

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Project Title:** EDUU – Education and Cultural Heritage Enhancement for Social Cohesion in Iraq

**Project Date:** 2017-2019

### I. Project Data

Status	On going
Report Type	First Phase
Project	Multi country
Grant Agreement nr	CSO - LA/2016/382-621
Monitoring visit dates:	January 2018
Start date	2/1/2018
End date	2/2/2018
External Evaluators	Mohammed Al Khalid

### II. Introduction

This report present the result of evaluation of the EDUU project. EDUU is a 30 months (2017-2019) international project funded by the European Union in the frame of the EuropeAid - Civil Society Organizations-Local Authorities Program in Iraq. The Project seeks to create an EU-Iraq partnership in the area of education and cultural heritage enhancement, connecting Universities, secondary schools and museums.

The consortium consists of the co-applicants: University of Bologna (UNIBO), University of Turin (UNITO), and the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino (CRAST), the Iraqi Universities of Qadisiyah (QU), Kufa (UoK), and Baghdad (UoB).

The State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities and the Youth Committee of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO as associated partner.

The evaluation procedure was undertaken keeping considering the project keywords: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Different types of information among which reports, lists and online materials have been used

to answer the evaluation questions, namely: (i) literature and document review, (ii) face-to-face formal and informal interviews with the partners during the monitoring visits, (iii) assessment of project outputs, (iv) analysis of evaluation feedbacks for the meetings and the training activities, (v) analysis of the Project Quality report.

### **III. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION**

The aim of the EDUU project is to enhance the pluralism of Iraqi civil society as well as to raise awareness on the diverse and multicultural past of the country. This purpose is expected to be achieved thanks to a solid EU-Iraq partnership in the education and cultural heritage development, through different actors including universities, secondary schools, and museums.

In order to achieve the specific objectives of the project, EDUU proposed an operational model based on seven sets of synchronic and diachronic activities (“Work Package”), targeted to the main beneficiaries of the project: the local population on one hand and the local higher education institutions on the other. These objectives will be achieved by sharing knowledge and expertise and by improving the technical and management capacity of target groups, final beneficiaries and of course the partners themselves.

In order to accomplish the above issues, the EDUU project carried out a comprehensive set of preliminary and general objectives, including:

- To Increase the knowledge of pre-Islamic societies in Iraq through archaeological and environmental research in the governorates of Al-Najaf, Al-Qadisiyah and Wasit and to raise awareness on Iraqi cultural heritage of these three regions.
- Teaching best practices for documentation and safeguard of the local cultural heritage also enhancing the promotion relevant archaeological and historical places as means for fostering dialogue between different sectors of society. This has been done by improving the skills of SBAH personnel and community leaders.
- Promoting interest in the common Iraqi past and identity among younger generations through courses in secondary schools and rural communities.
- Improving the local museum assets and engage civil society in cultural heritage initiatives promoted by museums.

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## **1. Relevance and quality of design**

Nowadays Iraq is experiencing several and diversified threats. In the last few years, increased violence accelerated a process of ethnic polarization and socio-economic devastation. These events have affected remarkably the Iraqi historical and cultural heritage. Intentional destruction of monuments, places of worship, books and manuscripts are strictly connected with the denial of specific cultural identities. Many archaeological site, even the big ones, like Tell Jidr (more than 600 ha; Bysmaya, 400 ha; Telul Alaloiyat 30 ha) are suffering today an intensive looting activities by treasure hunters, desirous of selling to the black market every single ancient object. The difficulties to access cultural heritage, to fully practice intangible cultural heritage and to transmit it to younger generations, to enjoy freedom of expression and creativity, and to participate in cultural life, are the preliminary steps for Iraqi cultural doom. Also, the Iraqi education system is suffering severe blows that caused major disruptions at all levels of the school system but affecting in particular youths and rural communities. These circumstances have been taken into account and discussed in depth by EDUU partners leading to the decision to write this project.

The project's design is clear and well structured, with logical and generally well-planned activities, linked to objectives and results. Most of the proposed objectives were designed to be achievable in the project framework. Foreseen activities and outputs revealed to be appropriate in order to achieve most of the proposed objectives. The interest in the project, shown by the two involved Partner Countries representatives, is the clear answer to the relevance of the project.

## **2. Efficiency of implementation**

The financial and the physical resources were available regularly on time and within the budget, managed transparently and in respect of the rules and procedures.

