

Scientific chairs of Iraqi universities and their role in achieving sustainable development goals

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Abstract

The study aims to show the emergence of UNESCO chairs in Iraqi universities and the activities carried out to achieve the goals of sustainable development, as each chair was established to achieve one of these goals, which left its impact on some educational and social sectors, and thus the importance of the study emanates from the need to indicate the establish of UNESCO chairs in Iraqi universities and the activities that strengthened their establishment, activity and local and international initiatives, as well as to identify what these chairs have achieved from the sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Scientific Chairs, UNESCO, Iraqi universities, Sustainable development

الكراسي العلمية للجامعات العراقية ودورها في تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة

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الملخص

تهدف الدراسة إلى استعراض ظهور كراسي اليونسكو في الجامعات العراقية والأنشطة التي تم تنفيذها لتحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة، حيث تم إنشاء كل كرسي لتحقيق أحد هذه الأهداف التي تركت أثرها على بعض القطاعات التعليمية والاجتماعية ، وبالتالي تنبع أهمية الدراسة من الحاجة إلى الإشارة إلى إنشاء كراسي اليونسكو في الجامعات العراقية والأنشطة التي عززت إنشائها ونشاطها ومبادراتها المحلية والدولية، وكذلك تحديد ما حققته هذه الكراسي من أهداف التنمية المستدامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكراسي العلمية ، اليونسكو ، الجامعات العراقية ، التنمية المستدامة

Introduction

Since the launch of the UNESCO Chair project in 1992, many universities in various countries of the world are seeking to establish it to achieve certain goals and objectives, foremost of which are the goals of sustainable development, and from these universities, Iraqi universities have found their way to achieve this, namely the University of Kufa, College of Arts/ University of Baghdad and the Faculty of Law, University of Mosul, as well as University of Diyala's quest for membership in the UNESCO Chair, as it has also succeeded in achieving three important goals, namely education, peace and strong institutions.

To achieve this, it is necessary to answer these questions, which begin with a main question: How did scientific chairs establish in Iraqi universities? Which branches out of several questions: 1- What are the activities that promoted its inception? 2- What is the relationship of scientific chairs to the sustainable development goals? 3- Have the Iraqi scientific chairs succeeded in achieving the sustainable development goals?

Accordingly, we decided to divide the study into two requirements within the framework of the experience of Iraqi universities, where the first deals with the establishment of scientific chairs, while the second deals with the complementary relationship between UNESCO chairs and sustainable development

First Requirement The Establishment of Scientific Chairs in Iraqi Universities

The UNESCO Chair is a project established in 1992 by a resolution of the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session that serves as a key means of strengthening the capacities of institutions of higher education and scientific research through an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation activities related to diverse fields and facilitates cooperation between high-level and internationally recognized researchers and faculty members of universities and other higher education institutions in a spirit of international solidarity⁽¹⁾.

These programs allow joining and establishing them in any country through their universities for they contribute to achieving the goals of the joining countries, and therefore Iraqi universities sought to establish chairs for UNESCO to achieve peaceful coexistence and improve education, because it is the responsibility of humanity to accept diversity as a blessing from Allah and live with people of different religions, cultures and ideologies in peace, harmony and cooperation, so that dialogue and understanding between followers of different religions is a necessary condition for promoting peace, tolerance, harmony and religious coexistence in the world today⁽²⁾, especially after the Iraqi state suffered for a long time armed conflicts and wars that Iraqi society paid the price for.

From this standpoint, Iraqi universities have sought to establish a UNESCO chair in which will be explained according to the following:

First: University of Kufa:

Established the UNESCO Chair for Interfaith Studies in the Islamic World, this chair, which was established in 2015, is the first UNESCO chair in Iraq, which was renewed by UNESCO for four

years from 2023-2027, and the UNESCO chair at the University of Kufa specializes in developing interfaith dialogue studies in the Islamic world, and it is the first single pioneering project obtained by an Iraqi university, which aims to provide academic knowledge in the humanitarian fields, especially studies related to religions and sects, and seeks to contribute to the development of the study of non-Islamic societies in Muslim-majority countries, while seeking to encourage a culture of dialogue, peaceful coexistence and respect for the rights of others, it is particularly concerned with the Islamic religion from a comparative perspective that takes into account world religions and multicultural societies that have experienced conflict among themselves.

The activities of this chair are:

- A. Developing scientific research by strengthening international cooperation: This is done by placing teams of Iraqi academic professors, researchers and intellectuals from different countries of the world in joint research projects that enhance the patterns of international, regional and local relations between universities and researchers through the UNESCO Chair, through exchange programs of visiting professors, joint supervision of doctoral dissertations and research cooperation programs, as well as proposing educational initiatives related to civil society and religious and political leaders to achieve a common understanding through dialogue between religions and sects in order to achieve the development of knowledge and skills of professors, researchers and students are in research methodologies and theoretical and practical approaches to the study of religion and interfaith relations.
- B. Production of high-quality research: In the field of comparative religions and interfaith relations in Iraq and the Islamic world from the perspective of different branches of study (religious

sciences, humanities, social sciences), by working with partners in the chair and working to provide a place for professors, students and other intellectuals from Iraq and various regions of the world to meet, work together on topics of sectarian and confessional divisions, contribute to public debate and decision-making policies to improve relations between religions and governments, strengthen the social fabric in Iraq and the Islamic world as a whole, and establish a network of relationships for communication and knowledge exchange through the creation of a website dedicated to the Chair and printed publications such as flyers, organizing conferences and workshops, etc., cooperating closely with UNESCO through programs and activities related to the subject of the Chair, and cooperating with UNESCO Chairs on the same subject ⁽³⁾.

