

Walled City of Lahore Project Multi-agency collaboration for urban rehabilitation in Pakistan

Section 1

The modern city of Lahore is a sprawling, rapidly expanding city, growing at the rate of something like 4.5 percent per annum over the past decade. It is constrained in its development on the north and west by the river and the flood plain, so it can only grow southward and a bit to the east. The Walled City, occupied by Turkic Muslims in the early 11th century, is a traditional South Asian city within Lahore's metropolitan area. At present it is a congested, bustling area of some 150,000 residents. It was selected for upgrading because it sheltered the largest single agglomeration of urban poor in Lahore, and suffered from some of the worst environmental conditions caused by inadequate solid-waste management and a breakdown of city services, all while containing several prized world class monuments. There is keen interest throughout the country in arresting this decay and preserving the nation's heritage. However on the fringes of the city, housing is expanding on a self-help basis into a mixture of flood plain, paddy fields and areas that are submerged in sewage. Congestion and an absence of basic services are common everywhere. Consequently when you first go to Lahore and start talking about preserving the Walled City, every politician and administrator looks askance at you, as if you have gone mad: "How can we do that when we have all these other pressing problems?"¹

This case study offers a model of revitalisation through cultural tourism by showing how the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) is working with Government of the Punjab, the German Government and the World Bank to support the regeneration, renewal, and conservation of Lahore's Walled City in an international, multilateral public-private partnership and to unleash the economic potential of Walled City of Lahore through leveraging cultural heritage and sustainable tourism.²

Section 2

The objective is to preserve culture and heritage whilst providing modern living facilities to the residents of the Walled City of Lahore, taken as heritage in its entirety. The project also aspires to promote the tourism and economic potential of the Walled City of Lahore.³

It aims to achieve this by improving the legal framework for governance, urban infrastructure and social services; restoring monuments; identifying sites of cultural worth and where the building is privately owned, finding funding alternatives (micro- financing, government assistance matching grants or loans) for their restoration.⁴

A Bank funded pilot project envisages the creation of a heritage trail, the classical "Shahi Guzargah" leading from Delhi Gate to Lahore Fort (an UNESCO World Heritage site since 1981) and aims to repair the entire route as well as its residential hinterland, identifying buildings of note, implementing a solid waste management system and traffic regulation, and enforcing building regulations.⁵

Section 3

From 1979-1981, the Lahore Urban Development and Traffic Study was undertaken, which recommended a Conservation Plan for the Walled City, the preparation of which was made a condition of the first World Bank credit, and was written by Masood Khan 1986-88.⁶ In 2006 a loan agreement was signed between the Government of Punjab and the World Bank, in which US\$ 7.83 million was diverted from the World Bank credit for the Punjab Urban Development Sector. A Public Private Partnership was signed between the Government of the Punjab and Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in 2007.⁷ An MOU was signed between

AKTC and the World Bank on the 'Urban Regeneration of the Walled City of Lahore' in March 2008, completing the three-way collaboration.

- The World Bank provides financial and technical assistance to help the people of Lahore to help themselves and their environment
- AKTC having a vast experience of conservation and restoration of heritage sites provides technical assistance to the Sustainable Development of Walled City Lahore Project (SDWCLP).⁸
- The Punjab Government committed 504 million Pakistani rupees and is the lead agency for infrastructure improvements.
- The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided 9.3 million Pakistani rupees in 2010 and 13.5 million Pakistani rupees in 2011 for the rehabilitation of 12 multi-storeyed residential buildings located in two residential lanes close to Delhi Gate, along the *Shahi Guzargah*.⁹
- In order to be in a position to sustain the efforts of rehabilitating private buildings, homeowners' contribution was encouraged and owner equity ranges between 5 to 15 percent for specific houses.¹⁰

The partnership began with a pilot project to test, at a reasonable scale, the overall restoration and renovation plan. "This remarkable project should be seen as a catalyst for overall development" said Luis Monreal, General Manager of the AKTC. "We do not intend to pursue a mode of rehabilitation that focuses only on the buildings, but rather we want to help renew a city with the full engagement of the inhabitants and through a process in which improving the quality of life is a central part of the revitalisation process."¹¹

Section 4

On the 1st of July, 2010 the first phase of activities envisaged for the PPP agreement came to an end. Over three years a wide array of planning, design and implementation activities were undertaken including the Mohalla Demonstration Project which aims to test methodologies and demonstrate how quality of life can be significantly improved by altering the built environment in a sensitive manner and in collaboration with the primary stakeholders – the residents.¹² "I have seen people move out and hand over their precious homes to the AKTC" writes journalist Majid Sheikh telling the stories of people whose lives have been turned around by this neighbourhood programme. "This is what we all dream about, for this is where the original inhabitants belong", he concludes.¹³ The project has seen other social benefits including the provision of health sessions and mobilising young people. The Partnership has yielded the new Lahore Walled City Act, 2012, The project can be viewed as a model as last year, in granting approval of the new law, Shahbaz Sharif, the Chief Minister, said that following Lahore's lead, legislation will be undertaken for a comprehensive programme of conservation of cultural heritage in all major cities of the province.¹⁴