The fulfillment of all the activities proposed has been coherent with the work schedule, arranged and approved within the consortium and updated regularly by the project coordinator. Moreover, reports on the developing activities have been shared and delivered on time and with quality. The use of standard templates for monitoring, reporting, documentation, etc. was fully endorsed: travel sheets, time sheets and financial sheets were successfully used.

The project consortium including the University of Bologna (UNIBO), University of Turin (UNITO), and the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino (CRAS), the Iraqi Universities of Qadisiyah (QU), Kufa (UoK), and Baghdad (UoB) (the State

Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities and the Youth Committee of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO will act as associate partners), had meeting in the different countries, and the communication was smoothed by email and skype. The communication reports suggested very profitable discussion around the main topics and they were indicated as very productive for the project development. In particular, the meetings were useful for implementing the networking activities among the partners and to reinforce their commitment in the project activities. Communication via email and Skype were of paramount importance due to the distance between all the consortium' members. Overall communication and coordination were efficiently overseen and supported by the project coordinator. A useful restricted area of the EDUU (<https://site.unibo.it/eduu/en/project>) website was implemented to easily upload and share the relevant documents during the project lifetime.

### **3. Effectiveness to date**

The outcomes of the EDUU project are in line with its objectives, in particular, promoting the modernization of university archeological education in the Iraqi region, mainly through cooperation with Italian universities, in order to contribute to the development and reform of education institutions and systems, addressing issues linked to the reform of governance structures and systems. Another main goal, to better protect cultural heritage and to promote its use as a tool for dialogue between different sectors of society, is been carry out by the Italian university directly on the field with the support of the SBAH personnel, Iraqi university students and professors and community leaders. During the fieldwork, and during the word at home, were created groups with different "mission", and all the groups were composed by some Italian archaeologists, the SBAH personnel and the community leaders, working together.

In the long run, this work is expected to help to promote interest in the common cultural heritage and identity of Iraqi society among younger generations through courses in secondary schools and rural communities, also through the improvement of the local museum assets and engage civil society in cultural heritage initiatives promoted by museums.

There are no joint efforts of this kind, coupling HEIs, cultural heritage authorities and civil society. This is why the Project has a strong potential not only for bringing tangible benefits to the target communities, but also for strong national and international visibility.

Despite the excellent work done, room for improvements exist:

1. *Staff involved*: Due to some unpredictable external factors, the staff involved in the project changed several times. This factor caused some difficulties to reach the final expected results. However, the dissemination to a number of persons higher than expected can be considered a good element of dissemination in the relevant sector.
2. *Organizational model*: To reach the common people, especially in a country like Iraq, it is fundamental to improve the current state of the archeological museums and starting the planning for archaeological parks. In this case it is necessary a better cooperation with the competent Ministries.

#### **4. Impact prospects**

1. Results on target groups: Ten Iraqi researchers were able to produce research papers on the Iraqi cultural heritage and social cohesion in some of the prestigious international scientific journals; hundreds of Iraqi students were involved in conference where were explained the results of fieldwork. Dozens of SBAH operators and community leaders from villages located in proximity to archaeological sites in the target regions were trained on the field by European expert in different filed. Hundreds of scholars (also with online activity) were engaged in workshops and in field trips for enhancing their bonds with their common past.
2. Results on archaeological sites: From 2016 to 2018, the Iraqi-Italian archaeologist surveyed 200 archaeological sites in an area of 1627 km<sup>2</sup>. 145 of these sites where discovered for the first time by the joint mission. For the other 55, that were previously surveyed in the 1960s and 1970s by an American expedition, previous information were updated, and in some cases corrected.
3. Results on archaeological data: In every site were collected pottery and tools to be studied for understand the type of the ancient settlement (chronology, typology, etc.). All the data collected were studied by the joint Iraqi-Italian missions. The objects and the diagnostic pottery sherds were washed, drawn, photographed, catalogued and carefully studied.
4. Results on final beneficiaries: The impact of the EDUU projects touched, directly and indirectly, the family of the involved expanding the number of Iraqi and European reached. The use of catalogues illustrating the new learning itineraries and the capillary presence on internet have helped this process. The EDUU website has been visited almost 1000 times by 563 unique users (at May 22 2018); the scientific web site like [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net) and [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) have counted more than 500 views to the articles presented by the EDUU's Iraqi-EU researchers;

the EDUU's page of social networks, like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are constantly updated, and they are followed by both Iraqi and EU researchers and members of the civil society.

