



The Challenges & Possibilities The Regeneration of the Built Heritage In Alexandria

Related With

This document serves as a seminar report for the meeting that took place at the **Swedish Institute Alexandria (SwedAlex)** in collaboration with the **Centre d'Études et de Documentation Économique, Juridiques et sociales (CEDEJ)** during the period 4-6 June 2017. The roundtable is dedicated to address, explore and compare the policies governing the use, restoration and conservation of built heritage. It had an overall aim of bringing experts and researchers from France, Italy, Morocco, Lebanon, and Sweden to share experiences and identify relevant solutions for Alexandria's preservation of the built heritage challenge.

Roundtable Seminar **Laws Protecting Built Heritage** **04 - 06 th June, 2017**

Roundtable Seminar

Laws Protecting Built Heritage

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SWEDALEX - Swedish Institute Alexandria

CEDEJ - Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Economique, Juridique et Sociale

MEK - Misr El-Kheir Foundation

CLUSTER - Cairo Lab for Urban Studies

DEDI - Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute

CEALEX - Le Centre d'études alexandrines

DAY 01

4TH JUNE, 2017

Opening and Introduction



The Director of the Swedish Institute Alexandria (SwedAlex), Peter Weiderud, welcomed the participants of the seminar. He began by emphasizing the main goal of SwedAlex in promoting dialogue between Europe and the Middle East/Northern Africa (MENA) region and to increase mutual understanding in addressing issues of importance to the political, social, economic, cultural, and scientific development.

The director's word addressed the history of Alexandria and its multi-cultural-cosmopolitan origin which is now fading away quickly. Alexandria's heritage buildings reflect its diversity in culture and ethnicities, among those were the Greek orthodox, the Armenians, the Jews and others. That being said, Alexandria is now facing challenges in preserving what is left of its heritage. The director expressed his view on the current conflict and aggressive approach in which cultural heritage is being dealt with. He then shared a presentation of his home town Arboga; west of Stockholm, to shed light on the importance of cultural heritage. He concluded by naming a few of the major threats to cultural heritage with examples, such as, war, neglect, lack of planning, dysfunctional regulations, ignorance, and corruption.



The organizer of the seminar and program officer at SwedAlex, Waleed Mansour, followed by welcoming the participants and referencing an incident which took place in an approaching date many years back; the bombardment in Alexandria by the British Mediterranean fleet that took place on July 13th 1882. This led to the issue of heritage buildings destruction which resulted in planning Alexandria back then, which in turn asks the question of whether we as experts in the field of development have a plan or vision in light of the recent demolition frenzy happening around us.

Waleed adds that the roundtable was organized in spirit of identifying the current challenges in Alexandria in order to pave way for a Remake the City Workshop 2018, in an attempt to come up with a holistic integrated approach in solving them. He then adds that the seminar aims to create a network between all participants with the intention of constructive discussions and an output of recommendations and ideas that can be implemented in the future.

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Session 01



The seminar came with the objective to bring together experts and researchers concerned with the field of cultural heritage to share experiences and identify relevant solutions for current challenges on this topic. That being said, the institute in collaboration with CEDEJ invited representatives of preservation from France, Italy, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, and Sweden. The sessions were based on a 10-15 minutes' short presentation from the attendees followed by a Q&A open discussion. The institute has also organized an iftar for the attendees by the end of every day.

The Case of Alexandria – From Village to Cosmopolitan and Current Status - May El-Tabakh

Arch. May El-Tabakh presented “The Challenges and Possibilities related to the Regeneration of the Built Heritage in Alexandria”. She began with a quick overview of Alexandria’s built heritage chronologically through history, explained how to find ways to regenerate it, and concludes with presenting the potentials and challenges regarding the matter.

With regards to urban regeneration, Arch. May presents the UK model for conservation principles and emphasizes the importance of public inclusion in the process and the significant role of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in conserving the cultural built heritage. The PPP model outlines the process of urban regeneration to any given historic site, starting with the data collection and research, planning, and feasibility studies. Arch. May, follows by showing exemplary projects of public participation in urban regeneration and referring to similar areas in Alexandria with potential. She highlights the overall value of integrated roles between the private sector, governmental sector, and the community for the sake of the city. In addition to focusing on the unclear laws and regulations governing the built heritage and how that has posed a challenge for conservation. She concluded by drawing attention to the lack of concise, clear, and easily accessible information on the Alexandria city’s built heritage in comparison with that in London and poses the question of, what are the guidelines and criteria that set the standards for such projects.

