



**RETURNING FROM ABROAD:
EXPERIENCES, NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES
OF MIGRANTS RETURNING TO IRAQ**

FINDINGS FROM A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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KEY FINDINGS

This longitudinal study followed 420 people who returned to Iraq after living abroad. They were interviewed on a recurring basis between 2020 and 2021.

MIGRATION CONTEXT

- Surveyed migrants were **relatively young**: respondents were on average 30 years old.
- The overall drivers of migration to Europe were **security** and **unemployment**, as well as the **encouragement of family or friends to join them** in the country of migration.
- A majority of respondents reported **economic challenges abroad**, such as insufficient income or lack of employment.
- Most respondents **intended to stay** permanently in Europe. The main reason for returning to Iraq was having an asylum claim rejected.

RETURN AND REINTEGRATION IN IRAQ

ECONOMIC

- Findings suggest that as time goes on after returning home from abroad, the **financial benefits of migration were not long-term** and instead offered only temporary economic relief for the sampled individuals.
- Respondents experienced **three main types of personal challenges**: insufficient income, unemployment, and to a lesser extent lack of hope for their future in Iraq (7%).
- **The main type of work of returned migrants was daily labour**, reported by one in three respondents. This was followed by house assistants (all of whom were female respondents), and self-employment.
- Among the respondents who provide for their families, over **eight in ten claimed not to have sufficient monthly income to cover basic needs**. Over half reported earning less than 250,000 Iraqi Dinar (IQD) or having no income. Over 50 per cent of returned migrants reported having borrowed money as a coping strategy.

- A large majority of respondents reported that age, the lack of connections in the community and the lack of patronage (wasta) were the main barriers to employment, as well as high levels of competition.
- The number of returned migrants who reported that they **'often' or 'very often' used coping strategies** – such as reducing food quantity – to deal with financial insecurity increased from 27 per cent in 2020 to 41 per cent in 2021.

HOUSING AND SERVICES

- **Adequate access to housing decreased** from 2020 to 2021, with almost half of respondents (45%) reported poor to very poor access to housing.
- About 1 in 5 respondents reported **poor access to documentation**.
- The vast majority have access to essential services like water, electricity, healthcare and education. However, half reported poor quality healthcare provision.

COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

- 1 in 5 of respondents reported having bad or very bad support networks (including people on whom they can rely) in their area of return.
- Similarly, **1 in 3 reported not feeling a sense of belonging in the community**. The extent of female respondents' sense of belonging fell between 2020 (78%) and 2021 (53%), while males' sense of belonging went unchanged (55%). However, the majority of those interviewed (68%) indicated never or only rarely receiving different treatment from the community due to having migrated abroad.
- Additionally, most respondents (70%) reported they

feel safe or very safe in the community. However, only 61 per cent of women reported they feel this way to walk alone during the day.

LOOKING AHEAD

- **Nearly half of all respondents indicated that they intended to migrate abroad from Iraq again** in the 6 months following the final round of data collection. When asked why they intend to migrate again, the majority cited a lack of jobs, followed by a perception of not seeing a promising future in Iraq, and lack of security.

INTRODUCTION

Migration from Iraq is multifaceted, characterized by different flows of emigration. In the post-2003 period, Iraqi nationals were mostly migrating to neighbouring countries, such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. In the following years, outgoing migration has turned towards Turkey and countries outside the region, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, as well as European countries like Germany, Greece and Finland.¹ Migration has been connected to waves of conflict-driven displacement resulting from the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988), the Gulf War (1990-1991), the US occupation of Iraq and sectarian war (2003-2011), and the armed conflict against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (2013-2017). Beyond fuelling international movements, the latter conflict also resulted in around 6 million of internally displaced people. Throughout these periods, migration has been used as a strategy to overcome economic instability, political unrest, and the lack of security, equality, and social justice in Iraq²; however, others have migrated abroad for economic, health or business reasons.

Iraqi migrants are estimated to be more than 2 million³, and return migration from abroad is an increasingly important dimension of the Iraqi migration landscape. After the end of the sectarian war and the conflict against the Islamic State, many Iraqis decided to return voluntarily. Moreover, among those who have emigrated as asylum seekers, not all of them have obtained a protection status (such as refugee status) that allows them to remain in the host country; frequently, such people are hence forced to return to Iraq. As of December 2022, approximately five million Iraqi nationals have returned from abroad.⁴ However, the exact number of Iraqi returnees is difficult to establish because not all of them have returned through programmes of assisted voluntary return and flows are thus difficult to track.

Little is known about the conditions faced by returned migrants in Iraq. Due to the lack of statistical data and research, it is not possible to have a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by nationals upon return, or their challenges of reintegrating in Iraq. This scarcity of data impacts negatively on the programming

1 The United States hosts 256,028 Iraqi migrants at mid-year 2020, while Turkey and Germany host 233,288 and 226,480 Iraqis, respectively. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020). International Migrant Stock 2020.

2 IOM. 2016. *Migration Flows from Iraq to Europe. Reasons Behind Migration*.

3 2.1 million emigrants at mid-year 2020: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020). International Migrant Stock 2020.

4 See: Diab, J. (2022). *Refugees in Iraq: An Overview*. Lebanese American University.

aimed to support returned migrants in the process of reintegration. The research presented in this report aims to fill some of these gaps by strengthening the evidence base, in order to inform strategy and planning of activities that address returned Iraq migrants' needs and vulnerabilities.

This assessment is part IOM's European Union (EU) funded project "Displacement Tracking Matrix Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (DTM REMAP)". The objective of DTM REMAP is to strengthen the formulation and implementation of humanitarian and development policy and programming on migration and forced displacement in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Pakistan through the use of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).⁵

This longitudinal study was conducted in Iraq by IOM between August 2020 and August 2021, with 420 Iraqi nationals (323 male, 107 female) who had migrated from Iraq to three European countries – Germany, Greece and Finland. After migrating to Europe, all survey participants had received support through

IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme to return to Iraq. At the time of data collection, all survey participants had returned in Iraq - most of them to their areas of origin.

A total of three rounds of the survey were conducted. Due to only minor changes being recorded across the rounds, for some indicators only findings from round 1 (August 2020) and round 3 (August 2021) are displayed in this report. This enables comparative longitudinal analysis of the experiences of returned Iraqis throughout the process of return and reintegration. The findings were developed using IOM's DTM REMAP methodology and MEASURE Framework.⁶ These standards were employed to identify the conditions and vulnerabilities of returned migrants. The findings are presented within the framework of the three dimensions of reintegration: i) economic, ii) social and iii) psychosocial aspects. The findings under each of these pillars aim to provide a better understanding of the experiences of Iraqi citizens who had migrated to one of three European countries of Germany, Greece or Finland.

5 IOM has also published a report displaying key findings from the same longitudinal study as the one on which this report is based, which was also implemented in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. See: *IOM DTM (2022). Returnee Longitudinal Survey: Summary Findings – Round 1.*

6 The Reintegration Sustainability Survey was developed in the framework of the MEASURE (Mediterranean Sustainable Reintegration) Project, which aims to foster the sustainability of reintegration support of migrants who have received assistance from IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Framework (AVRR). Refer to: *IOM and Samuel Hall (2017). Setting standards for an integrated approach to reintegration; Commissioned and funded by IOM and funded by DFID.*

METHODOLOGY

THE ANALYTICAL APPROACH: A FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

In 2017, as part of the MEASURE project⁷, IOM and Samuel Hall established a framework to guide the sustainable reintegration of migrants upon return to their country of origin. The Reintegration Sustainability Survey informs AVRRO programming that supports migrants who have returned to their area of origin. To assist the achievement of sustainable reintegration and safe and dignified return of the returned migrants, the framework highlights the importance of understanding their conditions and experiences across three dimensions.



The MEASURE Framework is based on the W Model of Experiences (displayed below), which allows for the identification of the key moments that shape returnees' experience of reintegration during 1) pre-departure, 2) departure, and 3) return. The survey questionnaire used for this assessment aligned with the W Model, with questions referring to returned migrants' experiences throughout these three stages of migration. As displayed in the diagram, while the questionnaire was designed to understand migrants' experiences before, during and after their migration to Europe, the three rounds of data collection all took place in the months and year(s) following their return. This allowed for the tracking of perceptions over the months following their return home.

A NON-LINEAR PROCESS OF REINTEGRATION

The W Model illustrates that returned migrants do not necessarily start from a low place and become more reintegrated over time, but rather they have a variety of key “up” and “down” moments over time. The high points (“up times”) represent the best times a returnee has had since his or her return, while the low points (“down times”) represent the worst times a returnee has had since his or her return. These low points are often experienced as shocks which impede their capacity to cope with return and reintegration. For example, returnees generally respond positively to the initial reintegration phase, (such as being reunited with family) but low points emerge in waves, for instance after 1-2 months and again after 5-6 months.⁸ The Integrated Approach to Reintegration⁹ aims to address the low points and build on high points in working towards their sustainable reintegration.

⁷ IOM and Samuel Hall (2017). *Setting Standards for an Integrated Approach to Reintegration*.

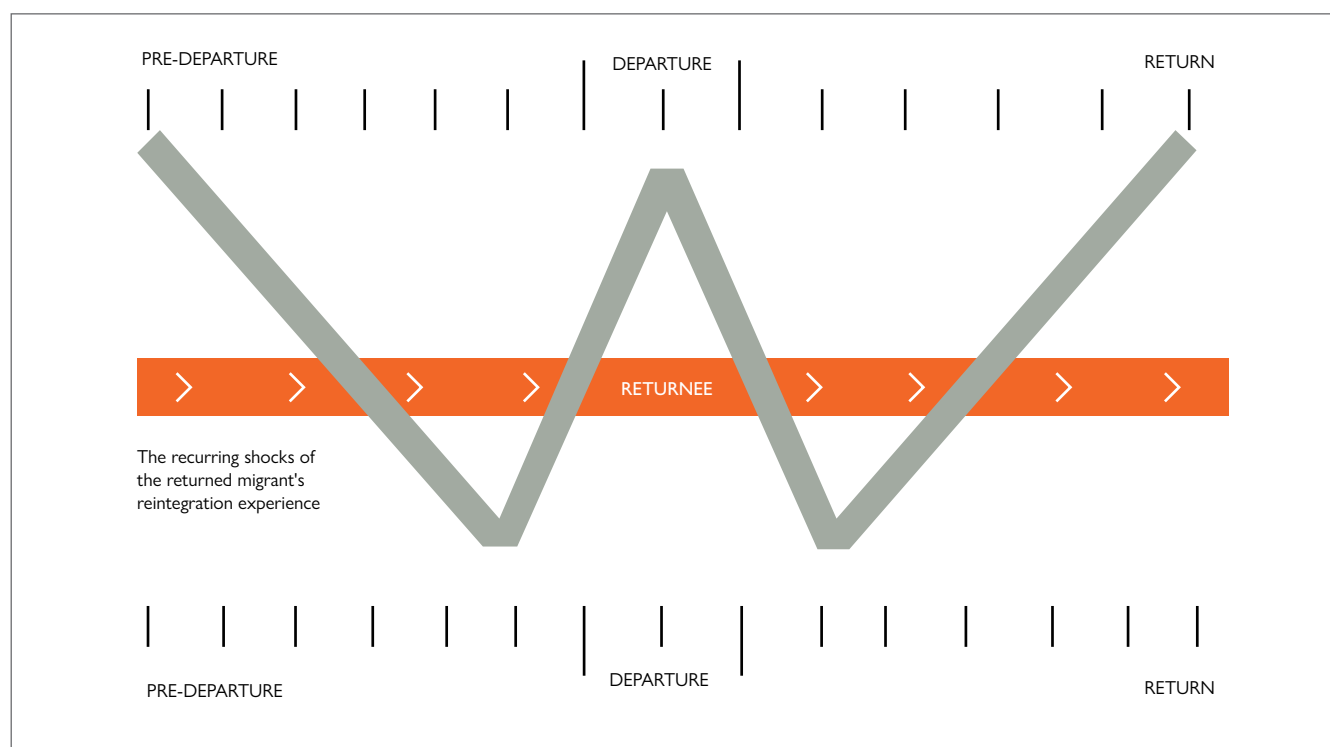
⁸ Samuel Hall, IOM. *Setting Standards for an Integrated Approach to Reintegration*.