5. Results on University: Administrative staff members from the 3 Iraqi University were trained by the European counterpart in order to improve their managerial skills. Iraqi people were trained for working, in the best way, with international civil society organizations.

## **5. Sustainability**

The evaluation indicates that the EDUU project results are fairly sustainable. The main results of the EDUU project online and face-to-face training courses in English, (the training on the field in English, the workshop and targeted trips), if properly disseminated, are suitable to enhance the sustainability of the project results. For this purpose, the continuous involvement of the staff trained during the project represents a crucial factor to guarantee the maintenance and development of the project results.

Several steps were designed by the project management team to ensure that the results achieved would have been adopted and improved in the future.

1. New project proposal: a number of project proposals were submitted both in Europe countries and Iraq (and other countries of Middle East). Other partners have enthusiastically asked to join the new projects and to expand the interested region.
2. Iraqi archaeological staff: Most of the Iraqi personnel trained in the frame of the EDUU project, now are highly specialized and they can more easily find a Job. It is possible to note an increasing interest in the community near the archaeological sites and this in a good starting point.
3. The archeological data: All the data collected, studied and processed will be integrated in an open access archive, so all the interested people could be able to access the data, ask for information and continuing or improving the data.

## IV. Evaluation Score

<b>A</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Weak 0-4</b>	<b>Fair 05-giu</b>	<b>Good 07-ago</b>	<b>Excellent 09-ott</b>
1	All expected results were achieved				9
2	Suitable and relevant methods were applied for quality control, evaluation and testing				9
3	Relevant target group were involved in evaluation and testing			8	
4	Lessons were learned from evaluation and testing			8	
<b>Overall rating A:</b>					<b>8,5</b>

<b>B</b>	<b>Conformity</b>	<b>Weak 0-4</b>	<b>Fair 05-giu</b>	<b>Good 07-ago</b>	<b>Excellent 09-ott</b>
1	Outputs are available as planned and contractually agreed			8	
2	Outputs have been produced as planned and contractually good				10
3	Results comply with the current state of art as regards the sector and the target group				9
<b>Overall rating B:</b>					<b>9</b>

<b>C</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Weak 0-4</b>	<b>Fair 05-giu</b>	<b>Good 07-ago</b>	<b>Excellent 09-ott</b>
1	The results meet the needs of the target group as described in the application				9
2	Results have the appropriate pedagogical quality for use with the target groups			8	
3	The results are user friendly for the target groups			8	
4	The context for use is clearly described				9
5	Results can be easily and consistently used across the different countries				10
6	The project objectives were achieved				9
<b>Overall rating C:</b>					<b>8,8</b>

<b>D</b>	<b>Dissemination</b>	<b>Weak 0-4</b>	<b>Fair 05-giu</b>	<b>Good 07-ago</b>	<b>Excellent 09-ott</b>
1	Activities for dissemination were carried out as planned			8	
2	Methods for dissemination were relevant to the target groups				9
<b>Overall rating D:</b>					<b>8,5</b>

<b>E</b>	<b>Impact and Sustainability</b>	<b>Weak 0-4</b>	<b>Fair 05-giu</b>	<b>Good 07-ago</b>	<b>Excellent 09-ott</b>
1	The project has an impact on the target groups and end-users				9
2	The project has an impact at geographical level (national, European, extra-EU)			8	
3	The project has an impact at sector level				9
4	Quantitative indicators have been achieved			8	
5	Qualitative indicators have been achieved				9
6	The project has institutional and or socioeconomic support				9

## V. Final Observation and Conclusion

The evaluation of the EDUU project is positive in terms of the effects and sustainability of the activities performed and results achieved. It found no serious shortcomings. There is however some space for improvement with regard to specific aspects of the project. Two recommendations addressing these aspects have been formulated and can be useful both for fine-tuning and the dissemination of the project results and for the design and implementation of future projects.

### Recommendation 1 – **Dissemination:**

The dissemination of the project outcomes and result has so far been realized by the partner universities website, academic and research platform (Academia.edu and research gate) and via social network. The first part of this recommendation is to promote the project result and outcomes in Arabic language the second part is to use more popular international platforms (i.e. Arabic TV channel such as Al-Jazeera education, some social network popular pages).

### Recommendation 2- **Sustainability:**

It is crucial to find new opportunities in order to emphasize and maximize the results of the project. The external evaluator suggests to continuously monitoring the next EU Call for proposals in order to include more universities partner and academic institution in Iraq.