- C. Establishment of the UNESCO Chair Library in 2015: It is a set of books that have been saved for reading, study and guidance, and it is dedicated to researchers and graduate students (masters and doctorates) to meet their needs from scientific sources that help them write research, as it contains books with critical, philosophical and religious sources, as well as all the preparation of Kufa International journal, in addition to theses, dissertations and important books by prestigious professors, as well as the chair has multiple activities represented by holding seminars at the local and international levels.
- D. Achieving international cooperation: This chair has activities of an international nature, including cooperation with international universities, as the Director of the Chair Dr. (Alaa Shatanan) discussed cooperation with the University of Domini in Paris with Mr. (Michel van Erd), President of the Dominican University of Dominican Republic and his assistant Mrs. (Marie Monet) in order to bilateral cooperation between the two universities within the

framework of the work of the UNESCO Chair for Interfaith Dialogue, and the UNESCO Chair participated in the activities of the thirtieth conference of the network of UNESCO chairs, which took place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris for the period from 3-4 November 2022 the conference was entitled (Transforming Knowledge for a Just and Sustainable Future).

- E. Organizing many courses and seminars: In May 2023, a number of activities took place in it, including organizing an intellectual-scientific lecture in Paris under the title ⁽⁴⁾(The Heart and the Fuad in Language, the Qur'an and Physiology), as well as organizing a course in Stockholm on the relationship between science and the Holy Qur'an as a religious text, the references contained therein about the late scientific discoveries, and the reactions of contemporary scholars, historians and commentators about the scientific miracles in the Qur'an, a dialogue seminar was held in cooperation with the International Council for Religious and Human Dialogue in Oslo entitled (Religious Dialogue and Civilizational Communication) at the Central Library in Oslo, and under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, a joint conference was held for several Iraqi universities with the British Council in Baghdad to evaluate the process of experimental teaching of the subject (dialogue and peaceful coexistence) that took place in six Iraqi universities, including the University of Kufa in the academic year 2022-2023⁽⁵⁾

Second: College of Arts, University of Baghdad:

The UNESCO Chair for Combating Genocide was established at the College of Arts, University of Baghdad the establishment of this chair came for social reasons as a result of the phenomenon of conflict and genocide to which Iraq was exposed, and therefore it is necessary to investigate the effects of genocide to explore this

phenomenon and study its various dimensions, in order to expose these inhuman practices and prevent their recurrence by teaching them to the new generation of young people, and informing them of their social danger, the factors contributing to their occurrence, the means that facilitate their occurrence, and the cultures that pave and justify them. Therefore, there was a need to establish such a chair, and the College of Arts, University of Baghdad, had this opportunity, as the UNESCO Chair for Genocide Prevention Studies at the University of Baghdad is a scientific platform to establish a field of studies and research to confront genocide and treatment its effects, because of several sciences will contribute to the establishment of this field of interdisciplinary studies, such as law, political science and history, archaeology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, geology, geography, genetic engineering and technology, whereas, the project is in line with UNESCO's medium-term strategy for the period 2014-2021 for the development of the education sector by supporting the education system's responses to contemporary challenges of a culture of peace and tolerance, integrating universal values based on mutual understanding and respect, and human dignity, this UNESCO Chair aims to produce interdisciplinary academic knowledge on the diverse aspects of genocide studies, and to contribute original research into the study of the factors that led to genocide against Muslims and non-Muslims in Muslim-majority societies. Therefore, education contributes to the dissemination of national reconciliation by creating and promoting the universal values of justice, tolerance, respect for others, solidarity, democracy and the creation of a culture of peace. Peace and unity are emphasized so that students learn to coexist without discrimination or exclusion and the goal is to build unity and encourage reconciliation by promoting peace and tolerance that in turn prevent the recurrence of violence in the future⁽⁶⁾.

The most prominent activities of this chair are the following:

- A. Establishing a project to develop peacebuilding curricula in Iraqi universities: Since 2016, the Professional Diploma in Peacebuilding Studies and Conflict Transformation has been established, which was completed at the College of Arts, University of Baghdad in partnership with the College of Peace at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, this project enabled the College of Arts at the University of Baghdad to grant an international certificate recognized by the United Nations and European universities.
- B. The participation of the College of Arts, University of Baghdad, in the conference (the role of universities in peacebuilding) organized by the Iraqi Al-Amal Association in Baghdad and concludes this conference (Our Dialogue Project) implemented by the Iraqi Al-Amal association in partnership with the Danish Danmission Organization and with the support of the European Union, and the conference interventions focused on the importance of foreign and local experiences in promoting dialogue, accepting the other and building civil peace, and the positive role played by universities in this field⁽⁷⁾
- C. Create an educational model in which virtual reality technology was used (no one listens): It is a pioneering immersive exhibition commemorating Yazidi genocide designed in Britain and applied in Iraq by the International Organization for Migration, Sulaymaniyah Technical University, Yazda and the UNESCO Chair for Genocide prevention studies at the University of Baghdad. This educational model aims to achieve empathy for victims of genocide and recognition of their rights in order to reintegrate them into society⁽⁸⁾ The Peacebuilding Studies Program came

