

(Re)Contextualising Contested Heritage

Building Capacity & Designing Participatory Approaches to Preserve Cultural Heritage by the Youth.



IRAQ Center
TOOLKIT



Project Partners



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BEIRUT ARAB UNIVERSITY

A Welcome Note



*Dr Gehan Selim
ReConHeritage
Principle
Investigator
Associate
Professor in
Architecture &
Urbanism
University of
Leeds*

Cultural Heritage became a vulnerable target without protection, with millions living continuously under the threat of recurring conflict. In addition, the international community is yet to have concrete or long-term strategies for building resilience to facilitate the protection of heritage communities, ethnic minorities, or vulnerable groups at times of conflict.

The ReConHeritage project resonates with a new and urgently needed mode of democratisation of memory and digital culture that further foregrounds the importance of comparative, cross-boundary and a transnational approach towards post-conflict reconciliation associated with contested pasts.

An inspiring and professional team from the UK, Lebanon, Kosovo and Iraq have worked together to mount an interdisciplinary approach using arts and humanities research to respond to a critical global challenge of the continuous destruction of cultural heritage in conflict regions. One objective was to develop transformative models of regional partnerships on sustainable transitions of peacebuilding and cultural exchange. Another objective was to establish a sustainable digital platform, supported by local young people, with help from three major international research universities. The project was designed as an opportunity for experimenting and documenting new ways of collaboration between people with different backgrounds, organisations and sectors to develop new ways of engagement and learning from each other.



*Dr Andrew
Holland
Research Fellow
University of
Leeds*

This Toolkit shares these concepts and provides insight into the unique opportunity our project partners have developed through experimentation, co-design and co-production that is embedding new practices within their respective unique and fascinating contexts and broader communities. The co-produced research with young people identifies issues and solutions, to negotiate historical conflict, and building local consensus on future awareness, protection and nation rebuilding.

The Toolkit provides several opportunities that may not always be obvious when researching context-specific case studies of inventive collaborations such as in this project. I hope young people are inspired and encouraged to take a step forward in their explorations of what it means to reengage with the memory and existence of their contested heritage.

Foreword



*Dr Sabeeh Lafta Farhan
Project Partner,
Wasit University,
El Kut, Iraq*



*Dr Venus Suleiman Akef
Research Assistant,
The University of Technology,
Baghdad, Iraq*

This toolkit documents the essence of many months of working on activating the role of youth for cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq through the international project: (Re)Contextualizing Contested Heritage: Building Capacity & Designing Participatory Approaches to Preserve Cultural Heritage by the Youth.

The major work in the Iraq team have been introduced in this toolkit in three main parts. The first is a brief summary of the activities that have been held in the Iraq center in order to achieve the key goals of the project on the local scale. This part includes the outcomes of the thirteen professional and academic preservation and heritage seminars, three documentation training workshops, discussion panels and several events and activities. In this process it was possible to engage stakeholders from many Iraqi governmental intuitions, NGOs, and Universities covering Iraq geographically from north to south.

The second part includes the possible future trajectories to ensure the sustainability of this project in Iraq through six main tools. Revitalizing the preservation culture in Iraq and activating the role of youth for saving and reviving the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the country require collaboration between the upper levels of decision making in Iraq, historic preservation experts, professionals, scholars and all stakeholders, and the public. There is also an urgent need for support from the international preservation society. Top-down and bottom-up strategies are proposed through six tools. The importance of these tools and the main resources that are needed are also included with each of the six proposed tools in this part.

The third part is the youth discussions and outcomes that prove the long-term impact of this project. The work of the youth who are actively engaged in this project provides strong evidences that simple acts of encouragement, support, and raising awareness could result in magnificent outcomes. If the proposed tools are to be activated, we will definitely witness a revolution in the field of cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq, led by the youth who are extremely willing to start a new page for better future after long years of wars and conflicts. Special thanks to the University of Leeds, Research England and Global Challenges Research Fund for leading and funding this project which is the first step towards more achievements for cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq.

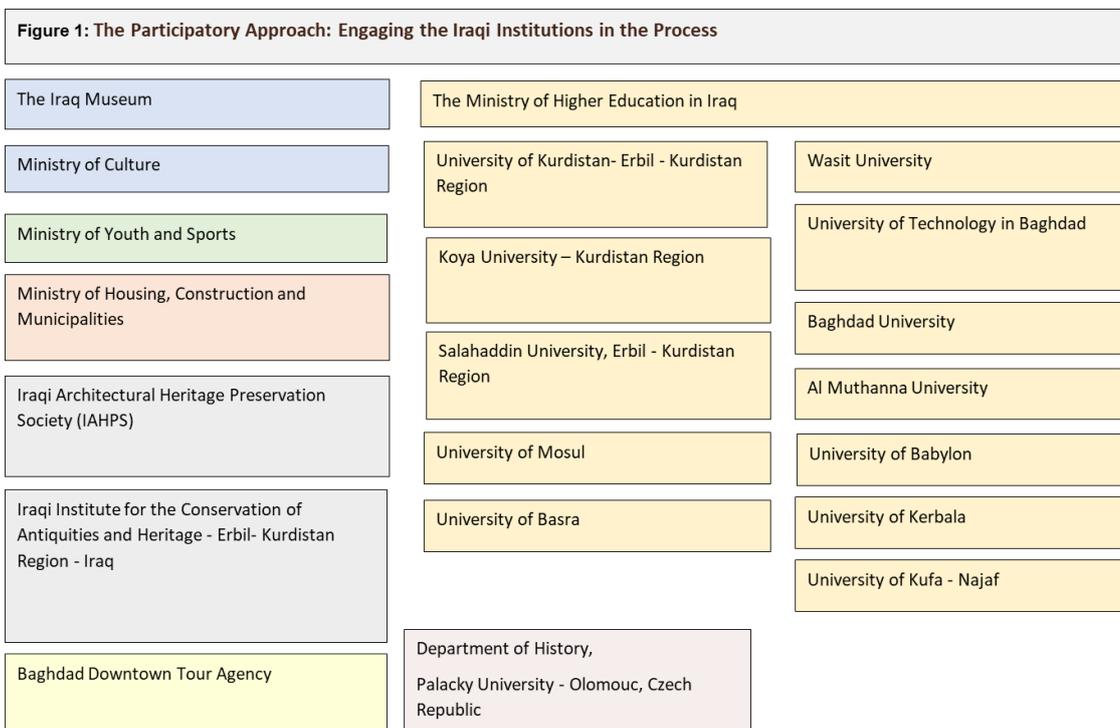
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1. Introduction

