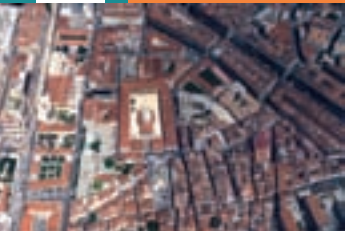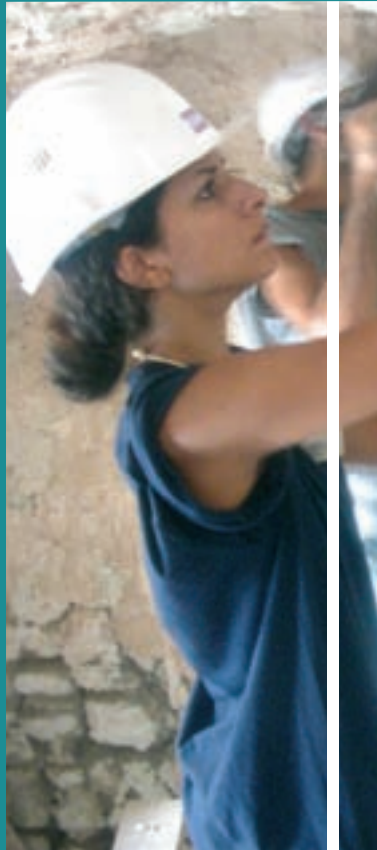# historic
districts
for all

a social and human approach
for sustainable revitalization

July 2008

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HISTORIC DISTRICTS FOR ALL

Foreword

▌ For over a decade, the Social and Human Sciences Sector of UNESCO has been studying cities as "arenas of accelerated social transformations". At the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, which took place in Istanbul in 1996 (HABITAT II), UNESCO organized a round table on "Democracy and citizenship in the city of the twenty-first century". Since then, the MOST2 Programme, in cooperation with all UNESCO Sectors, has carried out several international comparative research projects to draw attention to the different components of inclusive cities in the world. "Small historical coastal cities", "Old Beijing", "Rehabilitation of Quito's historic centre" and "Social sustainability of historic districts" are just four of these projects.

From HABITAT II in 1996 to the international seminars UNESCO organized in Beijing in January 2007, in Hué with the AIMF (International Association of French-speaking Mayors) in October 2007, and with UN-HABITAT in Seville, in May 2008, on "balanced urbanization for social cohesion, economic development and heritage conservation", UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector identified major indicators and parameters for strengthening social capital and cohesion in historic districts. These findings together with UN-HABITAT's best practices formed the basis for this brochure, designed for local authorities, to highlight public policies and practices that enable social sustainability in historic districts.

In his 1933 speech to the 4th International Congress of Modern Architecture, held in Athens, Fernand Léger said: "there are some essential qualities to which the average person is attached and which he insists on having. If you destroy those qualities, then you have to replace them. The problem is an essentially human one. Put your plans back in your pocket, go out to the street and listen to the people breathe; you have to be in touch with them, steep yourself in the raw material, and walk in the same mud and the same dust…".

I sincerely hope that following the training session scheduled during World Urban Forum IV, to be held in Nanjing, China, from 3 to 6 November 2008, this brochure, together with the *Manual for City Professionals,* should become a useful tool. Indeed, this brochure should help municipalities become aware of the role of political will, of the importance of preserving tangible and intangible heritage and of enhancing cultural diversity, and above all, to have a better understanding of the importance of building new forms of social cohesion in cities where people must once again be placed at the centre of urban projects and a balance must be sought between economic competitiveness and harmonious development. ▌

Wataru IWAMOTO
Director, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy
Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO

WHAT IS AT STAKE GLOBALLY AND THE CHALLENGES TO BE FACED

The global context

- Since 2003, the exponential growth of the world population has brought about a veritable explosion of urban populations, increasing with each day. Populations living in urban areas increase by 1.25 million every single week.
- In 2007, there were more people living in cities than in rural areas. In 2050, this figure is expected to rise by 65%.
- Urban growth is higher in the South.
- There are currently one billion people living in shanty towns. In 2020 this figure will rise to 2 billion.
- More than half the world's urban population live in towns and cities of fewer than 500,000 inhabitants. Three-quarters of population growth will be concentrated in these small- to medium-sized towns.

UN-HABITAT's *State of the World's Cities Report 2006/7*
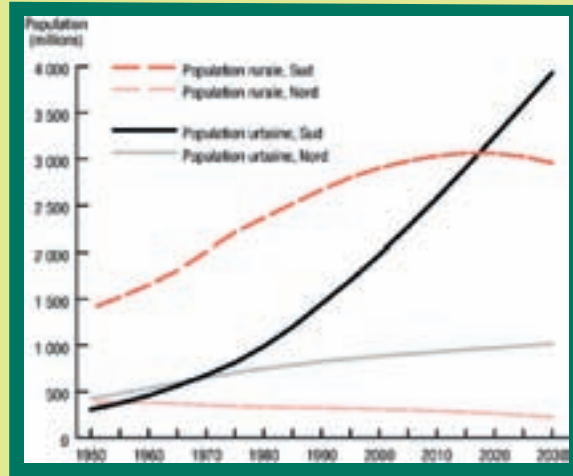
Urban and rural population of countries in the North and the South, from 1950 to 2030 (projected figures). Source: UN.