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Bringing Back Alexandria - Ibrahim El-Hennawy

Arch. Ibrahim El-Hennawy, the Operational Manager of Sigma Properties, introduces Sigma as a management company specialized in developing and reutilizing heritage buildings to turn them into key pieces of urban infrastructure in efforts of reconnecting the past with the present to transition into the future, through redeveloping these historic landmarks into full functioning properties. He then outlines the laws and legislation that govern such processes while highlighting the loopholes and attempt to rectify them, then concludes with a vision for Alexandria and their steps toward taking an initiative for development.

One of the issues regarding the laws of built heritage lies in the wording and terminology used, if they were to be rephrased into more distinctive and clear statements they would've been able to save and protect many buildings that fell victim to ambiguous proclamations. Arch. Ibrahim then presents Sigma's vision for Alexandria which begins in the downtown area, listed the showing examples of urban regeneration and adaptive re-use projects in Fuad street that acted as trigger projects that resounded in the area as a whole.

He concluded with the following recommendations:

- Combining Regulations with incentives
- Making use of creative economies
- Focusing on the indicators
- The significance of public participation
- Proposes the establishment of a Town Center Management (TCM), an entity that enforces decentralization, proposes strategies, and plans development

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Q&A Discussion

During the discussion, a number of issues have been opened. Firstly, the debate on the classification of architectural heritage buildings and the criteria that determines their value. For example, the listed buildings in Alexandria were determined according to the criteria set by the National Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH), which merely act as non-mandatory guidelines. However, there exists loopholes in the laws and regulations that protect and govern such buildings which resulted in many losses. Lebanon's case states that laws and criteria should be flexible in order to adapt over time and help in the protection and preservation of the buildings. Whereas in Italy, buildings are assessed to interpret whether it is heritage or not, the authority then has to be notified before any changes happen to evaluate the situation and provide inspections, assert guidelines, and check that everything is done according to regulation. Therefore, it is important to address the issue of evaluating buildings by experts such as architects and establishing a set of principles that categorize buildings and help in their protection and preservation.

Another issue discussed was one of the factors that assess the value of a heritage building to investors, which is the marketing approach in order to calculate its feasibility. A marketing approach can be in the form of relating the building to certain stories or historical events that can provide a sustainable and ongoing source of attraction or maintain a stable revenue. Therefore marketing is directly related to preserving the image that is the primary source of profit, it will not damage it but rather nurture its growth in order to gain more profit over time. Even from a sustainability stance, if the project can provide profit, then it will sustain itself and maintain its preservation.



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Session 02



Lessons from Regional and International Experience on Built Heritage

The Case of Sweden - Rasmus Renglin

Arch. Rasmus begins by discussing what is worth protecting in Swedish architecture, mentioning the National authorities working in protecting cultural heritage and the responsibilities of each, briefly explains the process of evaluating cultural heritage in Sweden which is based on 4 factors; the government decision, analysis, change, and need. He then describes the 3 levels of protection laws in Sweden, starting with the 1st level that protects all buildings and is the responsibility of the municipality, the 2nd level which protects monuments, and the final highest level which protects national state-owned heritage buildings. After that, a few examples are shown to give an idea of the intervention techniques used in Swedish heritage buildings across different cities and what are the factors affecting each case such as extreme climate conditions etc. Arch. Rasmus highlights the significance of meeting the publics' needs and how they influence decision makers before coming up with a master plan for a project. He concludes by showing how new developments can reflect heritage in continuation of relating the past and present.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion addressed the issue of public engagement with heritage projects and their flexibility towards them.

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Lessons from Regional and International Experience on Built Heritage

The Case of Lebanon - George Arbid

Dr. George attempts to answer 4 questions within his presentation, beginning with the motivational reason behind preserving heritage in Lebanon which is mainly related to national pride and sense of ownership towards the built heritage, as well as, tourism. He discusses the issue of how the latest law was from the year 1933 and does not address 19th century heritage buildings which causes a current challenge and is considered one of the main problems in the country. However, the Lebanese economy thrives on development and construction projects, but there are conflicts that arise from post-war influences that are out of the local context, as well as, the issue regarding lack of public participation. Dr. George discussed the example of Solidaire and their development of the city center after the war which was responsible for the demolition and construction of new buildings in 85% of the area causing many of the original urban fabric to be lost. Regarding the issue of financial mechanisms, the country relied mainly on funds from the World Bank in projects related to urban development and cultural heritage. The Ministry of Culture and Antiquities do not have the manpower or capability to fund such projects, however, rich families in Lebanon who represent the private sector and other investors who contribute to the funding and management of such projects. Moving on to the issue of protecting the heritage property which is mainly the role of the director of the Ministry of Antiquities, and raising the problem of poor management of such assets and the need to address it to ensure a sustainable future. Finally, Dr. George answers the final question related to the relevant experience to Alexandria, which was mainly advocating such projects to the public and the dissemination of information, in addition to the importance of public inclusion.