This toolkit is based on an interdisciplinary approach considering contributions from different disciplines including architecture, arts, history, archaeology, and engineering in response to the critical global challenge of the continuous destruction of cultural and architectural heritage which is particularly serious in Iraq. The focus in this project is mainly on activating

the role of youth in the process of preserving and reviving the rich tangible and intangible heritage in the country after more than four decades of wars and conflicts. This toolkit, introduces an applicable roadmap which is concluded from our experience in the Iraq center through the timely international project ((Re)Contextualising Contested Heritage: Building Capacity & Designing



Participatory Approaches to Preserve Cultural Heritage by the Youth). Throughout more than nine months of continuous work, it was possible to successfully engage a group of Iraqi youth in the discussion of the cultural and architectural heritage of Iraq through thirteen professional and academic seminars, two workshops, three documentation training lectures, and several events and activities (mentioned in detail in the final report). Contributed to the discussions in this intensive program, a professional group of architecture, history, and archaeology professors, preservation experts, engineers and activists from twelve Iraqi universities covering Iraq from north to

south, 6 ministries and governmental institutions in addition to the Iraqi Architectural Heritage Preservation Society (IAHPS), and the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage Erbil- Kurdistan Region – Iraq.

Throughout this intensive program, it was possible to achieve significant milestones in the process of raising awareness among Iraqi youth about the importance of the cultural and architectural heritage and the field of historic preservation in Iraq. The discussions included several aspects, the following are the most important:



Figure 2
The Great Ziggurat of Ur near Nasiriyah- Dhi Qar Province, Iraq (Circa 2030–1980 BC), by Gaith Laith

1. Defining the cultural and architectural (the tangible and intangible) heritage, introducing national and international examples.
2. Clarifying what does preservation mean, why historic preservation is important? And what are its types and conditions.
3. Highlighting the practice of preservation as a collaborative and interdisciplinary field of knowledge and work.
4. The question of (why is it important to preserve the cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq?) has been carefully discussed and addressed within the current socio-political context of Iraq.
5. The Examining local experiences on both the academic and professional levels in the field of preservation in Iraq and comparing the local practice with the international experience
6. It was also possible to specify the major issues threatening the cultural and architectural heritage and the obstructions that hinder the preservation attempts in Iraq.
7. Possible propositions and plans to save the heritage and activate the field of preservation in Iraq have been introduced and discussed.
8. The serious challenges that are expected to hinder the implementation of the proposed preservation plans were specified.
9. The tools to overcome these challenges were defined.
10. The outcomes of the intensive program have been discussed, and the first steps towards activating the role of youth for saving and protecting the cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq.

1.1 WHY IRAQ FOR (RE)- CONTEXTUALISING CONTESTED HERITAGE:

Why is it important to preserve the cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq?

Modern Iraq, is the land of Mesopotamia, and the cradle of civilization from where the pre-history of the Ancient Near East begins. Mesopotamia has been the home to successive civilisations of the ancient Sumerians and Akkadians (including Assyrians and Babylonians) who dominated there and established the first written history of mankind (c. 3100 BC). On this land the first wheel invented and the first written word, the first law, and the first civilized and geometric city in the world emerged. The land of Mesopotamia, Iraq, continued as part of the most important historical events in the development of human history until the beginning of the 20th century. The land of Mesopotamia, the Modern Iraq, therefore, embraces the world's richest cultural and architectural high profile historic and religious sites.

However, since 1980 to present, Iraq has lived through long successive wars and conflicts in addition to unprecedented rising rates of intra-state violence. The result can be best described as destruction on both the tangible and intangible levels and deterioration in every aspect of life that is yet to be addressed and resolved on the structural levels. During the last

four decades of wars and conflicts in Iraq, the country's rich cultural and architectural heritage was not immune. In fact, destroying many high profile historical and religious sites in Iraq was not only a part of the collateral damage but rather a systematic and potentially crucial aspect of warfare. Among many examples is the systematic destruction and brutal annihilation of high profile heritage and historic sites in Mosul, north of Iraq, committed by ISIS terrorists in 2014-2017, which is announced by UNESCO as a cultural cleansing. Another example is the catastrophe of targeting the Samarra Mosque which incited outrage, fear, and a degree of resentment that was powerful enough to cause the outbreak of the civil war in 2006 after three years of intense conflicts in Iraq following the 2003 military operations.

Recent studies define this case as 'Warchitecture' which is another version of ethnic cleansing that targets human beings through targeting their architectural identity and heritage during warfare[1]. Targeting the architecture which has specific symbolic values for a particular group of people, is a systematic targeting and destroying that group of people themselves. [2] Bevan argues that such systematic acts of destruction not only shatter a nation's culture and morale but is also a deliberate act of completely destroying a culture's memory and, ultimately, its existence. Such understanding of the systematic destruction of heritage during warfare opens the doors to enhance

1 Andrew Herscher, "Warchitecture/Post-Warchitecture," Volume#11: Cities Unbuilt, (2007):68-77. (Kosovo as a case study).

