

The Rehabilitation and Conservation policies for Historical Areas; Issues for Egypt and Mediterranean cities.

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Summary:

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. Therefore, Rehabilitation and 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. Consequently, the issue, in which this paper tries to address, is in what way more attention can be given to improve the policies for conservation and rehabilitation projects to advance the sustainability of these development programs. To tackle this issue, 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.

Introduction

Rehabilitation aims at regenerating towns or ancient living sections, at the same time preserving, restoring and reviving their characteristics and urban, architectural, aesthetic and social qualities as well as historic values. However, Rehabilitation is fundamental to the protective operation. It is not enough to preserve, or, if need may be, to restore; it is also necessary to ensure a living function to a historic monument or to an assemblage that will be useful to society. The solution of museum commitment, so often adopted, is an easy solution often of little effect.

The rehabilitation of the habitat will give priority to the social aspects of the operation. The inhabitants who have been removed during operations must be re-accommodated in the same location if they so wish as a matter of priority. Temporary and progressively declining aid for the community should help the inhabitants with modest income bear the eventual increase in the rent or the charges rising from the works carried out on their property.

1. Historic conservation definitions;

Historic conservation is a professional endeavor that seeks to preserve, conserve and protect buildings, objects, landscapes or other artifacts of historic significance. Other names for the discipline include urban conservation, landscape preservation, built environment conservation, built heritage conservation, object conservation, and immovable object conservation; however, "historic preservation" tends to refer to the preservation of the built environment, and not to preservation of, for example, primeval forests or wilderness.

1.1. Architectural conservation describes the process through which the material, historical, and design integrity of mankind's built heritage are prolonged through carefully planned interventions. The individual engaged in this pursuit is known as an architectural conservator. Decisions of when and how to engage in an intervention are critical to the ultimate conservation of the immovable object. Ultimately, the decision is value based: a combination of artistic, contextual, and informational values is normally considered. In some cases, a decision to not intervene may be the most appropriate choice.

1.1.1. Narrow definition; Architectural conservation deals with issues of prolonging the life and integrity of architectural character and integrity, such as form and style, and/or its constituent materials, such as stone, brick, glass, metal, and wood. In this sense, the term refers to the "professional use of a combination of science, art, craft, and technology as a preservation tool" and is allied with its parent fields, of historic environment conservation and art conservation.

1.1.2. Broad definition; In addition to the design and art/science definition described above, architectural conservation also refers to issues of identification, policy, regulation, and advocacy associated with the entirety of the cultural and built environment. This broader scope recognizes that society has mechanisms to identify and value historic cultural resources, create laws to protect these resources, and develop policies and management plans for interpretation, protection, and education. Typically this process operates as a specialized aspect

of a society's planning system, and its practitioners are termed historic environment conservation professionals.

1.2. Historic district

A historic district is a section of a city which contains older buildings considered valuable for historical or architectural reasons. In some countries, historic districts receive legal protection from development. Historic districts may or may not also be the center of the city. They may be coterminous with the commercial district, administrative district, or arts district, or separate from all of these.

1.2.1. The historical districts of town's inner cities are usually the areas from which these cities emerged. They are the oldest architectural structures and *ensembles* which have played an important role in social, economic, and cultural life throughout the towns' development. These areas and *ensembles* have been places where many cultural and historical strata have become concentrated and they integrate major elements of cultural identity, national tradition and town memory.

1.2.2. The historical districts of inner cities are of high historical, cultural and material value. As a matter of fact they keep the tradition alive and, due to their key position in the structure of cities, they still play a leading role in the intellectual, commercial and social aspects of urban life. They are of particular importance for the functioning of infrastructure communication systems. These specific features of inner cities make them highly attractive to the local population and to tourists.

1.3. The preservation and rehabilitation of inner cities is of great significance and is a matter of first priority for the development of the corresponding town and for solving its social and architectural problems. Concurrently with their superb qualities, the historic districts of inner cities are challenged by numerous problems which have to be resolved in order that residents may acquire fully developed living conditions.

- The first problem is posed by the inadequate state of the street network and the overall engineering infrastructure in these areas from the viewpoint of current requirements and demands.
- The second problem is posed by the drastic pollution and the lack of parks.
- The third problem is posed by the inadequacy, considering contemporary requirements, of the functional structure of buildings and by their inability to provide accommodation conditions that meet present-day criteria.
- The fourth problem is posed by the serious erosion of buildings which endangers security, creating at the same time an unsightly appearance.

