



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

WALADU

**Development and Structuring of BA Courses
in Archaeology and Ancient History**

External Formative Evaluation

**WP1 – Analysis of needs and opportunities of the Humanities field
of study and the labour market in Iraq**

By

Dr Hashem M. Khries

INTRODUCTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The WALADU project is consortium composed by three European universities (Bologna, Istanbul and Munich) and three Iraqi universities (Baghdad, Kufa, Qadisiyah) under the coordination of the University of Bologna. According to the project timeline, the first step of the project, named “WP1 - Analysis of needs and opportunities of the Humanities field of study and the labour market in Iraq”, aims at providing a solid understanding of the current issues and needs in the Iraqi higher education system. To do so, during the 7 months duration of the WP1 (from the Kick off Meeting in February 2017 till September 2017), the WALADU consortium foreseen different types of activities and outcomes. I will here provide a short overview of each outcome and summarize the way this has been evaluated:

Outcome 1.1 - Need analysis report

The aims of this outcome is to provide both EU and Iraqi WALADU partners with a solid and comprehensive knowledge on the current gaps and issues within the wider Iraqi Higher Education system, the BA courses of archaeology and ancient history in the Iraqi HEIs and the Iraqi cultural heritage labor market.

The result of this study is a bilingual (English-Arabic) report, produced by the WP 1 team leader (University of Qadisiyah). This document has been used as the main source for the evaluation of this outcomes. Evaluation criteria included the number of information provided and the level of detail.

Outcome 1.2 – Organization of Local workshops with local stakeholders

According to the project proposal after the need analysis report, each Iraqi university should have organized a local workshop inviting potential public and private stakeholders ranging from the state agencies and ministries (like the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education) to NGOs, enterprises, Chambers of Commerce and so forth. The aim of workshop was that of collecting ideas and strengthening relation between stakeholders and the universities for future cooperation including the organization of internships and traineeship.

Each university, was expected to produce a detailed report also including lists of participants and photos of the workshop. This documentation has been used as the main source for the evaluation of this outcomes. Evaluation criteria included the number of stakeholders involved, the degree of mutual understanding with regards to the issues and needs and the potential collaboration built during the workshop.

Outcome 1.3 - Data collection for integration criteria of the new BA teaching units

During the entire WP1 lifetime, the Iraqi project partners were expected to collect all the necessary data to understand the procedure and criteria for integrating the new teaching units and internships into the existing BA courses.

A dedicated discussion on this topic was carried out at the WALADU consortium meeting in Istanbul (October 2017) in presence of Prof. Muhsin Afurajy - Counselor and the Chief Executive of the Accreditation and Syllabus office, Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education.

A report on the meeting including this discussion has been produced by the WALADU coordination team. This documentation has been used as the main source for the evaluation of this outcomes. Evaluation criteria included the number of information provided and the level of detail.

Outcome 1.4 - Definition of the training system methodology (TSM)

Definition and validation of the training system methodology (TSM) which will be used during WP2 trainings. A dedicated discussion on this topic was carried out at the WALADU consortium meeting in Istanbul (October 2017). A report on the meeting including this discussion has been produced by the WALADU coordination team. This documentation has been used as the main source for the evaluation of this outcomes. Evaluation criteria included the number of information provided and the level of detail and the foreseen impact of the TSM.

Beside WP1 activities and outcomes, according to the project timeline, other activities were expected by to be carried out. These included:

WP5 – MANAGEMENT activities regarding the entire project coordination.

WP7 – DISSEMINATION activities consisting in the project promotion on the web and at local level.

EVALUATION OF THE OUTCOMES

WP1 - Outcome 1.1 - Need analysis report

The WP1 leader (Qadisiyah University) produced on April 2017 a document titled: *BA Education in Iraq: a focus on Archaeology and Ancient History*. The document was shared among the partners and reviewed.

This document included:

1. General information on the Iraqi higher education system, a complete list of Iraqi universities, academic year and the structure of BA courses (including credit system), quality assurance and accreditation system.
2. More focused details on teaching BA archaeology and ancient history in Iraq.
3. The current issues and needs, in teaching BA archaeology and ancient history in Iraq, as identified by the Iraqi WALADU partners.

According to my analysis, the general information provided are detailed and allow to understand the Iraqi academic framework. The main steps, the ministerial bodies, the admission requirement and the internal managerial structure of Iraqi universities are explained.