The challenges for 21ˢᵗ century cities

Historic districts are identitarian, historic symbols which today are at the centre of many challenges and questions:
- How should development and competitiveness be aligned with respect for rights and the needs of inhabitants together with highlighting urban heritage as a public good?
- How should the safeguarding of old buildings and inhabitants' traditions be structured together with the city's new functions to forge an urban identity for all?
- How should the urban fabric be restored without halting the development of cultures or destroying natural resources and yet integrating current cultures?
- How can social cohesion be ensured by managing the pressure of property owners and the need for a sociocultural mix of different generations?
- How can sustainable revitalization projects be successfully carried out with appropriate expertise and means?

The above questions stress the need for linking policies, techniques, people, culture, the environment and the economy. The complex challenges and processes of urban revitalization call for issues to be clearly identified and fully understood before they can be tackled in an interdisciplinary, democratic way in order to transform historic districts into more congenial living spaces.

The urban population explosion has a direct impact on historic districts. The different impacts vary from a *laissez-faire* policy to elitist revitalization.

- With a *laissez-faire* policy historic centres are left to run into disrepair and abandoned by residents who move out to the suburbs. Old buildings with no recognized heritage value become rental properties or they are squatted by people on very low incomes.
- Elitist revitalization tends to turn historic districts into "museums", property prices rise and there is a predominance of offices and hotels – all of which lead to population segregation and a loss of identitarian, social capital. And, finally, when old buildings are considered to have a shrine-like quality this can lead to further dilapidation.

The numerous difficulties encountered by cities can lead to a reduction of citizens' quality of life and threaten their social and cultural rights, a loss of social mix and the functions of old city centres, relative lack of infrastructures and public amenities, increase of poverty and insecurity, environmental degradation, inability to attract investments and thus stimulate the local economy, and uncontrolled development of tourism, etc.

However, in many cities the revitalization of historic districts has very positive and encouraging results:

A balance is reached for each local situation between preservation and protection of urban heritage, economic development, functionality and liveability of a city thus responding to the needs of current inhabitants while enhancing in a sustainable manner the city's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

The different approaches – heritage, economic, environmental and sociocultural – do not conflict; they are complementary and their long-term success is dependent on these approaches being linked together.

Tongli, China

"More than the restoration of spectacular buildings or landscapes, we were keen to safeguard the cultural context, the natural environment and the local customs whilst looking for new centres of economic activity. To improve the living conditions of the inhabitants we analysed the social problems through field surveys. We also set up networks for improving living conditions. To avoid the insidious degradation of the natural environment surrounding old districts and to preserve the typical aquaculture and agricultural activities of this area, we created a protection zone of the area surrounding the city, with its own regulations. Our aim is to find a just and sustainable balance between heritage preservation and the rapid growth created by tourism."

Alain Marinos and Shao Yong, Franco-Chinese Cooperation between the National Research Centre on Chinese Historic Cities in association with the Tongli University of Shanghai, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the City of Architecture and Heritage.

SEVEN KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS
1. Strong political will as prime vector for change

Historic districts often symbolize the whole city. These districts can become laboratories for the promotion of cultural diversity and the fight against poverty; they can forge cultural identity and the quality of the living environment for inhabitants and guide the regional development of the whole city and its suburbs.

The restoration of a historic district always attracts new inhabitants, new economic activities and brings about a rise in property prices. So it is tempting to opt for rapid economic development.

Decision-makers, local representatives and their teams have a key role to play: they can orient the revitalization strategies by placing inhabitants at the heart of the process, while trying to compensate, through appropriate means, for the inevitable pressure of property prices and people moving out of the district.

Revitalization means reaching a satisfactory balance between the laws of economic development, the needs and the rights of inhabitants, and the enhancement of the city as a public good.

Revitalization involves commitment at municipal level and building dialogue among the many actors at different levels, so that everyone is on the same wavelength. The issues pertaining to each local situation must be clearly outlined, political strategies must be thought through and realized via technically feasible projects while bearing in mind future generations.

Municipalities must listen

"The town of Mahdia, Tunisia, abandoned the project of an ill-placed leisure port and instead carried out an exemplary restoration of the sand dunes along the beach.
The town of Saïda, Lebanon, reduced the negative impact of the seashore boulevard on the north beach by decreasing its hold and better controlling its use."

UNESCO external evaluation meeting for the inter-sectoral initiative P.V.C.H. 1997/2003, Essaouira, Morocco, November 2003.

Santiago de Compostela, Spain

"We considered that the rehabilitation of a historic district first of all needed to go through a process of reconstruction of its urban cultural values and through a harmonization of its functions. The rehabilitation of a city's residential function not only justified maintaining architectural elements and the heritage we wished to protect but also constituted the most effective protection against modern transformations of the city, one of which is the phenomenon of social tourism. The problem, seen from that angle, took on a far greater dimension than merely basic preservation of architecture. […] More than just stones, buildings, materials or the value and proportion of the architecture, what we wanted to preserve, strengthen and protect, with the policies tested in Santiago de Compostela, was the cultural impact of cities, by restoring the functions and the urban quality of the historic city centre."