from the belief that education should contribute mainly to peacebuilding, so the College of Arts at University of Baghdad designed the Peace Education Program in partnership with the University of Innsbruck in Austria in 2019. This program was the result of the participation of the College of Arts, University of Baghdad in a workshop entitled (Peace Studies Curricula Related to the Project of Peacebuilding Education in the Iraqi Higher Education System) attended by a number of professors and researchers in Iraqi universities, in the city of Erbil and the goal of the workshop organized by the Iraqi Al-Amal Association presented by Dr. Wolfank Dietridge and Professor Adham Hamid from the University of Innsbruck, Austria, which laid the basis for the opening of a higher professional diploma study at the College of Arts, University of Baghdad in peace studies and conflict transformation. As well as approving the system of units and courses selected and open to multiple academic and cultural fields, to provide students with specialized knowledge and skills who aspire to work at a national or international level on peace and transform conflict scientifically and practically, specifically to teach interested students the vocabulary of the culture of peace and provide scientific sources that promote and resolve conflicts and apply them in the Iraqi context⁽⁹⁾. This study program includes teaching students the methods of dialogue in order to build lasting peace after conflict, and the development of a culture that promotes tolerance and coexistence among the various components of Iraqi society. The program includes education on citizenship and reconciliation in the context of building lasting peace and rejecting violence in its various forms. The program also included training teachers on conflict management and

peacebuilding methods, training on the classroom program and teaching hours in it, and training on social and emotional learning. This program teaches in the first semester of the academic year the basis of the concepts of peace, methods and scope of research in peace studies, as well as the study of human rights and international humanitarian law, teaching culture, peace, psychology, peace, diversity management and peacebuilding, either in the second semester of the academic year, an introduction to applied peace, additionally, the concept and theories of conflict, sociology and peace crisis management in negotiation the diploma program enhances and expands the knowledge and skills previously achieved. Students are practically trained and prepared for innovative academic research and work in the field Graduates are able to address research questions and practical challenges by applying theoretical and empirical based curricula, therefore they are able to relate to international technical state in the discipline and work with them independently and knowledge-based ability will be trained to solve problems, creative thinking, intuition and transform optional conflict in interdisciplinary contexts. Broadly as a balance of scientific peace theory and practical application exercises, graduates act around knowledge and experience large and deep enough to become self-responsible and quickly recognize the new tasks and methods of applied peace. They are able to apply their knowledge and skills professionally to solve problems in their specific field. They deal with personal and social experience and competence that qualify for leadership positions in this field⁽¹⁰⁾.

- D. Third: Faculty of Law, University of Mosul: The chair of peaceful coexistence at Faculty of Law, University of Mosul,

establish for social reasons as a result of the exposure of this coexistence to crises, turmoil, instability, deprivation of rights and other names that affect societies with religious, national, sectarian and ethnic diversity, especially if these crises lead to a state of fighting, conflicts or war that only produces destruction, displacement and mass displacement.

Therefore, the process of unification between the different parties of society in the post-armed conflict stage comes through a set of requirements that serve as basic foundations for promoting peaceful coexistence again within the same country in order to consolidate civil and societal peace to create a general framework and a coherent basis for restructuring society and building it again and continuing.

Hence, the hypothesis of the research starts by questioning the extent of the possibility and ability of societies with religious and ethnic diversity that were exposed to these crises, which targeted this diversity mainly to be able to rise, assimilate and continue again within the same country and thus achieve civil and societal peace, which the city of Mosul is a vivid example of this⁽¹¹⁾. The negative effects generated by the war and associated with many criminal acts committed by outlaw gangs represented by the mass abduction of civilians and the use of thousands of people as human shields, deliberate shelling of civilian residential areas, indiscriminate targeting of civilians trying to flee the city, execution-style killings of civilians, suffering inflicted on captivity and unjustified destruction of property, where at least 2,521 civilians were killed during the military operation and the highest number of casualties occurred more often as a result of ISIS attacks, including the execution of 741 people and the number of injured 1,673⁽¹²⁾.

In addition to the displacement and killing of Yazidi, Christian, Shabak minorities and Muslim, and the systematic and continuous

displacements that affected all religions and sects and all those they consider opposed to their existence and criminal orientations, and the consequent grave crimes of human rights⁽¹³⁾.

A United Nations investigative team confirmed that the evidence collected in Iraq reinforces the preliminary findings that ISIS terrorist gangs (Islamic State) committed crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Christian community, after it controlled about a third of the country in 2014. The report submitted to the United Nations Security Council, according to the Associated Press, stated that "crimes include the forced transfer and persecution of Christians, the seizure of their property, engaging in sexual violence, slavery and other inhumanity acts, such as forced conversion of religion and destruction of cultural and religious sites⁽¹⁴⁾.