2 Lebbeus Woods, War and Architecture (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993).

and activate the role of the cultural and architectural preservation for rebuilding sustainable peace within post-war (Post-Warchitecture) and conflict zones. [3] Moreover, in Iraq, destroying the cultural and architectural heritage during warfare is a process of destroying the common-ground platform (the shared-root identity) that has long united the Iraqis despite their different religious, social, and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, rebuilding sustainable peacefulness in our cities and societies urgently requires long-term plans to address the root causes of conflicts for structural conflict transformation. In response to the systematic destruction of architecture during warfare (warchitecture), and based on specific characteristics derived from theories of peacebuilding, the cultural and architectural heritage is proposed as a common-ground active platform for building positive peace.[4] Therefore, long term plans for sustainable peace requires raising

awareness among youth, practitioners, and scholars about the important role of preserving our cultural and architectural heritage in the process of the post-war reconstruction and sustainable development.

This project, Re-Contextualizing Contested Heritage: Building Capacity & Designing Participatory Approaches to Preserve Cultural Heritage by the Youth in Iraq, is a new approach that focuses on building collective resilience, shared humanitarian values and sustainable partnerships that transcend physical and cultural barriers with socio-economically benefits.

This research resonates with a new and urgently needed mode of democratisation of memory and digital culture that further foregrounds the importance of comparative, cross-boundary and a transnational approach towards post-conflict reconciliation associated with contested pasts.



Figure 3
Cellist Kareem Wasfi plays music in front of the destroyed historical Al-Hadba' Minaret of the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, which was bombed-out by ISIL on 21 June 2017, during the Battle of Mosul in Iraq.
[Source: Middle East Online, Public Domain].

3 Robert Bevan, "Cultural Cleansing," Volume#11: Cities Unbuilt, (2007):6-8 And, Robert Bevan, The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War (London, UK: REAKTION LTD, 2006-2016).

4 Akef, Venus Suleiman, "Architecture for Positive Peace: The Role of Architecture in the Process of rebuilding Peace within conflict and postwar contexts," 2019, On Ohio Link, University of Cincinnati

1.2 The major issues that hinder the work for the preservation of the cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq.

The experience-based discussions during the seminars revealed and agreed on that the major issues hindering the process of activating the cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq are basically a result of long years of wars and conflicts in Iraq, they can be summarized as following:

- 1. The lack of firm conservation legislations and regulations and weak law enforcement. These legislations are to regulate the conservation of the cultural and architectural heritage and high profile historical sites and cities in Iraq.**
2. Historic preservation (the cultural and architectural heritage) is an interdisciplinary field and collaborative work. Whereas, the existing departments and preservation programs in Iraq work separately from each other, and in many case the work is on individual level with no any support. No common ground platforms are yet existed to seriously unify all the efforts for professional interdisciplinary preservation practice in Iraq. (This workshop was the first platform to bring together many of the stockholders, academics, and activists who are professionally involved in historic preservation and working on stopping the dramatic heritage loss in Iraq). Such platforms are of crucial importance to address the serious issues that are threatening our heritage in Iraq, discuss all current efforts in this field, and exchange ideas and work experiences).
3. No enough preservation programs included within the curriculum of both the graduate and under graduate programs at all the fields of study that relates to historic preservation, particularly in the schools of architecture in the Iraqi Universities. The result is no enough prepared staff to work on both the practical and professional levels and to lead to whole preservation process in Iraq.
4. The isolation between the local preservation society in Iraq and the International preservation societies. In order to activate the cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq, it is important to reconnect the Iraq with its international context in order to exchange the experiences and update the information.
5. Lack of awareness among public about the importance of cultural and architectural preservation, its role in rebuilding a positive peace within our cities and societies, and its influential association with the sustainable development at all levels including the social and the economic development.
6. The result of all the above mentioned major issues is serious destruction and dramatic loss of heritage in Iraq.
7. The result of all the above mentioned major issues is the lack of awareness among youth about both the importance of preserving the cultural and architectural heritage of Iraq and their role in this process.



Figure 4: Babylon, the capital city of Babylonia, a kingdom in ancient Mesopotamia, Iraq
Founded 1894 BC, Photo by Gaith Laith

1.3 Why should young people engage in protecting their past heritage? Why their voices and actions make a difference? Why now?

The youth are the reflection of the future in the present time, they are the hope of tomorrow. If we are to build a better future for the next generations, the first step is to link them with their roots and keep their identity identified. No plans can be sustained on the long term without engaging the youth as they are the leaders of tomorrow. In Iraq, saving and protecting the cultural and architectural heritage of the country goes far beyond its tangible limits. Historic preservation in Iraq, particularly at this critical juncture in the history of the country, is one of the most influential strategies for sustainable development and rebuilding positive peace in our cities and societies after long decades of wars and conflicts.

1.4 What is the current role of the Youth in understanding the value of the past, what skills and practices are in place? What challenges do they face? What tools do they need to support them?

As the country is still in the process of recovering from long years of successive wars and conflicts, the field of historic preservation in Iraq is not at

the least expected level. The young generations of Iraqi youth are facing extreme challenges. They have not yet had the chance to actively contribute to the field of cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq. However, the most important point is that the desire still exists. Simple and small attempts to raise the awareness among the youth about the importance of cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq have been embraced by the youth and the outcomes (included in the last part of this toolkit) are more than encouraging to continue the mission. Yet, more support and intervention are urgently needed from international preservation societies (Universities, research agencies, preservation organizations, UN, and UNESCO). The international support is crucial not only for raising awareness among youth about the importance of the cultural and architectural heritage and activating their role in field of the historic preservation in Iraq, but also to enhance the whole preservation culture in the country.

1.5 How can we work in a better interdisciplinary way to motivate youth to engage? What are the main resources we need (educational /non-educational)?

In response to this Key question and the highlighted issues and challenges that hinder the preservation of the cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq, a set of tools and plans are proposed to save the heritage and activate the role of youth in this process.

