



IOM International Organization for Migration



IRAQ

MAPPING EXERCISE
LONDON, MARCH 2007

CONTENTS

Introduction	04
1 Iraqis in the UK	05
1.1 Overview of the Iraqi community in the UK	05
1.2 Geographical locations and size of the Iraqi communities	06
2 Mapping Exercise Outcomes – Information Channels	08
2.1 Media	08
2.2 Use of services	13
2.3 Preferred source of information	16
2.4 Community groups and organisations	19
3 Mapping Exercise Outcomes – Demographic Information	20
3.1 Gender	20
3.2 Age	20
3.3 Length of residence in the UK	21
4 Constraints	22
5 Conclusions and Recommendations	23

The aim of this Mapping Report is to guide IOM's outreach activities and communications strategies. The report does not purport to be exhaustive. The mapping consultant who conducted the exercise and wrote the report on behalf of IOM has taken every effort to ensure accuracy in his/her reporting and the views expressed in this report are his/hers. IOM cannot be held responsible for any omissions or inaccuracies.



INTRODUCTION

AIM OF THE MAPPING EXERCISE, TARGET GROUP AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the mapping exercise was to identify the main communication channels used by the Iraqi diaspora, in order to make IOM and its voluntary return programmes better known and understood by the Iraqi community in the UK. The ultimate goal of the exercise is to help IOM to improve its communications with diaspora communities in the United Kingdom through media articles, advertisements and presentations to community groups. An Iraqi national fluent in Arabic and Kurdish, and with inside knowledge of the community, was recruited as a mapping consultant on a part-time basis.

The field work was carried out during a three month period from November 2006 to March 2007 and involved meetings with leaders and members of community organisations. Extensive networking helped to identify media, organisations, and multipliers¹ within the Iraqi community. The qualitative and quantitative data used in this paper was the product of thirty informal interviews with Iraqis from different racial, ethnic, and political backgrounds. The research used a range of methods, including structured questionnaires, informal interviews, and statistical information. A review of the existing literature on the Iraqi ethnic populations of the UK was useful to find information about their location, size and the socio-economic features of the community. This helped in further refining the methodology.

A questionnaire consisting of nineteen questions was prepared in English, Kurdish and Arabic. It was divided into two parts. The first related to media channels and other sources of information — voluntary organisations, religious venues and festivals — which are available to Iraqis in the UK, as well as the geographical location and size of the communities across the UK. The second part of the questionnaire sought demographic information from each respondent about their age, gender and length of stay in the UK.

In-depth interviews were conducted with community leaders acting as multipliers in the course of this exercise. They were asked about the sources of information which the community uses, and about which of them is the most popular. Information about the location and the size of the communities was also collected. After the literature review, it was decided that the survey sample should consist of sixty questionnaires. The exercise concentrated on London, as the city with the highest Iraqi population, but visits were made to Birmingham, Manchester, Derby, Cardiff and Glasgow. A total of sixty questionnaires were successfully collected during the exercise². The data has been analysed and presented in the form of tables and charts in the following sections of the report.

As a result of the mapping exercise, a list of contacts³ has been created which merges data collected directly from completed questionnaires with information gathered from the multipliers during in-depth interviews. This resource will be used by the Information team at IOM to disseminate information on the voluntary return programmes to Iraqis across the country.

¹ This term is used to indicate individuals or organisations that are well known amongst diaspora groups and could therefore play a key role in delivering information.

² The number of questionnaires received is not critical since these completed questionnaires do not just represent the view of sixty individuals but the consensus views of various groups and communities. Individuals were selected to represent the diaspora.

³ This document is confidential and does not form part of this report.

1 IRAQIS IN THE UK

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE IRAQI COMMUNITY IN THE UK

The Iraqi community is a mixture of ethnicities and religions with a variety of traditions and social customs. Essentially, there are three main ethnicities: Arabs; Kurds; and Turkmen. There are also some small religious groups, such as Yezidi, Kakayee, Ahil Haq, Christians and Jews. Many of these emigrated to the UK in the early 1950s when the King of Iraq and some Islamic groups forced them to leave the country.

In the UK, ethnic Kurds make up the largest part of the Iraqi community. The number of Kurdish migrants to European countries, and especially to the UK, steadily increased in the early of 1980s after Saddam Hussein came to power. They fled Iraq when Saddam's dictatorship killed nearly 250,000 Kurdish people and exiled thousands more.

After the collapse of the regime in November 2003, allied troops occupied Iraq. The internal security situation in much of Iraq has continued to deteriorate. Thus, Iraqis have immigrated into the UK for different reasons and by different means.

