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UNIVERSALIZING GLOBAL LEARNING IN THE 21ST-CENTURY ACADEMY

# Sponsored Students and Partnership Opportunities in Iraq

## Presenters:

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# Opportunities to Engage in Iraq

## **Long-term investment in building relationships**

1. Recruit Iraqi scholarship students
2. Host PhD and master's students in Iraq for research
3. Host university faculty
4. Develop partnerships

**Why Iraqis? Why now?**

# Overview of Iraq

- Goal: Rebuilding higher education systems and re-establishing Iraq in the global academic and scientific community
- 2 ministries of higher education (Baghdad and Erbil)
- 3 Competitive Scholarship Programs for master's and doctorate degrees, with emphasis on STEM fields; funding for ESL; other opportunities for collaboration
- About 3,000 new scholarships/year; most students request Conditional Admission; about 2,000 waiting for admission
- *2013 Open Doors Report* – 1074 Iraqis



# Scholarship Programs

- **National Programs** (funded by Government of Iraq; open to students in all provinces)
  - GOI Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (MoHESR)
  - Higher Committee for Education Development (HCED) through Prime Minister's Office
- **Regional Program** (funded by Kurdistan Regional Government; open to all students in Iraqi Kurdistan Region)
  - Human Capacity Development Program (HCDP)

# Sponsored Students

- Competitive selection
- Tuition and fees for graduate programs
- 6 to 12 months of ESL instruction at U.S. university
- Monthly stipend for student and family, travel expenses, and health insurance

# Recruiting Sponsored Students

- Offer Conditional Admission
- Complete Online Survey  
[www.surveymonkey.com/EducationUSAIraq](http://www.surveymonkey.com/EducationUSAIraq)
- EducationUSA Advising Centers in Baghdad and Erbil
- Attend EducationUSA University Fairs in Iraq
  - September 28-30, 2013 in Baghdad
  - April 2014 in Erbil
- U.S. – Iraq Higher Education Conference
- Engage with Lorna, ICO, and KRG Office in DC

# Challenges

## For Students

- Security environment
- Lack of familiarity with US higher ed system
- English language skills
- Access to standardized testing
- Credit Cards
- Internet, electricity
- Visa application timeline

## For Programs/Institutions

- Security environment
- Highly centralized and bureaucratic system
- Lack of U.S. higher education experience
- English language skills
- Infrastructure and resources
- Value of Relationships



# Government of Iraq Goals

- Secure admission for graduate students at U.S. universities
- Establish institutional partnerships and MoUs with different universities
- Establish joint degree programs
- Host Iraqi faculty on sabbatical at U.S. universities
- Host Ph.D. and master students for short-term research at U.S. universities
- Recruit medical graduates for U.S. postgraduate studies.

# 1. Scholarship Program

- University faculty and top students, and ministry employees to earn graduate degrees abroad
- Competitive selection of candidates
- Priority areas: STEM, agriculture, medical sciences; but also more fields of study
- Conditional Admission for most scholarship holders; includes funding for Intensive English Program (IEP)

# Number of Scholarship Students Per Year in USA



# Scholarship Students in USA

# students NOW in USA: PhD – 233; Masters – 11

- 2/3 of students are studying Engineering (all fields combined)
- Agriculture, IT, and Biological Sciences, plus other STEM fields; but few in Medical sciences
- **Hundreds awaiting admission to U.S. universities**
- Iraqi Cultural Office administers Drop Box; students upload documents and U.S. universities can view to identify possible candidates for admission

## 2. Short-Term Research

- Faculty: funding for university faculty to do short-term research (3-12 months) abroad
- PhD and Masters Candidates studying at Iraqi universities: Funding for:
  - them to do short-term research (3-6 months) abroad;
  - Faculty supervisor from Iraq to come to US university (1 month)
- Require U.S. university willing to host students and faculty member willing to supervise work

## 3. Develop Partnerships

- MoU with University of Missouri-Columbia signed August 2013; umbrella agreement with College of Engineering that includes 10 Iraqi universities and BS, MSc, and PhD programs
- 2+2 Undergraduate Program
- 2+3 BS and MSc in Engineering
- First 2 years at Iraqi university; student earns degree from Iraqi institution only
- Top students demonstrate strong English language skills in first year of UG program in Iraq

# USAID & NSF PEER Science Program

- National Science Foundation peer reviewed Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) Science managed by U.S. National Academies
- Competitive grants program with funding from US Agency for International Development (USAID) to support research and capacity-building science in developing countries
- Iraqi researchers can apply as Principal Investigators in collaboration with NSF-funded U.S. researchers
- Up to \$180,000 over 3 years for: education and training, technology dissemination, support for students & postdoctoral fellowships, travel, equipment, publications
- Priority areas include: Food security, Climate change, Renewable energy, Water management, Hydrology, Biodiversity, Plant genomics



# USAID & NSF PEER Science Program

- 2 grants for Iraq-U.S. collaboration awarded in 2013 out of 8 total for the Middle East region:
  - The American University of Iraq - Sulaimani with Miami University of Ohio: Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU): Freshwater science and policy in Tigris River Basin
  - Baghdad University & Michigan State University (Soil water retention for vegetable production)
- U.S. and Iraqi researchers find each other through programs like: Department of State Linkages, Fulbright visiting scientist exchanges, scientific meetings, U.S. National Academies Arab-American Frontiers of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, and GOI Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research-sponsored STEM collaboration visits





