



Erasmus+

**Report on the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Conference  
of the Association of Arab Universities – AARU  
Sharm el Sheikh – Egypt – 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2019**

**Preamble**

The 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Conference of the Association of Arab Universities – AARU took place in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt on the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2019, hosted by the Egyptian Universities of Helwan and Zagazig.

The Conference gathered rectors, vice rectors, academic and administrative staff of more than 260 member universities in order to discuss different topics concerning higher education and scientific research in addition to the activities of AArU and its partners.



The main topics of the Conference were the following:

- Development of National Classification (Ranking) Systems for Universities;
- The importance of infrastructural interventions and transferring of know-how for the improvement of Higher Education in the Arab Countries;
- Exchange, sustainability and replicability of global best practices and projects for the improvement of Higher Education in the Arab Countries;

The University of Bologna has been invited to this Conference as associated partner of AArU in the frame of the WALADU project with the following aims:

- To present the project objectives, activities, results and impact;
- To evaluate any possibility of replication of the project's best practices in other Arab Countries that are members of AArU;
- To understand and discuss which are the opportunities of concrete cooperation that can be developed with AArU and the Arab Universities that belong to its network in a sustainable perspective;

<b>General Conference (21<sup>st</sup> of March)</b>
--

The 1<sup>st</sup> day of the General Conference on the 21<sup>st</sup> March started with the welcoming address of **Prof. Majed Najm, President of Helwan University (host university)**. Prof. Majeed presented the excellences of Helwan University (HU) in terms of implementing strategies in internationalization through the recent establishment of an International Relations Office (IRO) divided in 4 offices: Partnerships and Nextworks, Internationally Funded Projects, Academic Mobility and Promotion & Engagement. Helwan University has 13 Faculties and 24 Education programmes (MA, BA, Masters and diploma). Particularly interesting for the WALADU project is the recent establishment of a new Master Program in Heritage Conservation and Site Management coordinated by Prof. Dr. Hosam Refai. With his 150.000 undergraduate students, 20.000 postgraduate students (female are the 50%), 5.000 faculty members and 7.000 administrative staff, HU represents one of the most important University in the Egyptian ongoing Strategic Vision for Education to 2030 Egyptian Program ([this video was shown in conclusion of Prof. Najm's presentation](#)).



**Secretary General of AArU Prof. Amr Ezzat Salama** took the opportunity of his welcoming address to highlight the importance of working together to activate scientific research and strengthen cooperation between Arab and the international universities and improve the quality of education in the Arab world: the main focus should be on improving the performance of public and private higher education institutions, enhancing their Competitiveness at the national, regional and global level till reaching the developed countries rankings. The most important objective of the Conference will be to incentive the Arab Universities to participate in global ranking for the purpose of narrowing the gap between them and the best universities in the world.

**Prof. Amr Adly, Deputy Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research for University Affairs** addressed his welcoming speech exploring one of the main issue of the Conference: Higher Education in the Arab World should be tailored to fulfill future national as well as international job requirements; In this sense, taking the international rankings as reference is extremely crucial. Prof. Amr Adly also presented the ongoing [Strategic Vision for Education to 2030 Egyptian Program](#), which highlights investment in human resources and infrastructures as key to achieving its overall goal of promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Within this program, the government is seeking to modernize the Higher Education sector through the establishment of eight new technical universities, aided by a USD \$500 million loan from the World Bank. This strategic program, adopted in 2016, aims at expanding technical and vocational education and training (TVET), developing curricula more aligned with national and international labor market needs, and improve student-to-teacher ratios and quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms, as well as teacher training.

Another interesting speeches which are worth mentioning were made by **Prof. Bashir Al Zo'Bi, Jordanian member of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions**, and **Prof. Noha Osman Azmi, Director of Measurement and Evaluation Center of the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education**. Prof. Al Zo'Bi presented the good case of the Jordanian ranking for University whose general vision is to elevate Higher Education Institutions to global competitiveness via assessing their academic programs, research activities and quality of their outcomes in comparison with the global rankings.

## INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES RANKING VS. JORDANIAN RANKING SYSTEM

Ranking System	Initial Year	Total number of indicators	Frequency of publication	Participating Institutions	Total % focused on Research	Total % Focused on Academics or Teaching Quality
Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai)	2003	6	Annually	500	100%	0%
QS World University Ranking	2013	6	Annually	1000+	20%	80%
Nature Index	2013	3	Annually	8500+	100%	0%
<b>Jordanian Ranking System</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Annually</b>	<b>30+</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>

Prof. Azmi presented a very interesting, bottom-up and participatory methodology to develop a National Ranking System for the Arab Universities based on the continuous assessment of specific indicators to be used.

### CLASSIFICATION DIMENTIONS



- Research Performance
- Student achievement
- Teaching quality
- Resources
- Reputation
- Internationalization
- National interest
- Community engagement

## WALADU Presentation on 21<sup>st</sup> of March

Emmanuel Di Tommaso, member of the WALADU Project Coordination Team for the University of Bologna, delivered the following presentation during the session “Statements by representatives of Arab and international organizations participating in the meeting” on 21<sup>st</sup> of March:

*“WALADU – Development and Structuring of BA Courses in Archaeology in Iraq” is a three-year (2017-2019) international project funded by the European Union (915,000 €) in the frame of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building Key Action 2 in the field of higher education. The aim of the WALADU project is to contribute to the improvement of education in archaeological and historical subjects in Iraq and to increase the opportunities for students in the labor market in Iraq, bringing them in line with current EU trends and standards. The aim of the WALADU project will be achieved through three project objectives:*

- 1. Modernization of BA courses in archaeology and ancient history in Iraqi universities providing an innovative educational offer;*
- 2. Reinforced capacity to design teaching units, to teach and to produce innovative knowledge by the local teaching staff;*
- 3. To foster international collaborations between the EU and the Iraq higher education institutions for the exchange of the academic knowledge at any level, by framing them in a recognized and internationally regulated network;*

*In addition to the University of Bologna that is the Project Coordinator, the WALADU Consortium is composed by the following members: Koç University (Turkey); LMU (Germany); University of Baghdad, University of Kufa, University of Al-Qadisiya (Iraq) and the SBAH - State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (Iraq) and the Association of Arab Universities (based in Jordan) as associated partners.*

*([First WALADU promotional video](#) is shown to the audience).*

*The WALADU project activities are divided in the following pillars:*

*- ISSUES AND NEEDS IN IRAQI BA COURSES IN ARCHAEOLOGY.*

*The WALADU partners analyzed the current issues and needs in the BA courses in archaeology in Iraq. These included teaching methodologies, facilities and students employability. The results have been critical for designing the following actions;*

*- TRAINING AND TRANSFERRING OF KNOW-HOW.*

*24 Iraqi junior and senior scholars attended intensive trainings to improve their teaching and research capacities. As a result almost 30 new teaching units have been created.*

*([Third WALADU promotional video](#) is shown to the audience).*

*- NEW SYLLABI, NEW TEACHING MATERIALS, NEW EQUIPMENTS (ARCHAEOLOGICAL LABORATORIES AND LIBRARIES)*

3 new technical laboratories (WaLab) with modern instruments for archaeological research and 3 new libraries (WaLib) with more than 200 scientific books have been opened in the three Iraqi universities. In addition, 22 EU and Iraqi students participated to a Summer School on archaeology that was held at Koç University in Iraq and 19 Iraqi Academic Staff participated in the Cascade training on “New methodologies for research and teaching Archaeology) that was held at the University of Bologna. During the last year, the new teaching units and the internships for students started.

([Fifth WALADU promotional video](#) is shown to the audience).

