

NEW APPROACHES FOR REHABILITATION AND CONSERVATION OF URBAN HERITAGE

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1. Introduction.

Egypt with its long distinctive history as the oldest civilization of the world and has hosted most of other civilizations; has a unique historical patrimony of buildings and sites that are considered a world heritage and need to be conserved. However, with the huge amount of these historical building and sites, which need substantial investments for conservation, the problem of prioritization comes on the surface. Cultural heritage assets must be ranked in relative importance and conservation projects must be assessed according to actual social and economic feasibility.

Conservation the urban heritage in our Egyptian context involves a wide range of actors; governmental and non-governmental organization and private interests. However, government's organizations as legitimate representatives of society, must act as responsible custodians and supreme managers of our cultural patrimony. To perform this duty in a sustainable manner, the state must set up the right strategies, balanced between development and conservation, to incite, coordinate and implement the necessary conservation actions, and to defend these actions against the interests of individuals. Furthermore, restoration of single monuments without rehabilitating their historical environment and without supporting the vital social and economic forces that sustain them would make little sense and would eventually deprive the historic substance of its nutrients.

Therefore, conservation policy, to be successful, cannot be conceived in the abstract. It must take into account and integrate as much as possible society's current aspirations and living patterns. Therefore, The question, in which this paper tries to find an answer, is in what way can more attention be given to the institutional aspects of conservation and rehabilitation projects to advance the sustainability of these development programs? To answer this question, a better understanding is needed of the different aspects of conservation & rehabilitation of the urban heritage. Then analyze the different dimensions of the institutional problems facing the conservation & rehabilitation.

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2. 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

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

- **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;
- **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;
- **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. Fig (1) present the old urban stock in the inner city areas in Cairo, which are suffering from lack of infrastructure, poor-quality construction.

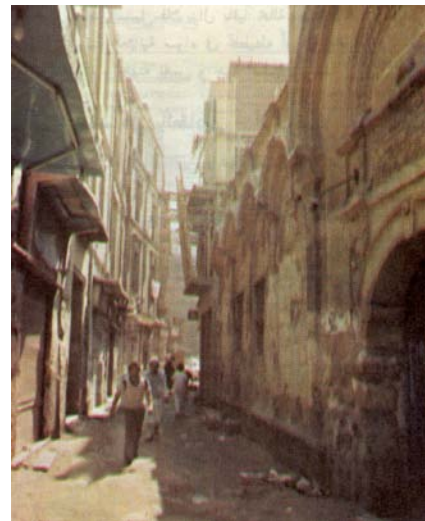


Fig 1 presents the old urban stock in El Moaied Mosque area – Cairo.

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 (fig 2).

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.

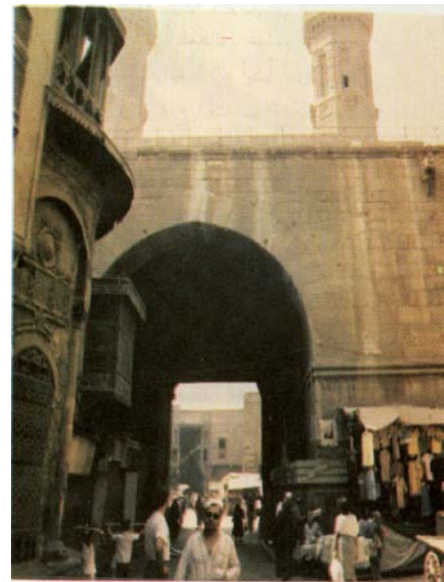


Fig 2 present the current situation of El- Moaied Mosque area

3. 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

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 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 (fig 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:

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:

- 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;
- 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;



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

- 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;
- To take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage;
- 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.

4. 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. (Including the goods and services provided by the natural environment, maintaining natural resource stocks at or above their present level.
- Social equity in the distribution of development benefits and costs (with particular emphasis on the needs of the low income groups.
- Avoidance of unnecessary foreclosure of future development options.

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 report of 1987)⁷. 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 The built environment and built expressions of culture of military, economic and religious powers and forces as part of the national heritage deserve to be included in this perspective, and urban heritage should attain the status of a preservable asset which can benefit the present and the future of cities. Such an asset is not only limited to cultural perspectives, but could become an economic asset with good potential for economic exploitation, for instance through tourism, for culturally-based image building of local economic development or promotion of corporate enterprises. 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.