All these problems have to be resolved, so that the historical districts of inner cities are revived and revitalized. They should acquire advanced, contemporary accommodation conditions, as residential areas and for the activities carried on in them. All this necessitates their urgent architectural rehabilitation.

2. The preservation and rehabilitation of the historical districts of inner cities is a complex and far from trivial problem. For greater efficiency, a thorough program should be implemented, encompassing not just separate sites, but the entire area of blocks and

quarters. In this way it is possible to resolve problems regarding individual buildings and the planning of the surrounding area, as well as those related to urban infrastructure. Such an approach ensures the achievement of advanced economic, technological and social effects. The implementation of rehabilitation activities in the historical districts of inner cities is a multifaceted problem, requiring proper resolution of:

2.1. Architectural and city planning aspects. A comprehensive design, yielding optimum architectural solutions, should be prepared. The architectural design is a package of documents and is envisaged to include:

- Precise cost-efficient estimation of the cultural, functional and material values of a definite area - the inner city;
- A design program which should set the objectives and criteria of rehabilitation;
- Architectural drawings and schemes which should provide for the solution of problems and achievement of objectives;

2.1.1. Administrative and financial organization for investing and financing of rehabilitation. The solution of these problems depends on national legislation. However, in all cases it is a useful practice to establish a group or a company for the financing of implementation and rehabilitation which should make use of government, municipal and owners' resources and should be able to operate both with public and private capital;

2.1.2. Judicial. Acquisition of the appropriate status and legal regulation of the area of rehabilitation according to architectural and civil legislation.

2.2. The preservation and rehabilitation of an historical district of an inner city should have high architectural, city-planning, social and economic effects. When one of these elements is missing, the rehabilitation is not, or can only be incompletely justified. As a result of rehabilitation, the town will acquire a renewed quarter with its original architectural nature unchanged but with contemporary features of urban environment and infrastructure. Rehabilitation should also provide advanced elements of social services and an active social life with increased comfort in buildings duly reconstructed to meet the appropriate requirements. The historical districts of inner cities were built during a definite period and, quite often, within several periods. They bear the features and styles characteristic of those periods. When planning rehabilitation, architectural intervention should be decided in the light of the specific case and to different degrees:

2.2.1. In the case in which a building is registered as a historical monument of culture, rehabilitation should preserve the complete architectural, engineering and functional of the site;

2.2.2. In the case in which a building is registered as an element in a historical district, its general architectural nature should be preserved, allowing at the same time the introduction of drastic modifications in its engineering and functional identity consistent with contemporary technologies and new social functions.

These requirements hold true both for buildings and for town-design elements.

2.3. Problem of Rehabilitation

The seriousness of the Rehabilitation problem is underlined by the fact that the majority of governments throughout the world are trying to save the historical heritage of their countries and to preserve and rehabilitate architectural treasures such as historic districts, towns and monuments. It would be vandalism, an environmental disaster, if positive action was not taken in this regard. In fact, World experience shows us that in solving shelter problems there is a potential threat to the low-income population of the city centers. Their presence itself and their low income constitute an impediment for implementation of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Hence we have to study very carefully an administrative and financial mechanism which can be properly used in the reconstruction of city centers, taking into account the interests of the inhabitants of those centers.



Fig (1) illustrates the types of the historical buildings in Rosetta.

Source: UN-HABITAT & GOPP, *Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS) ROSETTA report, Cairo 2006*

3. Rosetta Case Study

The city of Rosetta is located 12 km away from the mouth of the Rosetta branch of the Nile River, along its western bank. The area of the city is approximately 5 km², which represents 2.6 percent of the county area; the county in turn represents 2.11 percent of the governorate area. The estimated population of the city in 2005 was 70,314. The city has a master plan that sets guidelines until 2022. The master plan identifies and allocates space for all activities that should be in the city; it particularly focuses on its tourism role by including areas for tourism and its services. The city is internationally known for the Rosetta stone, which was the key to the deciphering of hieroglyphs. It also takes an impressive second place after Cairo in the number of Islamic heritage buildings it has; meanwhile, the number of historic residential buildings in Rosetta exceeds those in Cairo.

