

Seeking a better life for himself and his family away from the miseries of war, Mr Yousufi left Afghanistan in July 2015 to find better employment prospects. Thanks to IRARA and ACE he is now living back in Kabul with 8 members of his family and running a successful business.

SUMMARY

Abdul Latif Yousufi was in his fourth semester of study at the Faculty of Political Science at Kabul University and had seven years' experience as a fitness trainer and he held a black belt in Taekwondo when he decided to leave Afghanistan to get away from the misery of war. After finding no employment opportunities and many other hardships living in Europe, he decided to return to his home country and make a better life for himself using the reintegration support available through IRARA.

THE JOURNEY

Mr Yousufi had an incredibly tough journey through Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Austria, and Italy to finally arrive in France where he attempted to settle. He was in France for 3 months but spent over a year in Europe in total. This financially and physically exhausting journey cost him more than €15,000.

REINTEGRATION

After his asylum case was rejected by the French government, Mr Yousufi decided to return to Afghanistan in July 2017. He received a reintegration package from France as in-kind contribution, meaning he could use it for setting up a business or another form of income generation if he wished. Meeting with IRARA's local counsellors at the Afghanistan Centre of Excellence (ACE) they discussed his knowledgeable about running a gym and his experience in facilities management and book-keeping. It was clear that Mr. Yousufi also had good communication and sales and marketing skills, which are necessary to attract gym members and create a successful business.

Mr Yousufi decided to go back into the fitness business and is using the financial assistance provided to partner with his friend to run a gym. With these funds and the local knowledge and connections provided by ACE, Mr Yousufi sourced stock for the gym shop and set up a partnership agreement. The gym is currently on track to achieve a very good annual profit allowing Mr Yousufi to support his family.

Mr Yousufi likes this business due to its flexible hours. His clients are mostly Afghan young men, aged 18-30. He says he is inspired by them and has struck up good friendships. These friendships and the ability to work again and provide for his family have made him hopeful for a safer and more prosperous life.

Abdul Latif expressed: "If my own country was safe and I could work, I wouldn't have had to suffer so many hardships. I am now trying to adjust to living a better life here."



IN BRIEF

- Mr Yousufi left Afghanistan to find a better life in Europe in 2015.
- After finding no employment opportunities and having his asylum case rejected by the French government, he returned in 2017.
- Utilizing financial support and local knowledge provided by IRARA and their partner the Afghanistan Center for Excellence (ACE) he has set up a successful gym business.
- He now lives with 8 members of his family in Kabul and is once again able to provide for them.

"My decision to leave Afghanistan was wrong. I could have started a good business with the money I paid to people smugglers. Now, I am broke and lost, but the assistance I have received from IRARA and ACE is helping me get my life back on track."