To conclude, Dr. Arbid presents examples of heritage buildings in Lebanon, most of which have been demolished.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion brought about ideas of activities and workshops that attempt to raise awareness such as Lebanon's modern heritage case in the form of post cards and booklets. It also emphasized the importance of planners and architects to be involved in the decision making process of heritage related projects and developments. And finally drawing attention to the need for Syria to start planning ahead and gather information before all is lost in the war.

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Lessons from Regional and International Experience on Built Heritage

The Case of Syria - Stéphane Valtera

Prof. Stéphane starts by comparing the Syrian and Alexandrian cases in dealing with cultural heritage, which are both similar in the fact that the military has control over the decisions and procedures. He discussed the issues with heritage in Syrian cities through history dating back from the Islamic period up to the 19th century and the implications and conflicts in each with relative examples.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion reflects on the complexity in characterizing a heritage building and the need to come up with a model that proposes more factors that help in the classification and would then be open for discussion and debate. It also opens up the issue concerning monumental versus public buildings, the fact that preservation focuses on monumental buildings because they are from the past, well-built, and durable therefore has preferential survival. As well as, the idea of monumentality reflecting greatness of the nation, which poses a problem regarding what is the importance to the nation. There is also the issue in the Middle Eastern region with stating if the monuments are Arabic, Islamic, or National states. In addition to the question of who defines heritage, and this comes as a result of all kinds of people in society such as artists, architects, theatrics, etc. which then sparks another debate of whether cities are driven by a economic return from buildings or are they interested in the significance of buildings for social aspects such as sense of belonging and identity.

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Session 02



Lessons from Regional and International Experience on Built Heritage

The Case of Upper Egypt - Ohoud Wafi

Ohoud outlined her role in the funded research project by Misr El-Kheir Foundation (MEK) entitled “El-Mosharka El-Ma’refeya”, which focuses on documenting and archiving different aspects of the Beja nomad tribes in Upper Egypt, specifically in the Halayeb region. She discussed in brief the aim of the research starting from 2011 up to 2017 which began with gathering information by anthropologists and to currently studying the urban regeneration approaches in the area, and how they deal with their unique heritage by documenting their building techniques, materials, and even their furnishings and accessories. By the year 2013, the government constructed new facilities to serve the area and wanted to demolish the original built housing and replace them with new residential buildings. However, this posed a problem to the inhabitants due to the fact that they were not used to the proposed modern life style.

Ohoud addressed the 4 questions within her presentation, beginning with the fact that the people are the main reason for the motivation towards preserving the cultural heritage, while also funding small initiatives for preserving traditions and being responsible for managing and protecting their property in collaboration with the government in reaching a middle ground. Halayeb region is similar to Alexandria in a sense that the mountain is their source of safety and commerce etc. just like the sea is to Alexandrians. She then concludes by showing pictures of Halayeb’s variety of houses and how they are in need of documentation and preservation.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion raised a number of issues. Firstly, the contradiction of being able to judge what is good for the people and focus on their needs and local context. The other being the political instability regarding the boundaries of the area and ownership and the complexity and intricacy of it all. It also suggests that indigenous groups would benefit from discussing amongst each other the means of how to preserve their culture and so on. Finally, it raises questions on any successful cases where they protected indigenous tribes and how did they deal with the issues.

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Session 02



Lessons from Regional and International Experience on Built Heritage

The Case of Morocco - Abderrahim Kassou

Arch. Abderrahim begins by presenting an overview of Morocco's heritage throughout all the historical periods some of which reflects the diversity and complexity of the city, the legislation for urban and architectural heritage, the difficulties being faced during preservation such as; the bad physical condition of the building, the inefficiency for protection, and the availability of too many stakeholders with varying interests. He then discussed the institutional mechanisms to preserve heritage, namely the Ministry of Culture, Local Development Society (SDL), and the ADER FS, while showing some examples of projects implemented by each. Finally, presenting the actions of non-profit organizations and the axes of interventions of rehabilitation in Morocco with experiences in Casablanca, Kasabah, and Tadla Azilal.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion sheds light on the progressive decentralization in Morocco. However, the law still lacks in adapting to real life situations for example being able to list a large number of buildings, the process is still too slow and inefficient rather than registering a whole sector at once. Regarding the financial issue in Morocco's case, the Ministry pushes partners to help with the funding such as banks and insurance companies.