3.1. Rosetta's Development: -

After the construction of the Aswan High Dam, which controlled the Nile floodwater, the sea started to cover the shores and 2 km of central Rosetta, with all its tourist buildings, were completely submerged. Projects for tourism development have been initiated, including erecting seawater barriers to protect the shores and enable the rebuilding of submerged tourist villages. The importance of Rosetta as a tourist destination was confirmed in the law 113/1986, which identified Rosetta as a tourist city. The Supreme Council of Antiquities started the first phase of preservation of the city's historic buildings in 1985. About 760 Feddans have been allocated to build a new residential village, in addition to 2,000 Feddans for building a tourist city and summer vacation housing on the Mediterranean Sea.

3.2. Local Government and Main Stakeholders

The local authority in Rosetta benefits largely from a clear popularity among the members of society, despite the lack of resources and the deficiency in some of the services provided to the citizens. This popularity is underpinned by a trust relationship between the society and the local authority officials. Because of the historical position of Rosetta, there is a significant interest in the historical buildings and areas from foreign agencies and international NGOs. These actors desire to help the city council in preserving and improving historical building, as well as enacting governorate policies to preserve Rosetta's culture, civilization assets, and historical identity. There is a lack of understanding of what urban governance truly stands for (e.g. transparency, decentralization, and accountability) among citizens and local authority officials.

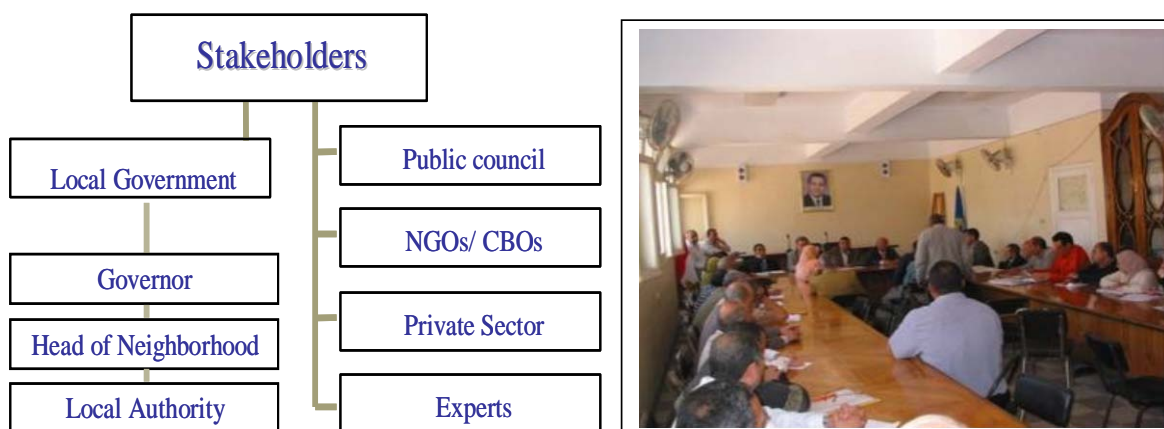


Fig (2) illustrates the Local Government and Main Stakeholders in Rosetta.

Source: UN-HABITAT & GOPP, *Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS) ROSETTA report*, Cairo 2006

3.3. Regulatory Framework at Rosetta;

National policies support the upgrading of heritage cities. The government has issued law 13/1986 declaring Rosetta a tourist city. There is a lack of specific building codes for heritage areas that would enable the preservation of the old urban fabric of the city. Building codes concerning setbacks in heritage buildings are issued by the Supreme Council for Antiquities; the codes specify 2.5 meters for setbacks to give space to build a scaffold needed for preservation work. There is conflict among the three authorities responsible for the city and its historic area.

- First, the Governorate itself which is responsible for issuing licenses for the erection of new buildings, or the alteration or clearance of existing ones, either inside or outside the historic areas.
- Second is the Ministry of Endowments, which is responsible for providing services to a number of historic mosques (maintenance, furniture, salaries for mosque employees).
- Third is the Supreme Council for Antiquities, which is responsible for providing maintenance and restoration for historical buildings that are listed on the national registrar.

The conflict among the authorities and their lack of coordination led to the decline of historic areas. Some rented stores in the ground level of the historic buildings have been used for such functions as raising cattle and poultry and keeping horses, activities that are not suitable for the nature and value of the area and have a negative impact on the buildings.