#### - SUSTAINABILITY AND PROJECT EXPLOITATION.

In order to support collaborations after the project lifetime, the partners and the associates will create an international network (WaLink). This network will act as a permanent ‘internationalization’ working group, and it will be the core of the project exploitation and sustainability. The activities carried out in the frame of the network in order to maximize the impact include:

- Student and teaching staff mobility from Europe to Iraq and vice versa;
- Organization of joint summer schools and online courses;
- Continuous improvement of the WALab and WALib with books and technical instruments;
- Creation and promotion of international working teams collaborating in joint research projects;
- Organization of workshops, conferences and events on the WALINK activities;
- Promotion of cultural heritage activities and events among the local communities;
- Advising for other similar capacity building projects;

The initiatives of WaLink will target any kind of stakeholder, including students, teachers and administrative staff members participating in the WALADU project and outside it. The project partners are now in the phase defining the guidelines of WaLink and establishing the network's agenda. In this regard, AArU will play a crucial role: we ask your authorization not just to take part in this network but also to promote the WALADU project methodology in other Arab Countries through the organizations of trainings, workshops and international conferences in which all WALADU training materials, reports and ICT tools can be disseminated.

The members of the network will try to obtain additional funding for supporting such activities. An example is “BANUU - Designing new pathways for employability and entrepreneurship of Iraqi students in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage”, a structural project that was submitted in the month of February 2019 in the call for application of the Programme Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education. The wider objective is to contribute to the improvement of the students’ employability in the field of Humanities in Iraq, by creating new pathways of cooperation between universities and both public and enterprise sectors. In the perspective of consolidation and expansions of the WaLink network, the BANUU project includes the same partners of WALADU (AArU included), with the addition of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Iraq and the University of Mosul as full partners.

The BANUU six specific practical objectives connected with the different WPs of the project are the following:

- 1. Creation of a national framework for designing and implementing internships in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage in Iraq;*
- 2. Creation of new pathways to enhance Iraqi students' transversal skills (focus on entrepreneurial skills);*
- 3. Piloting of the new frameworks and pathways in three selected sectors: Preventive Archaeology, Cultural Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management;*
- 4. Re-drafting of the learning outcomes of Iraqi BA and MA degree programs involving external partners as co-producers of knowledge;*
- 5. Strengthening of the relations between HEIs (Universities, Ministry) and the wider national economic and social environment;*
- 6. Creating a favorable legal, administrative, and financial environment in which HEIs can draft comprehensive agreements and contracts with external partners;*

*I would like to take the opportunity of this speech to express all my gratitude and appreciation for the precious support provided by AArU in the definition of the project proposal and the procedure of application. The project is now in the phase of evaluation and consultation by the European Commission. We will be informed on its results by mid-August 2019 and will keep you updated. If successful, we'll be able to provide Iraqi students in the field of Cultural Heritage with new training and opportunities for employability.*

#### **Bilateral meetings on 22<sup>nd</sup> of March**

Since the second day of the Conference foresaw the Plenary session of all members of the General Conference of AArU, we take this opportunity to have some bilateral meetings as follow-up of the Conference that was held on the previous day.

#### **Meeting with Dr. Lina Albitar, Assistant officer of the Secretary General of AArU.**

The meeting was held at 12:00 of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March in the hall of the Ryatt Regency Hotel in Sharm El Sheikh and it was focused on the following issues:

- The Secretary General of AArU has highly appreciated the participation of the WALADU Project Coordination Team in the General Conference. In particular, the presentation of the WALADU project results and impact and the projection of the promotional video represented a very interesting session of the Conference. In order to consolidate this successful partnership, the Secretary General would like to renew the invitation of the WALADU Team to the General Conference that will be held in 2020. If there won't be any funds from other specific projects, AArU will directly cover the participation expenses of the WALADU Team;

- AArU is ready to formally join the WaLink network and make all the necessary efforts to promote its strengthening and consolidation. The WALADU project results, impact and methodology will be disseminated in future Conferences, workshops and meetings organized by AArU. The University of Bologna as Consortium Leader will be informed in due time and will receive pictures and reports of the dissemination activities;
- AArU appreciates being associate partner of the BANUU project proposal and confirms its high commitment for the assigned tasks in case the project will be funded;
- Dr. Albitar suggests us a meeting with Prof. Dr. Hosam Refai, Program Coordinator of the new Master in Heritage Conservation and Site Management of the Helwan University. Prof. Dr. Refai would like to present us this Master Program and know something more about the WALADU methodology.