⁹ Other IOM institutional documents on the IAR:

-*Towards an Integrated Approach to Reintegration*

-*Handbook Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance (chapter 1)*

Figure 1: The W Model of Reintegration Experiences: pre-departure, departure and return



THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

This longitudinal study was conducted by IOM Iraq between August 2020 and August 2021, with 420 Iraqi nationals (323 male, 107 female) who had migrated from Iraq to three European countries – Germany, Greece and Finland. After migrating to Europe, all survey participants had received support through IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme to return to Iraq. At the time of data collection, all survey participants were returned in Iraq - most of them to their areas of origin.

The survey took place over three rounds, starting in 1) August 2020 after their arrival in Iraq, followed by 2) January 2021 and 3) August 2021. This longitudinal study over the 12-month period allowed for the tracking of returnees living conditions, enabling the comparative analysis of the experiences of returned Iraqis throughout the process of return and reintegration. For some indicators in this report, only the first and final round of the survey are presented due to minimal changes being recorded.

Table 1: Sampling and attrition rates

Round	Date	Number of Respondents	Rate of Attrition
1	August 2020	494	
2	January 2021	467	-26 (-5%)
3	August 2021	420	-46 (-10%)

Note: Three short surveys were conducted in the months between the three in-depth surveys for the purpose of following up with the respondents and tracking their locations. The analysis in this report does not include the answers from the three short surveys due to minimal changes in the answers.

The respondents were contacted by IOM's field research teams six times: three times for an in-depth survey and three times for a short, follow-up survey to track the respondent's living conditions. In Round 1, respondents were asked about their economic situation before migration and during their stay in Europe, their motivations to migrate, as well as their reasons for returning to Iraq. Questions related to the three thematic pillars, economic, social, and psychosocial, were asked in all rounds of the study to enable comparisons across rounds.

IOM Iraq selected survey participants who had returned from Greece, Germany, and Finland, due to the high number of Iraqi nationals returning from these countries during the conception phase of the survey. Using non-probabilistic convenience sampling, IOM Iraq collected an initial sample from 494 respondents, which sample shrunk during the data collection rounds to 420 people due to attrition rates (see Table 1).

As such, only findings derived from the final 420 participants are presented in this report.

The respondents were chosen among the beneficiaries of the IOM AVR program on the basis of having migrated from Iraq in the years prior to August 2020. In the first round of data collection, nearly all of the respondents (489; 99%) had been in Iraq for more than six months before the first interview was conducted in August 2020. The remaining respondents (5; 1%) returned between four and six months prior to August 2020.

The data collection teams were 79% male and 21% female, which aligned with the sex of respondents (75% male and 25% female). Interviews with respondents were conducted via phone calls due to COVID-19-related movement restrictions and safety measures. Surveys followed an informed consent protocol that offered respondents a description of the purpose of the survey and a chance to opt-out of the study at any time.

LIMITATIONS

- Due to the non-probabilistic sampling, the findings are not representative and should be considered indicative only. The sampling method consisted of selecting returned migrants who had received

support from IOM's AVR program, which means their experience may not correlate with the wider group of migrants who have returned to Iraq from abroad without this support.

- The study is limited to a selection of Iraqi nationals who migrated to and returned from only three European countries: Greece, Germany, and Finland. Findings cannot be generalized to all migrants who have returned from these countries, nor to migrants who have returned from other countries.
- The study collected quantitative data, which limited the depth of analysis, given that migrants were not given the opportunity to provide long-form contextualized responses. This means that questions remain after this study— particularly on issues relating to causal links between migration and needs and vulnerabilities.
- All surveys were conducted over phone calls. While this was the only option at the time of data collection due to movement restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, phone surveys are generally more likely to compromise data quality compared with face-to-face surveys.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated movement restrictions and economic impacts may have influenced some of the findings, especially in relation to economic indicators, such as access to employment and income, as well as psychosocial aspects relating to community wellbeing at a time when people were avoiding social gatherings. At the same time, while the pandemic may be a contemporary anomaly, this data nevertheless reflects the lived experiences of the survey participants and is perhaps indicative of other returned migrants' experiences during this period.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

SEX AND AGE OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents included 107 female and 313 male. Nearly all of them had returned to Iraq more than six months prior to the first round of data collection taking place. The **average age of 30 years old** confirms

findings from previous studies¹⁰ showing that Iraqi returnees are a rather young population. Indeed, the oldest participant was only 40 years old (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Sex of respondents

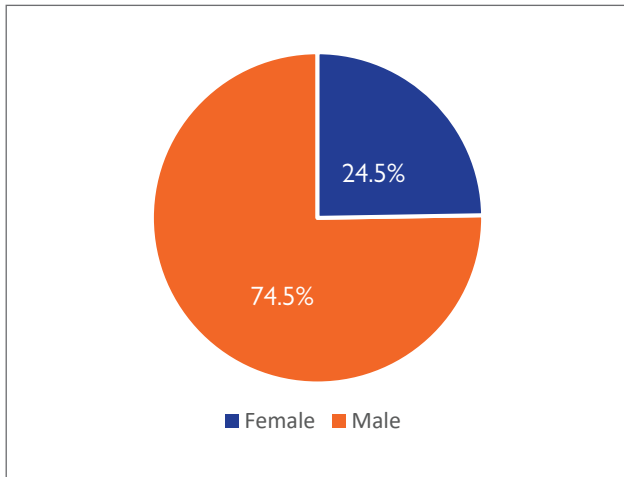
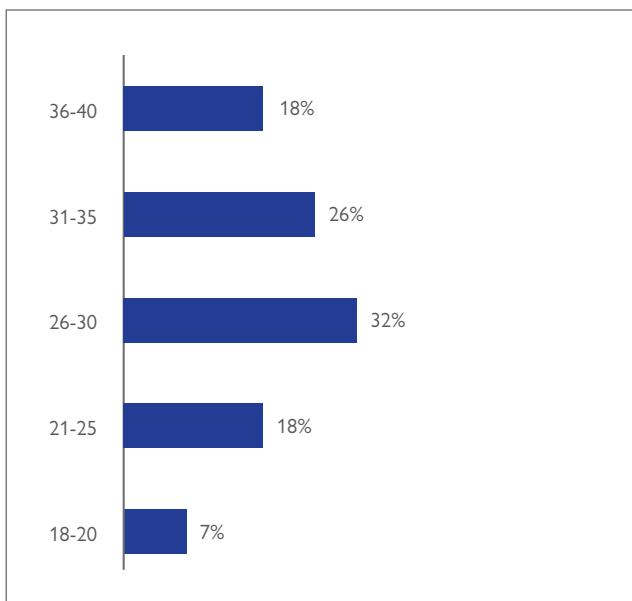


Figure3: Prevalence of age of respondent (years)



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Around two thirds of respondents were married. Over half of participants (55%) reported having children. Among these, 60 per cent have one or two children, while 40 per cent have three or more. In Anbar governorate, amongst those with children, the average number of children is four, while the average number is smaller in Babylon and Dahuk (3 children), and is even smaller in Baghdad, Diyala and Erbil (2 children).

Overall, the average number of people per household is four.

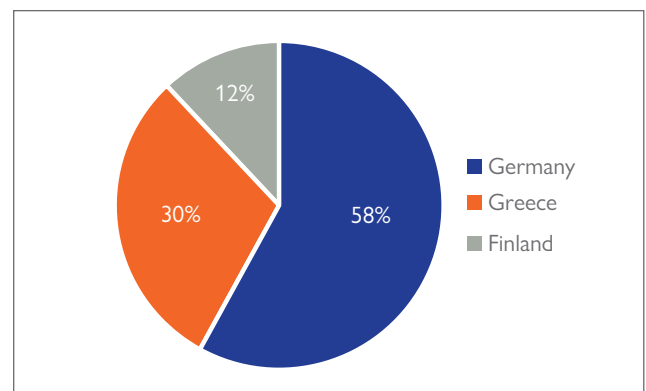
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

As for educational level, 27 per cent of respondents have completed primary education (years 1 to 6), and 27 per cent have received secondary education (years 7 to 9). Additionally, while just under half (45%) have completed high school, only 11 per cent have completed a bachelor's degree. Otherwise, 9 per cent reported not having completed any education, with under half of this group being able to read or write (4% overall).

AREAS OF ORIGIN AND COUNTRIES OF MIGRATION

The surveyed individuals had migrated to three countries in Europe – Germany, Greece or Finland. The majority of them returned from Germany (58%), a smaller percentage (30%) from Greece and the remaining participants (12%) returned from Finland.

Figure 4: Survey participants by country of migration



As for respondents' governorates of origin, most of the participants are originally from Baghdad (27%) or Dahuk (27%), followed by Erbil (18%), Sulaymaniyah (17%) and Ninewa (8%). The remaining respondents originate from the governorates of Diyala, Anbar, Babylon, Basra or Kirkuk (all under 2%).

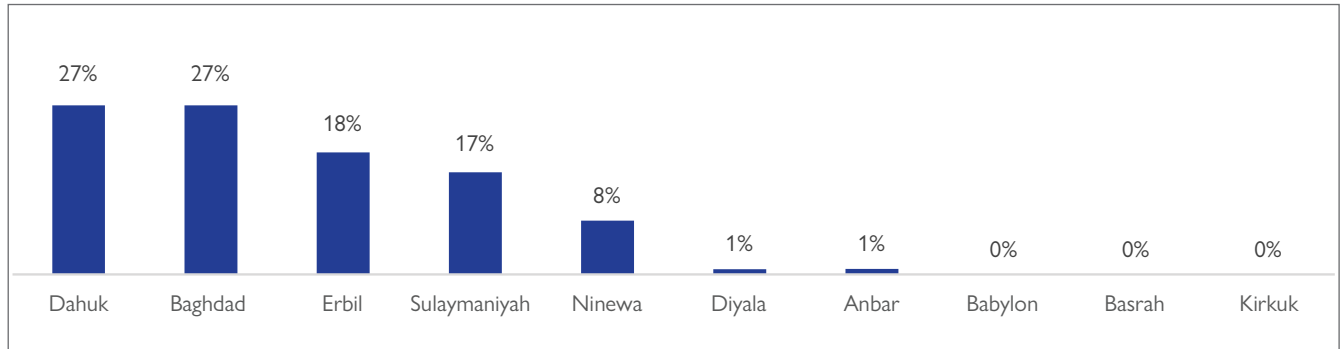
Upon return, most migrants went back to their governorate of origin, while 12 per cent of respondents returned to a different governorate. In particular, those who had migrated to Germany returned to Erbil (23%), Baghdad (22%), and Ninewa (20%). Respondents who had migrated to Greece returned to Dahuk (40%),

10 IOM (2018). Iraqi Returnees from Europe. A snapshot Report on Iraqi Nationals upon Return in Iraq.

Baghdad (21%), and Sulaymaniyah (20%). Finally, those who had migrated to Finland mostly returned to

Baghdad (58%) and Sulaymaniyah (16%).

Figure 5: Returned migrants' governorates of origin/return



RESEARCH FINDINGS

The main findings of this study fall within three thematic areas: (1) the migration experiences of returned migrants; (2) their return and reintegration experiences; (3) and their future migration aspirations.

I. THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Drivers of migration from Iraq are relatively well researched from both a macro and a micro-meso perspective. Recent literature has comprehensively outlined the main pull and push factors for Iraqi migration. This study confirms such findings and highlights that the two main drivers for migration among respondents were **security reasons** and **unemployment**. Among the different factors that have influenced Iraqis in their decision to migrate are the personal security threats experienced during the war against ISIL (2013-2017). Indeed, the majority of the respondents left Iraq between 2015 and 2018. Unemployment and insufficient income emerged as the second driver for migration.

Unwinding these figures according to the countries of migration, results show that most respondents who migrated for security reasons went to Finland and Germany, while those who migrated due to unemployment went to Greece. This difference seems to be related to the fact that Iraqi migrants seeking

asylum for reasons of security and political instability were more prone to relocate to Central and Northern European countries, like Germany and Finland, which are perceived as countries with stronger welfare laws and protection regulations. In fact, one in five respondents reported that they migrated to their country of destination due to the ease of access to asylum procedures compared with other countries. This perception was particularly high amongst those who went to Finland (46%), and to a lesser extent Germany (25%). Indeed, those who migrated to Germany and Finland did so in an earlier period (2005-2015 in Finland and 2014-2018 in Germany) when the ISIL threat was tangible. Greece, on the other hand, as a Southern European country, may have attracted those who were looking for a shorter-term and quicker solution to financial instability. Participants who migrated to Greece did so mainly during 2018 and 2019, when the security situation in Iraq was already improving.