Iraqis have come to the UK in three groups. The earliest wave of immigrants are now settled residents in the UK. This group has been living in the UK since the 1950s and 1960s: they came to London for educational reasons and to seek a better life. The second category consists of people who are permitted to remain in this country indefinitely and have "exceptional leave to remain" or were granted asylum. The third group is made up of Iraqis whose asylum cases have been refused by the Home Office.

Most of the leaders of the Iraqi Community are UK citizens. Most of the interviews and meetings were held with them and it is possible this category may be over-represented in the exercise.

Differences in religion, belief, and social and religious attitude were all taken into account during the mapping exercise process.

1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS AND SIZE OF IRAQI COMMUNITIES

It was very difficult to gather information about the geographical locations and the size of Iraqi communities in the UK. Establishing the exact number of Iraqis in the UK was complicated by the many Iraqis who have been resident in the UK for generations now. Many Iraqis also changed their names and nationality when they came to the UK and registered themselves with Iranian, Turkish or Syrian names and nationality.

The Iraqi Embassy estimates that the Iraqi population is around 350,000 – 450,000. No census has ever been carried out specifically identifying the Iraqi population and estimates given by the community leaders were very approximate. London has a large population of Iraqis, estimated at between 125,000 and 150,000, and Birmingham and Manchester are the cities with the second and third largest Iraqi populations.

The following are estimates given by Iraqi community leaders from London, Birmingham, Manchester, Cardiff, Derby, Plymouth and Glasgow.

AREA	ESTIMATED FIGURES OF IRAQI POPULATION
London	125,000
Birmingham	35,000
Manchester	18,000
Cardiff	8,000
Glasgow	5,000
Derby	2,000
Plymouth	2,000
Ireland	1,000
TOTAL	204,000

Geographical Spread of the Iraqi Community in the UK, 2007



The above figures are based on estimates supplied by community leaders.

2 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOMES

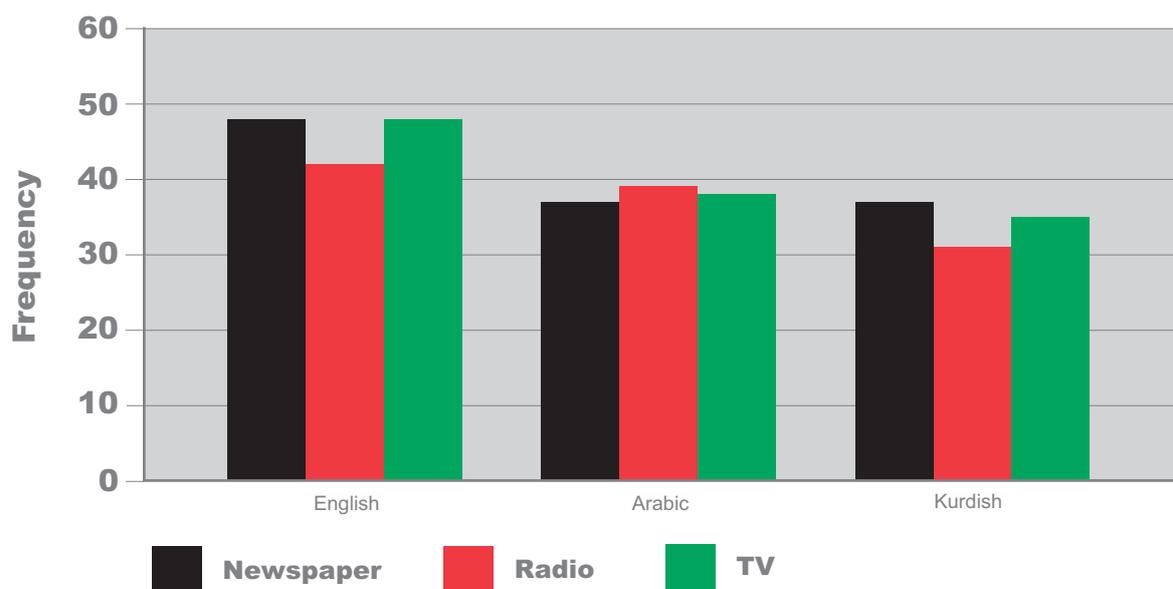
INFORMATION CHANNELS

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to identify the main channels of information used by Iraqis in the UK. The questions were divided into three categories: media; other sources of information; and information on other community groups. The details given by the respondents in the questionnaires for media, organisations, religious centres, schools, restaurants and shops were often vague. They had to be merged and organised alongside the contact details provided by the multipliers.

