

From skills to startups: mobilising diaspora for youth entrepreneurship in Sulaymaniyah

Overview

Main partner	The <u>Governorate of Sulaymaniyah</u> is the local executive public authority responsible for territorial administration, coordination and implementation of public policies and programmes in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.	
Duration	9 months	
Sustainable Development Goals		

Project design

Objective	Youth employment and self-employment opportunities in Sulaymaniyah Governorate are improved through coordinated public action and structured engagement of Kurdish-Iraqi diaspora expertise.
Needs	Public institutions and education partners are seeking to strengthen coordination and build a shared and practical framework that clarifies roles, facilitates collaboration and creates clear progression pathways for youth entrepreneurship initiatives. The project would support the transition from promising individual initiatives toward a more structured and scalable model at governorate level.
Context	Sulaymaniyah Governorate faces persistent youth unemployment and underemployment, particularly among graduates and young people, despite relatively high education levels and strong social capital. Labour force participation among women remains significantly lower (18.6%) than among men (74.5%), with an employment-to-population ratio of 13.5% for women compared to 68.5% for men. At the same time, the region holds significant untapped potential in its strong cultural identity, growing creative and agricultural sectors, and emerging digital and remote work opportunities, all of which could support youth-led entrepreneurship if paired with practical, locally adapted support.
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governate of Sulaymaniyah and related public institutions and units • Youth • Kurdish-Iraqi diaspora professionals
Impact	The project expands opportunities for young people in Sulaymaniyah to explore entrepreneurship and develop practical pathways to employment. By introducing a shared framework “Youth Impact - Entrepreneurship Programme”, pilot initiatives and mentorship from diaspora professionals, youth gain exposure to new skills, international perspectives and real-world entrepreneurial experiences. By strengthening collaboration between public institutions, universities, diaspora and ecosystem partners, the action contributes to building a structured and sustainable programme that supports youth.

Programme of activities