José A. Sanchez Bugallo, Mayor of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 18 March 2005, at the launch of the UN-HABITAT/UNESCO Project "Urban policies and the right to the city".

Pitfalls to be avoided

"Revitalization processes of historic districts can improve inhabitants' living conditions and enhance the value of the heritage if certain pitfalls are avoided:
- do not evict the local population (residents and traditional merchants)
- do not destroy traditional occupations
- do not contribute to the break-up of urban social links
- do not suppress existing trade
- do not convert housing into storehouses for itinerant merchants
- do not isolate the historic district from the rest of the city
- do not preserve the buildings without the involvement of the inhabitants and reflect on the impact on the rest of the city
- do not develop tourism as the sole activity."

Yves Cabannes, in cooperation with the Working Group of the Development Planning Unit (University College London), Coordinator, Urban Management Programme, United Nations. Excerpt from his remarks at the meeting of the UNESCO Steering Committee on the Social Approach to Revitalization, May 2007.

Qiu Boaxing, Deputy Minister for Construction of the People's Republic of China, at a press briefing held at an international conference on urban culture and town planning, said: "Some local officials seem to change the appearance of cities with great determination; they are ready to move mountains and redirect water courses [...] which has made some cities take on the aspect of a deprived urban landscape [...] thousands of cities look exactly the same from one end of the country to another. The Government is undertaking a revision of the National and Municipal Planning Act, which will prevent local officials from carrying out arbitrary town planning".

Excerpt from *The People's Daily*, 12 June 2007.

"Historic heritage is not only a treasure for our city, known for its culture and history, but it is our responsibility to preserve that cultural wealth while improving the overall quality of the city and of the lives of its inhabitants. Sustainable preservation of cultural heritage and historic districts requires strong support on the part of local decision-makers, solid scientific planning, funding mechanisms and the participation of local inhabitants. In accordance with the principles and methodology put forward by UNESCO and UN-HABITAT, local authorities should try to find balance and harmony between preservation of historic heritage and urban modernization based on the city's economic development."

Liu Sen, Mayor of Qufu, China, May 2008.

"People should be our prime concern. Inhabitants must first be made aware of the social and economic aspects before we launch into any rehabilitation of a historic district. Inhabitants need to understand the implications of preservation and rehabilitation. We should also involve children and raise their awareness, particularly before decisions are made with regard to aesthetics."

Faez Zayat, Mayor of Jableh, Syria, June 2008.
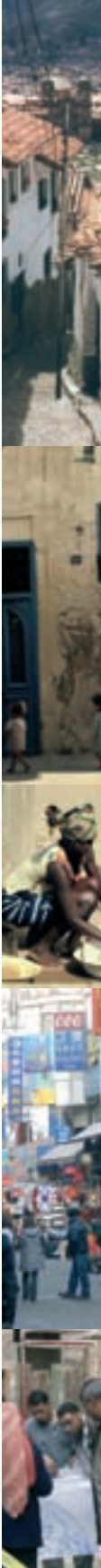
2. Inhabitants at the heart of revitalization projects

Historic districts for all

Men, women, children, young people and old, families who have lived in city centres for generations, new arrivals, immigrants living in poverty, peddlers, owners of small restaurants, community actors, artists, shop owners, local officials, tourists and other categories – they are all inhabitants but with varying ways of life and a diversity of expectations and needs.

Local and national strategies must ease access to housing and services, encourage the establishment of small, job-creating businesses, respond to the needs of the poorest, the youngest and the oldest inhabitants.

The preservation of old buildings cannot be dissociated from the local population who give meaning to those historic districts.

Everyone needs to be made aware of the quality of their living conditions and given every encouragement to pass on to future generations the multi-faceted identity of their district. The new functions of contemporary towns and cities must be compatible with the old. To this end, it is essential to identify and promote the intangible aspects of historic districts – practical, appropriation of spaces, know-how and values.

"Social cohesion and economic competitiveness are not mutually exclusive but in fact complementary objectives. In order to reach a balance between the two, governance is the key element. A strategic view needs to be developed that will take into account every municipality and will help the diverse objectives of the different actors to coexist in harmony."

L. Kamal-Chaoui, Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD. Debate on "Urban policies and the right to the city", UNESCO, Paris, 18 March 2005.

3. Historic districts linked with urban and regional development

Past urban revitalization projects for historic districts increasingly show how action is restricted when it centres solely on buildings without taking into account the inhabitants, networks, locations and interaction of the city with its wider area. Development that takes place between the suburbs and the centre must facilitate access to the centre, which depends on such access for its very survival and development. The revitalization process of historic districts must be in line with the **multi-faceted nature of urban development** and its reality; that is, it must respond to the needs of all inhabitants and users.

Historic districts must not become isolated from the rest of the urban area. Local projects must be supported and integrated into an overall urban development plan to make sure the historic district does not become an element of spatial or social segregation in the region.

Why?