2.1 MEDIA

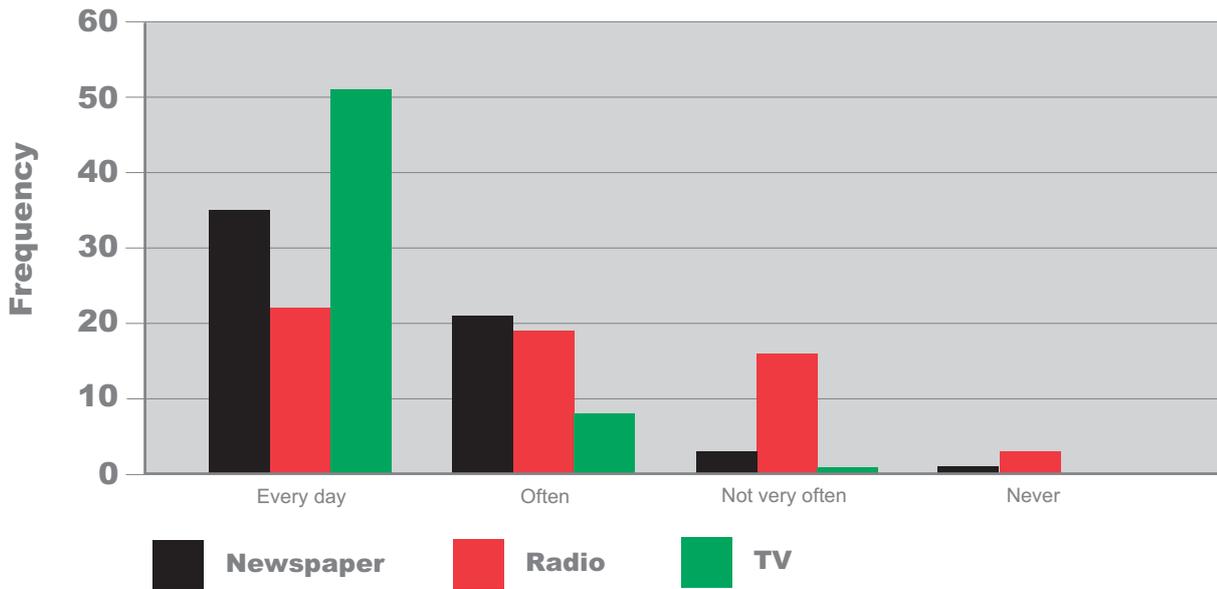
Media Comprehension

Figure 1: Preferred Language



Respondents were asked in which languages they could best understand information material such as newspapers, leaflets, radio and television. Most interviewees stated that their preferred medium for information was English, followed closely by Arabic and Kurdish.

Figure 2a: Media Consultation



Respondents were asked how often they consulted various media. Figure 2a shows that many respondents said that they watched TV every day. Reading newspapers came second with 35 respondents ticking that box. Only 16 out of 60 indicated that they rarely listened to the radio. Only a small number said that they never watched TV, read newspapers or listened to the radio.

Readership of Newspapers and Other Publications

Five magazines and newspapers out of the nine referred to were English publications that were frequently read by Iraqis (see figure 2b). The highest number of respondents read *Metro*, followed by *The Sun* and the *Mirror*. One of the most popular magazines for Iraqis is *Melband*, a magazine published by the Kurdish Cultural Centre. Figure 2b shows that 21 of the 60 respondents said that they read *Melband*. *Al-Muntad*, a monthly newspaper published by the Iraqi Association, was also read by a number of respondents. Other English newspapers, such as *The Times* and the *Guardian*, were also named by respondents. *Sharq Alawsat* and *Al-Hayat*, although not read as widely as *Metro*, *Melband* and *Al-Muntad*, are well known daily Arabic newspapers and read by most Iraqi intellectuals.

In Birmingham, Manchester, Derby and Cardiff, respondents cited free papers such as the *Manchester Evening News*, *Birmingham Daily News* and *Nergiz Magazine*, which is published by the Kurdish Development Association in Glasgow.