In addition to the crimes of rape and torture of Yazidi women, these crimes generated hatred and fear for everyone, and led to the loss of livelihoods, which in the long run may create devastating effects on the social and psychological levels⁽¹⁵⁾. These crimes led to a decline in the education process due to fear of the unknown, especially after the spread of weapons by unknown people, which facilitated their use and the spread of weapons chaos clearly, and therefore the process recorded a clear failure in this area and its results continued Until now (National Development Plan January, 2013-2017) as well as its significant impact on the most important human rights, including the right to work and health insurance⁽¹⁶⁾.

The post-peace environment is an ambiguous and unknown environment that raises anxiety, doubts and uncertainty, so it needs high-level strategic planning, accuracy and enormous capabilities, and although it depends on the current strategic planning, this planning process cannot be successful if it is sufficient to study the past and analyze the present only⁽¹⁷⁾. Therefore, consolidating a

culture of coexistence and peace is a strategic choice in promoting social integration between different ethnic components and removing all barriers which hinders its achievement⁽¹⁸⁾.

Therefore, in order to re-advance society and build a solid peaceful coexistence, the University of Mosul has succeeded in developing a strategy, which is to obtain its own chair within the UNESCO chairs, which was granted to University of Mosul as a recognition of Mosul's return to the global scene and its entry into the world of culture, literature, history and civilization from its widest doors, which is a recognition that this ancient city with a long history full of achievements and deep in history and with a cultural heritage and distinguished history deserves to receive its own chair within the framework of "Rejecting Violent Extremism and Promoting a Culture of Peace", through an agreement concluded between UNESCO and the University of Mosul in January 2023⁽¹⁹⁾, which aims at cultural promotion, internal dialogue of cultures and a culture of peace. Article (8) of the rules of procedure of the Chair defines its objectives as follows: "The Chair aims to achieve the goal of rejecting violent extremism and promoting a culture of peace by every means of research, education and training consistent with this purpose"⁽²⁰⁾.

Therefore, the city of Mosul is the best example of peaceful coexistence, tolerance and peace among these social components, and it is a point of convergence and rapprochement between the components of Iraqi society such as Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Shabaks, Christians, Yazidis, Kakains and other sects, and it represents small Iraq and the city of Mosul is considered the most reflective of this model, which combines religious, national and sectarian sectors of populations in a society characterized by harmony and cohesion between its basic components⁽²¹⁾.

Therefore, the liberation of the Mosul city and the desire for peaceful coexistence among its components was the main starting point for the establishment of a UNESCO chair, which aims to achieve peaceful coexistence between the social components in the Mosul city and all components of the Iraqi people from north to south. It is worth mentioning that the concept of peaceful coexistence has many connotations that the meaning closest to the goal to be achieved from peaceful coexistence in the Mosul city is the religious, cultural, civilized and social connotation, which is intended to meet and unite the will of the people of the monotheistic religions and different civilizations in working for security and peace, so there must be a strong relationship between us and the people of religions that is based on tolerance.

Culture also has a role in activating coexistence between others, its characteristics lie in that it is a human phenomenon that expresses the humanity of the individual as well as being a means of meeting with others and reducing the extremism of ethnic conflicts, breaking the thorn of tribal intolerance, removing psychological barriers between different classes of society, developing a sense of human brotherhood, eliminating hatred and grudge, spreading love and cooperation between people, and strengthening relations between individuals⁽²²⁾.

One of the most important and prominent activities of this chair, which is a living and realistic example to show the effectiveness of this chair in achieving the meaning of peaceful coexistence as shown above:

- A. Local Field Visits carried out by the University of Mosul to the holy city of Karbala, as these visits are the best example of peaceful coexistence among the components of the Iraqi people. A delegation of professors from the University of Mosul visited in 2020 the Karbala Center for Studies and

Research in the Holy Al-Husseiniya Shrine, and the visiting delegation held a meeting with the center's management, and they discussed holding the third international intellectual conference, under the slogan "With coexistence and love, homelands are built"⁽²³⁾ .

- B.** Activities of the UNESCO Chair Week: The Chair carried out its activities and events within the framework of a purposeful scientific and cultural week during the curricula of the UNESCO Chair Week from 7-11 May 2023, in cooperation with the colleges of Law, Arts, Political Science, Physical Education, Sports Sciences, Fine Arts and Archeology, and the Departments of Student Activities and Scientific Affairs at the Presidency of the University of Mosul, which included a conference, a number of seminars, fairs, sports, artistic and literary activities that all poured into the service of the chair's slogan, which focused on the fact that the University of Mosul is a permanent radiant of culture and science and a home for all.
- C.** Achieving international cooperation within the activities of the UNESCO Chair at the University of Mosul, and the result of its fruitful work, there was cooperation between it and the UNESCO Chair at the University of Ulster and through the coordination of UNESCO Iraq and Koya University, Erbil, in a workshop for the training program on peace research and education on June 3, 2023, which dealt with peacebuilding theories, the causes of conflict, the role of education in promoting peace, and mechanisms for achieving sustainable peace within society through its main tools, the teacher, the curriculum and the educational environment, its discussions witnessed great interaction from the participants who were professors of the University of Mosul, in light of a positive

conditions. As well as joint knowledge and scientific cooperation, as the Faculty of Law, in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair⁽²⁴⁾, hosted Dr. Kelsey Shanks, an international expert in education and peacebuilding programs and Director of the UNESCO Chair at the University of Ulster, during her session, she presented a distinguished lecture entitled (Research Ethics in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts). The lecture discussed types of ethical problems in academic research, especially research related to peacebuilding in post-conflict societies, and this lecture resulted in a number of dialogues with professors of scientific branches and their students in post-graduate studies, and it is worth noting that this topic is the main pillar in the cooperation program between the UNESCO Chair at the University of Ulster and the UNESCO Chair at the University of Mosul, which extended several months ago with live events of regular training workshops held on 1-2 October 2023⁽²⁵⁾.