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Session 02



Lessons from Regional and International Experience on Built Heritage

The Case of Italy - Danielle Salvoldi

Dr. Danielle presented “Sharing Practices and Experiences: Italy”. He begins with an overview of the terminology evolution of architectural heritage, its historical value, assessment of cultural interest, the protection and monitoring procedures, the role of the Ministry of Culture which acts through territorial superintendence. Dr. Danielle also outlines the different funding approaches, and finally concludes the presentation by showing a number of examples throughout Italy displaying the different intervention techniques in each. He concludes by suggesting that the state should allow for the private sector to work on such projects to relieve the government financially especially considering the amount of listed buildings and the financial crisis it’s going through.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion notes the importance of focusing on both the monument and the context in upgrading projects. As well as, including job opportunities when working with adaptive reuse projects.

Arch. May El-Tabakh mentions Prof. Soheir Hawas, who was not able to attend, but sent a book on the Khedivian Cairo which documents and identifies the urban-architecture in Downtown Cairo.

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Session 03



الإسماعيلية
AL ISMAELIA

The Case of Cairo Urban Regeneration

Mohammed Taher

Al-Ismaelia For Real Estate Investment

Mohammed, CEO at Al-Ismaelia Group, began by introducing the aims of the company in reviving Downtown Cairo as a destination for all Egyptians to live, work, shop and socialize. The project is designed to revitalize the center of the capital city through preserving the architectural grandeur of Downtown while celebrating Cairo's dynamic urban fabric.

Mohammed discussed the acquisition of prime real estate in Downtown Cairo for the purpose of restoring the buildings and upgrading the infrastructures to suit contemporary requirements for residential, commercial and cultural spaces. In addition to that, he introduced the process of acquiring a building which depends on a number of factors in order to guarantee secure investments while maximizing the Group's impact on Downtown Cairo's revival. Each potential acquisition is assessed for its architectural value, structural soundness, proximity to buildings in Al Ismaelia's current portfolio, legal feasibility and repurposing potential. When a building is deemed an attractive investment opportunity, Al Ismaelia initiates communication and negotiation with the building's owners. Once acquired; buildings undergo safety and maintenance inspection and an architectural drawing is designed to determine the structure's needs regarding interior renovations and restorations of its facades. He concludes by presenting examples of projects showing the before and after pictures and explaining the techniques used and reasoning behind each. All in all, he sheds light on the importance of trigger projects and their effect on surrounding areas, as well as, the role that the private sector plays in such developments such as Sigma or Al-Ismaelia should be an example that duplicates and spreads conservation.

Notes: 2 of their buildings follow sustainability criteria set by Egypt and other countries.

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Session 03



CLUSTER

Cairo Lab for Urban Studies, Training & Environmental Research - مختبر بحوث القاهرة للتصميم والدراسات

The Case of Cairo Urban Regeneration

Omar Nagati

CLUSTER

Prof. Omar begins by introducing Cluster - Cairo Lab for Urban Studies, Training and Environmental Research which aims at establishing a critical space for urban discourse. Cluster engages critical theorization while being grounded in professional practice, negotiating the blurred boundaries between formal/institutional regulations and everyday urban informality.

He then discussed one of their projects, which falls within the context of a broader research endeavor by CLUSTER, exploring the network of Cairo's Downtown passages. These passageways offer an alternative framework for the development and revitalization of Downtown.

Cairo Downtown Passages aims to develop a pilot urban design and art project in the northern part of downtown Cairo, highlighting existing and emerging initiatives and activating underutilized public spaces. This passageway redevelopment project emerged from a design workshop held in April 2014, organized collaboratively by CLUSTER with DEDI and CKU, exploring art and design interventions in two passageways in Downtown Cairo: the Kodak and Phillips Passageways. CLUSTER has been working in the two passages over an extended period, undertaking mapping, interviews and outreach as part of our larger project on Downtown passageways as an alternative framework for development. This pilot project seeks to promote a more diverse, inclusive, and accessible public space Downtown.

To conclude, he presented the 2 outcome of the design workshop; the "Green Oasis" project for the Kodak Passage, and the "Light Oasis" for the Philips Passage. Further explaining that these two schemes, emphasize a more diverse, safer, and environmentally enhanced experience in the passageways. The "Green Oasis" transforms Kodak into a pedestrian park, while the "Light Oasis" in Philips brings marquee lighting and the possibility for film screenings to a previously dark and decaying space.

Prof. Omar stressed on the fact that they worked in absence of local councils to facilitate participatory involvement, however, they managed to get people involved in a friendly matter. As well as, the long period of time it takes to issue permits and notify authorities, despite the fact that they were providing a service for the public with no desire for profit.

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Session 03

The Case of Cairo Urban Regeneration

Q&A Discussion

The discussion proposes the idea of competitions used in the case of Sweden to focus on the educational process of a certain hand craft or skill and use it in projects to be able to protect it in the future such as making lime mortar. It also focuses on the need for a board of members with specific roles to ensure the maintenance and sustainability of a project.

