

TAILOR-MADE REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

The story of Bahya H., 52 years, a voluntary returnee who purchased various household supplies and a sewing machine under the IOM project “Integrated Reintegration in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq”



Bahya H. obtaining an estimate for buying a fridge

“My goal is to become financially and professionally independent with my sewing machine.”

Bahya H., 52 years

The example of Mrs. Bahya H.’s story shows us that multiple smaller offers of help can have a great effect. In November 2015, the Iraqi came to Germany with her seven year old daughter while her other three children remained in Erbil with her husband. Without any prospects of gaining a residence permit, combined with her longing for her family, after her six month stay in Berlin Bahya filed an application for return and reintegration assistance with IOM.

Since the family lacked important supplies for their household, the applicant wished to invest the EUR 4,000 support from the reintegration project into the purchase of furniture for the bedroom, a washing machine, a fridge and a small stove. The most important item however, was the sewing machine which enabled Bahya to go into business as a tailor. The reintegration plan which the 52 year-old had developed with support of the local IOM office upon

her return to Erbil was promising. The returnee could draw on several years of work experience as a tailor and besides changing tasks, planned to offer custom-made sewing for her female clients.

Despite the difficult economic situation in the area of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Bahya was able to gradually establish a base of regular customers with the aid of her skills and her sewing machine. Thanks to her interconnectedness within the neighborhood in Badawa, a quarter in Erbil where the family lives, she is socially integrated and can count on having her initial regular clients.

The fact that she can work from home also provides her with the flexibility to simultaneously deal with the household and childcare. The mother has set herself the goal of becoming financially and professionally independent.