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Development Priorities in Informal Areas: Planning, Realization and Local Perceptions

DEVEPER! A few years after the dramatic political changes in Egypt began, triggered by the January 25 and June 30 revolutions, one of the biggest challenges to sustainable urban development in Metropolitan Cairo remains largely unchanged – congestion and urban deterioration are prevalent in its vast informal neighbourhoods, which lack many basic urban services. The situation has become even more critical due to the recent boom of informal building activity, while economic uncertainties threaten the poorest households. Yet political and societal changes have also led to the emergence of a multitude of new local actors beyond those sanctioned by the old regime, radically changing the power-dynamics in neighbourhoods.



This research project questions how the experience of integrated and participatory neighbourhood upgrading, which began under the old regime, can be revisited and reconceptualised as a tool to approach the challenges set by impoverished informal neighbourhoods. How can new possibilities for participation in the new political context be embraced? How can post-revolution civil society mobilisation be utilised as a potential to forge new effective partnerships with

governmental and international development cooperation agencies?

The research aim is to develop a theoretical and practical framework and structure for developing priorities for inhabitants' needs within informal settlements. This framework must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate local physical, social and cultural specificities of each area. While broadening an academic understanding of post-political change dynamics in Cairo's informal settlements context, the output of this project is also intended to help policy and decision makers, as well as community representatives, to forge more effective partnerships in future participatory upgrading projects.

In order to reach these aims, the project relies on empirical analyses of the early stages of planning in upgrading projects when participatory structures are set up and priorities are being discussed, decided upon and eventually developed into concrete improvement measures, in addition to the current on-going practices. In a case study approach of two distinct informal settlements in Cairo (Manshiet Nasser and Istabl Antar), the practice of past and current prioritisation processes for applied urban upgrading projects are examined. This covers grassroots-initiated and externally initiated interventions by the government and international development cooperation.

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Academic partners

Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable design IUSD, Ain Shams University, Cairo

Institutional partners

Ministry of Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements (MURIS)

[Informal Settlements Development Facility \(ISDF\)](#)

[Ministry of International Cooperation](#)

[Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit \(GIZ\) - Participatory Development Program in Urban Areas-Egypt \(PDP\)](#)

Events

Meeting and field trip in Cairo, October 23, 2014

Kick-off meeting November 4, 2014

Introduction to the associated partners and some experts from Cairo.

First meeting and workshop in Cairo February 3 & 4, 2015

Day one: internal meeting between the 2 teams

Day two: Workshop with experts from Cairo

ARCHCAIRO6 - UN HABITAT and Cairo University Conference:

Presentation on November 27, 2014.

"Round-table" meeting between the project consortium in Berlin

September 2015

"Round-table" meeting between the project consortium and external

experts in Cairo, February 2016

A Summer school for students (Masters and PhD) and young professionals.

Training workshops for planning authorities' employees, local initiatives and experts (March-June 2016).