Mohamad Anwar had no difficulty choosing his major at university; he had always dreamed of becoming an engineer. “I wanted to make my childhood dream come true and meet labour market requirements at the same time,” he says. “So I chose biomedical engineering, as it’s an evolving field that keeps up with developments in the medical field.”

After graduating, Mohamad discovered there were no job opportunities for a biomedical engineer in Mosul, and he considered leaving the city to find work elsewhere. But when the Islamic State group took control of the city, he chose to stay with his mother and siblings and to put his dreams on hold.

After the Iraqi government regained control over Mosul, a number of humanitarian organisations set up projects in the city, bringing with them new job opportunities. Mohamad browsed job postings on websites until finally he found one that caught his attention. The 29-year-old has now been working for three years as biomedical supervisor in MSF’s post-operative care hospital in East Mosul.

Mohamad believes that MSF’s medical activities can only be sustainable if its medical equipment functions properly. He has a regular maintenance plan for all the equipment in the hospital. But beneath the spreadsheets is a man with a passion for helping people. “I always try to help people as much as I can,” he says. “But following the battles in Mosul, the situation required more of a response than we could offer individually. I believe my work with MSF is my opportunity to help as many people as possible.”

Mohamad is sociable by nature, which is reflected in his professional and personal life. He loves to spend time with friends and family and he enjoys large social gatherings. These occasions give him a sense of hope, despite all the difficulties he has encountered.

“I love Mosul and I am not thinking of leaving anytime soon,” he says. “But our reality on this side of the world is uncertain and we can never know what the future holds.”