



Towards a New Generation of Engaged Universities: *The Need to Act, Adapt and Transform*

16TH- 18TH April, 2024 | Kempinski Central Avenue
(Formerly the Address Dubai Mall), Dubai, UAE

THE CURIOUS CASE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN KURDISTAN

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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF KURDISTAN (AUK)

City of Duhok, Kurdistan
Region of Iraq

Founded 2014

Opened 2015

8 Bachelor's Programs





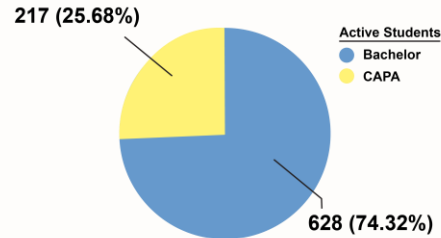
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AUK CENSUS DATA (SPRING 2024)

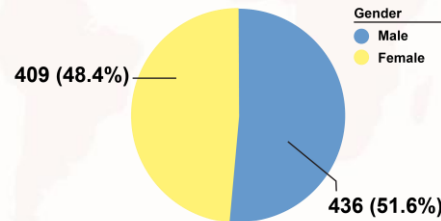
Total number of active students

BACHELOR	CAPA
628	217
845	



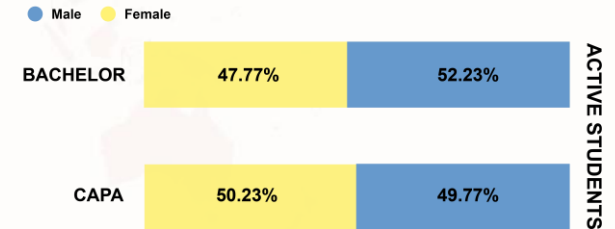
Gender balance

FEMALE	MALE
409	436
845	



Students by level

GENDER	CAPA	BACHELOR'S	GRAND TOTAL
FEMALE	109	300	409
MALE	108	328	436
GRAND TOTAL	217	628	845

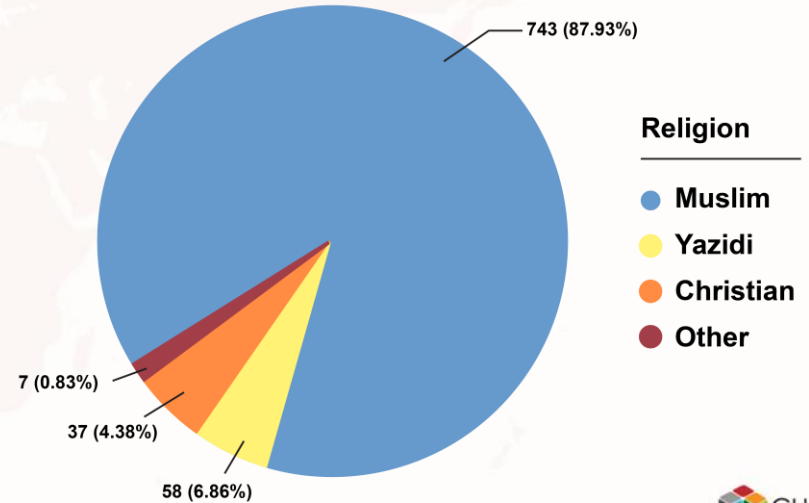
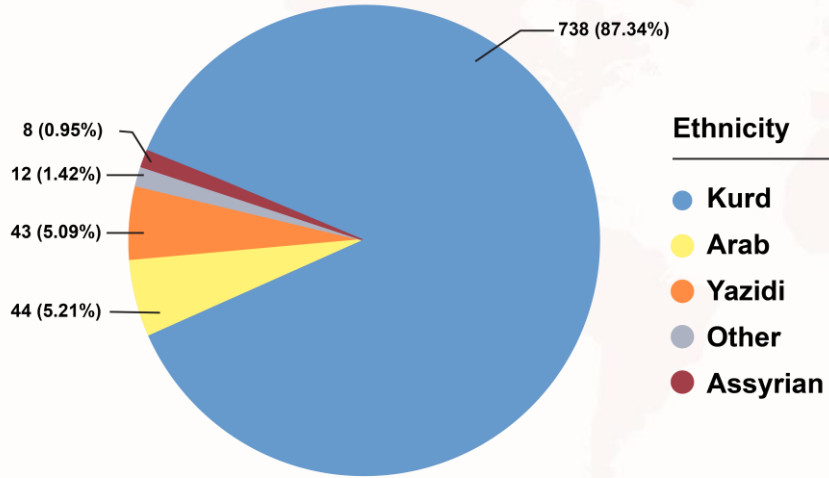




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AUK: STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS – ETHNICITY AND RELIGION





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THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

Demographics

- Population: 6.1 million
- 800,000 IDPs and Refugees
- 50% aged 20 years and younger

Economics

- 70% of employed in public sector
- 44% of youths unemployed
- 16% of females employed





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PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM(S)

MARKET RESEARCH REVEALED:

- **Need for lifelong learning to transform education to respond effectively to the marketplace**

IMPERATIVE OF DESIGNING PROGRAMS AIMING TO:

- **Upskill workforce**
- **Provide tools to adapt to a changing job market**
- **Foster entrepreneurship**
- **Promote development of private sector**
- **Instill competencies foundational to innovation**
- **Nurture soft skill development including critical thinking, problem solving, creativity**





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AUK CENTER OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT (CAPA)

MISSION: Through its expansive educational outreach in the region, CAPA prepares students for academic success, builds strong and resourceful communities through public and private sector capacity building, and educates highly qualified professionals. It functions as a bridge between AUK's academics and the communities that the University serves

VISION: CAPA will become the professional center of choice that is responsive to local and regional, public and private sector educational needs and be a leader in nurturing a culture of academic success, higher education preparation, lifelong learning and continuous professional development.