However, Greece was also an “unwanted” country

of destination for many Iraqis. Around one in five respondents reported that they ended up in a different country of destination that was different from the one they had initially intended. This finding emerged in particular among respondents that migrated to Greece two thirds of whom never intended it to be their country of destination. Prior to the respondents travelling to Greece, Germany or Finland, 43 per cent had previously migrated to other destinations - mostly to Türkiye (30%), followed by Serbia (9%), Austria (8%), and Bulgaria (7%).¹¹

Germany and Finland are also countries where the Iraqi

diaspora has migrated in previous years and decades. This was a further driver for migration for survey respondents, as a considerable number of respondents (over 27%) mentioned as first or second reason for migration that they have followed people in their community who had left to live abroad, and that their friends or family were migrating and encouraged them to join them to leave Iraq.

Strikingly, four in five respondents reported they had intended to stay permanently in their European country of migration; yet all ended up returning to Iraq.

Figure 6: Primary reasons for migrating to the European country of destination

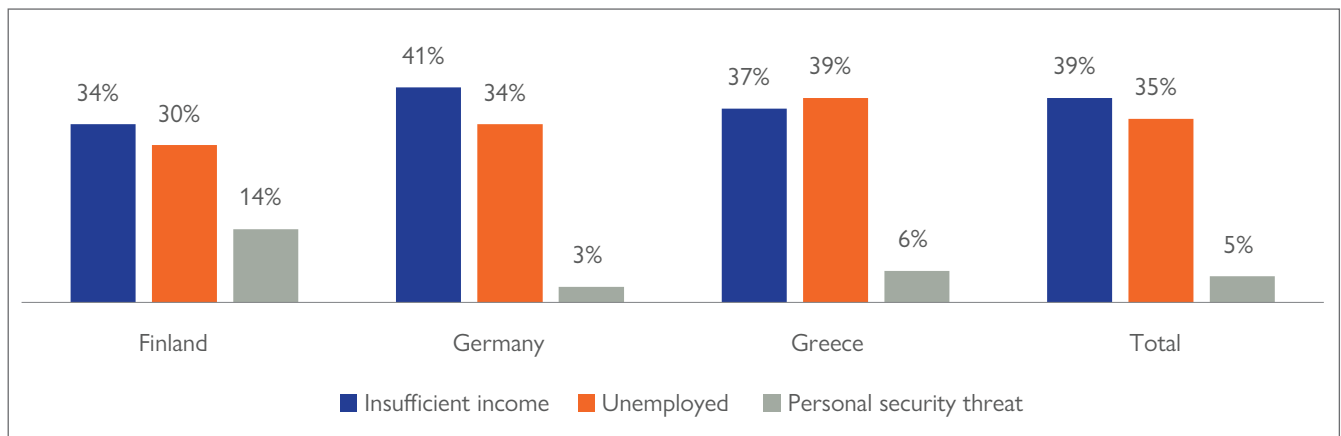
	Finland	Germany	Greece	Total
Planned to go to another country but ended up there through the migration facilitation network	6%	2%	67%	22%
Ease of access to asylum procedures compared to other countries	46%	25%	6%	22%
Relatives and/or friend(s) were there	18%	29%	4%	20%
Job opportunities	12%	13%	4%	10%
Respect for human rights	8%	8%	6%	7%
Suggested by migration facilitator	0%	5%	8%	5%
Seek safety	0%	5%	2%	4%
Medical treatment	2%	2%	2%	2%
Financial benefits	4%	2%	>1%	2%
Other	4%	8%	>1%	5%

Figure 7: Initial intended duration of stay, by country of migration

	Finland	Germany	Greece	Total
Between 1 and 3 months	0%	0%	7%	2%
Between 4 and 6 months	0%	0%	2%	1%
Between 7 months and a year	0%	2%	1%	1%
1 to 3 years	0%	2%	0%	1%
3 to 5 years	0%	1%	0%	1%
Over 5 years	2%	5%	6%	5%
Permanently	88%	87%	72%	82%
I do not know yet	10%	2%	13%	6%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%

¹¹ Respondents also previously migrated to Hungary (4%); Finland, North Macedonia, and Romania (3% each); Belgium, Netherlands, Croatia, Denmark, and Sweden (2% each); and France, Norway, Slovenia, Albania, Iceland, Spain, and Switzerland (1% each).

Figure 8: Top three challenges faced abroad, by country of migration



INCOME RECEIVED IN COUNTRIES OF MIGRATION

Respondents were also asked about their monthly average income during the final three months of their time abroad. Overall, the broad majority reported receiving a very low monthly income in the countries of migration. Around one in three respondents received less than 250 Euros (37%) a month, or between 251 and 500 Euros (36%). A smaller proportion earned between 501 and 1,000 Euros (10%), between 1,001 and 1,500 (9%), or between 1,501 and 2,000 (4%).

Notably, differences can be observed in the amount of monthly income in the final three months of their time abroad according to countries of migration. Almost all individuals (88%) who went to Greece earned under 500 Euros, and similarly in Germany 71 per cent faced this level of financial hardship. By contrast, 44 per cent of individuals who went to Finland earned under 500 Euros, while the remaining 56 per cent earned more than this amount.

Figure 9: Average monthly income during final three months abroad, by country of migration

	Finland	Germany	Greece	Total
0 – 250 EUR	16%	28%	62%	37%
251 – 500 EUR	28%	43%	26%	36%
501 – 1,000 EUR	24%	10%	4%	10%
1,001 – 1,500 EUR	16%	13%	0%	9%
1,501 – 2,000 EUR	12%	4%	0%	4%
Above 2,000 EUR	4%	0%	0%	0%
Do not want to answer	0%	0%	4%	1%
Do not know	0%	1%	3%	1%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%

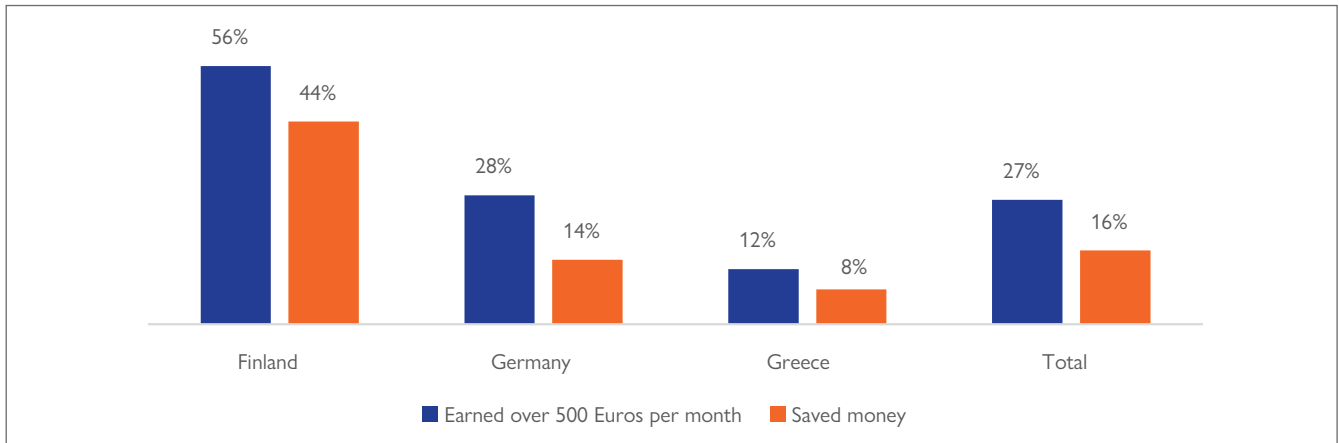
SAVING MONEY

Overall, **just 1 in 5 respondents reported** **they were able to save money while abroad,**

reflecting the financial hardship that individuals are likely to experience abroad. As displayed below, migrants who earned an average of over 500 Euros per month were far more likely to be able to save some money; 27 per cent reported earning over this amount, and 16 per

cent of this group reported having saved money. This was particularly evident in Finland – the only country where over half of the surveyed migrants earned over 500 Euros per month, with most of this group reportedly able to save some of this money.

Figure 10: Ability to save money with a monthly average income of over 500 Euros, by country of migration



EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS IN COUNTRY OF MIGRATION

Amongst all respondents, around a one in three were unemployed and searching for work while abroad, while 17 per cent were either house assistant (all females) and 17 per cent were unemployed and not searching for work. Around 1 in 10 had been earning a daily wage (11%), while eight per cent were students and unemployed.

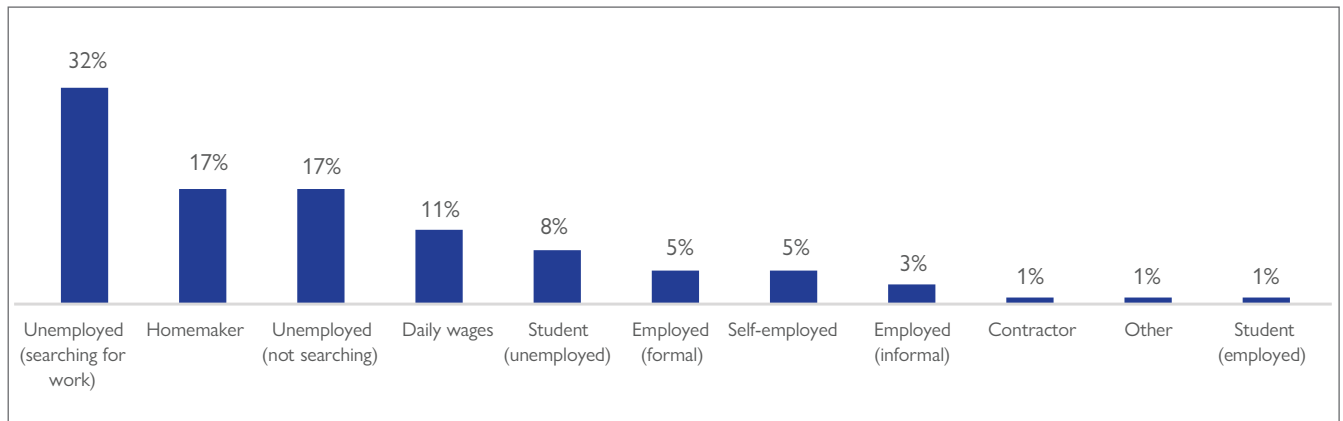
Some gendered differences can be observed in the types of employment. Unemployment rates were higher among males (39%) compared to females (12%).

In addition, all respondents who reported working as homemaker were female; notably 66 per cent of all surveyed females undertook this type of work. Otherwise, almost all who were earning daily wages were male, with this group composing 15 per cent of all surveyed males. Additionally, the majority of those who were unemployed and not looking for work were male; only (7%) of surveyed females were not looking for work.

Figure 11: Employment status in country of migration, by gender of respondent¹²

	Females	Males	Total
Unemployed (searching for work)	12%	39%	32%
Homemaker	66%	N/A	17%
Unemployed (not searching)	7%	20%	17%
Daily wages	1%	15%	11%
Student (unemployed)	8%	8%	8%
Employed (formal)	2%	5%	5%
Self-employed	1%	7%	5%
Employed (informal)	0%	4%	3%
Contractor	1%	1%	1%
Other	0%	1%	1%
Student (employed)	1%	1%	1%

Figure 12: Employment status of migrants in countries of migration



12 Figures for the proportion of female and male respondents who reported different employment statuses whilst abroad are shown, along with the overall proportion of respondents per employment status.

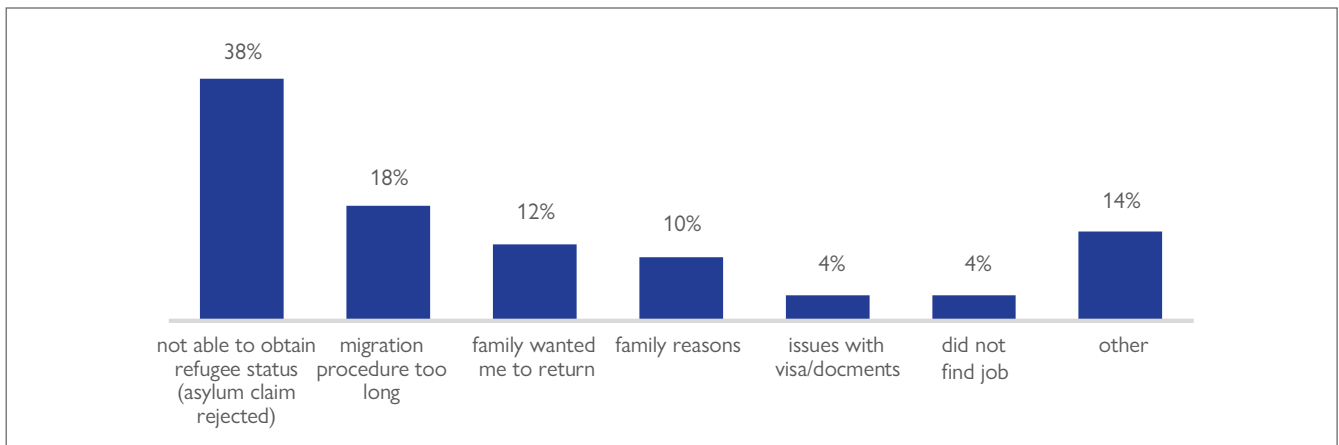
II. RETURN AND REINTEGRATION IN IRAQ

REASONS FOR RETURN

All respondents were asked why they decided to return to Iraq from the country of migration. By far, the main reason for returning was due to claims for asylum being rejected by authorities, reported by 38 per cent of respondents. The next most common problem related to the migration procedures being too long (18%), followed by the family wanting them to return (12%), or other family reasons (10%). Challenges

linked to visas/documents, or not finding a job, were reported at smaller rates (both 4%). A minor number of respondents reported other, unspecified reasons, including cultural customs/norms considered to be better in Iraq (3%), passing of a family member (3%), security situation improving in Iraq (1%), as well as the fact that life is more affordable in Iraq, or obtained citizenship in Europe (both under 1%).

