

Sustainable Improvement and Management for Deteriorated Urban Area In Developing Countries

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Abstract: *The protection and sustainable renovation of old urban area is one of the key actions for sustainability during the rapidly urbanization process in developing countries. The sustainable management of existing building is one of the key fields for the improvement of old urban residential area. Where sustainable renovation defined as a process for maintaining and renovating buildings with due care for existing architectural, cultural, and social qualities and attention to the impact on the natural environment, on people's health and well-being. In this paper, the significance and the demands of sustainable renovation for old urban residential demands a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating environmental, technical, cultural and social factors, as well as the cooperation of different participants., in addition, the general planning framework of sustainable renovation composed of existing building improvement, environmental quality improvement and weak population improvement was set up.*

However, different sustainability goals often come into conflict with each other and demand choices and compromises. Renovation projects are often more influenced by economic considerations than by care and concern for existing qualities. The challenge for sustainable renovation policies should therefore be to combine respect for the character of the place with high quality design of sustainable measures. The paper concludes that to maintain sustainability of the renewal and urban conservation approaches, the typical urban tissue and essential qualities of the historic areas and of the life of the communities, residing there should be maintained, while adapting the physical structures and activities to some of today's requirements

Key, Sustainable development; urban rehabilitation and revitalization; Environmental quality; deteriorated urban area

1. Urban Heritage in Developing Countries

1-1 Definition of the Cultural and National Heritage

If we want to define "Urban Heritage", what comes to the mind of the most urban planners are usually "monuments" i.e. all sorts of the old religious buildings, palaces, castles, historical city walls and gates and other type of institutional buildings (e.g. of education, science, social purposes,). This understanding often excludes historic residential areas and historic city centers which equally represent the urban heritage. In addition, there may even be non-tangible elements of urban heritage, such as customs and beliefs that play a role for the articulation of space use and the built environment. (1).

Refereeing to the General Conference of UNESCO, the seventeenth session, the following shall be considered as "cultural heritage". (2)

- a. **Monuments:** architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and

combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

- b. **Groups of buildings:** groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- c. **Sites:** works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

1-2 The Current Situation of Old Urban Stock In Developing Countries.

During the last four decades, the attention of most governments in the developing countries has been focused on the problems of new settlements built through the formal and informal processes. Typically, most of these areas grow rapidly and were characterized by overcrowding, lack of infrastructure, poor-quality construction, bad sites, and so forth. At the same time, the desire for “modernization” by Governments and decision-makers in most developing countries often led them to believe in new and modern style. Anything old or in traditional style was considered of little value and was torn down or at best ignored. (Image1) present the old urban stock in the inner city areas in Cairo, which are suffering from lack of infrastructure, poor-quality construction.



Image 1 the old urban stock in El Moaied Mosque area – Cairo.

In addition, because of the rapid growth in the size of most cities in developing countries, and the transformation of their city economics, the whole spatial pattern of land uses and activities began to change. Inner cities became valuable for land uses other than housing, and economic pressures led to further elimination of older urban stock. For all of these reasons, most cities in developing countries have been paid till now very little attention to their older urban areas.

As a result, these areas continue generally to decline, with their physical, social and economic functions disrupted and their present potential contribution to the city's overall urban stock under-utilized. On the other hand, most old cities have some Urban Heritage and monuments, which represent the religious, military, political or economic powers of the past as in (Image2).



Image 2 the current situation of El Moaied Mosque area.

The condition of such monuments is determined largely by their present function and use. Monuments, which have no future utilization, tend to decay rapidly, while monuments, which are still in use have a better chance of being maintained. There is a good chance that monuments, which have a new function through “adaptive re-use”, are even better maintained. In fact, the strategy of conversion of monuments for adaptive re-use appears to be the most effective approach for a self-financing and sustainable form of conservation. There is, of course, a very large variety among urban heritage monuments throughout the whole world (Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America), hence, it is difficult to generalize with regard to their conditions and possibilities for conservation and rehabilitation. Generally speaking, there is tremendous shortage of funds and institutions that can deal with the management of conservation projects or maintenance of government owned registered monuments.



2. Developing the Conservation & Rehabilitation Concepts.

Until the 1940s few countries in the world appreciated the value of their older cities. In Europe, conservation was limited to a concern for historical building of special importance, usually castles, palaces, churches, museums and other significant public buildings. Attention was focused on the monuments individually, considered in isolation from the urban surroundings. After the Second World War, a mass destruction was happened for the historical cities in Europe, which provided the stimulus for a more serious consideration of older urban areas. The re-building which occurred across Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s led to a much greater awareness of the unique character of these older areas and the need to treat them sensitively and constructively. (3)

At the same time, in Europe and North America, there was growing criticism of the 'modern school of architecture' and the 'bulldozer' school of planning and urban renewal, which generated great dissatisfaction, as whole areas were indiscriminately destroyed and their social communities thoughtlessly ruined. Professionals housing and planning started to formulate new concepts and approaches, which slowly won acceptance from politicians and bureaucrats. (4)

