

20
23 DEC. 13-15

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES OF
**HOUSING
REHABILITATION
IN HISTORIC
SETTLEMENTS**
IN ARAB REGIONS

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وزارة إعداد التراب الوطني والتعمير والإسكان وسياسة المدينة
Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire National,
de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville

Housing is the main constituent of historic urban fabrics



how do we preserve it in arab regions?



Rehabilitating and reimagining housing units is one of the biggest challenges of historic settlements in the Arab region

Historic urban settlements are the standing manifestations of centuries-old local planning and constructive cultures throughout the Arab region.

In the face of myriad challenges, many have remained operative, sustained by adaptive livelihood strategies that rely on mutual social aid and complementarity of pastoral and agricultural resources. While some were founded as far back as the 8th century like the Medina of Fez, others, like the Kasbah of Taourirt, were built no earlier than the 19th century. But behind the fortified walls operated a social organization that tested and reinvented spatial practices over the years, turning these settlements into continuously adaptive living spaces, rather than open air museums frozen in time.

Today, these historic urban centers across the Arab region, are plagued by many ills, making the preservation of the most significant constituent of their urban fabrics, housing units, a pressing issues. Among the ills that affect them are:

- 1) Some countries like Iraq, Yemen, Syria have faced significant damages to their urban cultural heritage over the last decade, with the destruction of many of their housing units.
- 2) Housing units are often the last

priority in historic center regeneration projects which privilege monuments, infrastructure, public and commercial programs.

3) Historic centers have become less attractive to locals, many of their housing units stand either abandoned, inhabited by low income groups unable to maintain them, squatted by illegal occupants or sold off to foreigners who use them as secondary residences or transform them into luxury hotels (which become enclaves that exclude the majority of local inhabitants).

4) Numerous inheritors and family conflicts often freeze rehabilitation efforts of housing units, and the lack of policies and laws to access this housing stock worsen this situation.

How do we prevent historic urban centers from losing the main architectural typology that constitutes their urban fabric, housing, to either one of these two faiths: abandonment/ rapid deterioration or tourism gentrification? And how do we approach historic urban settlements which have already housing that is deteriorated or is extremely gentrified?



PROJECT'S METHODOLOGY

The project has three defined steps:

- 1) case study analysis of best practice projects, highlighting their approaches (urban, architectural, legal, social, financing, governance) as well as their successes and challenges;
- 2) regional conference in Marrakech which will gather experts presenting the case studies;
- 3) report, published on a dedicated website, accessible to all, presenting guidelines for the revitalization and conservation of housing in historic urban settlements in the MENA region.

PROJECT'S GOALS

While focusing on selected countries in the MENA region, namely Morocco, KSA, Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia, Palestine, Lebanon and the Sultanate of Oman, the project's will attempt to achieve the 3 goals below:

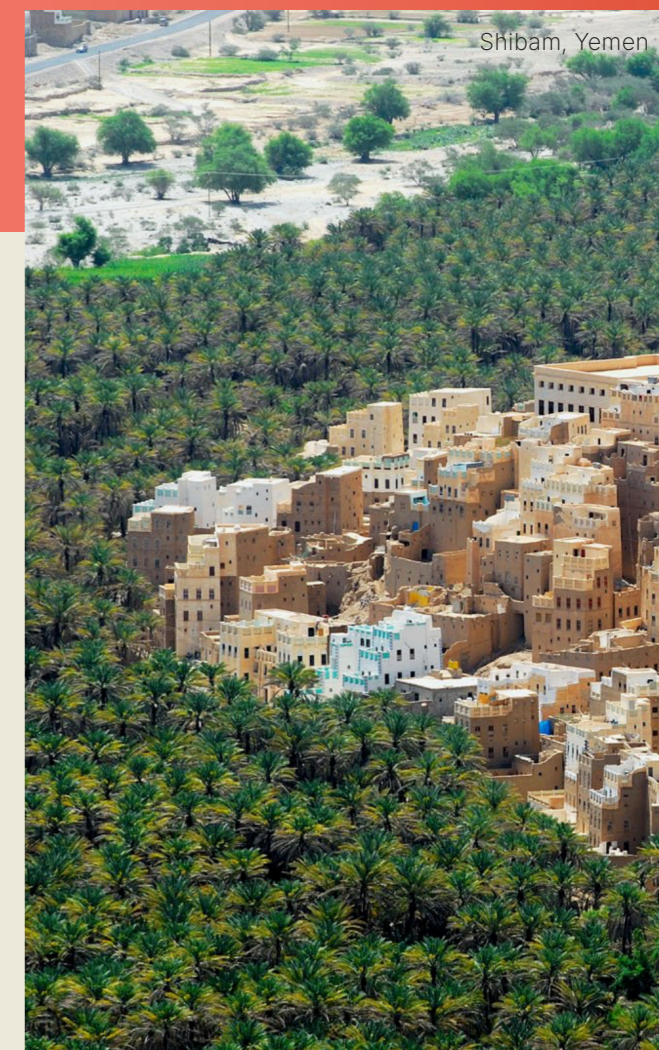
- 1) to take stock of the status of housing in historic settlements from all relevant angles (legal, administrative, technical, financial, environmental, social, etc.);
- 2) to define realistic/ innovative strategies and policies that would foster their conservation and prevent or reverse their degradation and disappearance, and ;
- 3) to propose operational pilot projects to test these solutions.



PROJECT'S STAKEHOLDERS

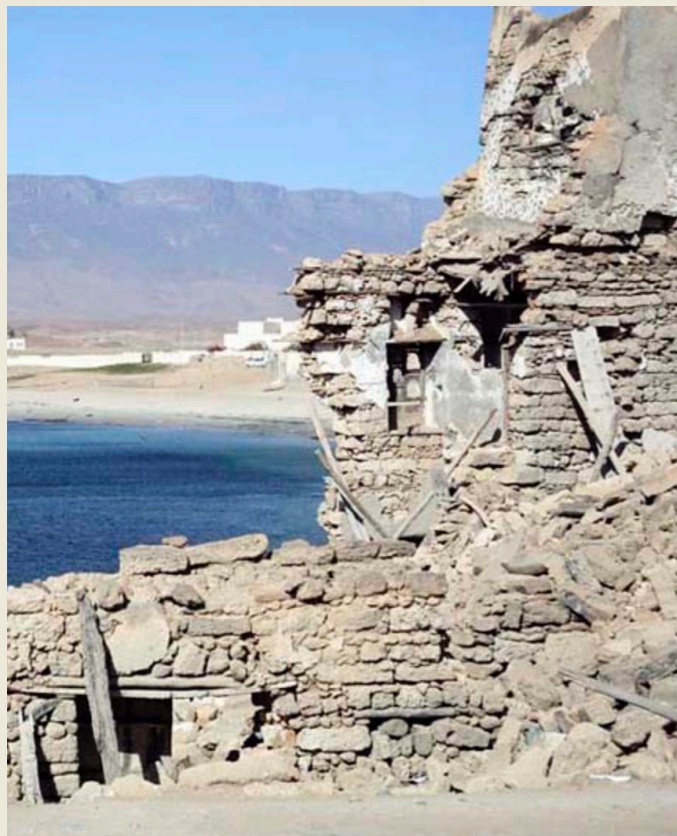
The project has three defined steps:

- > National and local authorities in governance, urban planning, housing, land and property rights, cultural heritage safeguarding, tourism, public private partnership, etc.
- > International and regional entities involved in the different sectors related to rehabilitation of historic urban settlements.
- > Religious authorities such as Waqf, Habous and others.
- > Civil society entities.
- > Private sector entities working in the area housing, tourism, cultural heritage rehabilitation and others.
- > Investment Banks.
- > International and regional actors with experience in sustainable rehabilitation of housing in historic urban cities and settlements.
- > Institutes and Universities and Experts.
- > The Owners and inhabitants of historic urban settlements.
- > Institutes and Universities and Experts.



New practice and policy models are needed.