Figure 13: Primary reasons to return to Iraq



RETURNEES' REINTEGRATION: EXPERIENCES, NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES

To understand the conditions faced by migrants upon their return to Iraq, in this section, findings are presented in line with the three dimensions of the Reintegration Sustainability Survey. As outlined in the opening section of this report, the framework is centred on highlighting

returnees' self-evaluation of their own situations as they reintegrate in Iraq. These factors are categorized under the three pillars of 1) economic, 2) social, and 3) psychosocial dimensions of returned migrants' experiences during the process of reintegration.

ECONOMIC PILLAR

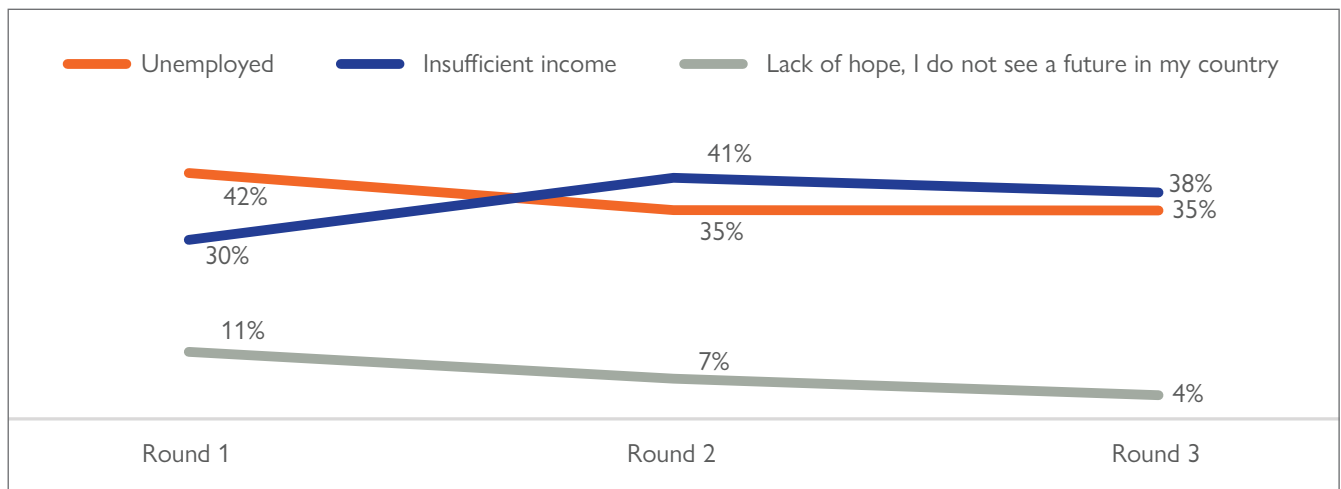
PERSONAL CHALLENGES

Overall, a large majority of returned migrants (almost eight in ten respondents) reported having faced personal challenges at a financial level after returning in Iraq from migration. A consistent number of them also faced challenges at a household level (six in ten respondents). Confronting these figures with the geographical area of return it is possible to notice that the percentage of those who faced challenges remained stable (between 65% and 80% of respondents in the main return governorates faced challenges). However, results show that all beneficiaries who returned to a governorate different than the one they lived before migration faced

some kind of personal or family challenge.

Whilst returning from abroad, respondents experienced three main types of personal challenges: insufficient income (36%), unemployment (37%), and to a lesser extent lack of hope and difficulty to see a future in Iraq (7%). As displayed in Figure 1 below, there were little changes in the three rounds for the three challenges. The only variables which saw a slight decrease were “insufficient income” – which went from 38% and 41% to 30% in the third round – and “lack of hope” which decreased from 11% in Round 1 to 4% in Round 3.

Figure 14: Top three personal challenges across the three rounds



Noticeably, if all the challenges related to financial hardship (unemployment, insufficient income, debts, no money for personal expenses, etc.) are merged, a large majority of respondents in the three rounds of data collection (over seven in ten respondents) claimed they have been impacted negatively. **This means that**

financial insecurity remains the main challenge for most returnees. This evidence is even more prominent at a family level, where eight respondents out of ten reported having faced challenges at a familial level such as lack of livelihood opportunities, household being in debt and not having money for household expenses.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Respondents were asked about the specific circumstances of their economic situation upon return. They were asked about their employment status after

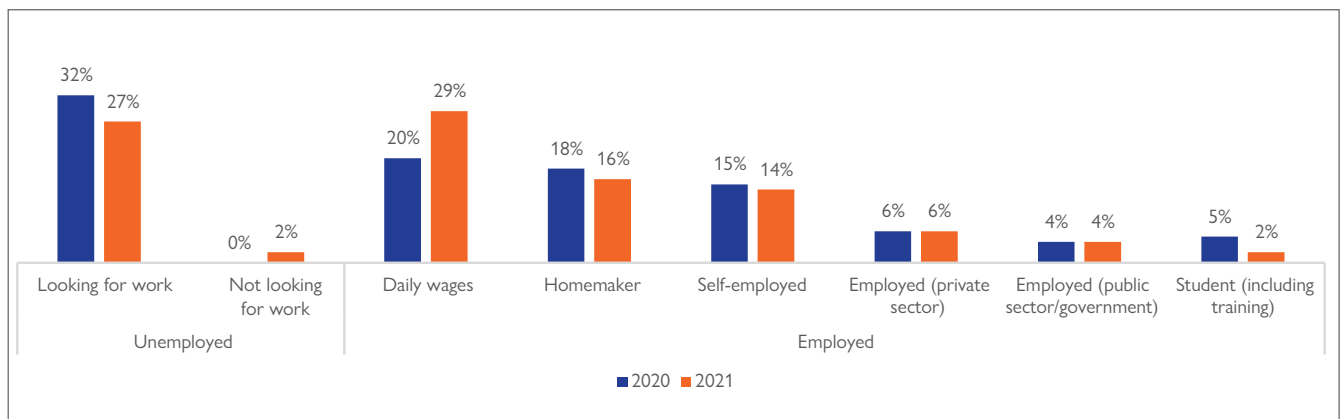
returning from migration as well as their household's monthly their income.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AFTER RETURNING FROM MIGRATION

Respondents were asked about their employment situation after returning to Iraq from Finland, Germany and Greece. As displayed in Figure 15 below, in 2021, **29 per cent of returned migrants reported being unemployed** – with 27 per cent searching for work and 2 per cent not searching for work. Amongst those who were employed (71% overall),

the main types of work were reported as daily wages, followed by homemaker (16%; all of whom were female respondents), and self-employed (14%). Only minor changes were recorded in the employment status of respondents between 2020 and 2021, with daily wage work being the main exception, jumping nine percentage points to 29 per cent.

Figure 15: Employment status of returned migrants, 2020 vs. 2021



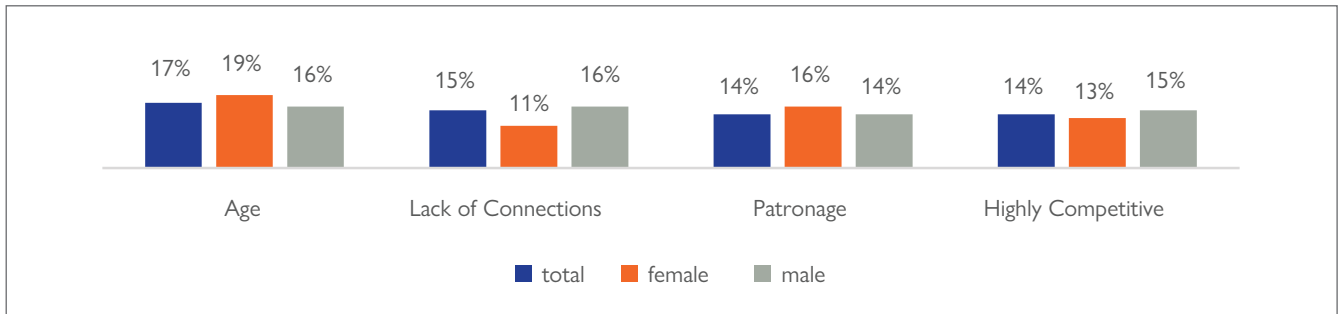
Respondents were asked a related question on the barriers they faced in finding employment. Amongst all respondents, the most common challenge relates to the respondents' age¹³ (17%), the lack of connections in the community (15%), a lack of patronage (*wasta* in Arabic)¹⁴, which increased from 33% of August 2020 to 44% of August 2021. The second most prominent barrier was reported to be the high level of competition to find jobs limiting job opportunities, which also in-

creased significantly across rounds of data collection (from 23% in August 2020 to 43% in August 2021). As displayed in Figure 16 below, the types of barriers faced rarely vary by sex of respondent. The only exception to this were challenges stemming from a lack of connections, with 11 per cent of females and 16 per cent of males reporting this as a barrier to employment.

13 This may be related to the fact that the sampled group was relatively young (below 40 years old). It also could be related to the fact that it is common for public sector jobs in Iraq to be held by an older population; however, this is an inferred possibility and not a firm conclusion.

14 "Wasta" refers to systems whereby individuals or groups may be preferred above others due to family or other personal connections, in this case in relation to assistance with acquiring a job.

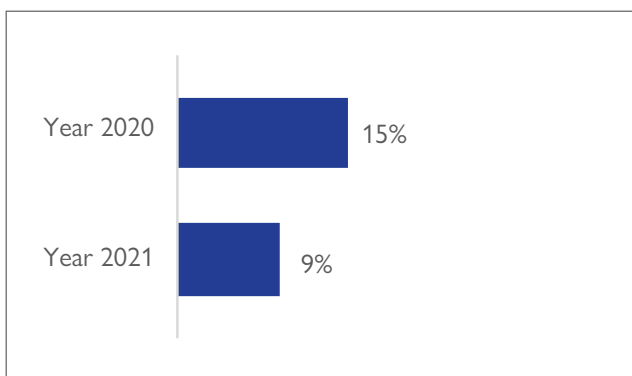
Figure 16: Main barriers to finding employment (top 3), by sex of respondent



HOUSEHOLD MONTHLY INCOME

Respondents reported a significantly concerning economic situation. **Over eight in ten reported to not have sufficient monthly income to provide for their basic needs.** Indeed, over half of this group reported earning less than 250,000 Iraqi Dinar (IQD) or having no income. In August 2021, only 38 respondents (9%) reported receiving a sufficient income, representing a decrease by third since August 2020 (15%). They were asked whether their economic situation had improved in the past six months. Almost seven in ten respondents claimed that their situation did not improve and almost three in ten respondents claimed that it remained the same.

