Sponsored Students and Partnership Opportunities in Iraq

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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
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 2nd 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\textsuperscript{st} 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.
- **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 Colombia & 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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