

Latest Developments in the University Partnerships between the Universities of Oldenburg and Dohuk on the Implementation of Inclusion in the Iraqi-Kurdish Education System

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After being guests for the second time at the University of Dohuk in Kurdish northern Iraq for a working meeting within the University Cooperation HSP2 in last April, a return visit of the Dohuk scientists took place from May 26th to June 1st, 2014.

The top-class delegation consisted of the president of the University of Dohuk, Prof. Dr. Mosleh Duhoky, the dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Prof. Dr. Odeat O. Essi and the director of the Center for European Studies, Dr. Mamou F. Othman.

The objective pursued by the research stay was to establish the basis for a succeeding university cooperation and to sign a «Memorandum of Understanding / Agreement of Cooperation».

The conditions of an expedient university cooperation were discussed during a reception in the presidium by the Vice-President of the University of Oldenburg, Mrs. Prof. Dr. Gunilla Budde, and elaborated on faculty level within two recipients by Prof. Dr. Manfred Wittrock, Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences.

At the end of the discussions both parties the Iraqi-Kurdish Delegation and the Oldenburg scientists were particularly delighted to sign a «Memorandum of Understanding / Agreement of Cooperation», which pursues the collaboration of the Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation of the University of Oldenburg under expert leadership of Mrs. Prof. Dr. Ortmann and the Faculty of Educational Sciences under the leadership of Dean Prof. Dr. Essi in the following fields:

- «Joint research projects»
- «Joint field projects (e.g. in "Inclusion")»
- «Exchange of faculty members»
- «Exchange of students»
- «Exchange of study programs in "Disability Studies and Rehabilitation"»

The objectives of collaboration set by the «Memorandum of Understanding / Agreement of Cooperation» form the basis for implementing inclusion in the Iraqi education system:

In 2015 the University of Dohuk will be the first university to establish a „Department of Special Education“, for which the authorisation of the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (MOHESR) has been given since June 18th, 2014.

In the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan the MOHESR is responsible for higher education, the annual allocation to the universities and allows the framework of academic curricular contents. The management of the University of Dohuk is aimed in cooperation with the Oldenburg scientists at enabling students to start studying „Disability Studies and Rehabilitation“ as early as next year at the newly established «Department of Special Education».

The authorization of the MOHESR lays the foundations for the realization of these plans. The structural basis for this is established in cooperation with the Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation by means of developing the curriculum as well as the study and examination regulations. Preparatory operations are currently in progress within the framework of the DAAD program „University Partnerships with Iraq“ (HSP 2, Funding Line A)

By the «Memorandum of Understanding / Agreement of Cooperation » between both universities

Dohuk and Oldenburg, the establishment of the „Department of Special Education“ and the implementation of the degree course „Disability Studies and Rehabilitation“ a trendsetting step is taken towards the realization of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities which was ratified by Iraq and therefore also by the Kurdistan Autonomous Region on March 20th, 2013.