- D. Achieving local cooperation: The UNESCO Chair, represented by Prof. Dr. Qabas Hassan Awwad, participated in the Youth for Peace project organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the Northern Technical University to enhance the employability and resilience of young people for peace in Nineveh, and rejecting violent extremism and the need to establish educational curricula that support free thought, analysis and infinite constructive criticism, the doctor pointed to the need to achieve intellectual and dialogue balance between the parties of the educational institution (student, professor, administration). Here, it is necessary to know the relationship between peaceful coexistence and higher education, because of the education is one of the tools for rejecting the discourse of extremism and intolerance, and

one of the tools for raising individuals to accept the different other, and building minds in order to be prepared to accept the ideas of peaceful coexistence with the different other. It is focused on working within international decisions to build societal peace and requires efforts and pursuit at several levels and requires thinking about how to build minds and ideas and apply what this word means on the ground, the basis for which the dissemination of concepts and ideas that contribute to the consolidation of peaceful coexistence. The educational environment encourages dialogue and acceptance of cultural, ethnic and racial diversity, and emphasizes societal peace and human integration⁽²⁶⁾.

Education has many roles, functions, tasks and challenges, the most important of which is maintaining the intellectual security of students and promoting the values of tolerance among them, as this has become necessary due to the lack of adoption of a culture of dialogue, tolerance and lack of respect for the other opinion⁽²⁷⁾ and Protecting girls from all forms of violence, especially social violence, which is intended to deprive them of the exercise of social and personal rights, including depriving them of education⁽²⁸⁾.

Since education is a peace gain from UNESCO's point of view, education can play a pivotal role in peacebuilding perhaps more than any other sector. Education can provide clear early peace gains, on which the survival of "peace" agreements may depend, and that the reconstruction of social institutions shows the importance of peace to society through two main approaches: addressing grievances, restoring trust in the state⁽²⁹⁾.

In 2015, UNESCO's Executive Board adopted a resolution emphasizing the importance of education as a tool to help prevent terrorism and violent extremism, as well as ethnic and religious intolerance, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity

around the world. It constitutes an important element of societal commitment to curb and prevent the rise of violent extremism⁽³⁰⁾. The university is one of the most important institutions, where it has a set of goals looming under three main functions: education, preparing manpower, scientific research, community service⁽³¹⁾.

Fourth: Establishment of the UNESCO Chair for Human Rights at the University of Diyala:

A committee was formed by a decision issued by the President of the University of Diyala in 2020 for the possibility of establishing a UNESCO chair at the University of Diyala in 2023. The committee for the creation of the UNESCO chair at the University of Diyala in 2021 at its headquarters in the Central Library building headed by the university held its first meeting and headed by Prof. Dr. (Muhammad Yusuf Hajim), Chairman of the Committee for the Development of the UNESCO Chair at the University and in the presence of all members of the coordinators of the colleges of the university to create the UNESCO Chair at the University of Diyala, this meeting came within the framework of the directions of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Presidency of the University of Diyala with the possibility of establishing a UNESCO chair at the university in order to enhance scientific cooperation with international universities as well as enhance scientific cooperation and interlock with international networks of scientific research institutions under the umbrella of UNESCO. This allows researchers to build bridges of communication and exchange of knowledge and technology and contributes to supporting scientific agencies, and the members of the UNESCO Chair Committee discussed the mechanisms and timetables for the implementation of the program to address the issue adopted by the University Council under the title (Human rights are

our sail towards the future - Diyala University is a beacon in community service) to obtain a UNESCO chair at the university⁽³²⁾ .

During its regular meeting in 2022, the Committee for the Establishment of the UNESCO Chair at the University of Diyala launched the mechanism for activating the training programs for the activities of the establishment of the UNESCO Chair, and during the meeting they discussed the mechanism for activating the launch of training programs for the University of Diyala in coordination with the United Nations Organization specialized in development programs in Iraq.

As well as setting a date for holding an extensive introductory seminar on the achievements and work of the Committee during a year in cooperation with the Commission for Human Rights in Diyala Governorate⁽³³⁾, as the United Nations affirmed basic human rights and equal access to these rights⁽³⁴⁾, and the report issued by the United Nations Development Program emphasizes the inseparable link between development and human rights⁽³⁵⁾.

The University of Diyala has many activities that enhance its establishment of the UNESCO Chair, and these activities include:

- A. Participation in a training course on climate change and disasters: This course is for training on developing appropriate solutions facing societies, especially women, children and the elderly, from drought and its repercussions, so that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Human Rights Council highlight that climate change affects the right to life, self-determination, development, health, food, water, sanitation, housing and a range of cultural rights, as a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is seen as a necessary prerequisite for the enjoyment of with many well-established and universally recognized human rights⁽³⁶⁾ .