Also the organization of the academic year, the credit and grading system are exhaustively summarized.

While the for the quality assurance there is no detailed explanation (due to the total lack of existing policies or strategies), it in my opinion less clear the discourse on the accreditation system, which probably necessitated a more exhaustive explanation, especially with regards to the official produce and deadlines.

BA courses archaeology and ancient history in Iraq are well explained (the Iraqi partners also attached the lists of BA courses and teaching units). Beside a general introduction on the Archaeology and Ancient History teaching in Iraqi, each partner university provided a list of potential stakeholder (for future internships) and a narrative overview on their BA courses in Archaeology, Philology and Ancient History.

Rather detailed is also the list of issues and needs for Archaeology teaching. Many of these point have been also touched during the workshops with the stakeholder organized at each Iraqi university in order to have a feedback.

WP1 - Outcome 1.2 – Organization of Local workshops with local stakeholders

Four workshops were held and organized by the Iraqi universities of Baghdad, Kufa and Al-Qadisiyah, two of which held at Baghdad University on March and May 2017, one at Kufa University on May 2017 and one at Al-Qadisiyah University on September 2017. The organizers invited many government agencies, local stakeholders and the local communities at the three provinces. There are no private stakeholders involved in the project at the moment, although some of them expressed interest. In the future, some of those private stakeholders will be involved in the project. As a matter of fact, their participation depends on the extent to which the new approach is understood and implemented by the Iraqi partners. Broader impact appears to depend heavily on systematic attention to developing the educational policies.

The colleagues and partners in the Iraqi universities underlined the importance of the project in supporting and developing the Iraqi archaeological and historical departments and their annex teaching units and labs which should respond to the needs of the international institutions and the job market in general. They also emphasized the need of benefit from the European academic experience in improving the academic knowledge and experience of Iraqi scholars in the field of archaeology and history. They also spoke about the emergence need of training the BA students according to the European criteria and implementing new internship programs and summer campaigns to improve their capacity in penetrating the job market. In this regard, they discussed the possibility of the inclusion the archaeological and historical subjects to the curriculum of the Iraqi intermediate and secondary schools and hiring the graduated students in teaching tasks.

Professor Alaa Abdul Hussein Rasoul, President of the University of Baghdad assured his personal support to all the Iraqi junior and senior scholars from the University of Baghdad engaged in WALADU project. The Iraqi partners in Baghdad University appeared to be aware of the importance of the project and the European role in solving the various numbers of problems related to archaeology and history in the Iraqi universities.

The partners participated in the workshop held at Kufa University departed from the goal of the project by raising issues and recommendations. These include four milestone which should help universities and students to meet the needs of the labour market:

1. Providing the students with scientific, theoretical and practical knowledge according to the latest programs, laboratories and International technologies.
2. Improving the college's input from middle school students.
3. Promoting the interest in archaeology and its role in strengthen the national identity.
4. Encourage students and teachers to choose local archeological and heritage sites as subjects for their scientific research.
5. Raising the level of students in foreign languages and English.

In my opinion, while some points are general or not in the immediate scopes of the WALADU project, the workshop certainly touched relevant issues including the need to provide the students with the cutting-edge tools and theoretical and practical knowledge as well as the need to improve their language skills.

The participants in the workshop held at Al-Qadisiyah University were aware of the goals of the project and the need of the department of archaeology at the level of enhancing the human resource and improving the structural units alike. They are conscious that modern scientific and technological means should be used and learned by the academic staff and students, which are very important to any archaeologist working on the field.

Overall, there is consensus the existence of an egregious imbalance in the high education system in Iraq and flaw in the methodology and implementation which rendered the outcomes unsuitable for the labour-market requirements. At its present state, educational curricula in Iraq do not adequately prepare graduates to meet the demands of the labour market. Education policies do not provide individuals with the quality of education needed for employment. These issues must be taken into consideration.

WP1 – Outcome 1.3 - Data collection for integration criteria of the new BA teaching units

In order to integrate the relatively small information collected and illustrated in the WP1 – Need analysis report (*BA Education in Iraq: a focus on Archaeology and Ancient History*). The WP1 team suggested to invite to the 2nd WALADU consortium Prof. Muhsin Afurajy - Counselor and the Chief Executive of the Accreditation and Syllabus office, Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education. In his presentation Prof. Afurajy, illustrated the ways to created new academic courses, new teaching units, the conditions for accreditation as well as potential strategies to introduce quality assurance policies.