# Human Capacity Development Program (HCDP)

- ❖ Launched in 2010, the KRG's Ministry of Higher Education has allocated \$100 million each year to HCDP, which aims to:
  - ❖ Train a highly skilled young generation of leaders, scholars, and professionals
  - ❖ Build and develop human resources to restructure the higher education system
  - ❖ Promote excellence in advanced research and improve knowledge transfer
- ❖ 4,351 scholarships have been awarded thus far
- ❖ Students must be residents Kurdistan Region of Iraq to be eligible
- ❖ Students are chosen based on merits
- ❖ Open to master's and doctorate degrees **only**
- ❖ Open to all fields of study, with emphasis given to STEM fields
- ❖ Option to study at universities in 15 countries worldwide, including the United States (current emphasis)

# Snapshot of HCDP in the U.S.

- ❖ 2,651 students have begun studying abroad, of which 10% are currently studying in the U.S.
- ❖ 1,700 HCDP students await placement and they need to improve their language proficiency in home country
- ❖ Students self-place into regionally accredited universities across the country
- ❖ Majority of students require conditional admission
- ❖ Many students travel with a spouse and/or dependents



# Recruitment Strategies

- ❖ Travel to Kurdistan
  - ❖ Participate in university fairs – **Spring 2014**
  - ❖ Meet with KRG MOHE officials
  - ❖ Visit local campuses
  - ❖ Establish a connection with English centers inside the Kurdistan Region - contracted by HCDP
  - ❖ Translate website information & application into Kurdish
  - ❖ Work with EducationUSA, who has a local education advisor in the U.S. Consulate in Erbil
- ❖ Contact the KRG Representation in Washington, DC



# Funding for Research

## ❖ PhD Pathway Program

- ❖ Funding available to spend one year researching with host supervisor abroad, with the option to extend for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year if approved by both supervisors
- ❖ Funding also available for 3-months intensive English language at host institution, with the option to extend at the student's own expense
- ❖ PhD degree awarded by home institution

## ❖ Joint Research

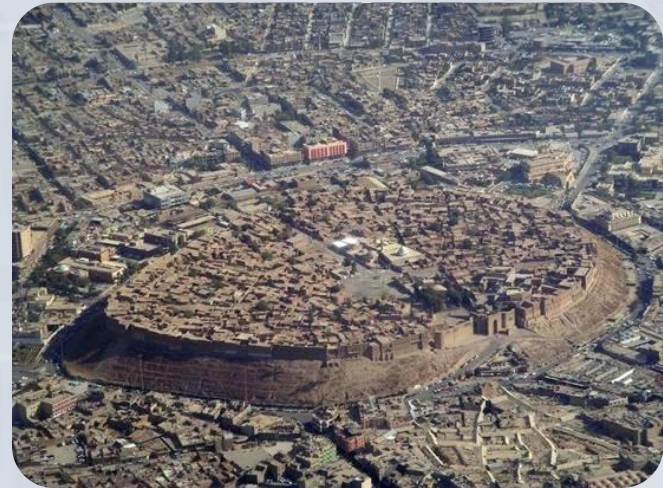
## ❖ Post Doc Training Program

## ❖ Sabbatical Leave

## ❖ Government funding available for self-funded students studying abroad.

# Partnership Opportunities

- Joint research opportunities and collaboration between higher education institutions
- Sign Memorandum of Understandings with:
  - Ministry of Higher Education
  - Individual Universities
  - Individual Departments
- Faculty Exchanges
- Unique and untapped Region, ideal for research (i.e. Archeology, agriculture, civilization records, etc.)




# Place to be...

- New and emerging market across the spectrum
- Safe, secure, and prosperous region
  - Liberated in 1991 (1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War)
- Not a single foreign civilian, military, or other personnel hurt in the Kurdistan Region as a result of any terrorist attacks.
- All sectors require reform or restructure (i.e. Higher Education, Health, Economy, etc.)
- Region's economy grew by double digits in 2013 (10 % to 12%)
- Erbil International Airport received over 1.2 million passengers in 2013
- Some 800+ foreign companies participated in Erbil International Trade Fair in 2013
- Some 70+ foreign higher education institutions participated in 2012 EducationUSA Fair



# University Linkage Program Overview

## Iraq University Linkages Program supports sustainable higher education reform

**55**   
 undergraduate students participated in a six-week intensive Summer English Language Study Program

**20**  
 Iraqi universities and government institutions participating in management training

**65**  
 administrators received intensive leadership and management training

**16**  
 administrators will take part in management job shadowing programs in the US

**english language training**



**curriculum and faculty development**



**administrative capacity building**



**career support**



**150**   
 Number of US and Iraqi faculty who have collaborated to revise and strengthen curricula and syllabi at Iraqi universities

**1,300**  
 trained by career center staff in CV writing, interview skills, leadership and professional development

**99**  
 students placed in internships

**72**  
 students placed in employment positions

**3** career centers established and staff trained

**4** industry advisory meetings in Iraq



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# University Partnerships

- Georgia State University & University of Baghdad (UoB)
  - English Departments in College of Languages, Education, and Liberal Arts
- Michigan State University & University of Duhok (UoD)
  - English, Biology, Computer and Electrical Engineering
- University of Missouri at Columbia & University of Technology in Baghdad (UoT)
  - Nanotechnology, Industrial Engineering, Renewable Energy





# Lessons Learned



- Successful long-term partnerships go well beyond exchanges, they have focus, expectations on both sides and they are results oriented.
- Extensive Orientation- develop common language
- No Assumptions
- Consistent and clear communication
- Understand context and complexities-expect things to take time
- Build relationships
- Provide structure to programs-be results oriented

# Opportunities for partnership with Iraqi Universities

- Short Term Academic Training Program
- MOHE Faculty training
- Research Collaborations
- Co-supervision/Split-site supervision of PhD students
- Additional opportunities

# Contact Us

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