Figure 17: Percentage of returned migrants reporting receiving sufficient income to meet their family’s basic needs, 2020 vs. 2021

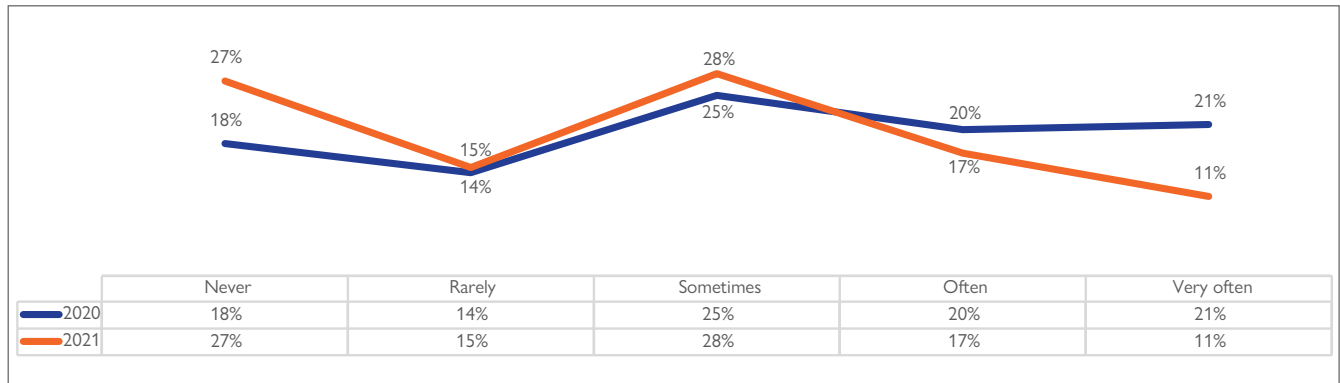


COPING STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO FINANCIAL STRESS

Respondents were asked about negative coping strategies related to their financial situation as they undergo the process of reintegration. This section included a question on whether they had reduced their food consumption deal with financial insecurities and other environmental circumstances as the rising food prices¹⁵ – during the six months prior to data collection; they were also asked if they borrowed money to meet basic needs. Concerningly, the proportion of returned migrants who reported reducing food consumption increased from 27 per cent in 2020 to 41 per cent in 2021. As displayed below, the increase in the proportion of respondents who reported that they ‘very often’ decreased the amount of food they purchased was especially high - more than doubling from 10 to 21 per cent between 2020 to 2021.

15 Following the devaluation of the Iraqi dinar in December 2020, the prices of essential food commodities increased. When comparing April 2022 prices with November 2020, a 131 percent increase was observed in vegetable oil prices while wheat flour prices increased by 40 percent in Iraq. WFP. Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 31: March 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-market-monitor-report-issue-no-31-march-2022>.

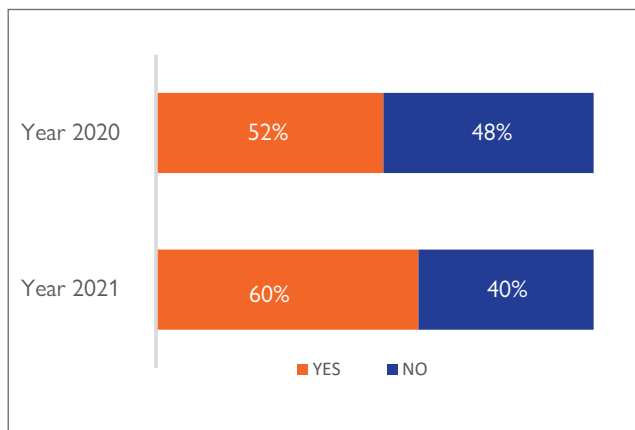
Figure 18: Percentage of respondents reporting reducing quantity of food purchased due to its cost in the six months prior to data collection, 2020 vs. 2021



Respondents were also asked an additional question on whether they had borrowed money in order to cover monthly expenses in the six months prior to data collection. In August 2020, 52 per cent of the returned migrants reported having borrowed money, which then increased to 60 per cent in August 2021. While this is not a significant increase, the indicators below related to the extent and frequency of borrowing money show a more concerning picture (refer to *Saving money* findings in the *Analysis: migration* section above).

In both 2020 and 2021, respondents who reported having borrowed money were asked follow-up questions on the amount of money borrowed, as well as the frequency at which they borrowed it in the six months prior to data collection. Overall, a significant increase took place in the average amount of Iraqi Dinar (IQD) borrowed amongst all respondents, jumping from 2.1 million to 3.2 million – amounting to a 51 per cent increase.¹⁶ While an insufficient number of surveys were conducted in order to rely on most governorate level findings, a notably high percentage increase was recorded (between 2020 and 2021) in the amount borrowed amongst returnees in Dahuk (+140%) along with Baghdad (+65%).¹⁷ Refer to Figure 20 below, which displays the average amount of money reportedly borrowed by respondents, disaggregated by the governorates to which they have returned.¹⁸

Figure 19: Percentage of returned migrants who reported borrowing money in the six months prior to data collection in order to cover monthly expenses, 2020 vs. 2021



16 Regarding the value of Iraqi dinar (IQD), the average exchange rate to American dollars (USD) in 2020 was 1,197, while it increased to 1,460 in 2021. Refer to: Exchange Rates (2020 and 2021). Exchange Rates: US Dollar to Iraqi Dinar Spot Exchange Rates for 2020 and 2021. See: <https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/Dollars-to-Iraqi-Dinar-currency-conversion-page.html>

17 As outlined in the demographic section of this report, the broad majority of respondents have returned to their area of origin across 5 governorates: Baghdad (109); Dahuk (100); Erbil (73); Sulaymaniyah (71); and Ninewa (54). In all other governorates of return, only five or fewer respondents were surveyed, making it impossible to draw indicative conclusions from governorate-level findings

18 Findings are only shown for the governorates where a sufficient number of surveys were conducted.

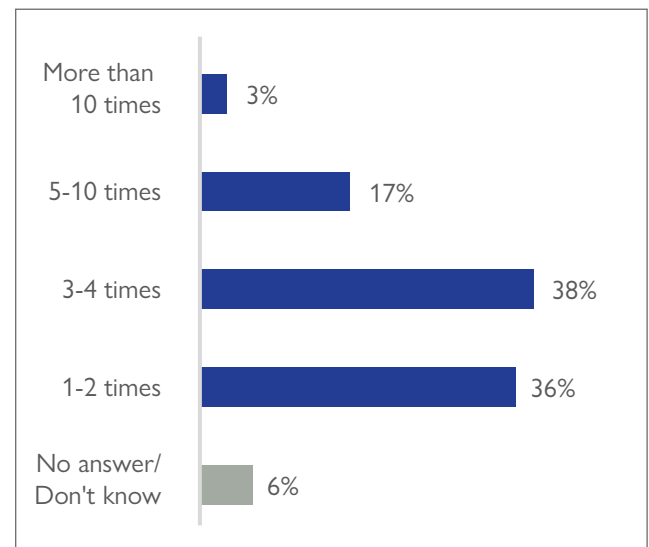
Figure 20: Change in the amount of money borrowed in the six months prior to data collection to meet basic needs, by governorate of return, 2020 vs. 2021

	2020		2021		Percentage increase
Baghdad	IQD1,833,553	\$1,256	IQD3,016,379	\$2,066	65%
Dahuk	IQD3,335,577	\$2,285	IQD8,000,000	\$5,479	140%
Erbil	IQD4,504,079	\$3,085	IQD2,500,000	\$1,712	-44%
Ninewa	IQD1,733,333	\$1,187	IQD2,960,595	\$2,028	71%
Sulaymaniyah	IQD4,227,451	\$2,896	IQD1,000,000	\$685	-76%
Overall	IQD2,148,221	\$1,471	IQD3,254,210	\$2,229	51%

These findings suggest that migrants are generally likely to resort to borrowing more money the longer they spend at their home country since their experience of migration abroad. As such, findings show that **as time goes on after returning home from abroad, the financial benefits of migration were not long-term and instead offered only temporary economic relief** for the sampled individuals.

The final indicator in this section refers to the frequency of borrowing – that is, the number of occasions that returned migrants reported having borrowed money in the six months prior to data collection. It should be noted that these findings refer to the households listed in the above two sections, who reported borrowing money during the same recall period. As displayed below, just over a third of respondents reported having borrowed money either 1-2 times (36%) or 3-4 times (38%) in the previous six months, while two in ten respondent reported borrowing five or more times during this period.

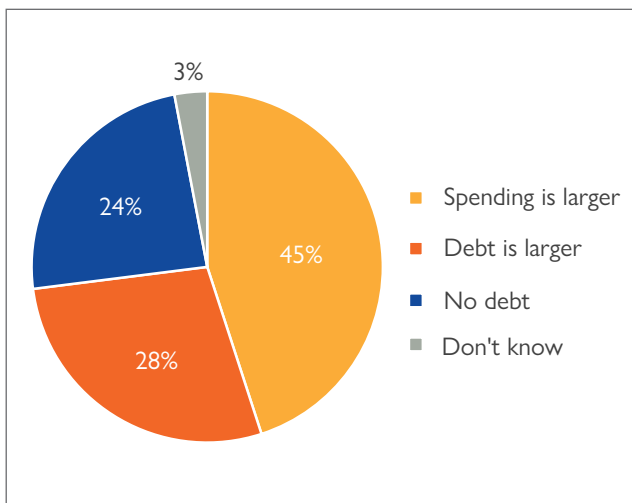
Figure 21: Percentage of returned migrants reporting frequency of borrowing money in the six months prior to data collection (2021), over one year after returning to Iraq from abroad



DEBT STATUS

A further indicator to understand the economic conditions faced by returned migrants relates to debt status, which is linked to the previous indicator on rates of borrowing. In 2021, **almost half of all returned migrants (45%) reported that the amount they spend on daily living expenses amounts to more than their accumulated debt.** Additionally, almost three in ten respondents indicated that their debt is larger than spending, while only a small number (24% of respondents) do not possess any debt. No significant changes were recorded between 2020 and 2021. This aligns with the above findings, suggesting that returned migrants find it difficult to get ahead financially as they reintegrate, despite potentially having received a (limited) financial boost whilst abroad. Refer to Figure 22 below.

Figure 22: returned migrants reporting that the amount they spend on daily living expenses amounts to more than their accumulated debt



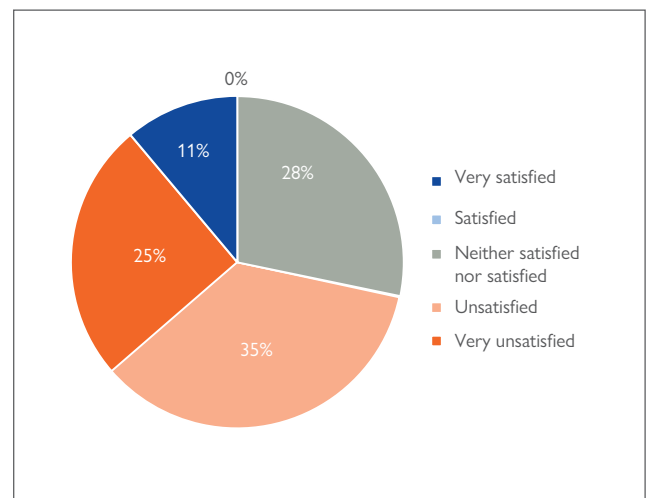
SOCIAL PILLAR

In line with the Reintegration Sustainability Survey, the social component of this survey included questions related to healthcare, housing, civil documentation, legal

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH ECONOMIC SITUATION

Throughout the 3 rounds of data collection, there was not a notable difference among the respondents' satisfaction with their economic situation. In 2021, during the final round of data collection for this survey, **negative levels of satisfaction heavily outweighed high levels of satisfaction.** While 11 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied, the majority were unsatisfied (35%) or very unsatisfied (25%). This broad economic discontent represents a significant concern in relation to the wellbeing of returned migrants and poses risks to the wellbeing of themselves and their families. However, it is important to note that this survey did not explore whether returned migrants face better or worse economic conditions than those who did not migrate.