- B. The College of Administration and Economics held a seminar entitled Measuring and analyzing the impact of some economic variables on the poverty rate in Iraq, as well as holding an educational seminar on reducing extremism and calling for peace.
- C. The College of Education for Pure Science held a symposium on the water crisis and its treatment by modern scientific methods.
- D. The College of Basic Education holds a seminar to discuss the phenomenon of begging.
- E. Holding a basic course on the work of human rights committees in higher education institutions.
- F. Launching a talking computer course for the blind and visually impaired.
- G. Providing support, assistance and care for orphans and the needy who suffer from psychological and economic problems and addressing their problems to create a conscious and healthy generation capable of developing and advancing society.
- H. Seeking to develop a mechanism to activate the launch of the new official website to publish the activities of the creation of the UNESCO Chair, where the engineer who created the site explained the mechanism for sending activity reports electronically and emphasizing video documentation, as well as the participation of university students in these activities and hosting scientists, experts and specialists in the field of human rights from outside the university.
- I. The delegation of the University of Diyala participated in a training course held by the British international organization Oxfam on the risks of climate change and disasters.

- J. As part of the efforts of the University of Diyala to obtain the UNESCO chair, the Central Committee visited the College of Administration and Economics to deliberate and dialogue on the mechanism of the committee's work and the most important enhanced requirements for the completion of this event because of its knowledge achievement that serves the aspirations of the University of Diyala towards universality⁽³⁷⁾.

Second Requirement

The complementary relationship between the UNESCO Chair and sustainable development

Some Iraqi universities have succeeded in establishing a UNESCO chair and working to achieve its goals, so it is necessary to address a very important issue, which is what is the truth of the relationship that brings these chairs together with the goals of sustainable development?

It is known that each university establishes a chair for UNESCO in its university; it aims and seeks to achieve a specific goal commensurate with the mandate of UNESCO and with the goals of sustainable development.

Iraq has gone through many crises and circumstances, changing systems of government and forming governments, as well as passing through obstacles to achieving peace after 2018 after the end of the war on terrorism, and these obstacles include the weakness of the legal dimension, the disruption of the legislative function, the caretaker government, which greatly affected the achievement of peace and peaceful coexistence⁽³⁸⁾.

The general educational policy in Iraq has suffered since the eighties as a result of the wars and crises suffered by Iraq and followed by the post-2003 stage, and it is worth noting that Iraq has gone through many crises and wars from the 1980 war and the 1991 siege, as well as the events after 2003, the change of governments,

the change of the constitution and finally to the emergence of ISIS in 2014 in addition to many crises and internal conflicts.

The change of governments and the spread of sectarianism have had a negative impact on education, so trying to find ways to solve the problem of neglecting education in Iraq must be preceded by the process of reviewing the places of weakness and defects, a real review of them and reaching radical solutions that serve the country and its future. However, Iraq was able to revive and develop education through school curricula, as it is a mirror that reflects the goals of education and that its development reflects its impact on all sectors of society, which leads to the development of the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence⁽³⁹⁾.

Curricula are one of the best means to achieve coexistence. Through human rights, education aims to contribute to building civil society according to a practical and comprehensive plan that adopts awareness of rights in a way that helps to preserve, practice and invest them in a space of guaranteed freedom for peaceful and safe coexistence⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Accordingly, the scientific chairs in Iraq were able to achieve the two goals at the same time, so they developed education and improved the curricula and at the same time through education they were able to achieve coexistence and spread tolerance and peace among the different segments of society, especially since Iraq has gone through long catastrophic events of wars, change of regimes, different governments, economic collapse, violence and sectarianism⁽⁴¹⁾.

All these events have greatly affected the Iraqi society in all its segments, so the balance and stability of society must be restored through education and peaceful coexistence, which education is the paved way for it, there must be quality of higher education if the quality reflects its impact significantly on all sectors as the quality of

education is the most important development tools for the work of institutions, ministries and private government sectors⁽⁴²⁾ .

Hence, this development reflects its impact on the ability to achieve the sustainable development goals. Education is the pillar of sustainable development and is a necessary means to develop knowledge, values, attitudes, trends, abilities, behaviors and lifestyles in order to be more consistent and in line with sustainable development in the same country and between countries, which would contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, the fight against injustice and inequality and help create inclusive and sustainable economic growth and support of social inclusion. Education for sustainable development constitutes a new vision in enabling individuals and groups without discrimination or exception to participate in making a sustainable future by finding a balance between human prosperity, economic growth, cultural traditions, respect for natural resources and environmental diversity, and aims to form citizens aware of the concept of sustainability, its challenges and stakes, equipped with the skills, knowledge and capabilities necessary to achieve sustainable development⁽⁴³⁾ .

Education based on international conventions on education and based on the fourth goal of the sustainable development goals is for all and equality between males and females without discrimination, as higher education in Iraq is characterized by providing equal opportunities for females and males in the primary and postgraduate studies stage⁽⁴⁴⁾ .

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq is one of the ministries that seek to achieve educational, cultural and scientific cooperation in educational and scientific institutions, and to participate in seminars, meetings and educational conferences held by ministries and institutions related to the educational process.