5. Approach to Rehabilitation & Conservation of Urban Heritage.

According to Bromley;⁹ the conservation of historical areas in cities of developing countries 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.

Realistically, no one argues for total preservation of everything that is old in the city.¹⁰ Equally, few would quarrel with attempts to improve sanitation and water supply, reduce overcrowding, or otherwise improve the living conditions in older housing areas, fig (5). 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.



Fig 5, The deteriorated urban areas around the historical building at El Nasr Gate area – Cairo.

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. 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, fig 5.

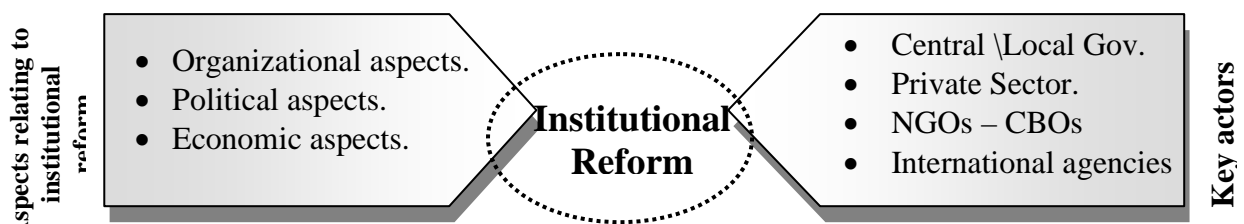


Fig 5, The Relationship and links between the different institutional aspects and all key actors dealing with the rehabilitation & conservation of urban heritage.

4-1 Organizational aspects; Weak institutions to manage old cities:

To work well and to develop effectively, old cities require good decision-making Systems and practices, good management and strong human resource skills. In most developing countries, the number of skilled urban managers is limited, and many urban areas struggle to attract and retain skilled personal. Many cities and towns are also managed by institutions

and organizations that have been inherited from the past, are old-fashioned, and do not enable the most effective use of human and other resources, nor the promotion of civil society or the private sector to play a role in development through partnerships. The consequence shows often in the inefficient and ineffective management of cities, which in turn affects the economic, social and environmental performance of the urban areas. The implication is that capacity building is a high priority and is one of the most important issues to focus on in order to have a sustainable development impact.

The institutional performance of urban heritage development programs 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. The institutionalization of project / program organizations, which is crucial to their success, depends on the degree to which the project/program can adapt to exogenous institutions. Development projects suffer from low-specificity and a lack of competition. Israel's strategies to compensate for these deficiencies include:

- simplification of the objectives of rehabilitation;
- professionalization and socialization of the staff, which should be especially skilled for people oriented activities, from talent or by training
- specific organizational measures, such as a fairly rigid supervisory structure, emphasis on team-work, few precise rules, avoidance of quantitative techniques, and specific non-pecuniary staff incentives
- simulation of competitive pressure

These measures will help to improve institutional performance. It is not always possible to apply all the suggestions. Beside this, additional strategies are possible and needed to improve performance. An important institutional condition for successful implementation of rehabilitation projects is that their goals are in accordance with (national) policy goals. Without such awareness it is difficult to achieve institutional progress. Governments should have not only a positive attitude towards Institutional Development, but also an open eye for a favorable legal-administrative frameworks. Sometimes an active policy is needed to level formal barriers. A necessary condition for the institutionalization of development 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. The people that are affected by the program/project should be involved in decision making. Using existing social institutions can do this. NGO's may help to mobilize the local population. Project organizations are often not rooted in traditional structures and, therefore, lack spontaneous acceptance. This makes it difficult to attain a sufficient level of institutionalization in the existing socio-cultural structure. That is a necessary condition for sustainability, however.

4-2 Economic aspects; Municipal finance is often weak:

These are a variety of crucial questions relating to economic aspects:

- How can urban rehabilitation be financed?
- What mix of private and public resources should be used?
- How can the contribution of older areas of the urban economy be consolidated?

