▶ **Over 4,300 jobs were created or supported** for forcibly displaced persons and host communities, including around 1,300 individuals who accessed Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) work opportunities—generating **more than 46,000 worker days through 10 projects** such as irrigation rehabilitation, solid waste sorting, afforestation, and compost quality improvement
- ▶ The total value of EIIP-related investments is estimated **at nearly three million dollars**
- ▶ **A total of 150 staff members from nearly 40 business development and financial service providers were trained and 75 certified** on five ILO curricula
- ▶ **Over 3,000 attendees** completed training and were later coached in entrepreneurship using the Start and Improve Your Business Financial Education curricula and Think.COOP and Start.COOP tools
- ▶ **More than \$4.7 million** was leveraged through partnerships with the Central Bank, Iraqi banks, and a microfinance institution to provide **nearly 1,000 loans** to host community members and forcibly displaced entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Through the financial inclusion initiative, **around 3,000 jobs** were created or sustained.
- ▶ Support to the technical development of Iraq's National Employment Policy (NEP) 2025–2030, currently pending final government approval

Share of
people
supported



74%
Male



26%
Female

Building on Phase 1, ILO PROSPECTS Iraq Phase 2 continues advancing employment and economic inclusion by:

- ▶ Supporting the implementation of the NEP following its formal adoption
- ▶ Building capacity and providing technical support for industry associations and chambers in support of business formalization
- ▶ Expanding the Job Search Club initiative, implemented with UNICEF, to support career guidance and facilitate youth transitions into employment
- ▶ Introducing boosted career guidance with stronger linkages to TVET, universities, and private sector employers



- ▶ Mainstreaming EIIP guidelines into national public works programmes, with strengthened engagement of social partners and the scaling up of green works initiatives.
- ▶ Advocating for the financial inclusion of refugees
- ▶ Expanding capacity building interventions for commercial banks and other financial service providers to serve host communities and forcibly displaced clients, particularly start-ups
- ▶ Expanding support to business start-ups and existing MSMEs through financial and non-financial support
- ▶ Scaling up support to microfinance institutions to provide new loan products to refugees and internally displaced people
- ▶ Supporting Iraq's cooperative movement through technical assistance, including the drafting of dedicated legislation



Critical infrastructure refers to essential facilities and systems that provide basic services such as schools, youth centers, health care facilities, and water supply systems. In Iraq, many of these structures were damaged or destroyed during conflict, and their rehabilitation is key to ensuring access to shelter, WASH, education, and other essential services for both host communities and displaced populations. This pillar will be officially introduced in Phase 2 of the project.

In Phase 2, ILO PROSPECTS will:

- ▶ Introduce its Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Programme (EIIP) into WASH infrastructure development, focusing on improving sanitation services
- ▶ Launch a capacity development programme for small- and medium-scale contractors
- ▶ Apply youth capacity building and engagement in EIIP WASH interventions



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