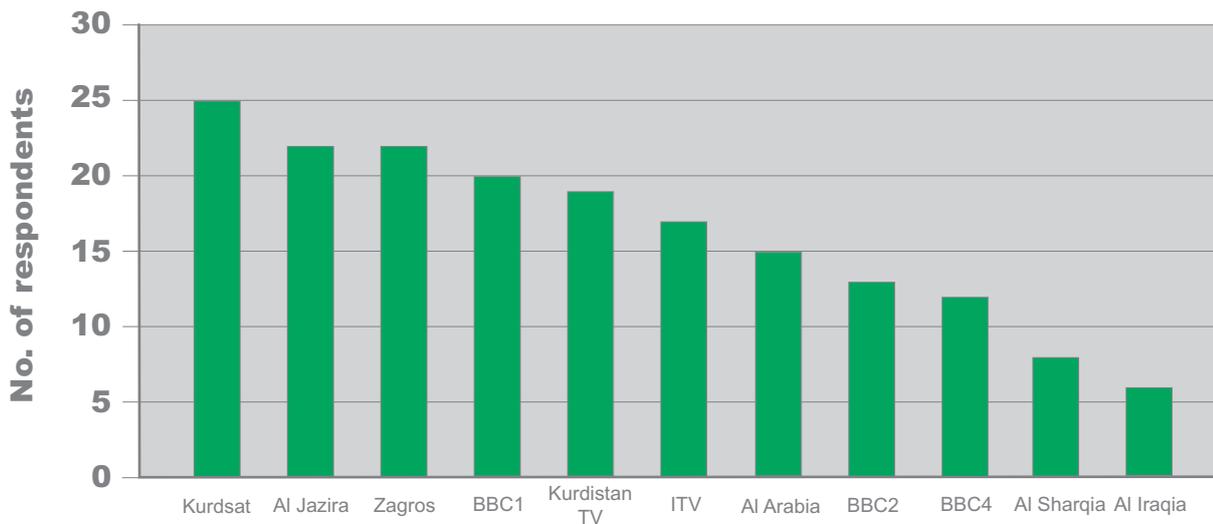
Figure 2b: Newspapers



Radio and TV

Interviews conducted with Iraqis in London, Derby, Manchester, Cardiff, Birmingham and Glasgow suggested that the radio is not much listened to by Iraqis. Such responses as were received indicated that *Radio FM*, *BBC Radio4*, and *Khak* were the most popular radio stations. *Radio FM* is a station in English, which is broadcast throughout the UK. Most Iraqis listen to it in order to improve their English. *Khak* broadcasts from Iraq 24 hours a day in Kurdish and Arabic. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan represents this station in the UK and has an office in Pimlico. In Manchester many Iraqis mentioned listening to *Galaxy*.

Figure 3: TV



59 of the 60 respondents said they watched TV every day. Interviewees were also asked which television channel they watched most often. Figure 3 shows that *Kurdsat TV* is the most popular TV channel, followed by *Zagros TV*, and *Aljazira TV*.

Most Iraqis in the UK watch *Kurdsat TV*, which broadcasts 24 hours a day. *Kurdsat TV*, *Kurdistan TV*, *Khak TV* and *Zagros TV* are Kurdish channels, which broadcast their programmes in a number of languages, including Kurdish, Arabic, English and Farsi. They are all based in Iraq with representatives in London. *Zagros TV* and *Kurdistan TV* are affiliated to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). *Kurdsat TV* and *Khak TV* are affiliated to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Other channels such as *Al-Sharqia*, *Al-Arabia*, and *Al-Iraqia* are based in Iraq and broadcast in Arabic only.



Newspaper

English

Radio

TV

... languages they could best understand information...
 ... Most...
 ... and...

Internet

Almost all the respondents used a computer, either at home or in the office. A few respondents said they used a computer at Internet cafés or the library. *Yahoo* and *Google* were the two websites most often mentioned: they were singled out by almost all the respondents.

There are some Iraqi websites which are based in Iraq. Every political party or religious denomination has its own website and publication. However, they do not cover the topic of migration.

Kurdistanet is a popular Kurdish website in Holland. It publishes articles and announcements in Kurdish only. This website is used by 30,000 people a day and covers political and social issues.

Conclusion and Recommendations

IOM should advertise its activities in English, Kurdish and Arabic.

- IOM should advertise in the *Meband* magazine, published by the Kurdish Cultural Centre, and the *Al-Muntada* newspaper, run by the Iraqi Association in London. Both publications have approximately 3,000 readers.
- IOM should use the following TV channels for delivering information to the Iraqi diaspora: *Kurdsat TV*; *Aljazira*; *Zagros*; and *Kurdistan TV*.