It also draws attention to 2 financial mechanisms used in Egypt's case, one of which is funding by development banks. The other by institutes such as the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute (DEDI).



DAY 02

5TH JUNE, 2017

Session 01



Authority's Vision and Feasibilities

The session demonstrated a parliamentary vision with regards to the topic of cultural heritage and tangible case studies from Alexandria.

Member of Parliament - Ingy Mourad

MP. Ingy began by introducing herself and her recent achievements. She started by addressing the particular case of neglect and corruption that Alexandria has faced in the past few years due to the lack of a holistic vision and strategic plan. She emphasized the importance of focusing on how to solve the growing challenges rather than merely listing the problems, as well as, her dedication towards the monitoring and evaluation of recent projects and developments in Alexandria to ensure that it complies with the wider master plan for development. She notes the role of the parliament and its members in the immense efforts undertaken in the control and legislation aspects. Regardless of the long, inefficient procedures and paperwork, she welcomes recommendations and all complaints that need attention in order to reach the ultimate shared goal of providing a better future for the city. During her talk, she mentions her strong sense of optimism towards the newly appointed governor due to his genuine interest of revitalizing Alexandria and attempting to ease procedures that are well-studied and have a positive impact on the city. The current approach in legislation focuses on decentralization and local administrative bodies, empowering the governor and giving him the right to act on local issues, in addition to, the significance of establishing an elected local council to observe and report the problems in an effective and efficient way. MP. Ingy also draws attention to the reinforcement of penalties toward the destruction of heritage buildings or illegal constructions and so on. She also notes the role of Local NGO's, initiatives, social media, and others in creating public awareness campaigns to shed light on the heritage in Alexandria and its value. To conclude, she thanks the institute for providing a platform for discussion and sharing knowledge and experiences in order to move forward from that, and awaits requests, recommendations, or complaints from a practical point of view so that she can work towards fulfilling her role as a member of the parliament and a lover of the city.

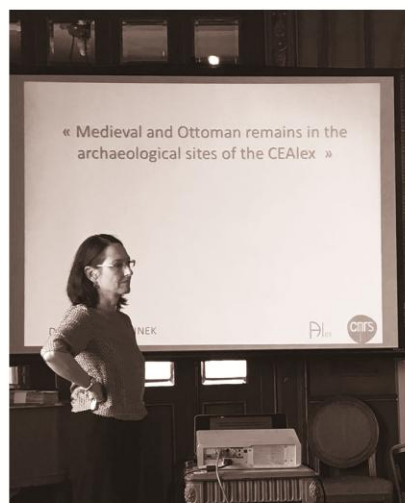
Q&A Discussion

The discussion addresses the challenge of local NGO's or initiatives in fulfilling their duties due to the laws, whether related to their activities, workshops, or the registration of their entity and the difficulty to do so. Another issue is the availability of a strategic urban master plan for Alexandria, the importance of a channel for communication and dialogue, as well as, the absence of public participation on such issues.

DAY 02

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Session 02



Guidelines and Urban related Points of Value

This session gives outlines the considerations in planning ahead for urban regeneration.

Kathrin Machinek

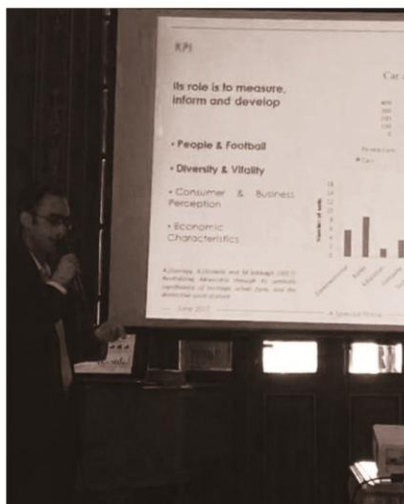
Medieval and Ottoman Remains in the Archaeological sites of the CEALex