Iraq, the cradle of civilization, can be considered as a huge museum. There is rarely a spot in the land of Mesopotamia that does not embrace a significant part from the history of the first civilizations of mankind. However, the rich cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq has been dramatically affected by the long years of wars and conflicts. Many important

high profile historic sites are seriously threatened to be lost. Hence, this proposed toolkit is not going to focus on one particular historic site. Rather, a macro scale strategy is envisioned for raising awareness among youth and activating their role in the whole process of saving and protecting the tangible and intangible heritage of Iraq. Such strategies on this scale, require building professional preservation programs, developing the existing discourses, and preparing leading teams of academics, scholars, activists, architects, historians, archaeologists, and other stakeholders in order to activate the field of historic preservation in Iraq on the long term. Activating the preservation culture in Iraq also requires intervention from upper levels of decision making in Iraq, public collaboration, and support from the international preservation society. Top-down and bottom-up strategies and tools are proposed including the followings:



Figure 5: the Fortress of Al-Ukhaidir or Abbasid palace of Ukhaider in Karbala, Iraq (775 AD), by Enas Ali Salman

2. Toolkits Tools

Tool 1

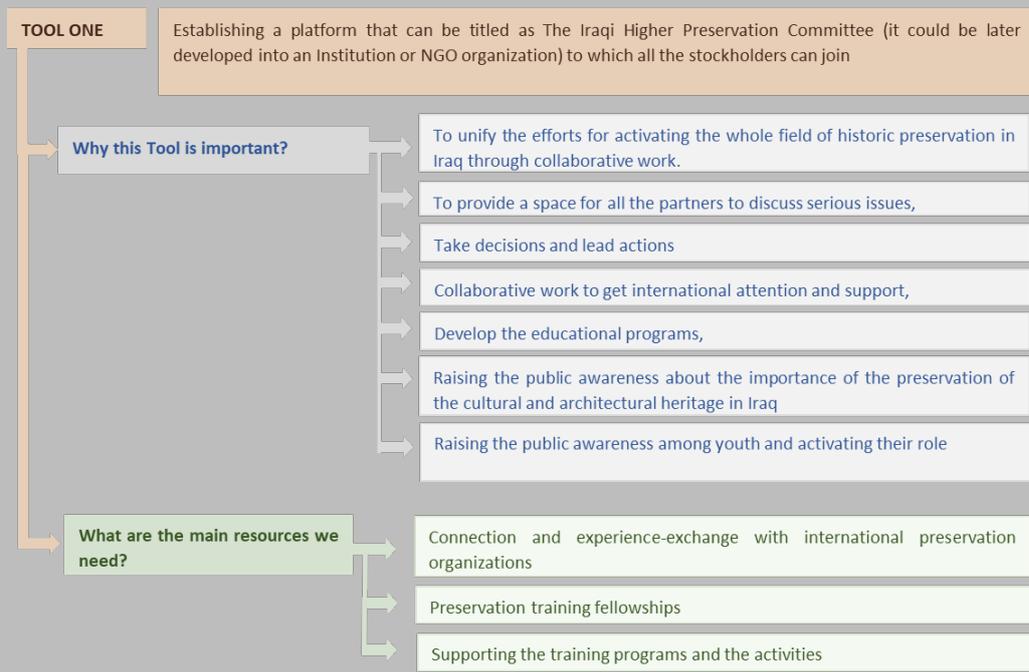
TOOL ONE

In the aim of unifying the efforts for activating the cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq, it is crucial to establish a platform that can be titled as The Iraqi Higher Preservation Committee (it could be later developed into an Institution or NGO organization) to which all the stockholders can join.

The individual work in such multi-disciplinary field (preservation) and in such complex contexts (in Iraq) proved to be not as productive as groups' collaborative work. Establishing such a platform is crucial to provide a space for all the partners to discuss serious issues, get international attention and support, take decisions, develop the educational programs, and activate the whole field of historic preservation in Iraq through collaborative work.

Among the very the first missions of this group is to raise the public awareness about the importance of preserving our cultural and architectural heritage, and develop and update the preservation legislations and laws in Iraq.

The first step in this tool has already been taken for raising the public awareness about the importance of preserving the cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq. A list of public trips is organized covering the important historical sites in Iraq from north to south, including Mosul, Kurdistan, Baghdad, Babylon, Karbala, Sothern Mesopotamia (the Cradle of Civilization) and the Marshes, and Basra the southern gate of Iraq.