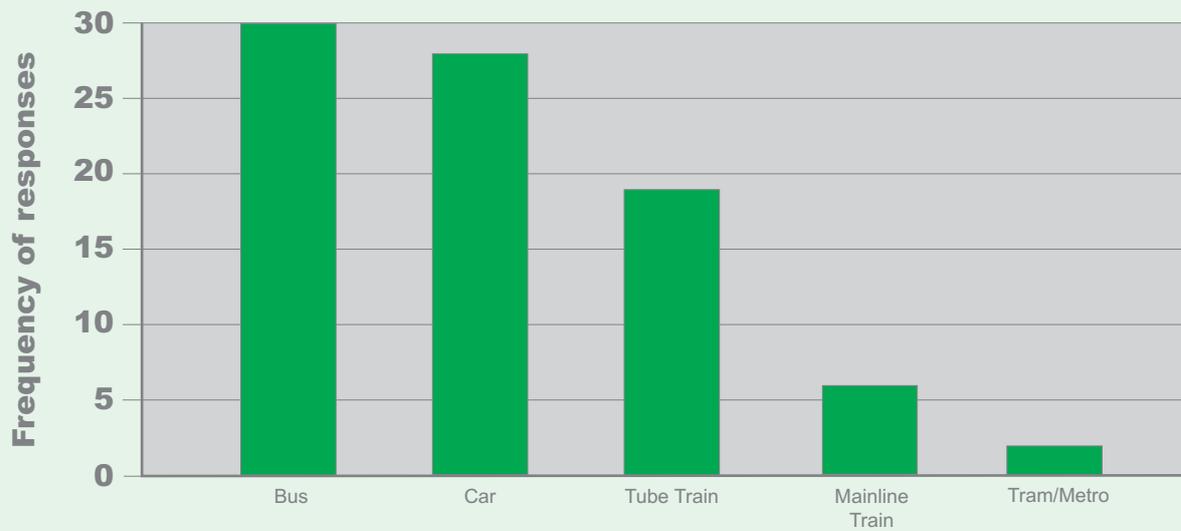
2.2 USE OF SERVICES

Questions were included in the questionnaire to investigate where IOM should advertise its voluntary return programmes to the Iraqi community.

Means of Transport

Respondents were asked what type of transport they used most often. Whilst ticking more than one option was possible, the majority used a car as their means of transport, followed by buses, with the Tube as the third option.

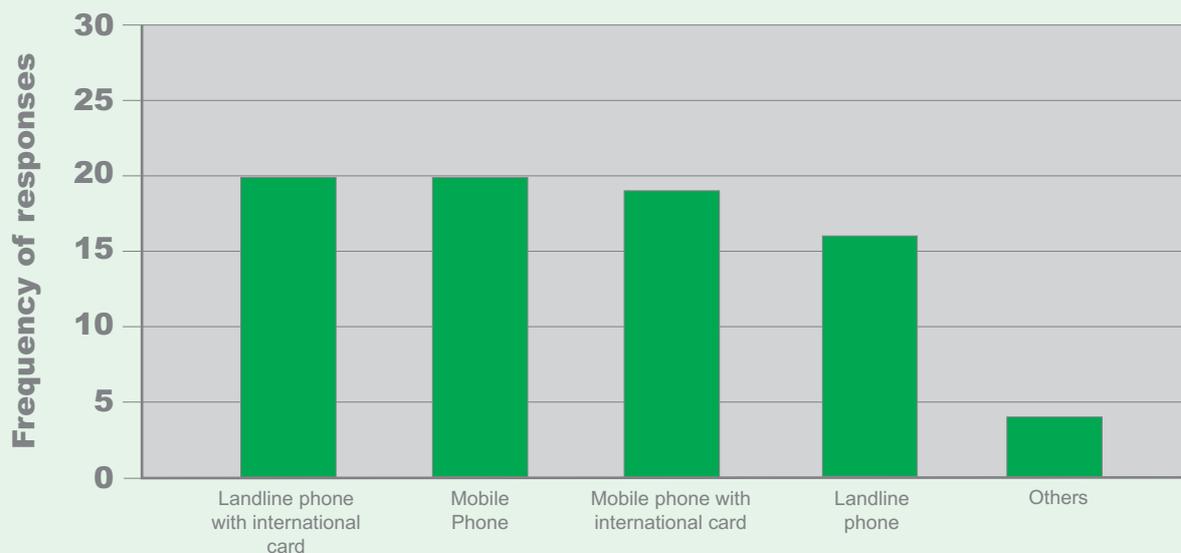
Figure 4a: Use of Services



Phone Calls

Respondents were asked how they make phone calls to friends and relatives in Iraq. Most respondents gave more than one answer. Landline with an international phone card and mobile phones were the most popular ways of making phone calls to Iraq, followed by using a mobile with an international phone card and using regular landline phones. *Banana, Global, Al-Arab, Euro Tell* and *Call Home* phone cards were highlighted by respondents.