Dr. Katherin begins by introducing herself and the role and activities of Le Centre d'Études Alexandrines (CEALex) and how they tend to focus on the archaeological heritage of Alexandria, which led to her discussion on the problems they face during excavations to save such assets. The presentation shows maps of urban excavations touching the whole history of the city, the study of the history of Alexandria, from its foundation in 331 BC to the present day, in collaboration with historians and archaeologists, specialists of the medieval, Ottoman and modern periods and the constitution of the related documentary resources (historical cartography, archives of Alexandrian institutions and families, fonds de la Presse francophone Egypt). Dr. Katherin then draws attention to the issue of buildings on the peninsula and the risk of heritage buildings collapsing due to the instability of the soil which consists mostly of sand and not rock, this has been evident in many recent examples such as the leaning residential high-rise building. After the extensive studies shown in mapping out the historical development of Alexandria, she presents the challenges facing the preservation of heritage buildings such as in the Old Turkish Town where there exists illegal heights in construction of new buildings with absolute disregard to the urban context, urban fabric, history, and regulations of the area. This leads to the point that, the center's role is only to study, excavate, and salvage the archaeological assets and preserve them, but they have no power as to what happens with the site afterwards because its governed by the governmental authorities and their legislation. She also sheds light on the archaeological sites that contain monuments and how they've helped in saving them, however, they face challenges in entering some of the sites such as the towers in Shalalat Garden in order to complete surveys and analysis for extensive studies. The Center completed a restoration project on the Tabiyet El-Nahassin which was given to them by the Ministry of Antiquities to store the excavations in, in addition to mapping out the cisterns available in Alexandria and undergoing surveys and clean-ups. The problem with cisterns is that it attracts dangerous activities such as taking drugs or violence, etc. She then concludes by noting the importance of distribution of the studies undergone by the Center to share information in the form of publications and exhibitions to spread awareness of their value.

DAY 02

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Session 02



A Special Place

Mostafa Ali – Magdi El-Sabbagh

Arch. Mostafa begins by introducing himself. His presentation noted the reality behind the problems facing heritage buildings in Egypt such as the fact that it's a developing country, the effect of urbanization on the services and resources, the issue of governance, challenges with proceeding to the next stage after listing heritage buildings, and the measures of intervention and its effect on the surrounding context. Arch. Mostafa then highlights the potentials which lie in the dynamic nature of such cities and their historical identity despite globalization, their resilience in facing challenges such as war, climatic disasters, etc. which in turn makes them more attractive for investment. In addition to the opportunity found in heritage led regeneration, cultural tourism, and creative investments. He then sheds light on the economic framework in such projects, in which the heritage building is seen as the primary asset, identifying the different stakeholders, defining the use value in the form of leased spaces and non-use value of the building, and finally studying the economic and financial aspects. The presentation then draws attention to the indicators of success towards such projects, how to be able to measure the interventions, and what are the factors affecting them. This provides an evaluation of the project's performance and gives an idea to potential investors of whether it would be successful to fund such a development project or not. Arch. Magdi presents the case study of Fuad street as an example to portray the indicators that led to the success of the L Passage project such as, the number of people that walk in the street and at which time of the day, the diversity and vitality of the street in particular the middle section where the project is located, consumer participation using questionnaires and surveys, and the economic characteristics of the place. He then gives an overview of the development trends in picking a function for the spaces for example, using global celebrity brands, community markets, or specialist shops such as patisseries or shoemakers. A study made in the UK by Association of Town Center in Management introduces a tool by which each factor is represented by a percentage and it then in turn indicates whether or not the project will be successful or not. To conclude, they gave a brief summary to the presentation.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion focuses on the need for cultural heritage development projects to consider the social and economic factors and to be sensitive towards the intervention techniques. It also proposes to provide regulations and a plan formed by the state to ensure a certain level of diversity that benefits the whole vision of the city.

DAY 02

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Session 02



Fekri Hassan

Al-Moez and Gamaliya Historic Cairo – Community Engagement in the Rehabilitation of Built Heritage

Prof. Fekri begins by introducing himself and elaborating the importance of cultural heritage in defining the identity of a city. He discusses the significant role that community engagement has in the sustainability of rehabilitation projects, as well as, the reasons behind neglecting or excluding them. Furthermore, addressing the absence of governing laws and regulations and not focusing on penalties but rather on incentives that encourage such projects, in addition to the lack of coordination between governmental authorities, distrust by government officials of local communities (and vice versa), absence of a governmental plan or institution to facilitate community participation, and finally the objective of such projects toward promoting tourism at the expense of the local community. Prof. Fekri also mentions the willingness of the community to engage in such projects and to what extent. He recommends the establishment of an autonomous body to run such projects, and gives an overview of the main factors that drive revitalization; the social development, economic development, livability, and conservation – all working together to ensure the success of the project. To conclude, Prof. Fekri outlined the role of experts in planning and creating guidelines and policies, the need to work with the local community, engage professionals from different fields, the importance of international co-operations, and capacity building.