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AUK CENTER OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT (CAPA)

GOAL: To create a quality workforce, prepare capable students who are equipped with 21st century skills and knowledge, and mentor public schools to provide those skills and knowledge to their students. The curriculum also seeks to nurture design thinking abilities, promote problem solving skills, and grow the small and medium enterprise sector through the development of entrepreneurship skills.

Overall, CAPA seeks to empower and support self-sufficiency among Kurdistan's vulnerable populations: youths, refugees, IDPs, and generally women, through its expansive educational outreach in the region and country.





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PROBLEM: QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

- Overcrowded schools with multiple shifts
- Teachers lack training in curriculum design, soft skill instruction, technology fluency
- No culture of parents paying for supplemental education (weekends and summers)

SOLUTION: CAPA YOUNG LEARNERS' PROGRAM

Curriculum in English language, critical thinking, creativity, tech fluency, STEM skills, entrepreneurship, design thinking





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PROBLEM: LACK OF RESOURCES TO TRANSFORM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Lack of culture supporting educational transformation
- Lack of financial resources to acquire instructional resources, technological tools
- Lack of implementation of student-centered pedagogies
- Lack of established student learning outcomes per discipline and grade level

SOLUTION: TEACHER-TRAINING CENTER

- Establishing teacher-training center to deliver student-centered teaching and training for adoption of instructional technologies
- Scaling up initiative with teachers training teachers





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PROBLEM: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISENCHANTMENT

- Excessive number of university graduates from programs not aligned with job market
- Lack of venture capital and investment in the private sector
- Insufficient instruction in entrepreneurship, IT development, and design thinking

SOLUTION: CAPAi DESIGN THINKING TECH BOOTCAMP

- Teams participating in intensive summer bootcamps to find creative solutions to real problems





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PROBLEM: STATE DEPENDENCY OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- Over one million Yezidi IDPs and Syrian refugees in Kurdistan
- Due to disrupted education and living in crisis, population lacks the knowledge, skills, and access to resources
- Family status volatility
- Need for economic self-sufficiency, especially women

SOLUTION: DELIVER PROGRAMMING TO WOMEN IDPS AND REFUGEES

- Provide women with tools to develop their SMEs addressing gaps in services and product provision in the camps and immediate neighborhoods





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PROBLEM: CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

- Minimal skills and knowledge for effective and efficient services
- Lack of ability to engage with technology that could transform service delivery
- Digitalization is a priority
- Minimal strategic planning on governmental level
- Transformation requires paradigm shift throughout the bureaucracy



SOLUTION: TRAINING GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

- Delivery of sector-specific trainings – e.g. Hospitality & Tourism Certificate – professional English, strategic management, project management, soft skill development – all tailored to local context





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LESSONS LEARNED - PRIORITIES

- **Establishing lifelong learning units at universities and learning institutions, allocating adequate financial and human resources to implement meaningful educational programs for the academic community and multiple publics.**
- **Engaging with the community through active outreach involving students, practitioners, and public influencers.**
- **Developing awareness programs to educate the community at large about the importance of lifelong learning and the opportunities that it presents.**
- **Aligning partners, pertinent programs and interventions to deliver meaningful educational programs.**





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LESSONS LEARNED – PRIORITIES

- **Creating accessible educational programs for the vulnerable as a hand-up.**
- **Seeking resources that ensure the long-term sustainability of programs and that provide students/participants with long-term coaching and mentoring; stakeholders in the private and public sectors share this responsibility.**
- **Collecting feedback in order to design solutions that are aligned with the issues/problems identified by students/participants and stakeholders.**
- **Ensuring that the publics understand the value of lifelong education and can support the sustainability of such programs.**
- **CAPA to open multiple locations across Kurdistan; double number of enrollees.**





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PROJECTIONS (3-5 years)

- **With government funding, the teacher training initiative will become institutionalized; the training center will accommodate more teachers and provide follow up with participants to certify their long-term competencies and skill development.**
- **Emphasis to be placed on programming for university graduates in the realm of start-ups and entrepreneurship supporting a youthful ecosystem of start-ups.**
- **Support for educational programming for IDPs and refugees will increase; the success rates of those completing the programs will increase; a multiplier effect in their respective communities as the number of trainers grows.**
- **More public-sector employees will receive trainings to reach greater efficiency and effectiveness; target – 50% of public-sector employees in Duhok will be trained.**





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CONCLUSION

Continuing education units like CAPA represent models that aim to improve educational opportunities for individual students and professionals in order to create an economic prospect for success. The greater access a country provides to quality education, the more its GDP will grow, and the better positioned that country will be to pursue and deliver favorable outcomes for its people and their communities.





Center for Learning Innovations &
Customized Knowledge Solutions

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