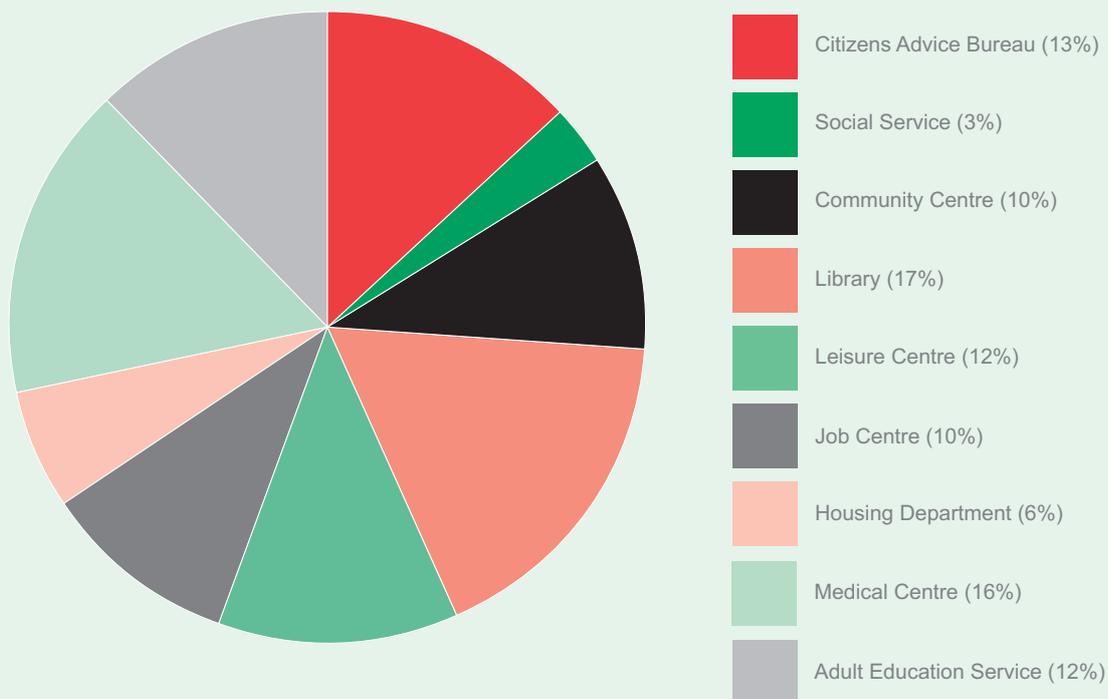
Figure 4b: Phone Calls



Local Services

Respondents were asked which local services they used. Most of them gave more than one option. According to the chart below, respondents mostly used libraries and medical centres, followed by Citizens Advice Bureaux, leisure centres, Job Centres and community centres.

Figure 4c: Local Services



Conclusions and Recommendations

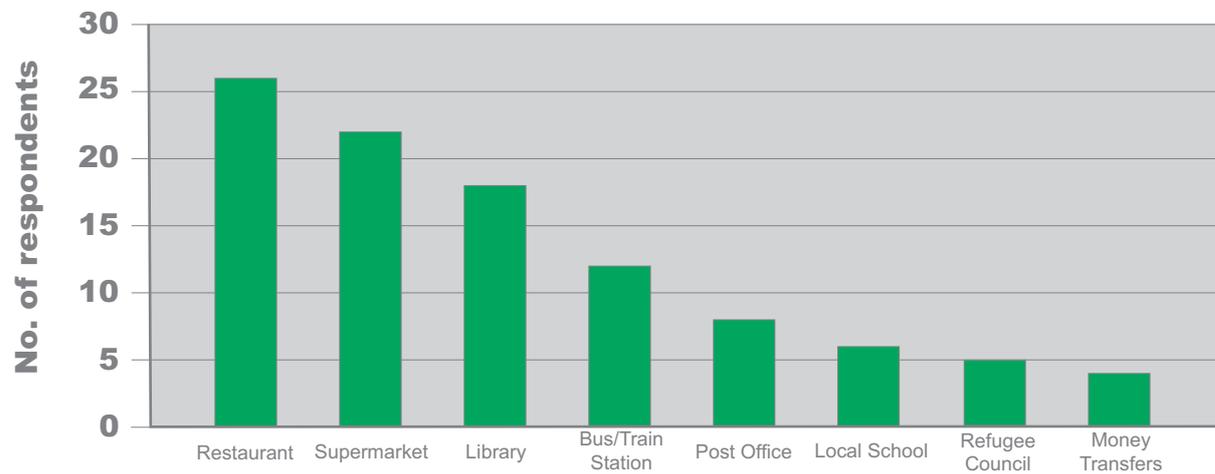
- IOM should advertise on buses (259, 91, 59, 36, 73, 27, 24, 29, 188, 86, 207, 212, 102, 17, 86); and in Victoria, Waterloo, Wood Green, Finsbury Park, Croydon, Brixton and Ealing train stations.
- IOM should consider advertising on phone cards both for landline and mobile phones. There are a number of international calling cards which are used by Iraqis, including *Banana Card*, *Global Card*, *Al Arab Card*, *Euro Tell* and *Call Home Card*.
- IOM should put up posters and leave leaflets in libraries and medical centres, especially the Central Library in Manchester, St James in Birmingham, and Derby and Glasgow Central.
- IOM should distribute leaflets and posters in Kurdish and Arabic to Iraqi Communities in UK cities, in particular in Birmingham and Manchester.
- Job Centres and some leisure centres could be other locations for IOM information material, especially those based in city centres.