Section 5: This section will outline lessons learnt and present recommendations

The lessons learned from this study are:

- That a paradigm shift is required in perception of cultural heritage assets
- Insights into socio-economic aspects were critical for success

- Heritage initiatives need patience but good social mobilisation pays dividends
- Public sector officials may feel challenged by “new” ideas and need canvassing and cajoling¹⁵

One calculation is that if the entire walled city is restored, tourism alone can bring to Lahore over \$3 billion a year.¹⁶ An alternative approach that combines a government’s responsibilities and resources with a co-ordinated institutional effort and investment from local, national, international and bi-lateral agency funds is therefore essential. “If realistic objectives are set, and a plan is made in which both public and private interests are not in conflict and are backed by adequate funding, then, once started, a project will have some hope of completion”, writes urban planner Braz Menezes.¹⁷

Section 6

Masood Khan
Technical Director
Lahore Walled City Project, Aga Khan Trust for Culture/Aga Khan Cultural Service –
Pakistan
Email: masood.khan@akcsp.org.pk
Tel: +92 42 3587 9421-24
www.akdn.org/AKTC

Section 7

¹ Menezes, Braz, Kamil Khan Mumtaz, and Masood Khan. 1983. “Upgrading and Conserving the Walled City of Lahore” In *Adaptive Reuse: Integrating Traditional Areas into the Modern Urban Fabric*. Margaret Bentley Sevcenko, (ed). (Cambridge, Mass. MIT Laboratory of Architecture and Planning), p 69

² Website of the Sustainable Development of the Walled City of Lahore Project (SDWCLP) <http://www.walledcitylahore.gov.pk/frmAllPPages.aspx?pid=3>

³ Ibid

⁴ Website of the Punjab Government <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2500.html>

⁵ Ibid SDWCLP website

⁶ Reza H. Ali, "Urban Conservation in Pakistan: a Case Study of the Walled City of Lahore," *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*, Papers in Progress, vol. 1 (Geneva: Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 1990), p 80.

⁷ Ibid SDWCLP website <http://www.walledcitylahore.gov.pk/frmAllPPages.aspx?pid=2>

⁸ Ibid SDWCLP website <http://www.walledcitylahore.gov.pk/frmAllPPages.aspx?pid=6>

⁹ Website of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs http://www.pakistan.diplo.de/Vertretung/pakistan/en/09_Education_Culture/1_Cultural_Projects_ISLA/Kulturerhalt_Walled_City_Lahore_BiG.html

¹⁰ Aga Khan Trust for Culture, *Walled City of Lahore Project, Status Report*, February, 2011, p 30

¹¹ Website of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture <http://www.akdn.org/Content/110>

¹² Ibid *Walled City of Lahore Project, Status Report*, p 29

¹³ Reported in *Dawn*, 2 January 2011 <http://dawn.com/2011/01/02/the-miracle-that-is-gali-surjan-singh/>

¹⁴ Reported in *Pakistan Today*, 14 March 2011
<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/03/14/city/lahore/punjab-cabinet-approves-walled-city-of-lahore-act-2011/>

¹⁵ Arshad, Shahnaz 2012. "Creating the Enabling Environment in the Walled City of Lahore" in *Supporting Historic Cities Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism* paper to the Urban Forum 2012 p 8
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTURBANDEVELOPMENT/Resources/336387-1330357378410/8468721-1331160207484/Arshad.pdf>

¹⁶ Ibid *Dawn*, 2 January 2011

¹⁷ Menezes, Braz, Kamil Khan Mumtaz, and Masood Khan. 1983. "Upgrading and Conserving the Walled City of Lahore" in *Adaptive Reuse: Integrating Traditional Areas into the Modern Urban Fabric*. Margaret Bentley Sevcenko, (ed). (Cambridge, Mass. MIT Laboratory of Architecture and Planning) p 68

Author profile

Catherine Leonard joined the UK National Trust in 1999, when she was responsible for the Trust's work with overseas heritage groups and managing the European Network of National Heritage Organisations. Catherine now heads the Secretariat of the International National Trust Organisation (INTO) and is the strategic lead for the organisation's international co-ordination, including resource management, programme development, communications and relationships with INTO members, other ngos, policy makers and institutions worldwide. Catherine studied languages and literature at university and has spent time living and working abroad. Prior to joining the National Trust, Catherine worked for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.