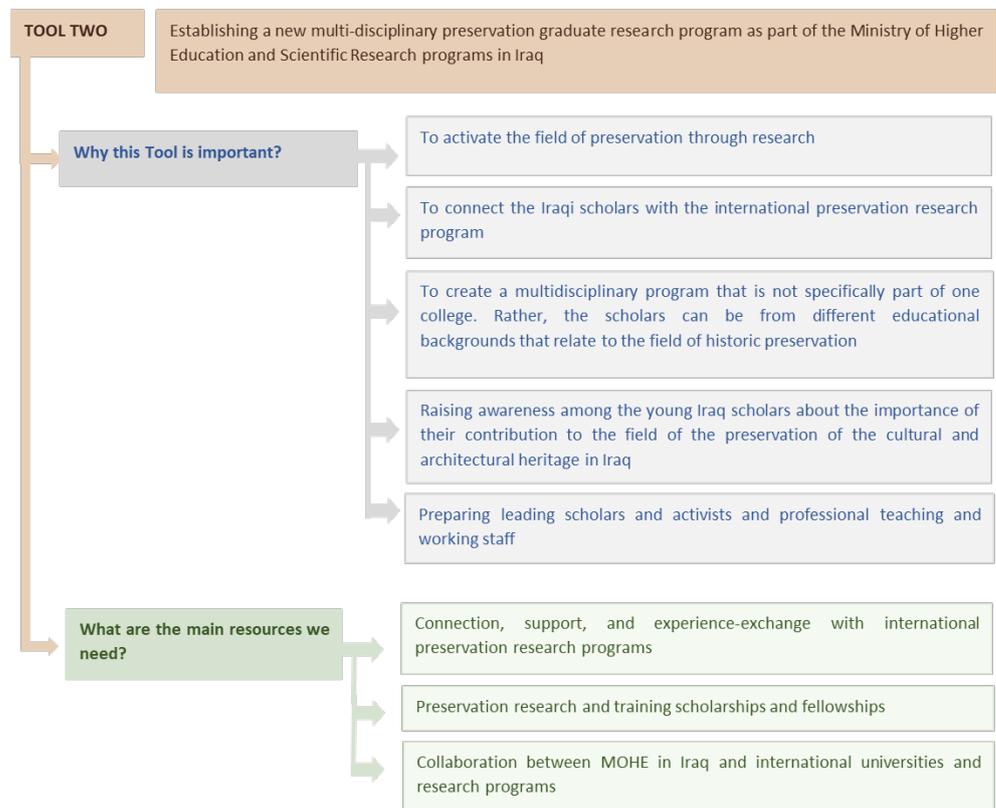


Tool 2

TOOL TWO

With the support from the international preservation society, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Culture in Iraq, it is important to establish a new research program – multi-disciplinary research – focusing on Preservation, Documentation, and Investigation. Investigation researches are crucial when there emerges such a huge information gap related to most of our historic sites in Iraq. This program will also unify the efforts and opens the doors for the youth to participate in the process through research and on-site work.

The international preservation society can provide a support by offering preservation and documentation training and research fellowships for the youth to prepare them and activate their role and contributions to the cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq.