4. Heritage or Historic Areas;

The city dates back to the ancient Egyptian era and is internationally known for the Rosetta stone, which led to the modern understanding of hieroglyphs. Although there was a law issued declaring Rosetta a tourism city, it does not fully use its tourist potential in a suitable manner.

The city lacks adequate sanitation; this has led to an increase in the groundwater level, which in turn affected historic buildings. The city also has numerous informal peddlers and markets scattered throughout the streets of the historic area, which lead to traffic-clogged streets and the accumulation of garbage.

The number of heritage buildings has decreased from 52 in 1963 to 37 in 2006. The city has numerous informal peddlers and markets in the streets of the historic area, which lead to traffic jams and the accumulation of garbage.

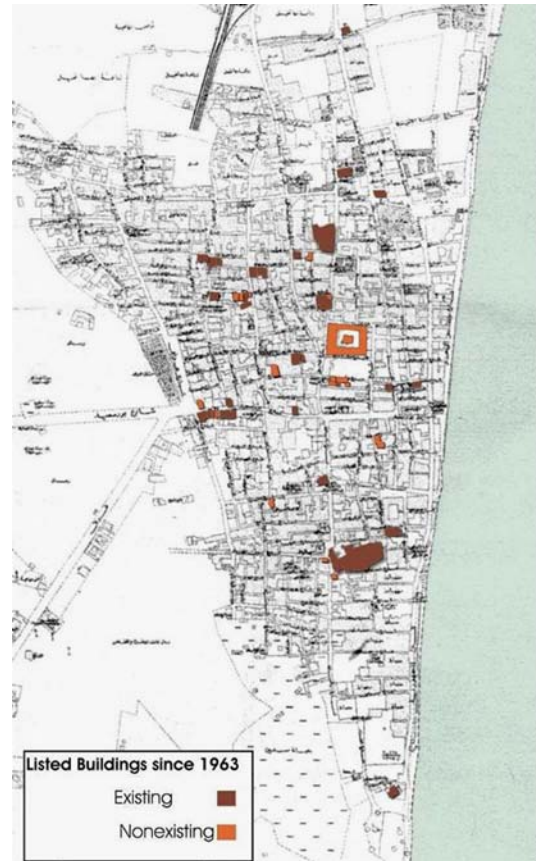


Fig (3) illustrates the location of the main historical in Rosetta.

Source: UN-HABITAT & GOPP, *Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS) ROSETTA report, Cairo 2006*

4.1. Governance;

The local authority in Rosetta is clearly popular, and this is underpinned by a sustainable trust relationship between the society and the local authority officials. However, among both citizens and local authority officials, there is a lack of understanding of what urban governance truly stands for (e.g. transparency, decentralization, and accountability). This situation is applicable to most small Egyptian cities; progressive understandings of urban governance are quite novel in Egyptian cities, with wrong concepts often embedded in people's minds.

4.2. Institutional Set-Up and Capacity Building

- The stakeholders that cooperate with the local government in developing poor neighborhoods are the non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- Rosetta receives great attention from researchers in Egyptian universities as well as international researchers.
- An information system project has been completed with several research studies by the authority responsible for continuous development.
- There is an urgent need for capacity building and training in the field of historic restoration and upgrading.

4.3. Development Process for Heritage Areas in Rosetta;

The historic area is provided with all basic urban services except a sanitation network. This lack of sanitation has led to an increase of the groundwater level, which directly affects historic buildings. An example: Zaghoul Mosque is undergoing a major preservation project to raise the mosque foundation level to one meter above ground after the floor was submerged in rising groundwater.

- Rosetta suffers from pollution caused by heavy vehicles; the vibrations also affect the structure of the historic buildings in the city.
- The city (municipality and local government) does not have any authority over centers operating under the supervision of ministries and central institutions.
- There is a shortage of trained technical workers in the conservation field.
- Weak public awareness about cultural heritage resources and their significance has led to low budget priorities and illegal acts of vandalism.
- Restoration of the Arab Kelly residence, which currently houses the Rosetta museum.
- The Tourism Development Agency provides direction signs for public streets.