Old urban areas (urban heritage) need a constant flow of finances to keep their functioning. Fortunately, old cities are also areas where it is possible to generate substantial financial resources. Urban finances are needed to operate, maintain and rehabilitate existing infrastructure services. They are also needed to provide new infrastructure for future growth. Funds are needed not just to build infrastructure; but also to operate the service over time. Getting the balance right between maintenance and new capital expenditure, and between servicing existing and new areas, is an ongoing challenge.

Old cities can be supported to improve the way they generate finances for maintaining their existing areas and for further development. Improving the way urban finances are managed and used can lead to greater efficiency, and hence spread further benefits through improved infrastructure and service delivery. They can also be used as instruments to promote equity. Importantly, many business opportunities for the private sector, communities and individuals can be developed through following more sustainable approaches to financing urban heritage and old town development.

Efforts to improve the financial status of national archaeological institutes and to increase their portfolio have mostly been unsuccessful, as most governments seem to shy away from additional expenses for the preservation and rehabilitation of monuments. Most countries do not have an adequate policy of charging entrance fees to monuments; in many cases monuments remain inaccessible to public and to tourists, or if they are accessible, only a pittance of an entrance fee, if any is charged, as for instance in most parts of India.

Very few cities have adopted a more progressive policy like the city of (Bhaktapur), which charges a (still nominal) lump-sum entrance fee from tourists for entering the historic conservation zone. The economic problems of financing the preservation and upkeep of monuments have stimulated a good deal of debate about the possibilities of doing this through the approach of “adaptive re-use” and to invite the private sector to lease historical buildings with commercially viable activities. These activities would pay for the conservation and rehabilitation of the monuments, and have an overall revitalizing impact on the economic development of such areas.

4-3 Political & Participation aspects;

Some key questions relating to Political & Participation aspects have to be answered;

- How can political support be generated and maintained?
- How can we establish a national support to conservation urban heritage?
- How can local key actors participate in conservation stages and efforts ?

Political support for urban rehabilitation & conservation is certainly crucial and a prerequisite for any substantial program. However, the experiences of the developing countries are not encouraging in this respect. Too many instances exist where the political commitment is lacking or very difficult to obtain, and even the concerted efforts of international and national heritage organizations have not been able to generate such support. In case of Cairo¹¹, and Sana’a,¹² many years of efforts on the part of UNESCO and Aga Khan Foundation of Architecture have not yielded a firm commitment for area conservation from the national authorities which were expected to take up a World Bank Loan as in Cairo, or to negotiate with donors for their support as in Sana’a. In both cases they have only benefited from isolated cases of monument restoration, financed by foreign archaeological institutes or bilateral donor agencies. On the other hand, the active

participation in the previous cases of the residents of historical city centers has been very limited in the conservation their city. However, certain interest groups, such as cultural and conservation and heritage associations of concerned citizens, have initiated at least some degree of publicity and debate on conservation and rehabilitation issues.

6. The Conceptual Process of Institutional Framework of the Rehabilitation & Conservation Projects:

However, from the previous discussion, we can formulate the next institutional structure presenting the relationship between all key actors in the rehabilitation and conservation process and their different tasks during the different steps of the process of the projects. The chart in (fig. 6) will illustrate the concept of the work within the institutional framework, which defines the main units and the flow of work within these units.