- In many countries, historic districts are the first places of refuge for rural migrants and post-conflict refugees
- The distribution of different social groups in the whole urban area and the surrounding region is the prime issue
- In a world context registering a high growth of urban tourism, historic districts often contribute to the tourist attraction of a region through organized itineraries

"To be most effective, the conservation of historic towns and other historic urban areas should be an integral part of coherent policies of economic and social development and of urban and regional planning at every level." Consequently, "the conservation plan should aim at ensuring a harmonious relationship between the historic urban areas and the town as a whole".

ICOMOS International Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (1987)

Montreal, Canada

"The urban design workshop (October 2006) was part of a larger urban event aiming at one and the same time to be a planning, consultation and communication exercise leading to the setting up of a constructive dialogue among the different actors interested in the sustainable revitalization of the Griffintown district (residents, city representatives, promoters, firms and institutions, town planning professionals, etc.)".

City of Montreal, Call for candidatures "Urban design workshop" prior to the development of the Place d'Armes (2007), Montreal, partner of the AIMF.

4. Enhancing public spaces while sustainably protecting natural and cultural resources

Public spaces play a central role in the functioning and shaping of cities. They are vital to the **quality** of urban space. Public spaces are meeting places, places for **dialogue** and exchange, and for information and culture. They structure the identity of districts and contribute to an **urban social mix.**

Similarly, good **management of transport and mobility** is essential to ensure the city finds a new equilibrium. The number of private vehicles on the road must be reduced, and there must be an increase of non-polluting public transport and pedestrian precincts. There must be rigorous yet flexible control of access to tourist areas.

Aims

- **Rediscover and maintain centres' vitality**
- **Link green spaces to city centres**
- **Affirm culture and start dialogue**
- **Restrict energy consumption and pollution**
- **Reduce the need for local travel**
- **Improve the city's image**

Rehabilitation of the traditional gardens of Sana'a, Yemen

The old walled city of Sana'a is the largest in the Arab world. Inside the city are 43 traditional gardens, or "magashem", which are green spaces where inhabitants can grow fruit and vegetables.

The deterioration of the gardens is due to construction and lack of water, and the bad management of refuse is of concern to the authorities. In 2002 this led to a rehabilitation programme managed by the Social Development Fund (SFD) and the Office for the preservation of the historic cities of Yemen (GEOPHCY). In line with the legal and administrative regulations, and having defined each person's role, the programme set out to:
- restrict residents' activities in the gardens and once again prepare the ground for cultivation
- protect and demarcate the gardens
- improve the traditional system of water collection
- rehabilitate the mosques' drainage systems

Kamal Haglan, Social Development Fund, Yemen.
UNESCO/UN-HABITAT Seminar "Historic districts for all",
Seville, 7 to 9 May 2008.

Lyon, France

"The city of Lyon has, inter alia, implemented a charter to highlight occupation of the public domain: a specific rule for better cohabitation; heritage vigilance areas which are listed on the Local Urban Plan: a heritage view of the more 'ordinary' districts; the re-enactment of historic events using the urban atmosphere during the day (colours), and at night (illuminations), with such special events as the annual lights festival on 8 December; and an urban recreation park of 10 hectares along the 5 km vehicle-free embankments of the Rhône."

Bruno Delas, Project Director, Mission "Historic site of Lyon", international seminar organized by UNESCO and Tsinghua University, "Balanced urban revitalization between social cohesion and heritage conservation", Beijing, 21 to 23 January 2007.

Rennes, France

"The transport policy is the deciding factor for moving from 'preservation' to 'enhancement' of heritage: no through-traffic, more pedestrian zones in the city centre and efficient public transport the most important perhaps being the underground which provides easy access to the city centre from the suburbs. Through these lines of action a redefinition policy of the public spaces was developed, revealing the spatial quality of these locations belonging to the urban heritage and their potential in the fields of urban tourism and cultural activities."

Directorate of Urban Planning for the City of Rennes, April 2007.
Rennes, partner of the AIMF.

5. Strengthen comprehensive functions and improve inhabitants' living conditions

For millions of people, life in the city is synonymous with survival: fighting unemployment and social exclusion, violence and insecurity. Revitalization programmes must combine material changes and the participation of local actors **with the projects and the activities relating to the economy,** as well as respond to interests and needs such as traffic control, public amenities, employment, housing, trade and water management. Urban policies, particularly in poor historic districts, must help **attract employers** who can provide work for inhabitants, establish a mixed social network and improve the surroundings and living conditions of the inhabitants (health care, education, services, local shops, etc.). Availability of **social housing** must be in parallel with a policy for property ownership for the middle classes and service costs for rented social housing should be minimized.

Aims

- take into account the basic rights of all inhabitants
- ease access to social housing for vulnerable sections of society, offset property market speculation and encourage an inter-generational mix
- modify transport and general traffic flow to link the district with other parts of the city
- create jobs and diversify trade
- maintain social and cultural links and develop public services (schools, health care, social services, training)
- avoid exclusion and integrate migrants

Saïda, Lebanon

"All responsible, concerned parties agreed on the necessity to pave the boulevard that runs alongside the old city and the 'friction lane' and to build two gates at either end of the boulevard where it runs adjacent to the old city in order to emphasize the fact that the boulevard is not a transit road but a low-speed traffic road, designed for light vehicles, thus avoiding heavy traffic [...]".

