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Built Environment News

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Salford work in Sri Lanka and Iraq praised at Guardian awards

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The University of Salford has finished runner-up in the **Guardian University Awards**

[\[http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/university-awards\]](http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/university-awards) for its work helping Iraq and Sri Lanka recover from devastating wars.

In both countries, academics from the School of the Built Environment have been making a real difference to people's lives using their expertise and building relationships with communities and organisations on the ground.

Iraq

Iraq and its universities, severely disrupted by years of conflict, were suffering from gaps in business-related expertise and needed to develop academic collaboration and train local experts in a variety of business disciplines. Strong local stakeholder engagement, working with the University of Basra and with links into the Governor's Office and Basra Local Council, was used to identify and prioritise requirements.

Salford's team, led by **Professor Mustafa Alshawi**

[<http://www.seek.salford.ac.uk/profiles/ALSHAWI246.jsp>], worked closely with the Iraqis to set up a dynamic educational, multi-disciplinary research centre – the Basra Centre for Development and Innovation (BCDI). Using Internet-based communications, Iraqi students and academics interact, access international expertise and participate in real-time global collaboration, including live seminars. This success sparked the development of a Science and Technology Park in Basra working with global companies Arup and Lyle & Partners.

Sri Lanka

Following Sri Lanka's ethnic war which ended in May 2009, communities needed to be rebuilt physically, socially and economically. The conflict had restricted the capacity of universities in the North and East of the country to undertake essential research for the reconstruction.

The University's **Centre for Disaster Resilience** [<http://www.disaster-resilience.salford.ac.uk/>], which has a 25-year relationship with the country, worked with the University of Colombo; Eastern University; the University of Jaffna and the Chamber of Construction Industry in Sri Lanka to meet the needs of the country's culturally diverse communities.

The Salford-led Conflict Prevention through Infrastructure Reconstruction project (www.reconstructionforpeace.org [<http://www.reconstructionforpeace.org>]) brought together a creative international collaboration which improved understanding of the relationships between physical infrastructure reconstruction programmes and social cohesion among people affected by conflict, helping local stakeholders deliver conflict-sensitive reconstruction programmes. These long-standing collaborations with leading universities in Sri Lanka strengthened Salford's links and drew in new partners, including the British High Commission and other universities in the North and East.

Salford's international work

"Salford sees investment internationally in terms of sustainable reciprocity and mutual learning and does not view countries simply as a source of potential student, business or research income," says Professor Mustafa Alshawi, who led the Iraq project.

"All Salford's work internationally is based on the principles of two-way collaboration and respect. Students from Salford swap places with those internationally, ensuring that learning can be jointly developed, shared and brought back into students' home countries and beyond. Projects are developed across

disciplines and with cultural sensitivity, underpinned by a humanitarian set of values."

For more information about the University's work overseas and for opportunities for people from abroad to study and work with us, [visit the International section of our website](http://www.salford.ac.uk/study/international/lang/en) [http://www.salford.ac.uk/study/international/lang/en] .

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