2.3 PREFERRED SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Preferred Source of Information

The great majority of respondents recommended restaurants as the best place to access information material. Supermarkets came second, followed by libraries.

Figure 5a: Where information should be published



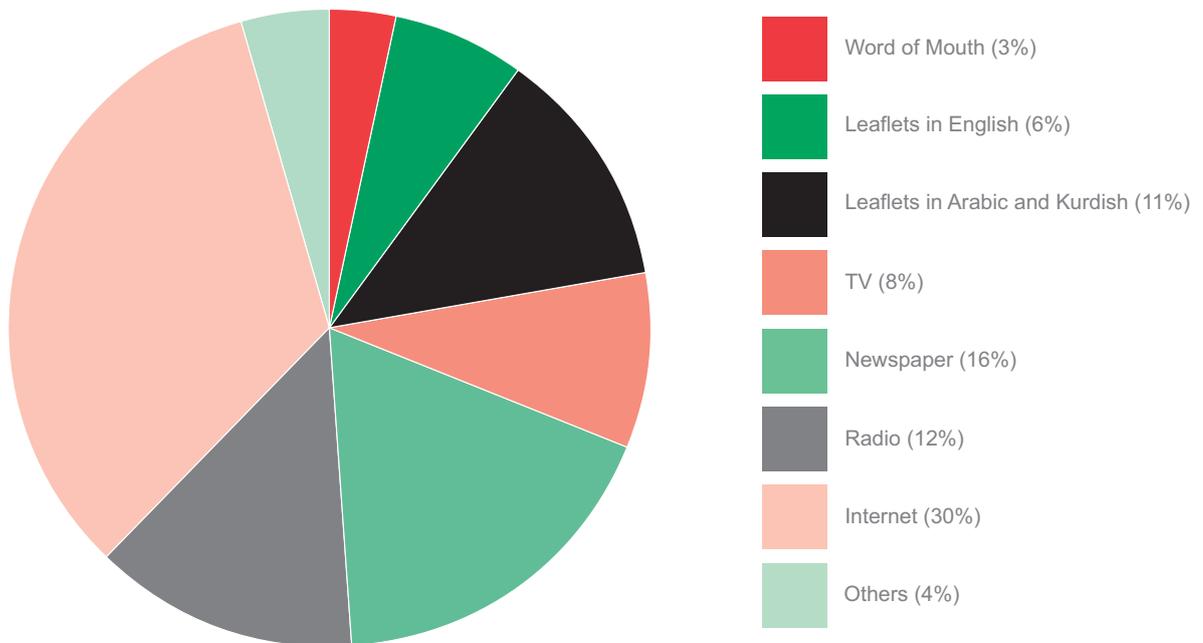
Local Services



Common Ways of Receiving Information

Figure 5b shows that 30% of respondents indicated the Internet as the usual way they obtained information. 18% referred to TV, 16% to newspapers, 12% to radio, and 11% usually obtained information from leaflets in Kurdish and Arabic.

Figure 5b: Common ways of receiving information



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Information should be publicised in Arabic and Kurdish restaurants, especially in the following restaurants: Tara, Azmar, Baghdadia, Diyar Bakir, Safin and Sarchnar in London; Sharbazer in Glasgow; Kurdistan and Miran in Derby; Rotan and Baghdad in Manchester; Vinos, Hazha, Meena and Kurdistan in Cardiff; and Shkar and Seevar in Birmingham.
- IOM should distribute leaflets and posters in Arabic and Kurdish in supermarkets and libraries.
- Iraqi community organisations, especially in London, could be a channel for informing Iraqis about IOM activities. The Kurdish Cultural Centre, the Iraqi Association, the Kurdish Association, and the Kurdish Housing Association are among the most popular centres in London.
- IOM should advertise on the Internet, particularly on Arabic and Kurdish websites, such as *Kurdistanet*, *Kurdistanpost*, *Alarabia*, *Al-Bawaba*, *Pukonline* and *Al-Jazira*.
- IOM should advertise on TV channels such as *Kurdsat TV*, *Zagros TV* and *Al-Arabia TV*.