From these various experiences has emerged the idea of urban rehabilitation. This does not mean the wholesome preservation of everything, which is old. Instead, it means the creative use and reuse of older quarters of the city, taken as a whole. Where possible, old buildings are repaired and modernized, to facilitate their continued use, especially as housing. This often includes upgrading of infrastructure services, but on a modest scale, allowing the preservation of incorporated, but on a small scale. Demolition should normally be reserved for structurally unsound buildings, but may also sometimes be needed in order to provide space for essential social services, infrastructure or open space. (5)

While the Venice Charter was still only concerned with single monuments, the UNESCO Conservation introduced for the first time the concept of cultural heritage, which is the basis for area conservation and rehabilitation concepts. Although the concept of rehabilitation has seen increasing support in most of the industrialized countries, a very different situation exists in the developing countries. The concept is still new and unfamiliar in most places. Intellectually and professionally it remains limited to heritage societies, a small number of foreign-trained local professionals, and eventually a few external advisors. Politically, it has not yet generated significant support. Legal and administrative machinery for historic area conservation, where it exists, is largely prohibitory rather than constructive and is seldom effectively enforced. Older housing area, as in (Image 3) is still seen as "problems" rather than as important components of urban life. According to Article 5 of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris from 17 October to 21 November 1972, at its seventeenth session:

- a. To ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its

territory, each State Party to this Convention shall endeavor, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country:

- b. To adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programs;
- c. To set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions;
- d. To develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage;
- e. To take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage;
- f. To foster the establishment or development of national or regional centers for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field.



Image 3 the deterioration in the old housing stock in El Moaied Mosque area - Cairo.

Experience in many countries has shown that it can be less costly to restore and modernize old building than was originally expected. In contrast, the cost of demolition and replacement by new buildings has almost always turned out to be more expensive than expected. Naturally, many mistakes were made in the early years of rehabilitation efforts; some projects were failures, some were far too expensive and some succeeded at the expense of the original



residents. Nonetheless, the trend of the experience is favorable, leading to a steadily growing support in countries throughout Europe and elsewhere. By 1964, International Commission on Monuments and Sites ICOMOS had promoted with the Venice Charter, the establishment of the conservation approach for historical monuments. And in 1972, many developing countries signed up for UNESCO's Conservation Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and National Heritage, and by 1977 the listing of world heritage sites had begun. While the Venice Charter was still only concerned with single monuments, the UNESCO Conservation introduced for the first time the concept of cultural heritage, which is the basis for area conservation and rehabilitation concepts. (6)

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- j. To take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage;
- k. To foster the establishment or development of national or regional centers for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field.



3. Sustainable development and Managing Urban Heritage Conservation Projects.

Sustainable development can be defined narrowly or broadly. In the more limited sense, creating the conditions for economic growth while maintaining the stock of natural resources at or above their present level is sustainable economic development. Such development can still occur at the expense of deteriorating social and cultural conditions. A broader definition of sustainable development would add to the above: the achievement of improved social objectives and quality of life for all income groups. With this in mind, it is suggested that sustainable urban development may be defined, for any city, as the maximization of: Economic efficiency in the use of development resources. (7)

Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission, 1987). In the same time, meeting basic needs (minimum standards of drinking water, solid waste management, drainage, sanitation and shelter) is an important component of sustainable urban development and addresses the growing importance of urban poverty. Sustainable development is often associated with the conservation of nonrenewable physical resources for the use of future generations. However, sustainable development is not limited to the careful use of physical resources and the environmental urban development initiatives must also be economically and socially sustainable. However, seldom is a cross-reference made between urban heritage and sustainability. The recent concern for sustainability and the "brown agenda" of urban environmental development has completely excluded urban heritage from the sustainability discussion. (8)

A critical challenge is the balance between these aspects - social, environmental and economic. How can improved environmental conditions in historical areas be balanced with creating jobs? How can new service industries be attracted to cities and towns while avoiding social division? These issues of linkages and balance between social, economic and environmental development are particularly important in urban areas because people live and work close together.

1-3 Balancing Development and Conservation

Upgrading and new development in urban areas are the positive outcomes of economic growth. They raise standards of living and set the stage for continued development. However, the accompanying rise in land values and pressure for high density urbanization can lead to the destruction of historic property and disruption of the traditional urban fabric. This loss of urban neighborhoods and historic sites was once thought to be the price of progress.