Figure 23: Level of satisfaction with the economic situation



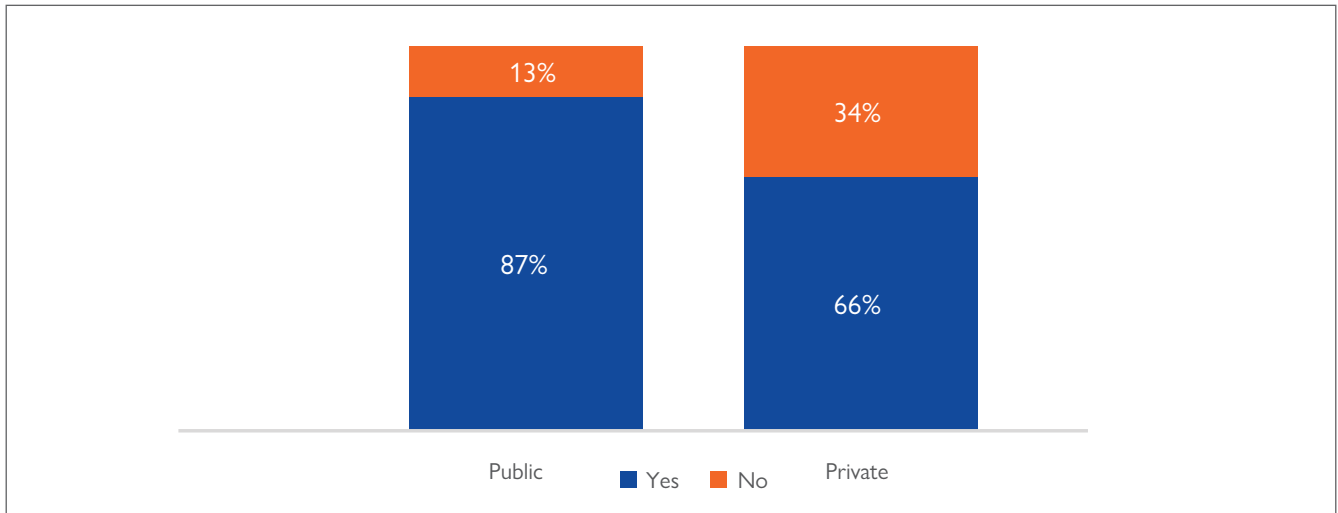
services, and perceptions of corruption. This section presents key findings across each of these areas.

HEALTHCARE

Overall, nearly nine in ten respondents reported having access to public health care¹⁹. However, a

much lower proportion (34%) of respondents reported being able to access private healthcare.

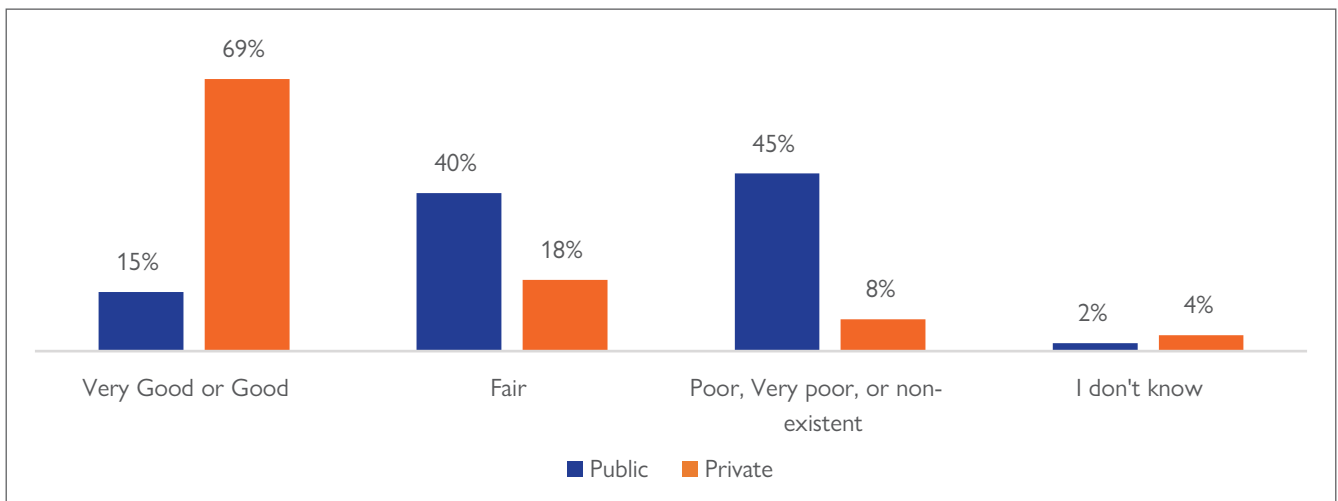
Figure 24: Percentage of respondents reporting being able to access public vs. private healthcare



The relatively small proportion of households who reported not having access to public healthcare reported that top barriers to access it were due to facilities being too far away, or an insufficient number of skilled doctors present in the community.

Respondents reported poor perceptions of public healthcare, with nearly half reporting either poor or very poor quality, or that it was non-existent. Seven in ten respondents reported that private health care is of sufficient quality (good or very good).²⁰

Figure 25: Percentage of respondents reporting perceived quality of public and private healthcare



19 For public healthcare, male respondents (88%) were slightly more likely to report having access to it compared with female respondents (84%).

20 Responses did not differ significantly according to the sex of respondent.

All respondents (99%) reported that they have consistent access to safe drinking water. The types of clean water sources include running water through

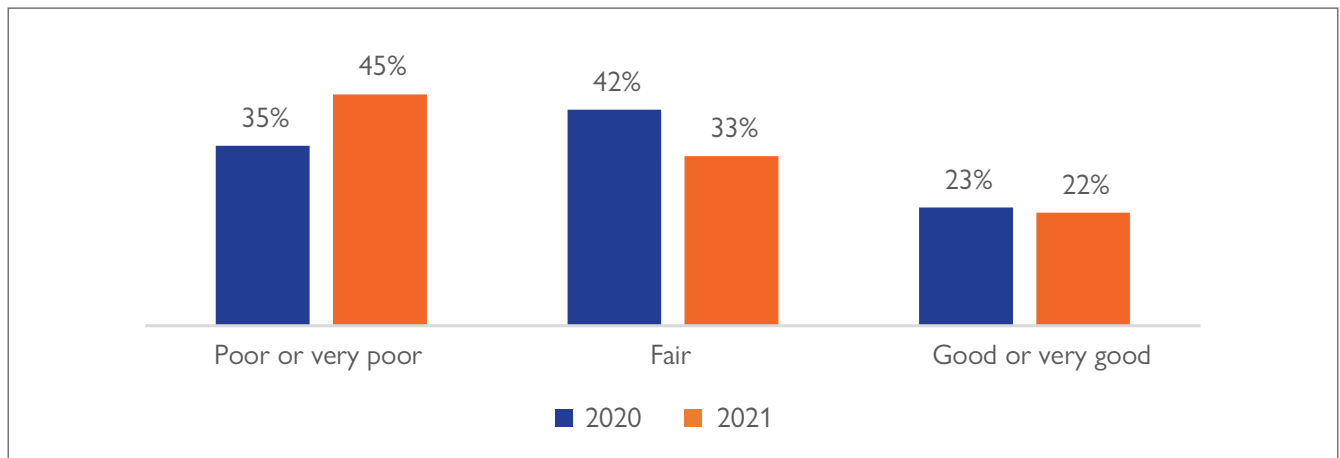
the public water network, with many opting to use a filtration system at home, while others rely on delivered water.

HOUSING

In 2021, around half of respondents reported that access to housing 'fair' or better. Concerningly, the remaining **45 per cent of households reported having**

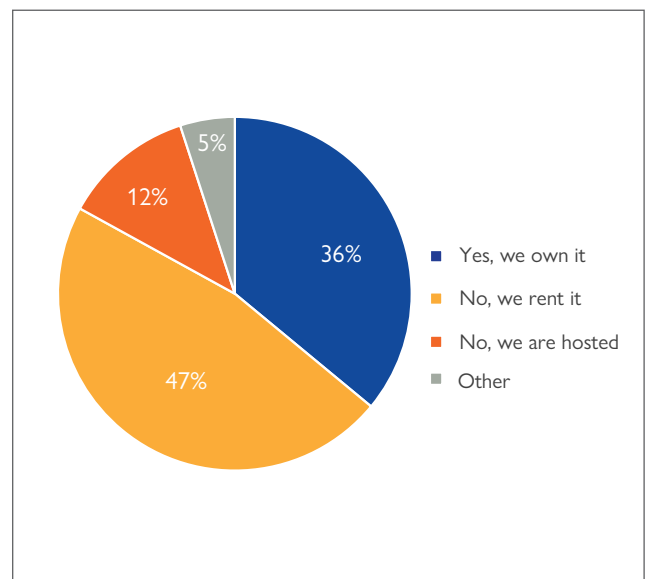
either poor or very poor access to housing – representing a sharp increase from 2020, when 35 per cent reported this was the case.

Figure 26: Percentage of respondents reporting level of access to housing in the community, 2020 vs. 2021



Additionally, the status of home ownership varied across respondents. In 2020, 36 per cent reported that they own accommodation they were living in, while 47 per cent and 12 per cent respectively reported renting or being hosted by another family. The remaining five per cent reported other types of living arrangements which were not specified.²¹ These findings are displayed below in Figure 27.

Figure 27: Percentage of respondents reporting home ownership status of current place of residence



Renting a home presents a significant vulnerability for these returnees. Consider that almost 80% reported that their income was insufficient to afford basic needs, and that 41% have resorted to decreasing their food purchases in order to save money in 2021. Rent likely represents a significant financial burden on returnees experiencing these difficulties, a likelihood that heightens their vulnerability to future shocks and threatens sustainable access to shelter. Indeed, throughout this study, an increasing number of returnees reported that their access to housing was poor or very poor.

²¹ Data for this indicator from 2021 is not available, due to the questionnaire for this section changing. However, in 2021, respondents were asked if their home ownership status changed in the previous year, with 9% reporting this was the case. Amongst this relatively small subset of the respondents, 61% reported they are now renting, while 22% reported now being hosted, and 17% now owning a home.

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

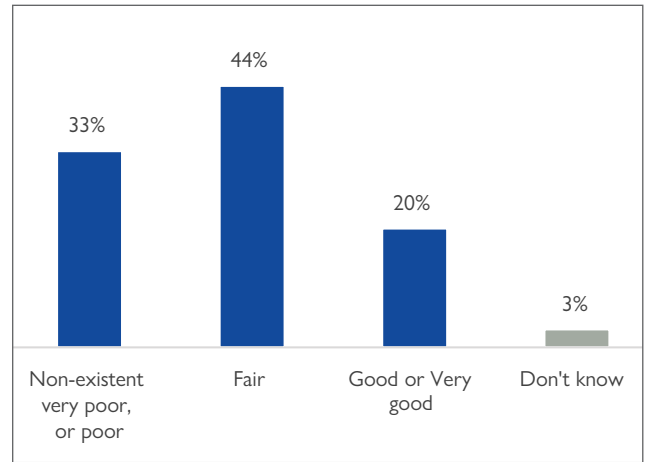
On the question of whether respondents can obtain civil documentation (e.g., ID cards or birth certificates), most respondents reported that level of access to civil documentation is either fair or better. **However, around one in five reported that access to this documentation is very poor or poor (18%).**

Access to civil documentation, and therefore to legal identity, is an inalienable right of everyone to be recognized before the law as a person and it is enshrined in Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous international human rights instruments.²² Civil documentation is essential for a number of protection concerns, including access to rights and services, such as education, healthcare, labour market, financial services, etc. It is especially important in relation to documentation of births, marriages, and deaths. For instance, children can be at risk of lacking timely birth registration to confirm their nationality and therefore be at risk of statelessness. It is also important for the recognition of marriages occurred abroad, or for matters of property inheritance. For returnees who are struggling financially to meet their basic needs, lack of documentation becomes a barrier to receiving other forms of support, multiplying their vulnerabilities for issues like healthcare, livelihoods, and freedom of movement.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

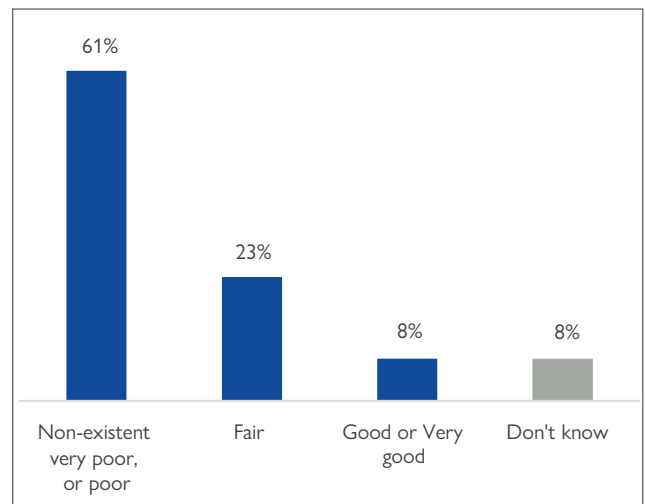
Respondents were also asked about the quality of the justice system in their community. One in three returnees (33%) reported that justice systems were poor, very poor, or non-existent.²³ No major differences were recorded between the sex of respondents.

Figure 28: Percentage of respondents reporting perceived quality of the justice system in the community



The final question under the social pillar relates to perceptions surrounding efforts to reduce corruption in the community. Concerningly, the majority of respondents reported that such efforts are either non-existent, very poor, or poor (61%) – representing one of the most negative findings of this study.