Excerpt of a letter to UNESCO from Mme Bahia Hariri, President of the Hariri Foundation, and Mr Hilal Kobrosly, President of the Municipality of Saïda, following the International Seminar organized by UNESCO on "Small historical coastal cities", which took place in Saïda, in May 2001.

Quito, Ecuador

"In order to respond to the changes, new infrastructures have made provision for the itinerant vendors, offering them an alternative to the instability and harsh working conditions they have experienced for decades. As follow-up to tackling this main problem, urban renovation was speeded up thanks to the cooperation of the municipality, the private sector and international aid: improvement of the streets and squares, renovation of façades and churches, improvement of lighting, etc. In addition, new strategic links have been strengthened such as the creation of small businesses, self-management of businesses, tourism development, generation of new economic activities, provision for families new to the district, attracted by the historic centre, etc."

Ambassador Horacio Sevilla Borja, UNESCO Round Table on "Social sustainability in historic districts", September 2004.

Malaga, Spain

"Over and above big public investments in the housing sector (new buildings and restoration), urban redevelopment, creation of multi-purpose sociocultural centres, construction of public amenities and special attention being given to immigrants, the innovative experience of Malaga lies in the implementation of public housing centres which can be rented for a limited period of seven years. These centres have been specifically designed for elderly and young people, particularly students. The centres aim to encourage intergenerational mutual help. They also represent a way of finding affordable accommodation for sections of the population who have been badly hit by property prices."

Moreno Peralta, J.R. Casero, A. Gutierrez Istria, Round Table organized by UNESCO during the UN-HABITAT World Urban Forum II in Barcelona, September 2004.

6. Urban identity enhanced through creativity and cultural diversity

The resurgence of identitarian feelings, of wanting to belong to a history, culture, region or district is symptomatic of the human need to know oneself and for one's identity to be acknowledged. Historic districts express the knowledge and the know-how of the civilizations from which they stem. They play a key role in the knowledge and organization of the life of a city.

Creation and creativity form an integral part of the revitalization process of historic districts. Creativity in these processes often leads to projects that involve new communication procedures among actors and a new understanding of the region.

Maintaining or creating quality handcrafts must take place alongside support for innovation.

Aims

- **Encourage mediation in order to link together cultural, artistic, political and institutional thinking**
- **Make culture and the meaning of heritage accessible to all sections of the population**
- **Transmit intangible heritage, people's true identity**
- **Turn archaeology into a tool for understanding the city**
- **Give support to artists and artisans for their quality products and services**
- **Counter-balance the attraction of the region with cultural events outside the historic district**

Brussels, Belgium

"Since 2000, the city of Brussels has been giving much attention to the Brigittines Chapel, located near a social housing district of mainly concrete construction. The Chapel was deconsecrated a century after it was built but its aesthetic quality is often remarked upon. The city of Brussels is convinced of the cultural importance of rehabilitating areas that have been neglected and is in favour of reviving residential and cultural spaces. It offers subsidies for renovation and embellishment, creating new meeting places and has drawn up a District Contract for the small area called Brigittines Tanneurs. The 'Brigittines', pioneer of a new arts district in Brussels, is now a Centre for Contemporary Arts for Movement and Voice, developing its own artistic project, taking into account not only the artists but also the local population while respecting everyone's cultural identity."

Monique Duren, Brussels Culture Department official, Director of the Contemporary Arts Centre "Les Brigittines", June 2007.

Fez, Morocco

"Further to a rehabilitation programme for the Medina, a study has been conducted on traditional building methods and materials; brochures have been produced on jobs in the construction industry and on the work of the ceramic manufacturers of Fez; a series of lectures was organized; and a Training Institute for the Traditional Building Trade (IFMTB) created. Students and professionals from different countries continue to cooperate with those responsible for the preservation of the built heritage in the region."

Xavier Casanovas, RehabiMed network official, UNESCO Workshop "Sustainable urban development in the coastal region of Mahdia", Tunisia, June 1999.

Lijiang, China

"A thorough and comprehensive understanding of the history and culture of the Naxi people and other ethnic minorities in this region should be reached (their ancestral knowledge, their efforts to promote the transmission and importance of their traditional culture). Thanks to continuous cooperation with us, local ethnic groups have gained increased confidence. They have enhanced their abilities to study, preserve and develop their culture. The aim is to establish a harmonious relation between man and nature, tradition and modernism, development of the culture of ethnic minorities, ecology and the economy."

Professor Shao Yong, Tongli University and the National Research Centre on Historic Cities.

7. Urban cultural tourism managed sustainably with several spheres of activity

Growing cultural tourism means that tourists seeking an urban atmosphere often set their sights on historic cities. The "brand image" of the city, and particularly the historic district, is made up of heritage, and historical and cultural interest on the one hand, and on the other, the atmosphere and soul of the place, conveyed by the inhabitants, with the street becoming the "cultural backdrop". It is often tempting to see tourism as an instant cash-producing sector of the economy. Indeed, tourism can inject energy into a district and can give a boost to the re-launch of products based on a large-scale mobilization of local producers.