However, planners now recognize that preserving the past is an essential part of creating livable, sustainable cities. Conservation of a city's historic and cultural environment enhances the city and the quality of life for residents by: preserving evidence of past achievements and cultural traditions; protecting enjoyable areas of architectural and natural beauty; and Creating energy for development by generating positive identity and civic pride. (9)

4. Approach to Rehabilitation & Conservation of Urban Heritage.

According to Bromley; the conservation of historical areas in cities of developing counties is often treated as luxury governments can ill afford. In recent years, however, the loss of cultural heritage as a result of the rapid redevelopment of urban fabric is becoming a pressing concern to various developing countries cities. In developing countries, the countervailing pressures of rehabilitation and conservation are being played out in different cultural and economic contexts as cities weigh up on the one hand, the demands of growing population and industries on limited land resources. (10)

Realistically, no one argues for total preservation of everything that is old in the city. Equally, few would quarrel with attempts to improve sanitation and water supply, reduce overcrowding, or otherwise improve the living conditions in older housing areas. Such improvements do provide a more satisfactory environment. But a better environment also implies a satisfying of social and cultural life for those who make use of the environmental resources. Human inhabitants create and constitute the social – cultural and economic systems, which give life to the physical environment. (11)

The focus of conservation and rehabilitation of historical centers, therefor, has to be on whole areas, not just individual buildings, and on social communities, not just the physical environment. These areas are often home for lower-income families, and they have physical, social, economic and cultural values different from the perceptions of the planners. On other words, these rehabilitation policies must emphasize the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to planning for older areas. (12)

Therefor, the institutional reform of this conservation and rehabilitation approach raises a variety of crucial issues that that could be summarized in the following chart, (Image 4).

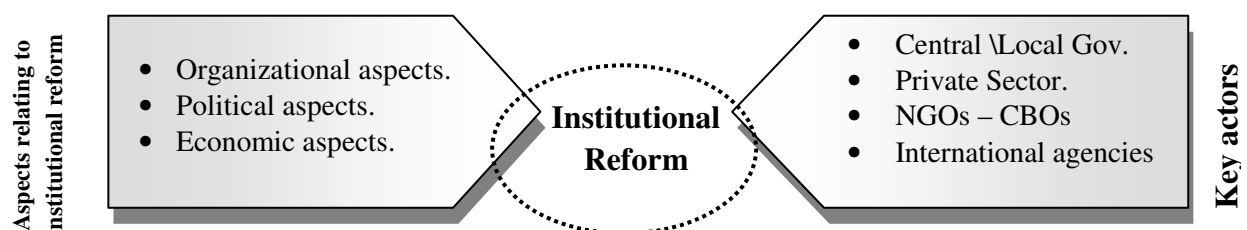


Image 4, The Relationship and links between the different institutional aspects and all key actors dealing with the rehabilitation & conservation of urban heritage.



5. Conclusions: -

Rehabilitation and conservation strategies should aim to avoid the idea of static preservation, and not attempt to fossilize the past and convert it into a sort of open-air museum. Therefore, there is an urgent need for rehabilitation approaches which, maintain and sustain the essential qualities of the historical areas in old cities and of the life of the resident communities, but which can also adapt these physical structures and organic approach of revitalization is needed. Adaptation of form and function can proceed, however, within a stable matrix of building and urban patterns. Selectivity is crucial. This implies, for example, a choice of new design concepts and relevant new technologies to enable older buildings and areas to adapt successfully to modern needs but without destroying existing urban form.

To achieve the previous approach, it will be necessary to create a changed political environment in which historical centers are rehabilitated in their true value, and where policies and practice of government are modified accordingly. And it will be necessary to change the attitudes of professionals of (administrators, economists, planners, architects, and developers). Institutions must be developed and economic and administrative instruments for control and promotion must be worked out. In the same time, civic authorities should pay attention to rehabilitation and re-use of old and historical properties which are not under government protection and use. These properties should be listed, and their rehabilitation and re-use should be promoted.

Recommendations: -

The institutional performance of rehabilitation and conservation project depends on the internal organization, including the organizational structure, the management and the availability of skilled staff. The development of the organization and the extent to which it is possible to set and attain the organization's objectives is also interrelated with external institutions such as the government and foreign donors, if any. A necessary condition for successful institutionalization of rehabilitation and conservation programs and projects is the acceptance of the goals, means and scope of the program/project.

The first step to secure this acceptance is to gain support for the policy objectives of development projects. Therefore, the objectives must reflect the interests of the beneficiaries. Sustainable development has tended to be associated with the conservation of non-renewable physical resources for the use of future generation. However, for urban development initiatives to be sustainable they cannot be confined to physical resources and the environment. If the urban economic and social frameworks within which they take are not sustainable, little of lasting value will be achieved. For this reason, the guidelines use the now commonly accepted view of sustainability as concerning connected social, economic and environmental issues.



Participation and partnership are at the center of the strategic approach to effective urban development. Whilst rehabilitation and conservation projects may take place with different actors and stakeholders, participation with different levels of involvement, partnership implies a more equal distribution of responsibility (and benefit) amongst all partners. In order to develop and sustain partnerships on this basis, emphasis must be given to "empowering" and "enabling" all partners, especially those with the least access to power and resources such as low-income households and communities of urban heritage.

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