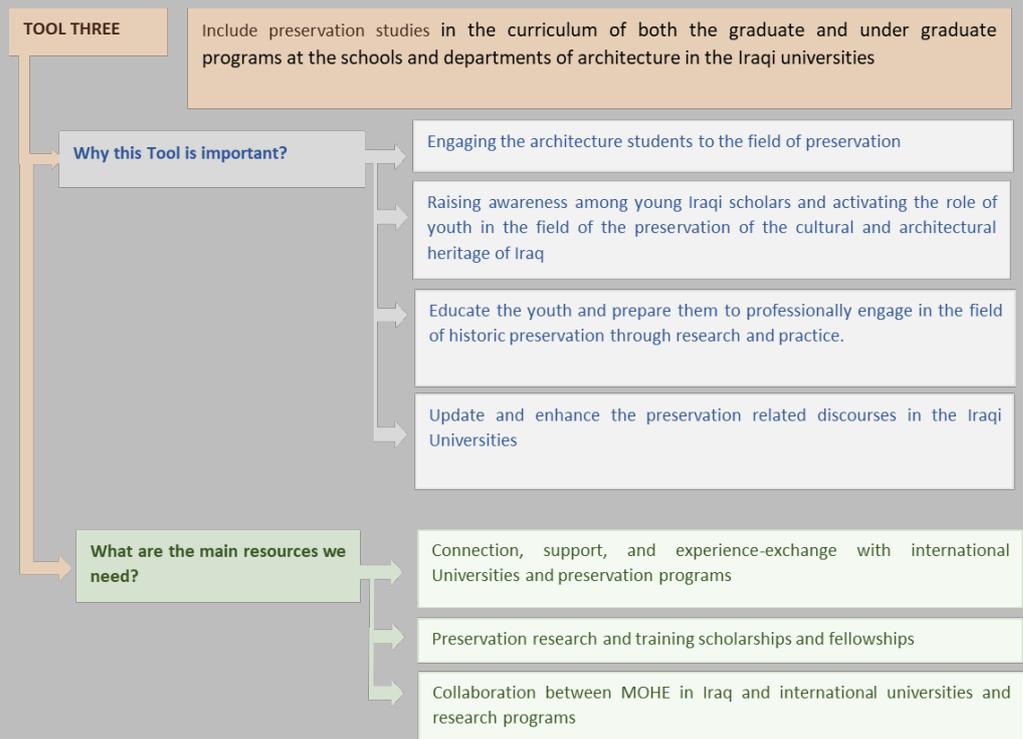


Tool 3

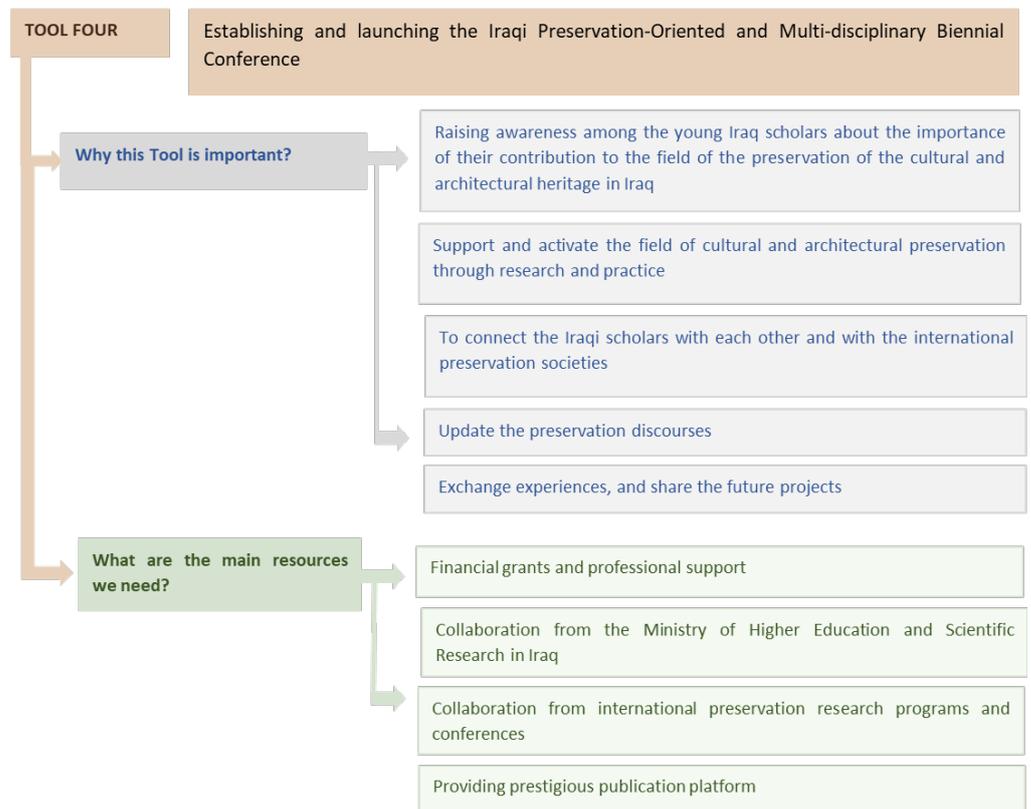
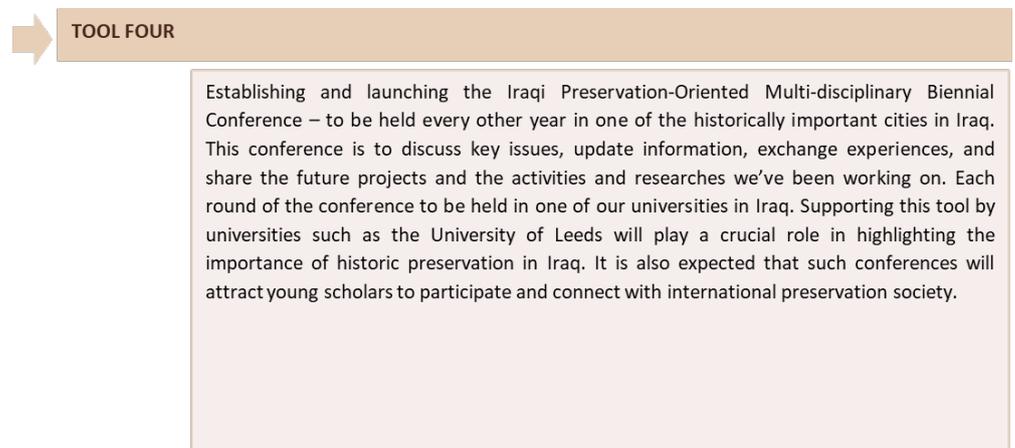
TOOL THREE

With the support from the international preservation society, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education in Iraq, it is important to establish preservation programs in the Departments of Architecture at the Iraqi Universities.

Actuating preservation studies as part of the curriculum of both the graduate and under graduate programs at the schools and departments of architecture in the Iraqi universities is expected to play a key role in activating the role of youth in the preservation of the cultural and architectural heritage of the country. These programs make it possible to educate the youth and prepare them to professionally engage in the field of historic preservation through research and practice. For example, department of architecture at the University of Technology, despite being one of the prestigious schools of architecture in Iraq, but it hasn't developed a preservation –oriented discourse yet.



Tool 4



Tool 5

TOOL FIVE

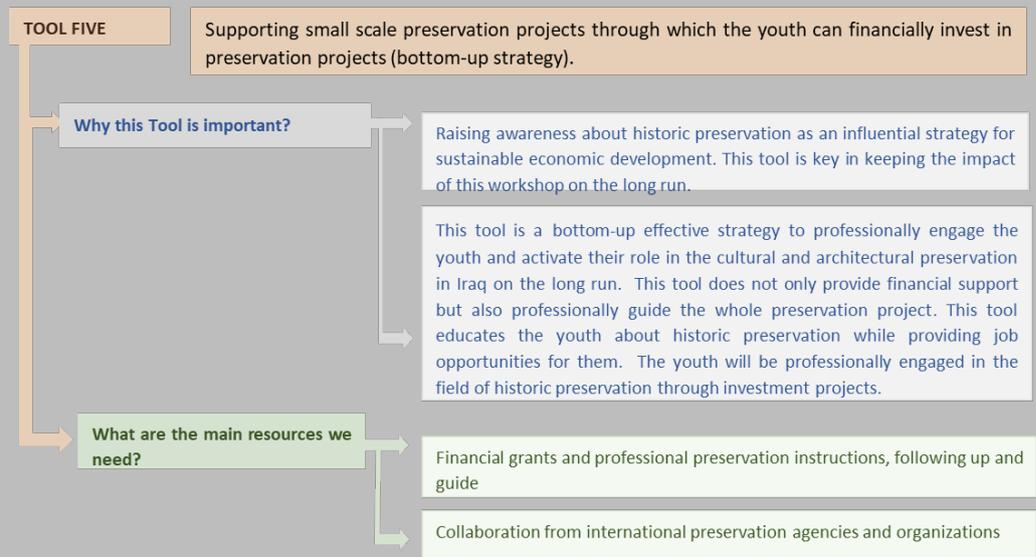
This tool is a bottom-up effective strategy which includes supporting small scale preservation projects through which the youth can financially invest in preservation. For example providing support for documentation projects which are being conducted by young Iraq activists. Another example of small scale preservation projects for investment by the youth is preserving and renovating historic structures such as the traditional courtyard houses for new activities such as restaurants, galleries, cafes, and cultural activities and gatherings.

The support includes both financing the project through grants and providing advice and the necessary experience for preserving and renovating the historical structures and revitalizing the historical sites.

Supporting such activities is expected to be a key in enhancing and revitalizing the whole preservation culture in Iraq by the youth. This tool is also going to reveal the capacity of preservation as an influential strategy for sustainable development. Such projects will provide job opportunities for the youth who are interested in cultural and architectural preservation and opens the door for more professional investment through preservation. There are several similar projects in Baghdad for example. However, these projects are extremely unprofessional in the way they preserved the buildings. Thus, providing support by professional preservation experts is of crucial importance.