But the development of tourism requires great care as it may lead to an irreversible impact on the environment, the heritage and the social fabric, and it may generate conflicts difficult to resolve. Products designed purely for tourists should be avoided. Instead, it is better to develop existing products while encouraging genuine exchange. The tourist city must remain – or become – a place for living, working, studying, leisure and investment. Diversification of tourist itineraries must help control the concentration of tourists in what are deemed to be the most interesting areas.

"A sustainable approach to development and tourism management needs long-term planning, cooperation, results control and adapting to change."

Towards sustainable tourism, Manual for decision-makers, UNEP, UNWTO, 2006.

Aims

- Make the district attractive without any negative impact on inhabitants' quality of life
- Respect load capacities and limit negative impact
- Thanks to revenue from tourism, ensure equal distribution of profits and enhancement of sites
- Assert cultural values and take environmental conditions into consideration
- Inform and train local people so as to increase their participation

Essaouira, Morocco

"Tourism cannot remain the sole lever for development. We have an exceptional opportunity in the creation of 130 associations in Essaouira. The State, the Ministries and the municipal councils cannot on their own solve problems as complex and varied as the Mellah, the wall and the dunes; it calls for a synergy among the associations, the public actors and international cooperation.

Saïd Mouline, Consultant. Excerpt from the debate on the case of Essaouira presented at the evaluation meeting of the "Small historic coastal cities" programme, Essaouira, December 2003.

Bamberg, Germany

"The city of Bamberg is a great tourist attraction. Priority has been given to the development and realization of an effective pedestrian itinerary to counter the problems that can arise from the combination of tourism, traffic, historic monuments and houses. Given this context, the cooperation of tourism experts and those responsible for heritage preservation is of the utmost importance."

Matthias Ripp, City of Bamberg, 2007.

Cape Coast and Emina, Ghana

"The local economy of Cape Coast and Emina benefits from the development of cultural tourism along the Slave Route. Forts and castles of Volta, Accra and the surrounding areas, as well as the central and western regions are inscribed on the World Heritage List and therefore benefit from its renown. Local populations participate fully in the activities organized, employment figures are rising and heritage is better protected."

Randal Smith, Commonwealth Territorial Collectivities Forum, June 2007.

HOW SHOULD WE PROCEED?

1. Every historic district is unique – there is no "perfect model"

As every historic district is distinct, strategies must take local situations into account and rely upon the cultural, financial, technical and human resources of each particular district that were identified at the outset. There is no single or "miracle" solution but there are subtle strategies based on local values and abilities to promote them. It is these values and elements that trigger the strategies to be implemented by experts.

It is therefore highly recommended to start with a diagnosis in order to grasp a full understanding. There are many techniques and fairly precise methods that can help the actors in a revitalization project.

"We all agreed on the need to avoid or limit gentrification and to keep seeking a social mix and diversity of functions. The city, the district, the space and the street should never be monofunctional: the city is life. When you start an urban project in historic districts, never forget the 'genius loci', the 'spirit of the place'."

Bruno Chauffert-Yvart, Inspector General of Architecture and Heritage, Ministry of Culture, France.

2. Organize, from the outset, consultations with actors and involve everyone concerned in order to establish a dialogue

Good local governance is a straightforward chain of political, financial and professional partnerships. It is key to the success of revitalization processes while ensuring the coordination of all action within the district and its immediate surroundings. Interaction and working together with actors from different backgrounds involves overcoming social, economic and technical differences and finding common ground. The participatory process must be implemented during the various stages of the strategy or revitalization project. Consultation of citizens, and sharing and respecting the rules is essential from the start. Discussions must not be in terms that are too technical but on a level accessible to everyone.

Saint-Denis, France

"Within the framework of the implementation of the City Policy, inhabitants' participation is clearly the best way to move forward for setting up public education workshops on living in the city, creating local committees, and strengthening the role of local community associations. Inhabitants get organized at grass-roots level with associations and community committees, etc. These are the groups where local problems are evoked and there is participation and discussion on the projects to be carried out. At local level, these groups are the skeleton district committees."

Major project for Saint-Denis, Regional Convention, 2000-2006.

Bangkok, Thailand

"Pom Mahakan is a community of around 300 residents located near Mahakan Fort. In January 2003, under the Government-sponsored plan to revitalize the old city, the residents of Pom Mahakan did everything they could to avoid eviction and demonstrated their resistance by holding protests, building barricades and organizing a night-watch committee. Helped by a coalition of academics, NGOs and human rights activists, they put forward a highly innovative land-sharing plan as an alternative to eviction and relocation."

Jean du Plessis, COHRE Coordinator, at UNESCO Round Table of experts on Social Sustainability in Historic Districts, World Urban Forum, September 2004.

Portland, United States of America

The city of Portland was established in 1843 and it now has to tackle the issue of gentrification that has come about as a result of the revitalization process of districts that have become "historic districts". The "historic district" label had the strategic aim of investments and forging the identity of districts known to have vulnerable inhabitants and a high rate of violence. Several participatory tools and policy strategies in the fields of education, housing and the economy not only helped improve the situation in these districts but also helped us draw lessons from it for the Portland plan in general (on the scale of the whole region).

Gill Kelley, Director, Portland Planning Office, UNESCO/UN-HABITAT Seminar "Historic districts for all", Seville, 7 to 9 May 2008.