2.4 COMMUNITY GROUPS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

In general, the Iraqi Community in the UK has a well-established network. However, questionnaires and interviews with community leaders suggested that Iraqi organisations and community services are mainly used by Iraqis who have a permanent status in the UK. Irregular migrants seem not to use these services as much as others.

Community Organisations

In London, the Kurdish Cultural Centre and the Iraqi Association are the two major Iraqi organisations. They are recognised by almost all Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers. There are Iraqi organisations outside London but they often do not function well and lack financial support.

Religious Centres

The majority of Iraqis are Muslim but most of the respondents do not practice their religion. Only a few said that they go to Regents Park and Finsbury Park mosques regularly.

Help, Advice and Support

Most respondents said that they go to Citizens Advice Bureaux for advice and support. Some respondents said that they go to a community centre for legal advice and support.

Community Gatherings and Social Events

According to the respondents, New Year and Nawroz are the two most important events for Iraqis. Nonetheless, Eid Al-Fitur and Ramadan were also mentioned by the respondents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

IOM should liaise with the Kurdish Cultural Centre and the Iraqi Association to engage with the Iraqi community in London.

IOM should put up posters and leaflets in Citizen Advice Bureaux, especially in Manchester, Birmingham, and Cardiff.

Every year, on 21 of March, 10,000 Iraqis celebrate Nawroz in Finsbury Park. IOM should consider making leaflets and posters available at the event.

3 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOMES

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The second section of the questionnaire was designed to collect baseline data from each respondent about their age, gender and length of residence in the UK. This information will help IOM to improve its information strategy.

3.1 GENDER

39 of the 60 respondents were men and 21 were women.

3.2 AGE

Figure 6a shows the percentages of the 60 respondents who fall within different age bands. 23 out of the 60 (37%) were aged between 25 and 34. The second largest percentage was of respondents between 35 and 44 (30%).

Figure 6a: Age

AGE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Under 18	1	2%
18-24	7	12%
25-34	23	37%
35-44	18	30%
45-54	10	17%
55-64	1	2%
65 or over	0	0%
No answer	0	0%

Rest of Scotland

3.3 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

See figure 6b. More than half the respondents have been in the UK at least 5 years and for less than 10 years. 23% have been in the UK for between 3 and 5 years, and 20% for more than 10 years.

Figure 6b: Age

TIME IN UK	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Less than 12 months	0	0
1 year to less than 3	3	5%
3 years to less than 5	14	23%
5 years to less than 10	31	52%
10 years or more	12	20%
No answer	0	0



4 CONSTRAINTS

The mapping exercise of the Iraqi diaspora ran smoothly. Questionnaires were distributed and meetings and interviews with Iraqis across the UK were arranged. Sixty questionnaires were completed. Almost all the questionnaires were filled in during face-to-face meetings because many respondents asked for more explanation about completing it.

There were some difficulties in arranging meetings in cities outside London and a number of appointments were cancelled. This held up the mapping exercise but the consultant still had a number of successful meetings with community leaders. The overall response by participants was satisfactory.

Iraqis live all over the UK and it was not easy to locate them. The complexity of the ethnic groups in the Iraqi community, taking in Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Christians, Kakayees, Yazidis and Kldo Ashuries was another matter that had to be handled with sensitivity.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mapping exercise achieved its aims by identifying the main channels of information used by Iraqis in the UK, and their main locations of the diaspora. A summary of the main recommendations is as follows.

- IOM should continue to advertise its activities in English, Arabic and Kurdish.
- IOM should distribute Kurdish, English, and Arabic leaflets to Iraqi communities in UK cities, in particular Birmingham and Manchester.
- IOM should advertise in publications like the *Meband* magazine, published by the Kurdish Cultural Centre, and the *Al-Muntada* newspaper, published by the Iraqi Association in London.
- Information should be displayed in Arabic and Kurdish restaurants, especially in Tara and Sarchnar in London, Sharbazer in Glasgow, Kurdistan in Derby, Rotan in Manchester, and Vinos in Cardiff.
- IOM should put up posters and distribute leaflets in Citizens Advice Bureaux, particularly in Manchester, Birmingham, and Cardiff.
- Every year, on 21 March, nearly ten thousand people gather to celebrate Nawroz in Finsbury Park. IOM could attend the event to distribute leaflets and put up posters.
- IOM should advertise on the TV channels *Kurdsat TV*, *Zagros TV*, and *Al-Arabia TV*.
- IOM should implement the recommendations included in the list of contacts, which are an action plan for outreach activities for the Iraqi community in the UK.



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