In the Iraqi team we have several young activists who are seeking support and advice to continue their documentation projects and initiate their small scale investment in preservation projects.

Providing such opportunities for the youth and stakeholders who are financially investing in the cultural and architectural preservation will encourage, enhance, and enrich the whole preservation experience and revitalize the tourism sector in Iraq. This tool is to support the main objectives of this workshop - which is to raise awareness among youth about the importance of the heritage and activate their role in historic preservation on the long term.



Tool 6



TOOL SIX

Providing professional preservation and documentation training and research fellowships, grants, and scholarships in collaboration between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq and the international universities. Providing such opportunities for the students, teaching staff, and scholars who are working for cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq will encourage, enhance, and enrich the whole preservation experience in the country. This tool is to support of the main objectives of this workshop - which is to raise awareness among youth about the importance of the cultural and architectural heritage - on the long term. This tool is also to support the preservation programs by further developing their discourses and staff members.



Figure 6: Shaduppum (modern Tell Harmal), the city state of the kingdom of Eshnunna which was part of the Akkadian Empire and The Third Dynasty of Ur, also called the Neo-Sumerian Empire Baghdad, 2028 B.C, Photo by Mustafa Hisham Assi,



Figure 7: Shaduppum (modern Tell Harmal), the city state of the kingdom of Eshnunna which was part of the Akkadian Empire and The Third Dynasty of Ur, also called the Neo-Sumerian Empire Baghdad, 2028 B.C, Photo by Mustafa Hisham Assi,

3. The Youth: Discussions And Outcomes

Since April 15, by the end of the 14 lectures that addressed almost all the major issues related to the tangible and intangible heritage in Iraq, despite all the challenges, the work in this project has continued. A roadmap has been concluded with action plans for the next steps towards preserving our cultural and architectural heritage through a collaborative work. The focus has mainly been on raising awareness and activating the role of youth in the process of protecting and preserving the contested heritage of Iraq.

As a result of the first round of lectures that took place between March 30th – April 14th 2020 , promising outcomes become evident. The youth participants began to actively engage in the field of preservation. Ms. Shahad Abdul Abbas, for example (an architect at the Department of Architectural Engineering- the University of Technology, Iraq) has realized how important is to document our architectural heritage, especially the high-profile historic sites using 3D-Modeling professional programs such as 3ds-Max and V-Ray. Directly after



Figure 8: 3D Modeling, the Great Ziggurat of Ur near Nasiriyah- Dhi Qar Province, Iraq (Circa 2030–1980 BC), by Shahad Abdul Abbas

attending the series of the 14 lectures and discussions, she started to create 3D models for a group of historical and monumental buildings in Iraq such as the Great Ziggurat of Ur near Nasiriyah-Dhi Qar Province circa 2030–1980 BC, See Figure (8), the Ishtar Gate of Babylon about 575 BCE in Babylon, See Figure (9), the Fortress of Al-Ukhaidir or Abbasid palace of Ukhaider in Karbala 775 AD, The Great Mosque of Samarra and its Spiral Minaret in Samarra 851 CE, See Figure (10), and the The Qushla or the Qishlah Building in Baghdad 1861-1868 AD, See Figure (11).

The youth participants have also realized how crucial the collaboration is between specialists and individuals from different backgrounds in the process of preservation. The collaboration between architect Shahad and Mr. Ali Taha (the archaeologist and historian from the Iraqi Museum, whose Master's degree is in Islamic Architectural Heritage) led to

build accurate 3D models for the historical buildings and sites. Our work was to link architect Shahad with Ali to provide her with all the required information based on Ali's documentation work that he has done for his thesis in Archaeology. Initiating this collaboration was essential to our work in order to demonstrate a clear understanding that preservation is a collaborative work.

Another group of students started to share and post their personal photos, from previous trips to different historical sites in Iraq years ago, on Facebook. They started to realize how important are these sites and they become more aware of the value of these sites and photos as a kind of personal documentation method. The number of the photos that they have shared with us exceeded the 300 photos at different historical sites in Iraq. Prior to our intensive workshop, these photos were as not much acknowledged as today;



Figure 9: 3D Modeling, the Ishtar Gate of Babylon in Babylon, Iraq (Circa 575 BCE), by Shahad Abdul Abbas



Figure 10: 3D Modeling, the Great Mosque of Samarra and its Spiral Minaret, Samarra, Iraq (851 CE, 775 AD), by Shahad Abdul Abbas

the students have re-discovered the value of these photos. These posts on Facebook attracted the attention of the people from different backgrounds. So many comments included the memories of people in these places back in the days and how they feel about the tragic loss of the cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq.

Memories of childhood have been also shared. For example, Ms. Enas Ali (an architect and Faculty Member at the Department of Architectural Engineering, the University of Technology, Iraq) shared her childhood memories with her late father who used to take her with him regularly to the historical center in Baghdad, particularly to Al-Mutanabbi Street, to visit the Qishlah Building and other historical buildings in that area. She remembers that the buildings were in much better shape and she recognizes how urgent is to stop the rapid deterioration in that particular historical area in Baghdad. Furthermore, she decided to further develop her

observations and visions through her Master's thesis.

