

Global Astronomy Survey: Iraq

First Submission : Rojgar Hamid (SpoC) [see human resources section]14 May 2009

SpoC Approved : Yes

1. Professional (research) astronomy:

i. Number of universities offering Astronomy (and their names):

Only one university in Iraq has an astronomy department (University of Baghdad)

ii. Number of universities offering Physics (and their names):

there are 8 universities that offer physics
(Bahdad,Saladdin,Anbar,Sulaimanya,Duhok,Basrah,Mousl,Kerkwk)

iii. Number of academics who have been trained in Astronomy (ideally with their names and levels of qualification):

honestly I don't have any idea about number of academics in astronomy But I'm sure we used to have a lot of academics before war but the majority of them have left Iraq ,some of them before war ,some of them after, among them Dr.Hamid Mijwal Naimi (president of Arab astronomical union) and Dr.Alsabti who is manager of London university observatory.

And those who still live in Iraq, I just remember a few of them :

Dr.Nihad:the head of astronomy department in Baghdad university

Dr.Mariwan rasheed ,Dean of Qaradax university in sulaimanya

Dr.Muhammad aziz in saladdin university in Arbil province

Dr.Ismaeal Musa Mwrad, college of education saladdin university

iv. Number of astronomical facilities (observatories, telescopes, etc) and as much detail about each as possible (websites/contact details):

there is a very large observatory in Arbil province ,it consists of 1-a 3.5 meter telescope 2- a 1.5 meter telescope 3- a 30 meter radio telescope ,all of them located on the top of Mount korek in Arbil but unfortunately all of them have been attacked by plane missile during war.

There is also a planetarium and a small Observatory in Jadria ,Baghdad but unfortunately none of them are operating now.

v. Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Professional Astronomy? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.):

not only astronomy, the majority of scientific fields are not good at all ,science is simply not well respected here, that's simply because there is more essential necessities for their life that people worry about, life in Iraq is very difficult, and and getting a high degree in astronomy doesn't make you a well lived person. Phase 2.

2. Public understanding of astronomy:

i. What governmental astronomy/science outreach programmes for the public take place (co-ordinated either by government departments or national facilities):

no governmental programs is taking place Iraq with exception to astronomy department in Baghdad university.

ii. What non-governmental astronomy/science outreach programmes for the public take place (NGO activities or international programmes that your country is involved in)

there is two very active non governmental organization that are doing a lot of astronomy programs:

amateur astronomers association of Kurdistan in Arbil and amateur scientific association in Baghdad

their activities include: star parties, seminars, training course and astrophotography.

iii. Comment on the presence of astronomy in the media (TV, radio, newspapers). Is it very prominent? Are there specific programmes on astronomy? Is the media generally willing to publish news on astronomy?

yes of course Iraqi media is well reacted with scientific news, most of newspapers has it's own scientific page which is specified of scientific news especially astronomy, and also TVs is looking for such news and presents documentaries form time to time, the good thing (which is not good in deed!!) there is now copyright low in Iraqi constitution! Which makes Iraqi local TVs to present tens of documentaries for free!!! With out paying anything for the license!

iv. Comment on the presence of astronomy/science in the general culture of the people. Are there any specific challenges or setbacks? Is astronomy a welcome subject of conversation?

yes astronomy is a very welcome subject in our society, that's because the majority of Iraqi people are Muslims and as you might know most of Islamic feasts and events is depending on astronomical calculations, not only now but since ever astronomy is very welcomed science in Iraqi history, this is why you can find a lot of ancient astronomical observatories in Iraq for calculating of equinoxes and solstices.

v. Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Public Understanding of Astronomy? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.):

very bad! They like to learn but honestly they have a very limited education on astronomy and space sciences. Phase 2.

3. Astronomy in schools

i. What governmental astronomy/science education and outreach programmes for schools take place (co-ordinated either by government departments or national facilities) :

there is no such a program

ii. What non-governmental astronomy/science education and outreach programmes for schools take place (NGO activities or international programmes that your country is involved in) :

as I have mentioned before, there is a lot of astronomical activities that are conducted by NGOs (training courses, seminars, star parties and astrophotography campaigns)

iii. Comment on the presence of astronomy in the school curriculum. Is it part of the school curriculum? Is it very prominent? What age groups?

astronomy in curriculum : students in high school are taking astronomy as a part of their physics subjects in the 2nd and 3rd year (planetary motion, solar system planets, eclipses, celestial phenomena ...etc)

iv. Comment on the status of astronomy/science in schools. Are there any specific challenges or setbacks? Sufficient number of students studying maths and science? General interest in maths/science/astronomy in schools? :

all of students should study physics and maths as a main topic of their studies, there is no way to avoid studying them before entering university.

v. Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Astronomy in Schools? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.)

bad, it's just not good . Phase 2.