

STANDING ON ONE'S OWN FEET BACK HOME

The story of Bahar M., 38 years, a voluntary returnee who entered an existing grocery store business as a business partner under the IOM project "Integrated Reintegration in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq"



Bahar M. working in her joint grocery business

„I would not have been able to provide for my children without the assistance of IOM.“

Bahar M., 38 years

Born in Mosul, Bahar M. came, together with her husband and four of their five children, to Germany to escape the lack of prospects in Iraq. Arriving in Berlin, the family was housed in emergency accommodation in a gymnasium in Berlin where they lived for nine months. In her application form for reintegration assistance Bahar described life in Germany as difficult: "We have lived in the emergency shelter since November 2015. We have no money and, until now, we haven't received a residence permit. Life in Iraq was better than what we experience here. This is why we want to return home."

The young woman's mother, her siblings and her youngest son awaited her in Iraq and in August 2016 this prompted Bahar to decide that it was time to return to Iraq. With three of the four children which came with her to Germany – aged four, seven and thirteen at the time – Bahar travelled back to the area of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with the assistance of IOM, while her husband and her eldest son remained in Germany.

With support of the IOM office in Dohuk, the 38 year old returnee was able to enter into an existing grocery shop business owned by a distant relative. This has enabled her to provide for her children through her regular income as well as acquire much-needed business experience.

For her reintegration business plan, the mother of five children provided all necessary documents, including a notarised contract of partnership as well as the business license of her partner. With the support of the EUR 4,000 reintegration assistance, she was able to purchase a wide range of products for the grocery shop, including milk powder, oil, bulgur, jam, rice, detergent and tomato paste.

With the constant proceeds of the mini market, Bahar can provide for her family and can extend the range of products needed in the neighborhood.

In the meantime, her husband and her eldest son have returned to Dohuk and the family is now happily reunited.