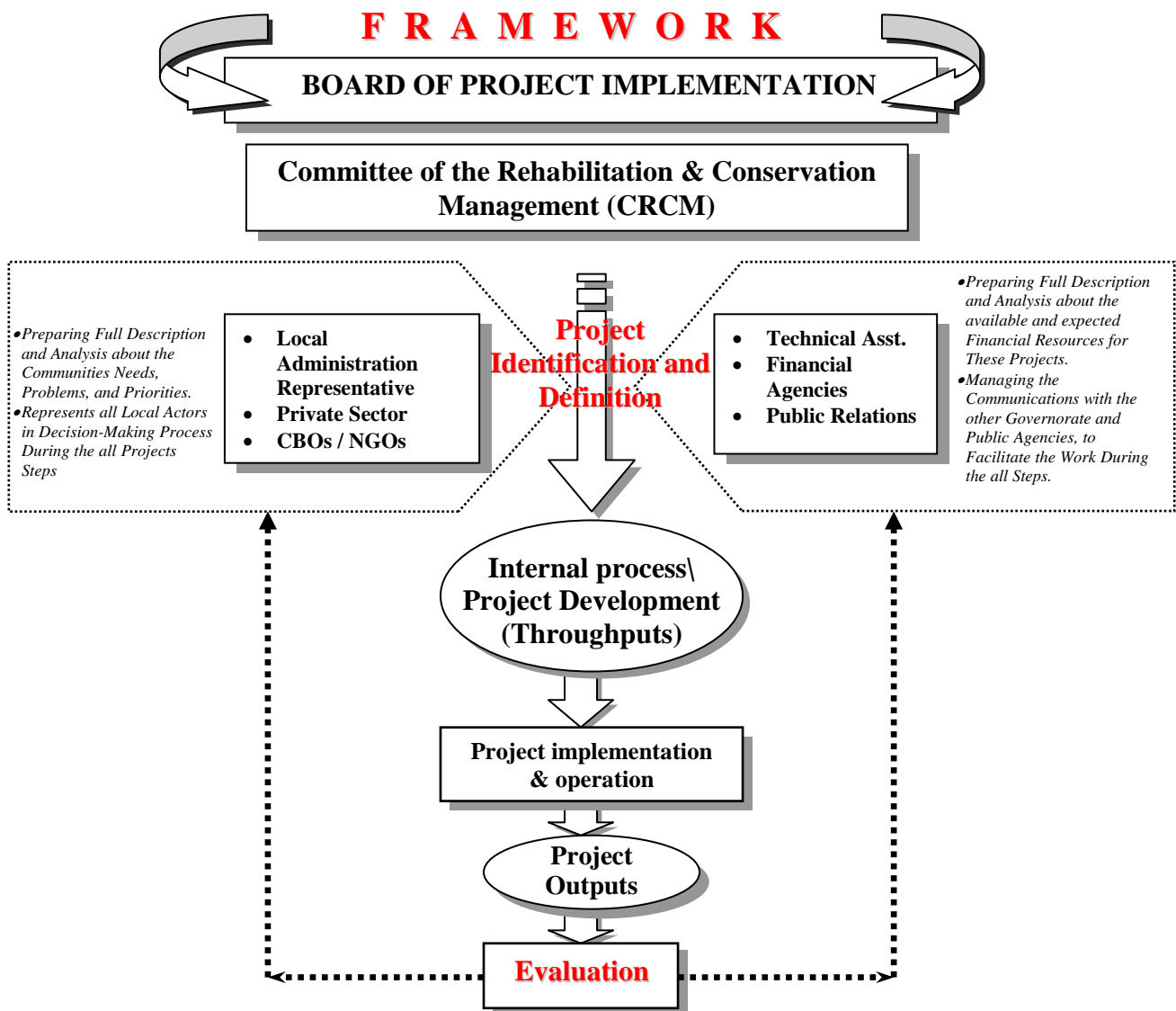


Fig 6, The Relationship and links between the different institutional aspects and all key actors dealing with the rehabilitation & conservation of urban heritage and illustrate the concept of the work within the institutional framework, which defines the main units and the flow of work within these units.

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. The institutionalization of project organizations, which is crucial to their success, depends on the degree to which the project can adapt to exogenous institutions. In the same time, the manpower problem should not be resolved by hiring expatriate managers. Indeed, not to provide training program for indigenous managers is a serious threat to sustainability. Such a program is an essential part of Institutional Development.

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. The people that are affected by the rehabilitation and conservation project should be involved in decision making. Using existing social institutions can do this. NGO's may help to mobilize the local population.

- 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. To design sustainable development projects in historical areas, governments must be aware that Institutional Development is indispensable. Without such

awareness it is difficult to achieve institutional progress. Governments should have not only a positive attitude towards Institutional Development, but also an open eye for a favorable legal-administrative frameworks Sometimes an active policy is needed to level formal barriers.

- 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.
- All rehabilitation and conservation projects need to be financed in some way. Problems have been confronted particularly with urban developments that are financially supported during their construction or early phases, often from sources external to the urban area in which the development is located, but which do not generate enough of their own finances or fall far beyond the means of the old city to operate and maintain over the medium and long terms. Rehabilitation & conservation developments should be designed appropriately with regard to the financial Systems and capacities of cities. The importance of appropriate cost recovery has been a particularly important lesson for long term financial sustainability. The need to involve the private sector and civil society in urban heritage financing is also important.

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