

German-Iraqi University Partnerships

Project

„Rehabilitation of urban heritage in the cities of Iraq“

Online meeting 17th June 2020

11:00 am Iraq time



buildings in the old town of Koya, Foto: University of Sulaimani, Architecture Department

Introduction

The reason and starting point of the project are on the one hand the heavy destruction and neglect of Iraqi old towns and the interest of the Iraqi project partners in doing something sustainable for a better handling of the architectural heritage and on the other hand the experience of the partners from Germany with the reconstruction and redevelopment of war-damaged or neglected and run-down old towns in Germany and the Middle East.

To this day, many of Iraq's historic quarters, old towns and villages are severely neglected. The examples of the citadel of Kirkuk, the old towns of Kifri and Koya or the villages of Hawraman, a mountainous region in the east of Sulaymaniyah and north of Halabja in the Iraqi region of Kurdistan, stand for this¹. Apart from the general neglect of the building fabric and settlement structures of the old towns, however, special war-like exposures have also destroyed or severely damaged many old towns and old villages. The city of Halabja should be mentioned here, where many buildings were destroyed during the war between Iraq and Iran in 1988 and which suffered sad fame due to the use of poison gas by the Saddam Hussein regime against the Kurdish population. Many villages in the Kurdish region were also destroyed during this period, partly in order to destroy the cultural roots and history of the Kurdish population in Iraq. More recently, the ISIS attacks and the subsequent fight against the "Islamic State" have severely destroyed old towns in the north-western regions of Iraq. The city of Mosul is best known for this, but this project will focus on smaller cities that have received little attention from outside, but which are of great importance for the lives of large parts of the population, their history, homeland ties and identity.

In central Iraq, the situation of the old towns does not look any better than in the Kurdish region of Iraq described above. Already at a conference with a delegation from the University of Baghdad at the BTU in Cottbus in 2010, several lectures on the disastrous situation and plans for the old cities of Karbala and Nadjaf as well as the historical quarters Al-Karkh, Rusafah and Kazimiyah of Baghdad were presented and discussed.

The main common goal for the project "Rehabilitation of urban heritage in the cities of Iraq" is the establishment of competence centres at Iraqi partner universities for the reconstruction, revitalisation and rehabilitation of neglected or war-damaged old towns in Iraq (hereinafter referred to as 'Revitalisation of old towns in Iraq'). In conjunction with the establishment of these competence centres, master curricula are to be modified or supplemented with corresponding modules; joint conferences, workshops, colloquia, seminars and field studies are to be used to initiate practice-oriented research and doctoral projects; and guest visits by young Iraqi lecturers and master students to BTU are to provide intensive further training, thus anchoring new knowledge at the partner universities in the long term.

Tasks and objectives of the first project phase are a deeper penetration of the topic, the definition of case study areas and the coordination of an action plan for the project duration until the end of 2021.

¹ see: University of Sulaimani, Department of Architecture, project proposal paper "Cooperation Partnership for preserving urban heritage in the Kurdish cities of Iraq", Sulaimaniyah 01.02.2019

Timetable 17.06.2020

11:00 welcoming

11:10 Christoph Wessling, presentation of the project – questions and answers

11:30 Sulaymaniyah University, tbd., presentation of the proposed case studies in the Kurdish Region – questions and answers

12:00 Baghdad University, tbd. (together with Dr. des Mohammed Al Hassani), presentation of the proposed case studies in the Kurdish Region – questions and answers

12:30 Christoph Wessling, presentation of the proposed project programme for the fall term 2020 / 2021, with: webinars and online lectures, online workshops and online research colloquia - debate

13:10 agreement about the programme for the fall term

13:30 end of the online meeting

Invited Institutions

Brandenburg University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Planning

University of Baghdad, College of Engineering

University of Sulaimani, Faculty of Engineering

Government of Iraq, Ministry of Construction, Housing and Municipalities; Development and Research Centre

German Archaeological Institute, Berlin / Baghdad

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