DAY 02

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Session 02



Rana El-Badry - Vibrancy in the City

Arch. Rana introduces herself and begins the presentation by defining what a vibrant city is and how it affects the quality of life. She states that the availability of resources in Alexandria that allows it to become a vibrant city like others around the world and that was evident from her study using similar examples of places that are vibrant to those that are in Alexandria. She then gives an overview of the factors affecting vibrancy in a city and how they affect each other; density, transit, and mixed land use. In addition to outlining the indicators that measure vibrancy in a city; 60-70% usage of the transit by people, 50-100 residential unit/acre within the attachment area, and with regard to mixed land use index - a minimum requirement of 40% commercial use in the ground floor area, and not exceeding 15% of mono-use area. That being said, a criteria has been formed to assess any given area which has been presented on a case study located in the Sidi Gaber Train Station area. Arch. Rana displayed her analysis and maps that indicate whether an area is vibrant or chaotic and what determines each. To conclude, she identifies the reasons behind the lack of vibrancy in Alexandria; Absence of suitable resource distribution, and lack of resource management. She finally recommended the following:

- Redistribution of vibrancy factors within the city
- Limit the availability of mono-use
- Encourage the growth in commercial use at the ground level
- Provide green and open public spaces to attract social interaction
- Improve the public transportation systems
- Create streets that allow for pedestrian movement
- Providing maps that already document each of the factors so that its less consuming to work on the development of any area

Q&A Discussion

The discussion proposes the idea of creating a vibrant cornice in Alexandria. It also notes the need to keep in mind the adaptation of streets for the disabled and the factor of sexual harassment and its effect on the vibrancy as well. A Debate follows discussing the social exclusion of the low income level in Fuad street and what are the factors affecting it.

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Session 02



Dalila Ghodbane - Climate Heritage Keeping heritage alive & livable

Dr. Dalila began by introducing the notion of thermal/climate heritage and re-considering the qualities that have to be saved when dealing with the built heritage. She then gave an example on the particularities noticeable in Cairo's ancient buildings, which can be related to means of passive climate control and thermal comfort improvement. She then discusses the idea that different thermal strategies and logics of comfort making exist, just like different approaches to heritage exist, therefore, the need to develop strategies of identification of the problem that embrace broader urban issues. Adaptability is taken into account; Adaptive reuse, adaptive comfort. Therefore, Dr. Dalila emphasizes the inclusion of the built heritage in the urban life. On that account, it is importance to keep residents on the same site, as they are the most likely to keep on making the place alive, but also livable. She finally concludes that, preserving the built heritage, naturally, presents crucial memorial stakes. But expert's discourses and practices about thermal qualities of old buildings, and by extension, on heritage buildings themselves, become a stake of social inclusion in the city. Taking this aspect into account, projects should seek alternative methods of heritage conservation, articulated with the realities of social life locally. Exclusive definitions of "good practices" related to heritage buildings often lead to the eviction of the population of the geographic perimeter protected by institutions (Elsheshtawy, Mitchell...). Some practices stands in opposition to what experts in the field of architecture would consider as viable ways to create an adequate indoor climate with regards to heritage considerations.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion reflected on the evolutionary process and thinking about new solutions, giving an example in Sweden about using lake water in cooling buildings. It also highlighted the idea of thinking about heritage and identity as a dynamic adaptive field, learning from lessons in heritage and thinking about new possibilities.

DAY 02

5TH JUNE, 2017

Session 02



Gardens and Parks - Sahar Adel

Sahar began by discussing the problems with the use of certain plants and trees in green spaces and how it affects thermal comfort and underground water. She points out the importance of using suitable vegetation that enhances the quality of a space, not only from an aesthetical point of view, but also, the environment and the users. Sahar also points out that trees and plants should not only be used in public spaces or gardens, they should also be incorporated in streets as well as green belts surrounding the city. She then shows pictures displaying the types of gardens in Egypt and how they used to look as oppose to how they are nowadays. She concludes by emphasizing the value of these gardens and how they affect our daily lives.



El-Manshiya Walk around the Square and Gardens

Arch. May El-Tabakh gave instructions to the participants in preparation of the workshop activity which is as follows:

- Each participant will carry a map and a questionnaire sample
- The walk will be limited to the Square and Garden surrounding streets
- Divide into 3 main groups (Public – Private – Community) which constitute the key stakeholders to any urban regeneration project
- Each participant will document their point of view with regard to their group identity and their personal backgrounds in the following

- Investors/Private Sector

1. What are the potentials?
2. What is it lacking?
3. What are the values of this site that attract you to use it?

- Public Authorities

1. What are the problematics?
2. Solutions from your point of view
3. Support them with regulations

- Community/Users

1. What are the site attractions?
2. What is missing for you to come here and spend time with family and friends?

DAY 03

6TH JUNE, 2017

Session 01



Outreach and Education

This session focuses on the discussion of the outcomes of the workshop.