The two ministries also worked to take advantage of the trends of renewal and modernization, especially those related to information systems, technologies, curricula, evaluation, teacher preparation and training, taking advantage of the energies available through training and rehabilitation opportunities available to Iraq internally and externally, with the contribution of some advanced countries and relevant international organizations, and despite the harsh conditions that the country went through, the efforts made were invested in sustaining the education process and securing its necessary requirements in order to achieve its goals⁽⁴⁵⁾.

This is through the development of a constitutional and legal regulation of the right to education because of the education is the most important means of the political system in guiding citizens, where attention is paid to education for guidance and awareness, and this has an impact on the right to education itself in proportion to the extent of openness of the political system in the state and the existence of a space of public freedoms and democracy, and accordingly, political instability and crises greatly affect all sectors in the state, especially the education sector, unlike politically stable countries, we note Political stability leads to the stability of education, attention to it and the pursuit of its improvement. We note that political stability leads to the stability of education, interest in it and seeking to improve it, in addition to that, internal political stability leads to improving relations with foreign countries and then reflects its impact on education, which leads to partnerships, scientific missions and exchange of scientific research⁽⁴⁶⁾.

One of the concrete efforts made in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development in Iraq, especially the fourth goal and the sixteenth goal is the establishment of scientific chairs or as it is called UNESCO chairs (twinning universities), we note that the chair of the University of Kufa and the chair of the College of Arts

University of Baghdad and the chair of the Faculty of Law, University of Mosul and the chair of the University of Diyala, each of these chairs achieves two goals of sustainable development, namely the fourth goal of quality education and the sixteenth goal of peace, justice and strong institutions in accordance with the goals of sustainable development for 2015.

The United Nations has clarified what is meant by quality education and the extent of its impact on achieving most of the sustainable development goals. The United Nations explained that achieving quality and inclusive education for all confirms the conviction that education is one of the most powerful and stable means to achieve sustainable development and this goal ensures that all girls and boys complete free primary and secondary education by 2030.

It also aims to provide equal access to vocational training that is accessible to all, eliminate disparities in access to education due to gender or wealth, and achieve access to high-quality education for all, and it explained the goal of peace, justice and strong institutions and its impact on the rest of the sustainable development goals and it confirmed that without peace, stability, human rights and effective governance, based on the rule of law, we cannot hope to achieve sustainable development. High levels of armed violence and insecurity have devastating effects on countries' development, affecting economic growth and often leading to long-term grievances that can last for generations. The sustainable development goals seek to significantly reduce all forms of violence, working with governments and local communities to find durable solutions to conflict and insecurity. Strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights is key to this process⁽⁴⁷⁾.

As for the sustainable development goals for 2022, they were launched as a result of the end of the Corona pandemic and the quest

to continue to achieve the sustainable development goals. Therefore, the fourth goal is meant for quality education to ensure free education at the primary and secondary levels, equal access to quality education at the pre-primary level, equal access to affordable technical and vocational education and higher education. Increase the number of people with the right skills to achieve financial success, eliminate all forms of discrimination in education, literacy, numeracy and education for all to achieve sustainable development and global citizenship, build and raise the level of safe and inclusive schools for all, and expand Higher education scholarships available to developing countries and increasing the number of qualified teachers in developing countries.

The sixteenth goal is intended to promote peaceful societies in which no one is marginalized for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, reduce violence everywhere, protect children from abuse, exploitation, human trafficking and violence, combat organized crime and illicit flows of arms and money, and significantly reduce corruption and bribery⁽⁴⁸⁾. Therefore, Iraq has turned to peacebuilding studies as a result of the great role it contributes to achieving coexistence and thus the ability to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

The idea of peacebuilding studies in Iraq came from the support of the United Nations Development Program and over a period of two years, the United Nations Development Program, the non-governmental organization Iraq Al-Qmal and the University of Innsbruck (Austria) supported academics from the universities of Baghdad, Tikrit, Anbar, Basrah, Karbala, Kufa and Mosul to prepare the first national curriculum for peace and conflict studies with the support of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research,

the first group of students in 2020 will be the first to promote peace as an important field of study for the advancement of the country.

The curriculum was developed between 2017-2019, in collaboration between the United Nations Development Programme in Iraq, the Iraqi Al-Amal Association, the University of Innsbruck and the Association of Iraqi Universities for Peace Studies, and generously funded by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation through the German Development Bank and the Government of Japan⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Peace Education in 2019 is based on United Nations Development Programme response to Iraqi Crises and resilience in Iraq – which, with the support of the Government of Japan, has been developing the Diploma in Peace and Conflict Studies – on the idea of "building back better".

This approach uses the opportunity of recovery and recovery to form a sustainable environment and equip communities to better manage future crises, it is a comprehensive, integrated and community-based program, addressing main areas of government coordination, crisis response, basic services, livelihood restoration and social cohesion, as a important support in the peacebuilding process.

The Diploma in Peace and Conflict Studies is launched at a critical juncture as the process of reconstruction continues – physically and mentally – peace education empowers the collective ownership of yesterday, collective efforts today, and collective peace tomorrow, at this stage of the project, the focus will be on building the individual capacity of Iraqi faculty to obtain the new diploma and the institutional capacity of Arabic literature in this field with the overarching objective of the project to ensure that sustainable cultures of peace can be established and that the road towards

achieving sustainable development goal sixteenth becomes slightly shorter for this post-conflict country ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

The most prominent activities of universities in peacebuilding studies:

A. Discussion of many peace diploma theses at the College of Arts, University of Baghdad and the University of Mosul, and examples of theses discussed are (citizenship and its relationship to societal peace: a study in peacebuilding), (social tolerance among students of the University of Baghdad: a field study in peacebuilding), (the role of volunteer work for youth in achieving community peace: a field study in the Karrada district).

