

ON OLD SOLES INTO A NEW LIFE

The story of Aram A., 37 years, a voluntary returnee who established his own shoe store in Sulaymaniyah under the IOM project “Integrated Reintegration in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq”



Aram A. in his shoe store

“By selling new as well as pre-owned shoes, I can serve clients with a lower income and can set myself apart from other stores.”

Aram A., 37 years

To be able to fund the medical assistance for his cardiac daughter, Aram A. came to Germany in mid-2015 with the hope to find a well-paid job. After three months without promise in a reception centre and due to his wish to support his wife with the caretaking of their sick daughter, the father decided in September 2015 to return with the help of IOM to the area of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Prior to his migration to Europe, Aram worked for four years as employee in a shoe store – business experience which he wanted to continue with. Hence, he filed his application for assistance under the project “Integrated Reintegration in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq”, wishing to get support for opening his own shoe store in Sulaymaniyah. With the help of the reintegration experts in the

local IOM office in Sulaymaniyah, Aram refined his plan after his return to the KRG and soon found appropriate premises in a market building near the city centre.

With the in-kind reintegration assistance of EUR 4,000, Aram was able to purchase various models of new as well as pre-owned shoes. The unique feature of second hand shoes enabled him to also serve clients with a low income. But despite his promising business concept, the shoe store of Aram did not generate enough profit and the returnee got granted a second installment in the value of EUR 1,000 to push his business by expanding his assortment.

Meanwhile, Aram became father of two and can better provide his family with the nearly USD 700 turnover, especially his cardiac daughter.