Bangalore, India

The participatory model of heritage preservation depends on the creative abilities of the inhabitants and their potential to plan and take decisions. Once trained, not only can they contribute to heritage preservation but they can also draw a living from it through developing the market economy, particularly around tourism. The success of micro-credits in India bears witness to this. However, the lack of strategy and method makes progress difficult. Current projects must involve all groups, particularly women and young people. Apart from the economic effects, what is sought is the inhabitants' pride and their strengthened feeling of identity through heritage and culture.

Dr Mukta Banerjee, Best Practices Foundation, Bangalore, India.
UNESCO/UN-HABITAT Seminar "Historic districts for all", Seville, 7 to 9 May 2008.

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Over the past twenty-five years the revitalization of the historic district of this colonial city has been marked by the dominance of the tertiary sector, housing rehabilitation and the setting up of activities linked to tourism.
With its strategic plan, the municipality is now working on enhancing the urban heritage. Santo Domingo's integrated revitalization plan is an example of management and regulation of the colonial city, with a control plan and a strategic plan both of which call for inter-institutional, decentralized management.

Sina del Rosario, Director, Santo Domingo Urban Planning Department.
UNESCO/UN-HABITAT Seminar "Historic districts for all", Seville, 7 to 9 May 2008.

3. Support multidisciplinary approaches through networking and partnerships

Revitalization is made of complex processes requiring a sound understanding of the different fields and their interaction (environment, social transformations, economy, culture, town planning, heritage, tourism, etc.). Each integrated approach generates a reorganization of work. Smooth functioning of the city's administrative and technical services requires adapting to the actual revitalization work. This reorganization must be accomplished through listening, discussion, conflict resolution and training. Changes are not decreed, they are shared. Respect for transparency is linked to follow-up of action taken and a certain continuity, adjusted step by step with the city's development strategies. Forward planning must allow the city to respond to the needs of the present generation without jeopardizing those of future generations.

Quebec, Canada

"… there must be close ties among the managers, in particular us, the administrators or local officials, and the users – not only residents but workers and property owners as well. Discussions must be continuous. […] Constant monitoring is an essential guarantee for preserving our environment whether natural, heritage or simply urban. Discussion mechanisms must become the norm and not left to individuals to decide, or the political or economic climate."

Serge Viau, Architect and Urban Specialist, Assistant Director-General for Sustainable Development, City of Quebec, October 2007.
General Assembly of the AIMF, Hué, Viet Nam.

4. Create autonomous administrative and technical management structures

Funding for revitalization projects should go hand in hand with autonomous **management structures** (e.g. offices and tasks) and strategic plans that in particular help developing countries to **integrate and coordinate** how these **funds** from international aid agencies should be used, in order to minimize the frittering away of funds and the lack of short-, medium- and long-term overall planning. The most efficient way of proceeding is to begin with what is already there and to be practical.

These structures manage the process once initial decisions have been taken with the back-up of existing technical services. The structures must be flexible, able to work across disciplines and tackle the economic, social, cultural and environmental issues of integrated urban rehabilitation. When the public's interest is respected, **partnerships can be very effective** and make it possible not to rely solely on external aid.

"Viability and economic investments go hand in hand with the social dimension of revitalization. No sustainable revitalization can take place without a holistic approach linking economic vitality, social cohesion and human development … In Havana, an investment office opened. The procedures and general philosophy concerning the future of investments in the old city were considerably simplified thanks to a planning system which helped prepare and implement investments and enhance productivity."

Silvio Mutal, town planner, expert, 2007.

Suggested stages

For a successful outcome, ensure that inhabitants participate at each stage from the very beginning of the project.

Suggested chronological, cross-cutting stages

- Draw up an inventory: identify what is at stake, the district's available resources within the context of the region, analyse the needs of the inhabitants, identify and list the heritage.
- Conduct a strategic, participatory, regional diagnosis: outline the issues clearly and consider possible solutions.
- Draw up and validate a plan of action: follow priorities and plan impact studies.
- Implement the action plan and the projects: acquire human and financial resources. Capacity-building (training, expertise).
- Follow the progress and evaluate continuously: draw lessons for future interventions.
- Communicate: present and clearly explain the options of the revitalization project.

Seville, Spain

The city of Seville has two complementary tools at its disposal. These have been of particular importance for the success of the city's revitalization of its historic districts: the Seville Strategic Plan 2010 and the New Plan for Urban Development. This dual strategy (socio-economic and urban) brought together tradition with modernity, and history with projections for the future. The strategy enabled a framework of action to be drawn up involving local decision-makers from both the public and private sectors. It generated funding and an improvement of living conditions and services while remaining faithful to Seville's image.

The following are key factors for success:

- The combination of strategic planning and urban planning
- An agreement among the different levels of administration, the existence of a legal framework and the clear separation of public administration responsibilities
- Strengthening inhabitants' participation – this can be complex but is extremely productive
- Involvement of the private sector and negotiations with businesses
- Positioning the city at international level through marketing and promotional activities abroad, and strengthening cooperation

José Carlos Cuerda García Junceda, General Coordinator for Planning, Seville.
UNESCO/UN-HABITAT Seminar "Historic districts for all", Seville, 7 to 9 May 2008.

