

“NEW ARCHITECTURE IN OLD SETTINGS”

Historic Cities across the world are undergoing conservation programmes to sustain their historical heritage for the benefit of their inhabitants. They are doing so also responding to the World Heritage Commitment embodied in the UNESCO Conventions and declarations over the last decades of ngo’s etc. More than ever alongside national legislations, integral conservation policies at the national and international level (where they exist), there is a growing interest and participation of local governments in the **Development, Conservation and Management** of Historic Cities/Centers and Urban Compounds in general, including archaeological sites.

It goes without saying that the active participation of local populations in, their awareness for city development are crucial, if at all we seek an integral approach to conservation for it to be **sustainable** and of **functional** use in economic and social development.

A social mix, a multidimensional and integral approach is indispensable to follow suit to the political **will** of local/national governments where it exists or to foster it to address the issues of Conservation to the needs of the local populace and contribute to the phenomena of **urban poverty** where it exists among the cultural physical and non-tangible richness of history and today’s socio-cultural realities as they unfold, not to mention the economic realities and aspirations for the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants.

Over the years a number of adaptive reuse projects have been undertaken in the urban fabric in individual buildings and/or urban settings and compounds, including the use and reuse of public spaces. Some have proved to be **successful** and **durable** sustainable. Cities as such are undergoing vast and rapid changes in the urban settings in all matters related to growth and development.

The urban **Problems** and **Solutions** are in themselves on the agenda of City-Urban Professionals of all walks of life, along with city dwellers, local governments, community-based groups, ngo’s, etc. In Historic Areas/Settings how does one face development?

Personally I believe that development and to that matter underdevelopment could be reconciled with Cultural Richness. What is Development? Real Estate Development? Or Development in the UN sense? Real Estate is not the issue really!

Can Conservation go hand in hand with the preservation of the past and the creation of tomorrow’s heritage, which is nothing but the **creation of today**.

Giving a continuity to the past, architectural manifestation could be achieved by dynamic global integrated Conservation Policies and Programmes, combining those with elements of **new architecture** in the adaptive **reuse of old buildings, and also in actual insertion of new architecture in old settings**.

A social mix is indispensable in Historic Centers/Cities. A diversified economy is of relevance for the sustainability of Historic Cities’ Conservation and Development. An **ARCHITECTURAL (CRITERIA) MIX** of **old** and **new** could prove to be also a way to sustain Heritage Cities/Centers in their road to a Sustainable Human Development, along with their functional conservation for cultural, economic, and basically specially social purposes and mixed uses with economic gains.

Heritage is not static.

New architecture can increase and develop its dynamism.

Some examples of new architecture in old settings have proved to be rewarding in some old cities in the world.

In 2005 the World Heritage Center initiated a worldwide conference in Vienna which led to the **Vienna Memorandum** on "[World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture - Managing the Historic Urban Landscape](#)".

Of relevance is also the regional UNESCO/ WHC sponsored regional conference on this subject in [Olinda, Brazil](#), and [St Petersburg](#). Other regional meetings on the subject of historic urban landscape have been organized and can be found [here](#).