Marwa Abd El-Gawad

Days of Cultural Heritage

Marwa began by introducing herself and the role and activities of Le Centre d'Études Alexandrines (CEAlex) and outlined the educational and cultural aspects that she focuses on. The main aim for the center is to connect the public with their archaeological and architectural heritage through educational field trips, workshops, exhibitions and more. She gave a quick overview of all the types of activities accomplished by the center throughout the years. She emphasizes on the value it has on the youth and how it enriches their minds with the city's history. Marwa also mentions the booklets, games, and experiments prepared that are distributed to schools to provide an alternative learning opportunity. Not only that, but the center has curated artistic workshops comprised of children's sketches and recycled work. They also host cultural heritage and public awareness days at the center and presented a variety of exhibitions. Marwa concluded by addressing the issue of facilitating and helping the center in reaching out to a wider audience and more schools by support from the government.

Q&A Discussion

The discussion addresses the issue regarding easier and efficient procedures to get permits. It also proposes that the Center's work should be included as a part of the curriculum in schools to educate all children of the value of their built heritage. As well as, including gift shops and information booklets in museums and heritage sites to help inform visitors and act as an economic generator to maintain the building/site itself.

DAY 03

6TH JUNE, 2017

Session 02

Recommendations and Conclusion

Each group was asked to gather among themselves and come up with ideas and recommendations according to their assigned roles and the observations from their site visit.

PUBLIC



USERS

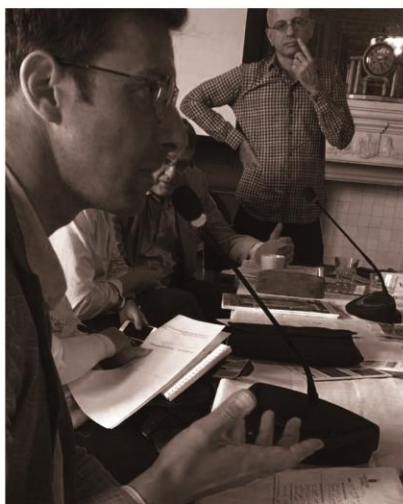


INVESTORS

DAY 03

6TH JUNE, 2017

Session 02



Each group presented their outcome as a set of recommendations.

Group 01 - Users

- Vision for the square – A Creative Cultural Community Center with a Library, Art Galleries, etc.
- Regulations for street vendors
- Raise awareness of the built heritage site
- Improve quality of the built environment
- Develop the promenade as recreational space for users
- Take into consideration people with disabilities

Group 02 - Public

- Reinvesting in buildings that are underused
- Managing conflicting uses of space – Walking, Selling, Driving
- Advertisement and signage do not respect the heritage buildings
- Public transportation needs improvement
- Green spaces and water elements need maintenance
- Historical monuments/building/statues need maintenance
- Square should be equipped with recycling bins
- Square needs parking lots
- Proposing an equal level of sidewalks and streets to provide accessibility for the disabled, whilst using green buffers for security
- Need to add seating areas and information boards at historical monuments/statues/heritage buildings etc.
- Sound and Light show in the square
- Synagogue transformed into a Jewish museum
- Renovating building facades
- Organize an urban planning competition for a developed master plan of the square
- Facilitate rental agreements between owners and tenants
- Rental space to legalize and regularize street vendors
- Public Private Partnerships to transform some of the buildings

Group 03 - Investors

- The mixed uses, as well as the public transportation accessibility, and green spaces available act as potentials in the area
- Developing the urban fabric
- Re-using vacant spaces in buildings above the ground floor level
- Improve green spaces
- Sponsor cultural events in the square
- Arranged parking lots
- Needs more Security and women-friendly meeting points

DAY 03

6TH JUNE, 2017

Closing Session

Conclusion

The seminar concludes by emphasizing the main lessons shared during the 3 day roundtable. Firstly, the importance of stating a legal framework that is flexible and clear to provide laws and regulations to govern and protect built heritage. Secondly, the need to start including the public in the planning, designing, and implementation phases of development projects. As well as, creating local councils that are responsible for the maintenance and evaluation at all times. Thirdly, the establishment of a set of criteria that assesses and evaluates cultural heritage. It also draws attention to using the mechanism of a Public-Private Partnership. Moreover, emphasizing the importance of public awareness of the value of their built heritage and support from the government to the initiatives that help document and preserve it. Finally, it highlights making use of existing opportunities and saving heritage from being lost.

Way Forward – Next Steps

Implementing part of an area that has potentials and start with small actions or trigger projects in the form of a workshop based on what has been concluded from the roundtable funded by Sigma/Al-Ismaelia in order to act as an experimental ground to what's been said in theory and possibly attract other opportunities and echoing in the city.