(The role of civil society organizations in peacebuilding: a field study in the city of Baghdad) (The official website of the College of Arts, University of Baghdad), and the Department of Sociology at the College of Arts, University of Mosul, discussed in 2023 a diploma thesis on peacebuilding on: (Social justice and its implications for peace: a field study in Mosul city) and a thesis entitled (The role of the family in building, a culture of peace among children: a field study in Mosul city)⁽⁵¹⁾.

B. The Department of Sociology – post-graduate studies at the College of Arts, University of Baghdad, issued the first edition of the book (Media and Peacebuilding) on the Professional Diploma Program in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation in cooperation with the University of Innsbruck / Austria, the Iraqi Al-Amal Association and the United Nations Development Program. The book included topics on media and enhancing societal cohesion, elections are a peacebuilding mechanism, media functions and their role in rejecting hate speech and violent extremism, media marketing of the concept of peacebuilding, peace journalism and its impact on human

rights issues, social values of the peacebuilding message, documenting violations in accordance with international humanitarian law, and digital media literacy: A societal necessity for the development of critical thinking⁽⁵²⁾.

In addition, the Iraqi Al-Amal Association, within the framework of its prominent and significant role in achieving peace, has issued a number of books, including (Conflict Assessment and Planning for Peacebuilding Towards a Participatory Approach to Human Security for the year 2019, as well as issuing a research entitled Community Reconciliation in Nineveh after ISIS for the year 2019, preparing for peace, transforming conflict across cultures for 2020, the book Building Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies for the year 2021, the introduction to peace studies and conflict resolution for the year 2021, a guide towards restorative transitional justice in Iraq and a proposed practical guide for the path based on the participatory approach in 2022)⁽⁵³⁾

The College of Arts, University of Baghdad, opened the international scientific conference under the theme (Building Peace and Preventing Genocide) at the University of Human Development in Sulaymaniyah in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities, the House of Wisdom, the Martyrs Foundation, the Political Prisoners Foundation of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, Koya University, Halabja University and Charmo University, On Wednesday, the fifteenth of December 2021, (27) specialized research was discussed, in the field of ideologies and genocide, manifestations of genocide and mass graves in Iraq, and the impact of humanities, laws, constitutions, curricula and education on the upbringing of the new generation (An article

published on the Internet in the newspaper of the Assyria Land Agency).

- C. The Faculty of Arts, University of Kufa, seeks to hold a seminar on education policies entitled (Dimensions and determinants of university education policy in Iraq after 2003 between absence and abduction), as the panel discussion summarized that educational policy represents the cornerstone of any process of change that may occur in the educational field. This policy is usually adopted by the state and is based on plans drawn and prepared in advance by experts in education for periods of time ranging from five to ten years, that would become the preparation of educational policy according to plans, criteria, directions, goals and specific times an essential part of the work of the modern and contemporary state⁽⁵⁴⁾.
- D. One of the professors of the college of Arts, University of Kufa, issued a book entitled (Basic Introductions to Reforming the Reality of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq after 2003) that the book dealt with the impact of higher education in Iraq on the nature of the political crises that accompanied the emergence of successive governments to rule Iraq after 2003 through their quest to lay the foundations of a model for building a modern state in Iraq. Later, the manifestations and dimensions of these crises were reflected on the reality of higher education in Iraq, whether at the level of institutional infrastructure or at the level of achieving the required quality standards in upgrading the nature of the scientific and knowledge achievement of Iraqi universities⁽⁵⁵⁾.

Conclusion

At the end of this study, we can summarize our conclusions and we want it from proposals according to the following:

First: Results:

The establishment of scientific chairs in Iraqi universities has a major and prominent role in the advancement of the Iraqi reality has succeeded scientific chairs in achieving two goals of sustainable development, namely the fourth and sixteenth goals.

Therefore, the establishment of scientific chairs at the University of Kufa and the College of Arts, University of Baghdad and Mosul university, and the attempt to establish a chair at the University of Diyala led to the promotion and adoption of initiatives for the establishment of scientific chairs in other colleges, such as the colleges of the University of Baghdad, which have a prominent role in achieving development goals and a clear quest to establish a scientific chair as it established a platform for sustainable development, and this is evidence of its desire and endeavor to move forward in achieving the goals of sustainable development.

Second: Proposals:

We propose the establishment of a unified and official Iraqi website that includes a detailed and explanatory explanation of the establishment of chairs and their activities to be the reference and the basic guide for the rest of the universities, students and researchers, as well as seeking to establish scientific chairs to include the seventeenth sustainable development goals and not limited to one or two goals because Iraq needs to achieve all the goals of the neighborhoods of various sectors, especially those related to climate, and seek to strengthen cooperation between chairs at the local level after their inception, as well as cooperation with scientific chairs at the Arab level and globally.

Footnotes

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