4.4. SWOT Analysis and Priorities for Heritage or Historic Areas:

- Strengths:
 - The heritage potential of Rosetta, in addition to it taking second place to Cairo in its number of Islamic heritage buildings.
 - Rosetta is uniquely located on the Nile.
 - National policies support the upgrading of heritage cities.
 - The city is internationally recognised for discovering the Rosetta stone
- Weaknesses
 - There is no clear plan for developing the tourism sector in the city.
 - Contradiction of authorities responsible for the city and for its historic area. The city in general is not fit to receive tourists (number of hotel rooms, level of cleanliness, number of recreational facilities).
 - The lack of adequate sanitation, which directly affects the heritage buildings.
 - There are no tourism agencies in the whole city and the Tourism Development Authority has no representative in Rosetta
- Opportunities
 - Adding the city to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list.
 - Adding the city to the list of historic attractions in Egypt.
 - An agreement between Rosetta and Figeac, the birthplace of Jean-François Champollion.
- Threats
 - Continuous transgression over historic area will lead to the loss of its unique identity.
 - The negative impact on the city's historic buildings if the national drainage project is delayed.

From SWOT Analysis we could conclude that developing the tourism sector in the city and establishing an office for tourism development in Rosetta are main priorities:

4.5. REHABILITATION AND CONSERVATION PROJECTS;

The rehabilitation program starts two Rehabilitation projects, Both of them focuses on the benefits of the city inhabitants, and the duration was 36 months with the active participation of all city implemented partners; local authority, ministry of Waqf (religious trust), the supreme council for antiquities, NGO's, and architectural consultant offices and their affiliations.



Fig (4) illustrates the current saturation of the historical residential building in Rosetta.

Source: UN-HABITAT & GOPP, Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS) ROSETTA report, Cairo 2006

4.6. First Project : (A project for developing the area surrounding Qait Bey Fortress in Rosetta)

- **Location of the project:** (Qait Bey) Fortress in Rosetta, and the estimated duration for this project is 36 months, when the beneficiaries are the city inhabitants.
- **Implemented Partners:** Local authority, Ministry of Waqf (Religious Trust), the Supreme Council for Antiquities, NGOs, and architectural consultant offices and their affiliations. And the estimated cost for the project is US\$4 million .
- **Project Background:** The fortress goes back to the year 1472 when it was built on the west bank of the Nile River, north of Rosetta. The place is directly connected to the Rosetta stone, which was said to be discovered in this location during the French expedition in 1799.
- **Project Objectives:** The main objectives of the project are to develop the area surrounding the fortress and provide services in order to prepare it for receiving tourists.
- **Project Activities:** 1) Plan the surrounding area to accommodate parking areas for buses and vehicles. 2) Build restaurants and cafeterias. 3) Improve

the façades of surrounding buildings. 4) Add bazaars, gift shops, and exhibits for handmade carpets and crafts.

- **Project Outputs:** The area surrounding the fortress developed and services provided in order to prepare it for receiving tourists.

4.7. **The Second Project** (Developing Dehliz El-Molk Street.

- **Location of the project:** Dehliz El-Molk Street, one of the historic streets of the old centre of Rosetta (it lies between Masjid El-Arabi Street and Amasyalli Street). And the estimated duration for this project is 36 months, and the beneficiaries are the city inhabitants.
- **Implemented Partners:** Local authority, Ministry of Waqf (Religious Trust), the Supreme Council for Antiquities, NGOs, and architectural consultant offices and their affiliations. And Estimated Cost is US\$1 million.
- **Project Background:** With its particular historic background, Dehliz El-Molk Street is considered one of the most important streets in the historic district and is seen as the entrance to the historic area of the city. The street has a concentration of historic buildings (Orabi Mosque, Ramadan residence, Abohoum residence, Kohie residence, Bassioni residence, Elgamal residence, and Moharam residence).
- **Project Objectives:** Developing the street while respecting its historic background and preparing it to receive tourists.
- **Project Activities:** 1) Transformation of Dehliz El-Molk into a pedestrian street, with all the requisite changes (viewing the street as the gateway into the historical area). 2) Adaptive re-use of historic buildings with suitable functions (e.g. arts workshops, galleries). 3) Façade treatment of existing buildings alongside the street. 4) Façade treatment for commercial shops alongside the street and standardization of signs, colors, and pavilion design. In addition, transformation of the shops into bazaars, gift shops, and exhibits for handmade carpets and crafts.
- **Project Outputs:** The Street developed and prepared for receiving tourists; the project implemented in such a way that it can be duplicated in other historic streets.