WP1 – Outcome 1.4 - Definition of the training system methodology (TSM)

During Summer 2017 the EU partners started to discuss the creation of a proper training system methodology (TSM). Despite initial different positions, due to the different academic systems of Italy, Germany and Turkey, the partners agreed to create a general common framework (named General Training) and to provide more freedom to each EU partner for the training details (Intensive Training).

Three types of training have been foreseen: Senior training, Junior Training and Administrative staff training.

Senior training consists of a two weeks General Training addressed to 12 Senior scholars from the three Iraqi universities will be organized in LMU.

Junior training consists of a two weeks General Training plus 1.5 month of Intensive Training addressed to 12 Junior scholars from the three Iraqi universities will be organized in LMU, Koç and UNIBO. Junior staff training will aim at improving both their technical and academic skills focusing on didactic, research and innovation policies. Moreover by focusing on specific themes on the History and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, we will also aim at improving the topics that they will teach since the beginning of their careers putting them in line with the EU standards.

Administrative staff training consists of a two weeks General Training organized at UNIBO on the way EU universities manage international projects and international relations.

This system (TSM) was further discussed with the Iraqi colleagues at the 2nd WALADU meeting in Istanbul in October 2017. Here the training system methodology was approved by the entire consortium. I can say that, while on theoretical point of view the system seems to be efficient, a proper feedback will only be possible after the end of WP2.

WP5 – Management

According to the project proposal, one of the aims of the WP5 – management was to create an “efficient and cost effective communication strategy among project partners including a clear and well defined decision making process”. This has been done by creating a Waladu official mail, also supported (in a few cases) by the personal UNIBO email of the WALADU coordination team members.

From the 1st March 2017 to the 1st October 2017 more than 700 emails have been sent and received only on the official WALADU. Additional 200 email have been received on the personal UNIBO email of the WALADU coordination team members.

In addition to this the WALADU coordination team also created a Skype account which allowed the Operative Team member to held two Skype meetings in April and July 2017.

WP7 – Dissemination activities

Between late Spring and Early Summer 2017 the WALADU coordination team created:

- the official WALADU website www.waladu.unibo.it
- the official WALADU Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/waladuproject/>
- the official WALADU Instagram page <https://www.instagram.com/waladu.project/>

The WALADU webpage has been divided in eight different sections each one providing information on specific aspects of the project. Details on the project aims, project timelines and the partners are well illustrated.

According to the official data provided by the WALADU coordination team, the official WALADU webpage was visited more than 500 times from 14 different countries in three continents (America, Europe, Asia).

The WALADU Project Facebook page, has been used by the partners to advertise activities, including calls for positions, training and so on.

According to the official data provided by the WALADU coordination team, the official WALADU Project Facebook page has 153 followers, it reaches approximately 700 people per month, has more than 600 interactions per month and has it almost 200 “likes” per month.

It is in my opinion quite visible, especially in the WALADU partners countries.

The WALADU Project instagram page has been used by the partner to show images of the main project events. This page has been less developed as according to the official data provided by the WALADU coordination team, it has only 13 images and it followed by less than 40 people.

I would therefore suggest to improve the work on this social platform in order to reach as many people as possible.

In addition to this the WALADU team created almost 10.000 brochures and other paper materials which have been partially distributed to the WALADU partners during the 2nd meeting in Istanbul.

01/11/2017

Dr Hashem M. Khries

Dr Hashem M. Khries, MA, Phd
German Protestant Institute of Archaeology



Dr Hashem Khries, comes from Jordan, born in Irbid in 10/10/1986. He started to study archaeology in 2004 as an undergraduate at Yarmouk University in Jordan. He graduated with honors in 2008 and obtained a full-funded master scholarship in 2008. He obtained the master degree in 2011 in the specialization of prehistory and ancient archaeology specialization from Yarmouk University. On January 2013, He obtained full scholarship offered by the European Commission through the well-known intercultural exchange program of Erasmus Mundus Action 2 to obtain the PhD degree from the University of Bologna in Italy. He defended the thesis entitled: The Architectural of the Persian Period in the Levant that held at the Department of History and Cultures on July 2016 and obtained the PhD degree in archaeology and art history of the ancient near east. Currently, he works at the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in the Holy Land as an assistant project director; a four-year project dedicated to the documentation of the archaeological objects from all periods both exhibited and stored in the Jordan archaeological museums.