### **Meeting with Prof. Dr. Hosam Refai, Program Coordinator of the Master in Heritage Conservation and Site Management of the Helwan University (Egypt).**

The meeting was held at 4 pm of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March in the meeting room of the Ryatt Regency Hotel in Sharm El Sheikh and it was focused on the following issues:

- The Master's program in Heritage Conservation and Site Management (HCSM) of HU aims to train experts who can respond to the problems arising from issues such as the lack of integrative conservation and management strategies, poor or often inexistent interpretation concepts and an acute lack of qualified administrative personnel;
- The curriculum is focused on transferring knowledge and skills necessary for assessment, protection and management of archaeological sites, and includes the following academic fields: conservation strategies and methods, heritage site management and strategic planning, presentation and interpretation, tourism and visitor management;
- The duration of the master is four semesters, full time. At the end of the path, graduates will be qualified to work in a broad range of heritage institutions in the private and public sector: government agencies, heritage organizations, museums, tourism agencies, private corporations, etc. As heritage consultants and managers, they may be employed to develop and implement conservation and management plans for archaeological or other cultural heritage sites. Scholarships for students are awarded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and other funding bodies;
- Prof. Refai expresses his high interest and consideration for both the WALADU and BANUU project methodologies. He is particularly in favor of developing BA Courses in Archaeology with a bottom-up approach that takes into account the context's features and is in line with the highest international standards. In his opinion, priority should be given to endow graduates with the specific knowledge and multidisciplinary skills required in the significance assessment, management and safeguarding of archaeological sites which is accomplished through the variety of



the taught subjects. The HCSM and the BANUU project go in this same direction and it would be very interested to explore any possible future convergences and synergies among these two initiatives;

- An exchange of the WALADU and HCSM informative and didactic materials and reports will be realized among UNIBO and HU as follow-up of this meeting;

- Prof. Refai admits is interest in make HU a member of the WaLink network: any initiative that goes in the direction of strengthening international academic cooperation in the field of Cultural Heritage Management and Archaeology must be supported;

الدورة الثانية والخمسون للمؤتمر العام لاتحاد الجامعات العربية  
جامعة حلوان – جمهورية مصر العربية

14-15 رجب 1440هـ  
الموافق 21-22 آذار/ مارس 2019  
شرم الشيخ

برنامج أعمال المؤتمر العام لاتحاد الجامعات العربية  
في دورته الثانية الخمسين  
جامعة حلوان – شرم الشيخ – جمهورية مصر العربية  
21-22 آذار / مارس 2019م

**الأربعاء 2019/3/20**

- 10:00 - اجتماع المجلس التنفيذي في الفندق + غداء  
7:00 مساء - استقبال المشاركين في المؤتمر العام + حفل استقبال في الفندق  
- التسجيل واستلام الشنط

**اليوم الأول الخميس 2019/3/21**

- 11:00 - 10:00 الافتتاح ويشتمل:  
- السلام الوطني المصري  
- كلمة أ.د. ماجد نجم/ رئيس جامعة حلوان (الجامعة المضيفة)  
- كلمة أ.د. عبد المنعم القبسي/ نائب رئيس الجامعة الإسلامية في لبنان / رئيس الدورة  
السابقة)  
- كلمة أ.د. عمرو عزت سلامة / أمين عام اتحاد الجامعات العربية  
- كلمة راعي الحفل  
- تسليم علم الدورة، واستلام أ.د. ماجد نجم رئاسة الدورة (52) ورئاسة المجلس التنفيذي.  
صورة جماعية واستراحة 12:00 – 11:00