Figure 29: Percentage of respondents reporting there are efforts to reduce corruption in the community



22 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 6 and 15; 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, Articles 25 and 27; 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons, Articles 25 and 27; 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, Articles 1-4; 1965; 1969 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5(d)(iii); 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 24; 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Article; 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 7-8; 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers

23 2% reported it was non-existent

PSYCHOSOCIAL PILLAR

The third and final pillar under the Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS) relates to psychosocial conditions after return. This section covers the extent to which returned migrants in Iraq enjoy strong support

networks; community activities; a sense of belonging; as well as perceptions of safety and security, including perceived threats of conflict or attacks.

SUPPORT NETWORKS

The first indicator in this section refers to returned migrants' support networks in their area of return, including perceptions of whether they can rely on their community. As shown in Figure 30 below, only minimal changes were recorded between 2020 and 2021.

who increasingly reported that they had a bad or very bad ability to rely on their community. Strikingly, those who reported this change had previously reported that they had good or very good community support (and not a 'fair' amount).

However, a change occurred for female respondents,

Figure 30: Feeling of support and ability to rely on the community, 2020 vs. 2021

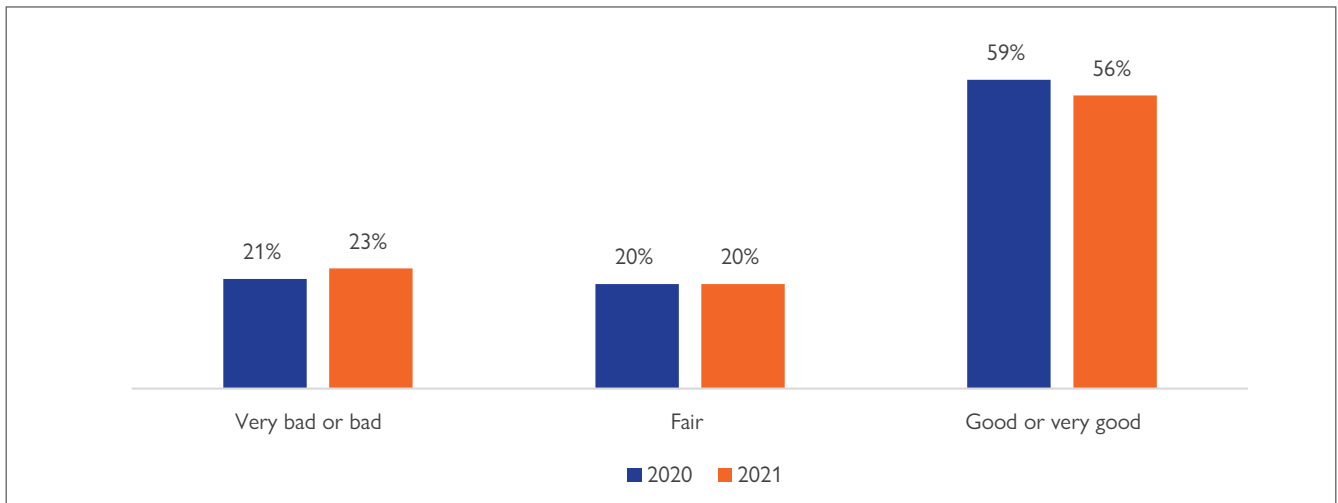
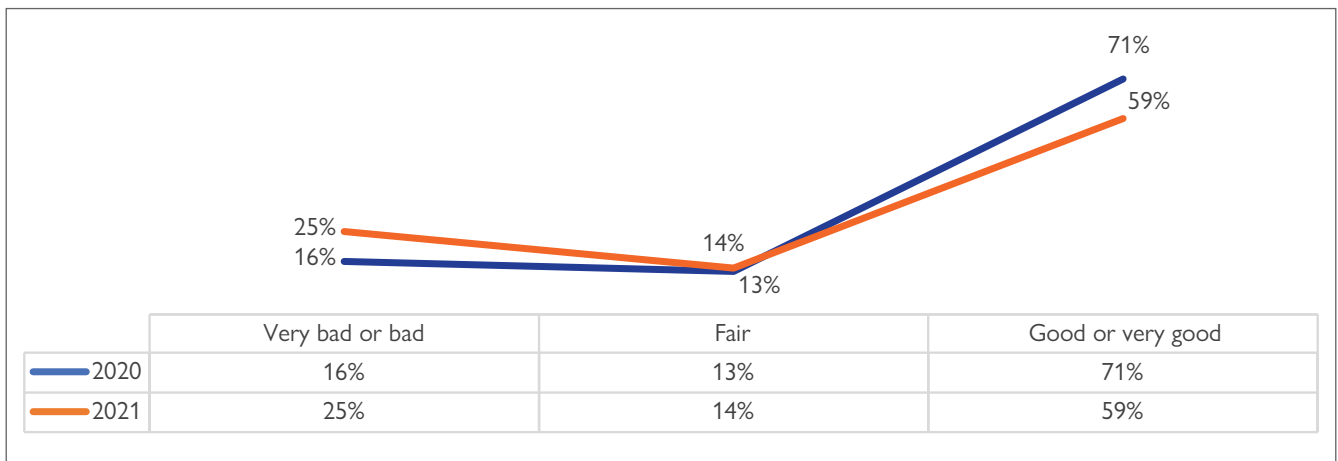


Figure 31: Feeling of support and ability to rely on the community, 2020 vs. 2021, female respondents

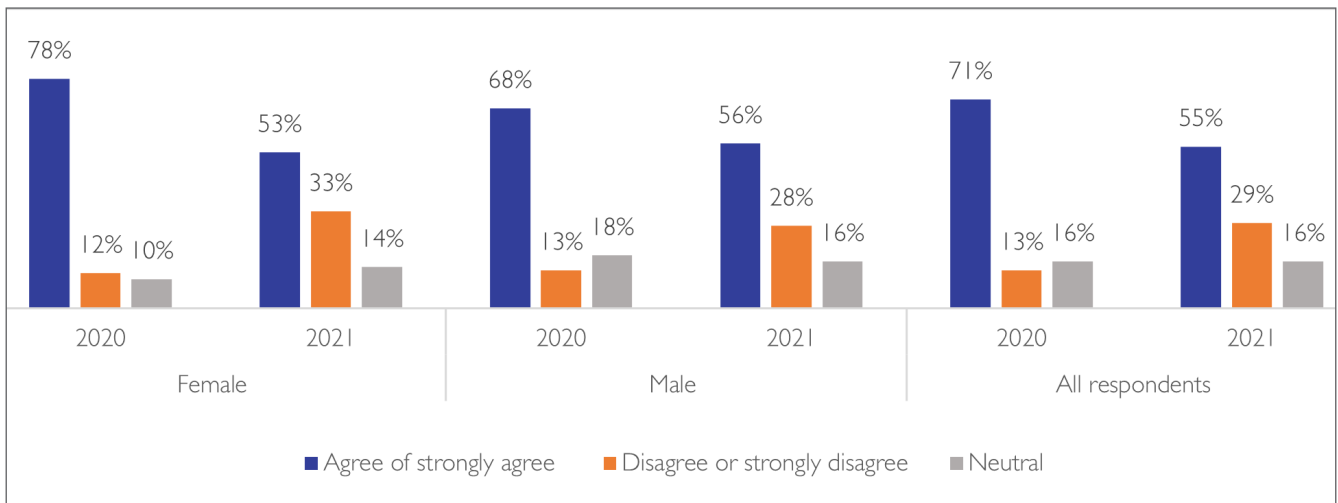


FEELING OF BELONGING

Respondents were also asked about the extent to which they feel a sense of belonging in the community – an important measurement of connectedness and personal wellbeing. Concerningly, between 2020 and 2021, respondents reported **an increase in feelings of alienation from the community** – increasing from 12 per cent to 29 per cent. Unlike other sex-disaggregated indicators, this increase in a negative feeling of belonging applied to both female and male respondents, with

females most likely to report this negative outcome between 2020 and 2021, increasing from 12% to 33%. This may be explained by feelings of alienation amongst the return migrant community the longer they spend reintegrating in their area of origin – especially in cases where they intend to migrate overseas again (which the majority report is the case; refer to the Movement intentions after returning from Europe section above).

Figure 32: Percentage of respondents reporting the feeling of belonging in the community, 2020 vs. 2021, by the sex of respondent

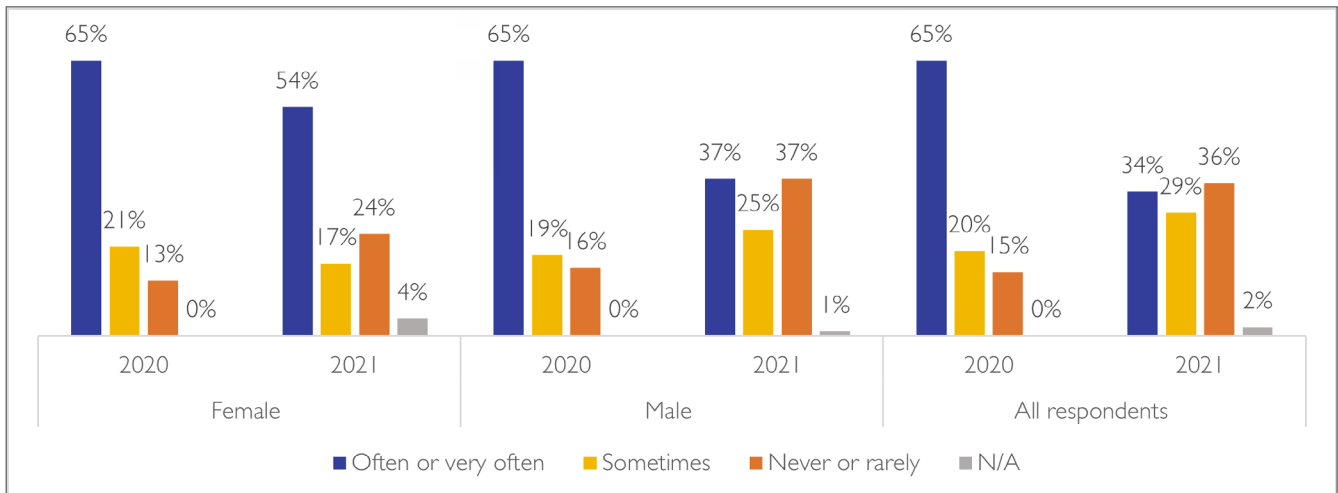


COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The third indicator in this section refers to the frequency at which respondents are invited to social activities such as celebrations or weddings in the community. Notably, the overall proportion of respondents reporting they are never, or only rarely, invited to such events increased significantly between 2020 (15%) and 2021 (36%), with a major decline in “often” or “very often” receiving such invitations from 65 per cent to 34 per cent. This may have also been impacted by restrictions that were imposed as a consequence of Covid pandemic.

As displayed in Figure 33 below, while the rates of females reporting “often/very often” being invited dropped between 2020 and 2021 (65% to 54%), males were most likely to report this was the case – almost halving from 65 per cent to 37 per cent. As with the previous indicator on feelings of belonging, this speaks to the broader issue of alienation and disconnectedness at home that migrants are likely to face after returning from an extended period abroad.