Mustafa Hisham Assi, is a fifth grade architecture student, has changed his graduation project to become the Iraqi Museum of Ancient Civilization. His design concept is to recall and revive the iconic architectural heritage of Iraq such as the Ziggurat of Ur and the clay tablets of Cuneiform writing invented by Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia. Mustafa also shared his childhood memories about his feelings towards one of the oldest archaeological site sites in his neighbourhood in Baghdad: Shaduppum (modern Tell Harmal) 2028 B.C. This site was the city state of the kingdom of Eshnunna which was part of the Akkadian Empire and The Third Dynasty of Ur, also called the Neo-Sumerian Empire. The still existing building is believed to be the house of finance of the whole kingdom of Eshnunna. When Mustafa was a young child, he used to think about what this building is and why he feels belonged



Figure 11: 3D Modeling, the Qushla or the Qishlah Building in Baghdad, Iraq (1861-1868 AD), by Shahad Abdul Abbas

to it. After long years of wars and unrest in Baghdad, he forgot about the building and the building itself has been dramatically neglected. After the workshop, Mustafa told us that he went to visit the site, despite the lockdown, he could take some photos to the building using his personal phone cam and he shared them with us See Figures (6, 7). Part of his concerns is that this building could be further damaged if it is not carefully preserved. Quoting him, “after listening to the lectures, I believe that the whole neighbourhood would flourish economically if this historical site would be preserved and invested as a tourists’ destination”.

More important is the academic part of this discussion, many of the youth participants who are graduate students in the department of architectural engineering at the University of Technology have decided to particularly focus on the cultural and architectural

preservation in their graduate studies (Master’s thesis and PhD dissertations). Through the work of these graduate students, a new line of research is going to be activated in the Department of Architectural Engineering- the University of Technology in Baghdad.

Very important to mention is that the impact of this project has exceeded the 20 youth participants from the University of Technology in Baghdad to include more architects and architecture students from Wasit Universities. They contributed with short recorded videos as documentaries of their visits, stories, memories at different historical sites in Iraq.

For example, Hawraa Nadhim and Rabab Jassim from Wasit University shared with us short videos. The first is their trip from Wasit to Baghdad (180 km) to visit the historical center (Al- Al-Mutanabbi Street, the Qishlah Building, Madrasah Mustansiriya and

other historical buildings in that area). The two young architects chose (From Past We Move Forward to Our Future) to become the title of their first video. They mentioned that they felt very much belonged to the place: “the place, despite seeing it for the first time, is very familiar maybe because of the use of the brick and the architectural details”. They mentioned that some of the historical buildings, such as Madrasah Mustansiriya, are neglected and need to be protected, sustained, and activated by some activities in order to attract more visitors.

the 2nd video is about their documentation to one of the historical houses in the city of Al-Kut that belongs to a British General Thawzend. The house is about 200 year old, the history of this house goes back to 1914 when it became the house of the British General who led the battles between the Ottoman and British military groups in Iraq during WWI.

In addition, Hussein Jaber Azez, from Kut University College is photographer and uses Drone to document the historical sites in Wasit. He provided us with a video of his documentation to the historical Gate of Wasit which is more than 1400 years old. He also decided to join us and participate in any preservation activities in Iraq. He also publishes his work as UTV Channel in Iraq.

Our Iraqi team also included Mr. Ahmed Kadhum Al-Naher, who is a 4th stage student at the College of Medicine, Wasit University. Dr. Ahmed is a young photographer and activist for the preservation of the cultural and architectural heritage in Iraq. His work is mainly to record and document cultural and oral heritage and historic sites, focusing on the most neglected and forgotten sites and traditions.

And finally, Mr Junaid Amer Hameed, the director of the exhibitions at the Iraq Museum, has joined the team. Working in in the Museum and being one of the founders of Ziusudra Organization, Mr. Junaid organizes trips for young people and families to visit historical sites in Iraq in order to re-connect youth and families with their roots, the rich cultural and architectural heritage of Iraq. He provided us with some videos of the trips that he organized; these videos are also included to this project.

One of the examples of the long-term impact of this project through the youth, is that by the time of launching the last session (the documentation training workshop), after two months of hard work and intensive lectures and seminars, our students have joined the session not as attendees but as speakers and introduced their own experiences and future planes.

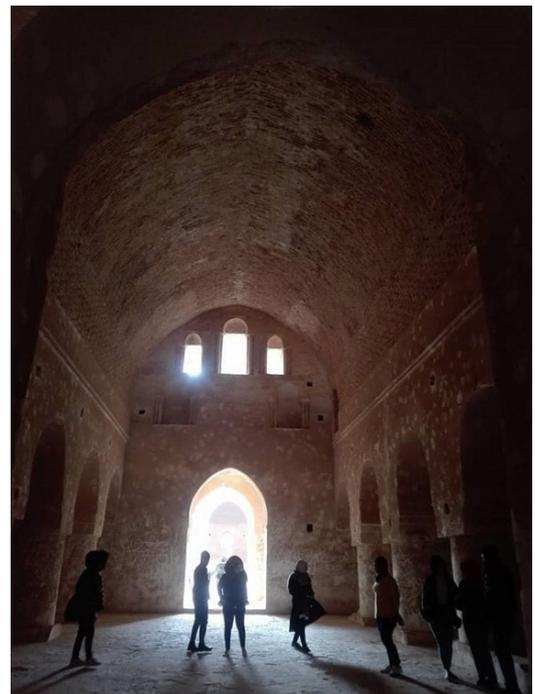


Figure 12: the Fortress of Al-Ukhaidir or Abbasid palace of Ukhaider in Karbala, Iraq (775 AD), by Enas Ali Salman

Finally, reaching to this point in the progress of the workshop required long hours of work and high determination to keep our commitment with the University of Leeds , and to achieve the main goals of this project despite all the challenges in Iraq (October Protests), and the world wide (Coronavirus pandemic).

The discussion of these outcomes is of crucial importance as it proves that the impact of this project is not going to end by the end of this project; the outcomes of this project will continue active on the long term through the work

of the youth who are actively engaged in this project. These outcomes are also a strong evidence that simple acts of encouragement, support, and raising awareness could result in magnificent outcomes. If the proposed tools are to be activated, we will definitely witness a definite revolution in the field of cultural and architectural preservation in Iraq, led by the youth who are extremely willing to start a new page for better future after long years of wars and conflicts.



Figure 13: the Ishtar Gate of Babylon in Babylon, Iraq (Circa 575 BCE), by Gaith Laith