5. **CONCLUSION REMARKS:**

- It is important in principle to save its living functions in regard to its structure and the place it occupies within the physical context of the town in social, administrative and economic life. The often aggressive development of certain urban functions, especially in historic centers, has created conflicting situations in which the traditional element has become or is at risk of becoming the victim, destroying or endangering the historic, artistic or ecological values that constitute the very reason for its protection. It is important to seek solutions to conflicts which

will give priority to the preservation of these values, even if those solutions involve the movement of the functions towards zones outside the traditional centre. The nature and importance of the functions maintained must be determined, among other things, by the capacity to encompass the historic body. The participation and inclusion of the inhabitants of the entire town are essential for the success of the protective operation. They should be considered out of the necessity to preserve the consciousness of all generations. One must never forget that the protection of historic towns concerns above all their inhabitants.

- The rehabilitation of the dwelling area of the inner city should give priority to the social aspects of the operation. Inhabitants who have been removed during reconstruction operations must, as a matter of priority, be re-accommodated at the same location if they so wish. Temporary and progressively declining aid for the community should help the inhabitants with modest incomes bear eventual increases in the rent or the charges arising from the works carried out on their property. During execution of the works it is appropriate or expedient to plan alternative accommodation situated if possible in the neighborhood or in a social environment similar to the assemblage to be dealt with.
- A policy of encouraging tourism should never be developed at the expense of the native population, or end up damaging the social, cultural and economic structures and endangering its traditions and identity. At the same time, one must be aware of the fact that contact with foreigners and different visitors will necessarily bring about a rapid change for the population in which it will be difficult to remain oriented. This aspect of the problem is particularly important for the development of tourism in developing countries. The adaptation of ancient towns to the ever-growing requirements of modern infrastructure and automobile traffic usually leads to a profound change in their historic values and beauty. The objective to be pursued in an urban rehabilitation operation is not unity of style. On the contrary, the various contributions of each period deserve respect and consideration. The same is valid for our time.
- Conservation the urban heritage in 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. 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 housing properties, which

are not under government protection and use. These properties should be listed, and their rehabilitation and re-use should be promoted.

- The concentration of historic monuments in Rosetta requires immediate action to improve and sustain the urban heritage. Of prime importance is the preservation of the physical context and the distribution of monuments. Any policy must promote rehabilitation and upgrading, as well as conservation, thereby improving the quality of life for the inhabitants. It is imperative that efforts to restore and conserve historic Rosetta include renewal of the economic base, an increase in investment and the revitalization of the financial structure to both fund and maintain a restoration effort through a viable authority. The active participation of the local people is paramount to the success of any proposed action in the historic areas.

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سياسات إعادة التأهيل و المحافظة على المناطق التاريخية؛ مدخل متكامل لمصر ومدن البحر الأبيض المتوسط.

الملخص العربي:

استضافت مصر مع تاريخها المميز أقدم الحضارات في العالم، ، أتاح لها استيعاب تراث تاريخي فريد من المباني والمواقع التي تعتبر تراثا عالميا وتحتاج إلى إستراتيجية متكاملة ومستدامة لإعادة التأهيل و المحافظة على هذا التراث الإنساني . ومع ذلك ، ومع هذا الكم الهائل من هذه المباني والمواقع التاريخية ، والتي تحتاج إلى استثمارات كبيرة للحفاظ و إعادة التأهيل ، يأتي على السطح مشكلة تحديد الأولويات بحيث يجب أن يكون في المرتبة الأولى - أصول التراث الثقافي - من حيث الأهمية النسبية كما يجب أن يتم تقييم مشاريع المحافظة و إعادة التأهيل طبقا لدراسات الجدوى اجتماعية واقتصادية فعلية. ويجب أن تأخذ في الاعتبار دمج اكبر قدر ممكن من تطلعات المجتمع المحلي وأنماط المعيشة الخاصة به.

وبالتالي، فإن السؤال الرئيسي في هذه الورقة البحثية التي نحاول معالجها هيكمين في ما يمكن أن يعطى اهتماما أكبر لتحسين سياسات للحفاظ العمراني ومشاريع إعادة التأهيل للمناطق ذات القيمة لتعزيز استدامة هذه البرامج الإنمائية. و هو ما يتطلب فهم أفضل للجوانب المختلفة لحفظ وإعادة تأهيل التراث العمراني. ثم تحليل الأبعاد المختلفة للمشاكل التي تواجه المجتمع و المؤسسات العاملة في برامج الحفظ وإعادة التأهيل العمراني للمناطق ذات القيمة التاريخية.