Figure 33: Percentage of respondents reporting frequency of being invited to participate in social activities in the community, 2020 vs. 2021, by the sex of respondent

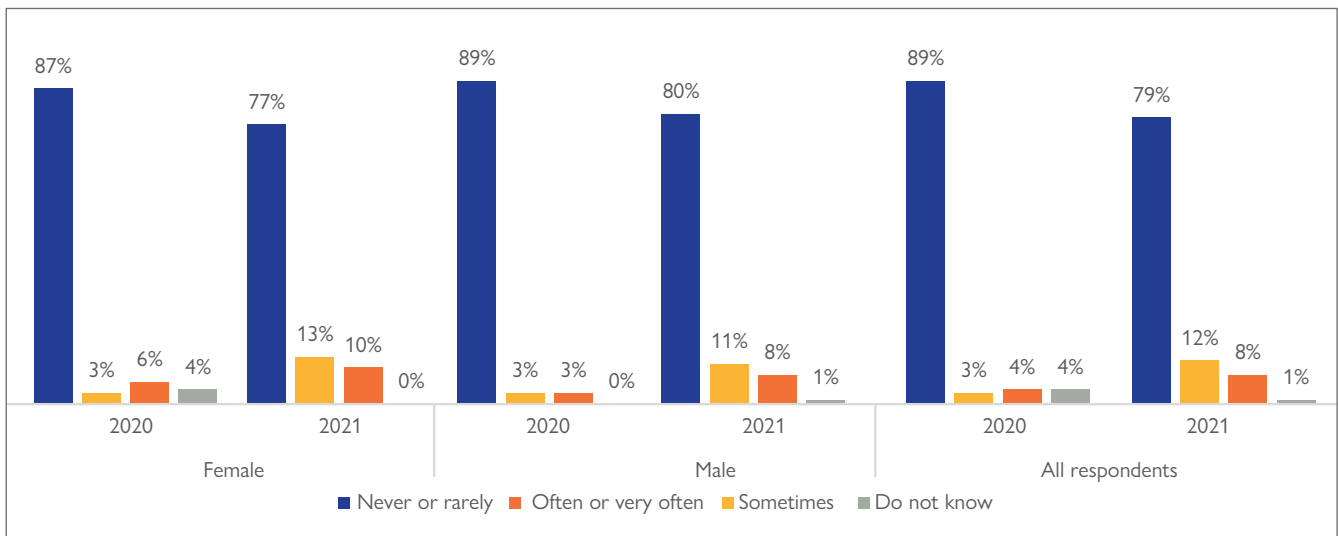


TREATMENT BY THE COMMUNITY

Respondents were also asked a question on whether they feel that they are treated differently by the local community in the past six months due to having migrated abroad. Respondents indicated they do not feel as though they are treated differently for this reason (79%). However, a marked decrease is observed compared with 2020 (89%), suggesting that as time

goes on, returned migrants may be more likely to feel negatively treated due to having migrated abroad. The same applied to both female and male respondents, with negative treatment reported at higher rates in 2021 compared with 2020. These findings are displayed in the chart below.

Figure 34: Percentage of respondents reporting frequency of being treated differently by the community due to having migrated abroad, 2020 vs. 2021, by the sex of respondent



SAFETY AND SECURITY

The final indicators in this section relate to perceptions of safety and security in the community. The findings in this section relate to the perceptions of safety across different groups; as well as the frequency that respondents feel threatened or unsafe.

Firstly, respondents were asked whether they consider themselves as well as their household members to be safe. The broad majority of respondents reported that they personally feel safe in the community (70%), with the same applying to their household members

feeling safe (70%). Otherwise, around two out of three respondents (65%) indicated that the wider community is generally safe, while 70 per cent of respondents suggested that men are safe to walk in the community after 11pm, and 63 per cent indicated that women are safe to walk around the community during the day. Only minor differences were recorded between male and female respondents, and only marginal changes were recorded between 2020 and 2021.

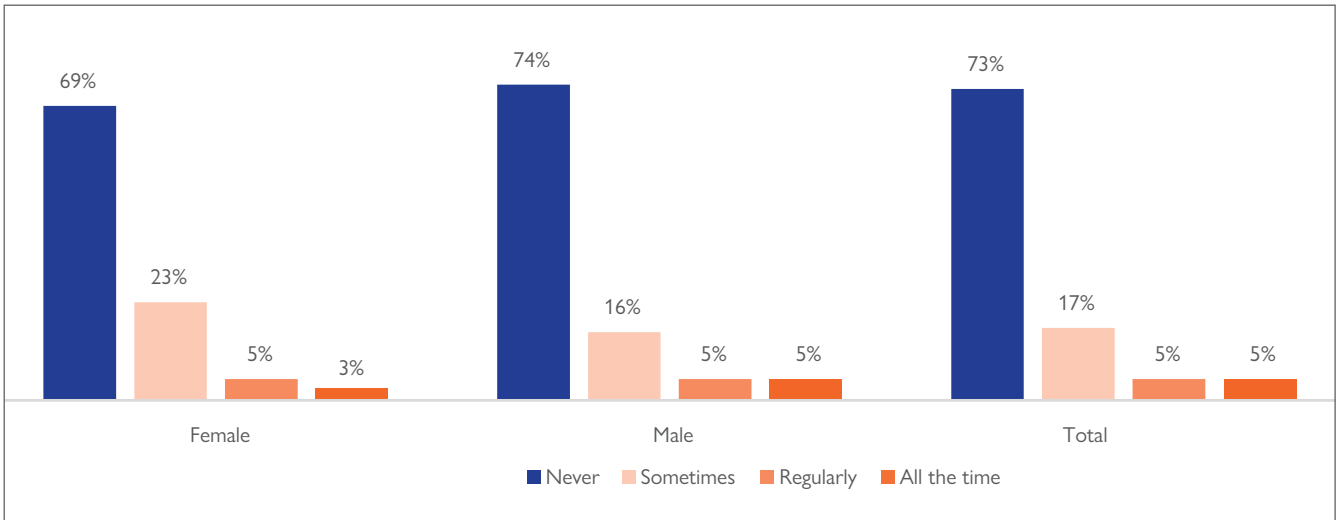
Figure 35: Perceptions of safety in the community for different groups, by the sex of respondent

Perceptions of safety for:	Sex of respondent	Very poor or poor	Fair	Good or very good	Don't know
Respondents (themselves)	Female	14%	13%	73%	0%
	Male	13%	18%	69%	0%
	All respondents	13%	17%	70%	0%
Respondents' households	Female	14%	16%	70%	0%
	Male	9%	19%	70%	2%
	All respondents	10%	18%	70%	1%
The local community	Female	13%	18%	68%	1%
	Male	10%	20%	64%	6%
	All respondents	10%	19%	65%	5%
Men to walk alone after 11pm	Female	12%	14%	71%	3%
	Male	9%	21%	70%	0%
	All respondents	9%	19%	70%	1%
Women to walk alone during the day	Female	14%	25%	61%	0%
	Male	10%	27%	63%	0%
	All respondents	11%	27%	63%	0%

Finally, the returned migrants were asked how often they worry about security threats or attacks in the community. Overall, around three quarters of the sample (73%) indicated that they are never worried about security issues, with smaller numbers reporting

this is the case sometimes (17%), regularly (5%), and all the time (5%). Male respondents (74%) were slightly more likely to report never being worried about this compared with females (69%) – who were more likely to indicate sometimes having this concern.

Figure 36: Percentage of respondents feeling worried about security threats or attacks, by the sex of respondent



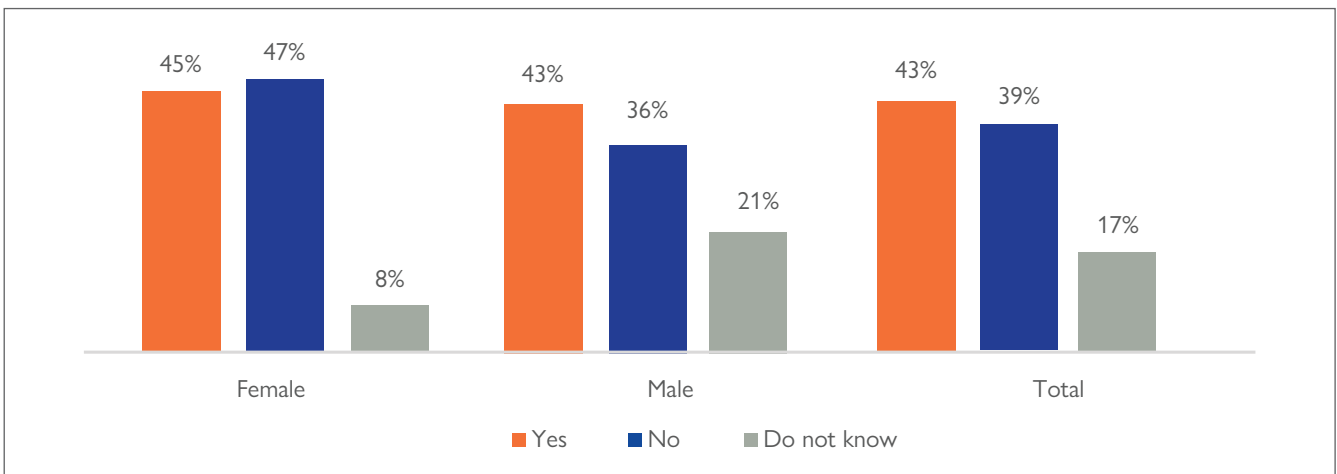
III. LOOKING AHEAD: FURTHER MIGRATION ASPIRATIONS

The final set of findings in this study is related to how returned migrants perceive their future. As migration is not a linear phenomenon, starting with emigration and ending with permanent resettlement in a new country, similarly return to a home country might not be the end of a migrating path as individuals and families' needs and aspirations might change over time. This study shows

that further migration is still an aspiration of many returned migrants.

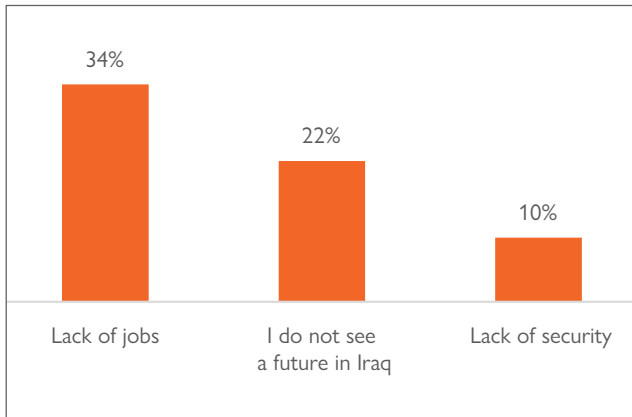
Nearly half of all respondents indicated that they intended to migrate abroad from Iraq again in the 6 months following the final round of data collection, while a smaller proportion has no intention to migrate. Another 17% didn't know if they would stay.

Figure 37: Movement intentions after returning from Europe, by the sex of respondent



When asked why they intend to migrate again, the majority cited a lack of jobs, followed by a perception of not seeing a promising future in Iraq, and lack of security.

Figure 38: Top 3 reasons for the respondents to migrate again



The proportion of migrants who reported their intention to migrate again after returning home (43%) is significantly lower than the proportion who had initially intended to migrate permanently (82%). This result would suggest that some respondents might have decided to stay in Iraq. Some respondents intended to migrate abroad again, but more than six months after data collection, meaning that they might intend to take some time to understand if the home country can offer opportunities to them. Finally, the prohibitive costs of remigrating, especially for those who incurred debts the first time they migrated, might have played a significant role in the decision of staying in Iraq. Indeed, only 16% of participants were able to save money abroad – with the large majority earning less than EUR 500. As such, for some respondents, migrating may not have paid off and therefore might not have been an option after return.

CONCLUSION

Between 2020 and 2021, IOM implemented the longitudinal survey focused on the experiences, needs and vulnerabilities of returned migrants in Iraq. As part of a multi-country initiative,²⁴ the Iraq component of the study sought to understand the experiences of Iraqi citizens who had migrated to one of three European countries: Germany, Greece or Finland before returning home.

This survey aimed to capture information related to all stages of the migration process, including household composition, migration profiles, drivers of migration, reasons for return, challenges upon return, and future movement aspirations. It also assessed the sustainability of return, linked to the economic, social and psychosocial factors that characterize a returned migrant's experience.

This study was based on the implementation of a multi-round quantitative survey focused on the experiences, needs and vulnerabilities of returned migrants in Iraq. While the findings presented in this report add to the growing (but still limited) body of research on the experiences of returned migrants, some information gaps remain, limiting the opportunity for evidence to inform programming in response to the needs and vulnerabilities of this group.

To continue strengthening the evidence base, the following avenues for further research are recommended, for the consideration of actors conducting applied research with returned migrants:

Implement end-to-end surveys, with data collected amongst returning migrants in the period before migrating, which takes into consideration their

experience abroad; followed by an assessment of their needs and vulnerabilities upon returning to their home country and their experiences of reintegration at an economic, community and structural level; as well as their future expectations and aspirations for further journeys abroad. While the survey on which this report is based covered these stages of the return process, data were collected only after migrants returned, with participants reporting at a time when the challenges of return and reintegration might have influenced their attitude. Understanding the factors prompting the migration in the first instance would assist in ensuring they migrate, return, and (if they are willing) migrate again in a safe and dignified manner and reintegrate sustainably.

Design mixed methods data collection research tools, including both quantitative and qualitative components. Qualitative data can build a stronger understanding of the nuanced attitudes and experiences of migrants throughout the migration and return process.

Develop sampling strategies that enable the production of quantitative data that is representative rather than indicative, enabling the comparison of findings across different governorates/districts of return. This would require a far more significant sampling strategy than the non-probabilistic approach employed for this survey. This would assist in understanding how environmental circumstances affect the experiences of return and reintegration and therefore inform responses to return migrants needs and vulnerabilities with the aim to improve their reintegration in the home country.

24 The study was also implemented in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan

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