**الجلسة الأولى :**

- 12:00 – 1:30 - كلمات ممثلي المنظمات العربية والدولية المشاركة في الاجتماع  
جامعة الدول العربية -  
- أ.د. عبد الإله بنعرفة/ المشرف على الأمانة العامة للمنظمة الإسلامية للتربية والعلوم  
والثقافة – المغرب  
- أ.د. ناصر الهتلان القحطاني/ المدير العام للمنظمة العربية للتنمية الإدارية – مصر  
- أ.د. ياسر محمد جاد الله/ عميد المعهد القومي للملكية الفكرية - جامعة حلوان  
- د. فواز الزغول/ مدير المجلس العربي للتدريب والإبداع الطلابي- الجامعة الأردنية  
- أ.د. علي عبدالله موسى/ أمين عام المجلس الدولي للغة العربية - لبنان  
- د. محمد لطفي/ عضو مجلس إدارة – Magna Charta  
- أ.د. نهى عثمان عزمي/ مدير مركز القياس والتقويم – وزارة التعليم العالي - مصر  
University of Bologna / Emmanuel Di Tommaso -

1:30 - 2:30 - الجلسة الإجرائية وتشمل:

- 1- التأكد من النصاب القانوني للاجتماع وإقرار جدول أعمال الدورة
- 2- اختيار رئيس الدورة الحالية للمؤتمر العام ودعوته ليرأس الاجتماع
- 3- اختيار نائبي رئيس الدورة

- 4- اختيار المقرر العام للدورة  
5- تسمية اللجان الفرعية واختيار مقرريها وتوزيع بنود جدول أعمال المؤتمر على هذه اللجان.

4:00-2:30 - حفل غداء والصلاة

### الجلسة الثانية:

5:30-4:00 - اجتماعات اللجان الفرعية لمناقشة البنود المحالة إليها

8:00 مساء - حفل عشاء

### اليوم الثاني الجمعة 2019/3/22

10:00 12:00 - جلسة عامة لجميع أعضاء المؤتمر العام للاتحاد

- مناقشة البنود المحالة إلى المؤتمر العام وتوصيات اللجان الفرعية  
- الجلسة الختامية للمؤتمر وإقرار التوصيات وتسليم الدروع

12:00 – 1:00 صلاة

1:00 – 2:00 غداء

2:00 - 5:00 - ورشة عمل بعنوان تصنيف الجامعات العربي

- الجلسة الأولى : Higher Education Ranking Overview

- مقدمة : أ.د. أشرف حاتم/ مستشار الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة 2:00 – 2:05

- أ.د. عبدالرحيم الحنيطي/ الأمين العام المساعد لاتحاد الجامعات العربية 2:05 – 2:25

- ممثل QS Mr. Ashwin Fernandes 2:25 – 2:45

- ممثل Times Higher Education Mr. Will Sanchez 2:45 – 3:05

- الدكتور محمد أمير ممثل Elsevier 3:05 – 3:25

- مناقشة 3:25 – 3:55

- الجلسة الثانية : Ranking Perspectives of Arab Universities

- مقدمة : أ.د. إيهاب عبد الرحمن/ الرئيس الأكاديمي للجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة 4:00 – 4:05

- مناقشة 4:05 – 5:00

- د. أحمد الجبيلي/ المدير التنفيذي للاعتماد الأكاديمي والتقييم – المركز الوطني للتقييم

والاعتماد الأكاديمي – السعودية

- د. عمرو عدلي/ نائب وزير التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي – مصر

- د. بشير الزعبي/ رئيس هيئة اعتماد التعليم العالي – الأردن

- د. محمد أبو العلا، مدير هيئة الاعتماد الأكاديمي – الإمارات

- د. يوهانسون عيد/ رئيس الهيئة القومية لضمان جودة التعليم والاعتماد – مصر

- ختام وتوصيات

**اليوم الثالث السبت 2019/3/23**

- مغادرة الوفود المشاركة