The rehabilitation of housing stock in historic urban fabric is in need of innovative strategies to safeguard the character of the fabric, local architectural features and construction techniques while insuring a return on investment and effective long term maintenance.



Selection of 10 case studies across 10 countries of the North Africa - Middle East Region

Through the study of 16 case studies, this project proposes to highlight the strategies that countries across the MENA region have deployed to handle the housing stock within their historic fabric.

Selected case studies include project which focused on the rehabilitation of housing units and which have been partially or completely implemented.

The selection criteria for these case studies are:

- Historical and architectural value
- Socio-economic impact
- Original population kept in place or abandoned houses filled with new dwellers
- Active participation of locals in the rehabilitation process
- Integration of key services and amenities
- Innovative programming and adaptive reuse
- Investment catalysis



A. Conference goals

The goal of the conference is twofold:

- 1) to foster knowledge exchange between experts, decision-makers and practitioners involved in housing rehabilitation in historic urban centers across the MENA region by sharing expertise on principles, practical and creative means, and policy options.
- 2) to identify and disseminate best practice guidelines for the development and implementation of housing rehabilitation in urban historic centers.

B. Conference localisation

City of Marrakech, venue TBD

C. Conference draft schedule

DAY 1 SITE VISIT

7:30

Departure from Marrakech

11:30-13:30

Ksar of Taourirt

13:30-14:30

Lunch

14:30-20:30

Return to Marrakech via a stop at Ksar ait Ben Haddou (UNESCO site)

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DAY 2

SITE VISIT

9:00 - 12:30

Visit of case studies of housing rehabilitation in the medina of Marrakech

12:30 - 13:30

Lunch

CONFERENCE

13:30 - 18:00

> Plenary session 1

13:30 - 13:40

Keynote introductory lecture, professor Aziza Chaouni

13:40 - 14:40

> Introduction by H.E Mrs. Fatima Zahra Mansouri, Minister of National Territory Rehabilitation Urbanization, Housing and City Policy(10 min)

> Welcome address by Mrs.

Rania Hedeya Regional Representative, Regional Office for the Arab States UN-Habitat (10 min)

> Introduction by H.E. Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, Chairman of the ISDB (10 min)

> Introduction by H.E Sheikh Ebrahim Al-Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA),

Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH)

> Welcome address by Mr. Eric Falt, Regional Director at UNESCO Office for the Maghreb (10min)

14:40 - 14:50

Broadcasting of institutional films with a focus on housing: PK&K, the Pearl Road in Bahrain (selection TBD)

14:50 -16:40

> 17 Case studies

Part 1

Morocco (30 minutes)

Oman (20 minutes)

KSA (10 minutes)

Palestine (20 minutes)

Tunisia (20 minutes)

16:40 -16:50

Coffee Break

16:50 - 18:30

Part 2

Irak (20 minutes)

Bahrein (20 minutes)

Oman (30 minutes)

Yemen (20 minutes)

Lebanon (20 min)

43 experts will co-define new guidelines to protect and revive housing in historic settlements in the Arab region

DAY 3

CONFERENCE

9:00 - 10:45

> Session 1

with moderator and rapporteur

Conservation Management

Plan and housing

rehabilitation: from inception

to implementation

Break down group 1 (15 people)

Break down group 2 (15 people)

Break down group 3 (15 people)

10:45 - 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 - 12:45

> Session 2

with moderator and rapporteur

Citizen participation and

creative financing in housing

rehabilitation projects in historic

centers

Break down group 1 (15 people)

Break down group 2 (15 people)

Break down group 3 (15 people)

12:45 - 14:00

Lunch

14:00 - 15:45

> Session 3

with moderator and rapporteur

Land tenure policy and

sustainable governance in

housing rehabilitation projects

in historic centers

Break down group 1 (15 people)

Break down group 2 (15 people)

Break down group 3 (15 people)

15:45 - 16:00

Coffee break

16:00- 18:00

> Plenary session 2

Conclusions from the 3 sessions

Round table with

rapporteur session 1

rapporteur session 2

rapporteur session 3

Q&A session

Closing remarks

18:30- 20:30

Diner



Medina of Fez, Morocco

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