Help needed?

The most productive partnerships are often those that arise from local needs and values. On this basis, capacities can be strengthened, advice proffered and training foreseen. Experts from the UNESCO/UN-HABITAT network can be mobilized to work alongside you according to your needs.

"I am convinced of the importance of the development of city exchanges in the field of culture and know-how, and therefore stress the importance of cooperation such as that between two European cities and the town of Qufu, recognized in China as being the cradle of a civilization thousands of years old. So it was extremely important to gather together experts and specialists to reflect further on the meaning, relevance and significance of our experiment. We also included the city of Schichachaï and its cooperation with Rome and Paris."

Edmond Hervé, Mayor of Rennes, April 2007. Excerpt from a letter addressed to UNESCO. Rennes, partner of the AIMF.

The RehabiMed method for the Mediterranean region

"RehabiMed is proposing an intervention method for local authorities and all actors involved in rehabilitation processes. It facilitates the promotion, planning and management of rehabilitation measures for traditional architecture in its regional context (rural or urban) by providing a range of tools and recommendations to help implement a 'Rehabilitation Plan of Action'. It comes with a manual."

www.rehabimed.net

The SIRCHAL workshops for Latin America

"These workshops are places for discussion with local actors (councillors, technicians, associations, etc.) to develop new working methods, find ways to obtain local funding and involve councillors and key political figures. Ideas and projects, knowledge and experience must be linked together to build a solid base for a balanced revitalization of historic centres and provide the means and the tools for each project to be autonomous."

www.archi.fr/SIRCHAL

Useful links

The following list is not exhaustive but an international expert can help you find the most appropriate network for your city.

1. UNESCO Chairs and international networks

Researchers and academics who are willing to organize training sessions in cooperation with local actors, universities of your region, your town or your city:

Landscape and environment, Montreal, Canada.
www.paysage.umontreal.ca

Urban policies and citizenship, Lyon, France.
www.cge.asso.fr/ecoles/ECOLE100.phtml

Landscape architects, constructive cultures and sustainable development,
Grenoble, France. http://terre.grenoble.archi.fr/

Social and spatial inclusion of migrants: urban policy and practice, Venice, Italy.
www.unesco.org/education

Housing management and socially sustainable development, Mexico D.F., Mexico.
www.catedraui.iteso.mx

Social sustainability in historic districts, Seoul, Republic of Korea.
www.unesco.org/education

2. UN-HABITAT training centres

Seville: City-to-city cooperation.
www.sevilla.org

Republic of Korea: International urban training centre (IUTC), Chuncheon, Gangwon Province.
http://iutc.gwd.go.kr

3. Centres of expertise and regional networks

Mediterranean: **RehabiMed,** www.rehabimed.net

Latin America: **Sirchal,** www.archi.en/SIRCHAL

Africa: **CRATerre – ENSAG,** terre.grenoble.archi.fr

Asia: **College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Tongji, Shanghai,** www.tongji.edu.cn/english/Academics

Shanghai **Tongji Urban Planning & Design Institute (TJUPDI)** www.tjupdi.com

Europe: **Raymond Lemaire Centre,** www.asro.kuleuven.ac.be/rlcc

Architecture and heritage centre: **"The Chaillot School", "Observatory of the architecture of contemporary China",** www.citechaillot.fr

4. International and regional organizations

UNESCO www.unesco.org

UN-HABITAT www.unhabitat.org

IFLA (International Federation of Landscape Architects) www.iflaonline.org
UIA (International Union of Architects) www.uia-architectes.org

AIMF (International Association of French-speaking Mayors) www.aimf.asso.fr

ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners) www.isocarp.org

FMCU (World Federation of United Cities) www.fmcu-uto.org

CLGF (Commonwealth Local Government Forum) www.clgf.org.uk

UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) www.cities-localgovernments.org

UIM (Union of Latin American Municipal Leaders) www.uimunicipalistas.org

Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World www.alliance21.org

**Cities Alliance** www.citiesalliance.org

Eurocities www.eurocities.org

OWHC (Organization of World Heritage Cities) www.ovpm.org

ANVPAH & VSS (National association of cities and countries, art and history, and cities with heritage protected sectors) www.an-patrimoine.org

CAEP / IGAPA (School of Architecture and Protected Spaces, Inspectorate General of Architecture and Heritage) www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/da.htm

DAPA (Directorate of Architecture and Heritage) www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/da.htm
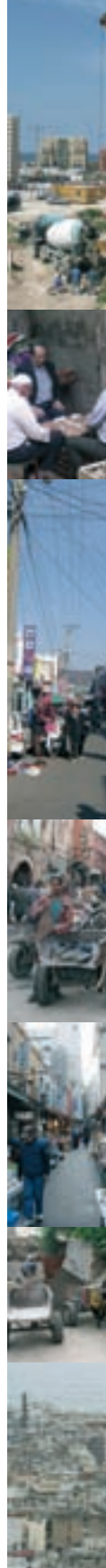
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The UNESCO *Manual for City Professionals*
"Historic districts for all: a social and human
approach for sustainable revitalization"
provides further detailed information and
can be read in conjunction with this brochure