

MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC CITIES/CENTRES (also to that matter all “Built Heritage”)

During many years of work and experience, global and contextual criteria have been defined for application to the comprehensive challenges on programmes for the development and management of historic cities.

Questions like “Why, for what reason, for whom and how” are relevant in these policies and plans/ programmes.

These criteria may be usefully considered in the evaluation of the development/ rehabilitation/ revitalisation of historic cities. They are among others:

- Firm political will and decision-making at the highest national and local levels.
- Establishment of interdisciplinary Master Plans and strategies as a progressive and continuous process and not merely as an end in itself.
- Consideration of urban cultural heritage as a resource leading to, and as part of, economic and social activity.
- Participation of other organisations in the formulation of plans and multi-dimensional programmes with which to meet the challenges of the protection, conservation and development of urban cultural heritage.
- Involvement and participation of a network of ministries and public bodies at national and local level, which may well seek wherever possible the participation of the private sector and NGO's.
- Consideration of the involvement of Ministries of Culture and their decentralised units and/ or those **within local and municipal** governments.
- Decentralisation in an assembly which concentrates various agencies of development and rehabilitation in one Local Organisation.
- Establishment of a Central Executive Agency to operate at the local level in close collaboration either with the municipality, if this is considered appropriate, or associated with a totally independent agency. (This type of organisations already exist in some cities.)

Increasing the powers of the local institutions involved (such as heritage, urban development, housing, social services, urban environment, public services, education, health, social care). This automatically empowers individuals and institutions working in each or all of these fields.

- Viewing housing as an essential element of rehabilitation.
- Avoiding Gentrification by innovative forms of land-use, mixed-use, social-cohesion.
- Establishing further profit making enterprises of various types, in line with current political and economic systems and market economies.
- Establishing Enterprises in the Historical Centre likely to generate high profits which could be invested in its physical and social rehabilitation.
- Establishing joint projects in historical centres between public and private, national and foreign sectors (Public Private Partnerships).
- Preparation of systems, guarantees and responses to standard banking criteria in order to take advantage of potential credit lines from national or international banks.
- The existence of adequate human resources both nationally and locally, for the management of historical centres.
- Availability of qualified technicians and general personnel for renovation, restoration, conservation and rehabilitation of the urban fabric.
- Establishment of various types of companies within the local economy; micro credits; self-help projects and initiatives, specialised NGO's, guilds, etc.

“Existing local agencies have been transformed into sole agencies (as is the unique case of the Havana City Historian Office). Others have been restructured as a result of loans from international banks such as WB/ ADER of Fez in Morocco (which used to belong to the Ministry of the Interior). Others have been created in association with local municipalities to administer bank loans and other entrepreneurial financial undertakings; examples are the Quito Development Company, OTRA in Vilnius (World Bank), EO in ST. Petersburg (World Bank) and executive-administrative units in Brazil (IDB).”

- Establishment of programmes of adaptive re-use of the built heritage comprising elements of different types of use (mixed, individual) for economic and social ends.
- Adaptive re-use in such areas as housing, medical centres, recreational and cultural centres, day centres for children, maternity homes, centres for the elderly, home industries, etc.
- Insertion into the ancient urban fabric of high quality new architecture.
- Ethical application of the principles of conservation as appropriate, rather than wholesale. Well planned recycling of space is almost a guarantee of sustainable “maintenance” and “conservation” for units of urban heritage, provided it has been carefully audited and that those responsible for the works are guided by previous national, municipal and provincial examples.
- Treatment of public spaces in historical centres in a manner appropriate to multiple uses.

- Reconciliation of cultural wealth/ richness with urban poverty.
- A well planned social policy.
- Human development on a local scale.
- Care of vulnerable sectors of society.
- Sustainability of the tourist industry in order to promote national tourism in historical centres, including the design of tour itineraries for locals and visitors (national & foreigners).
- The preparation for and mitigation of natural disasters (Civil Defence, the Municipality, Neighbourhood Associations, Hazard Preparedness).
- Establishment and Coordination of adequate mechanisms of international cooperation for historical cities in the form of technical assistance, international subsidies, training with inter-governmental or bilateral organisations and NGOs and foundations.
- Community participation at all stages.

The city centre is to be a place for living, working, walking, visiting, investing... a place in which heritage is preserved, people are respected, jobs are created, income is generated, squares and buildings are used and re-used adequately.