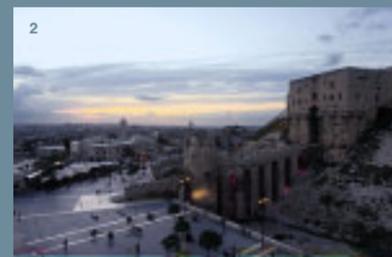


1 Citadel of Aleppo 2 Citadel Perimeter 3 Bab Qinessrine Intervention areas N 200m

FEATURED CASE STUDIES



CITADEL OF ALEPPO



CITADEL PERIMETER



BAB QINESSRINE

Programme Scope / Objectives

In Aleppo, AKTC aims to revitalize the Old City and to bring social and economic benefit to its residents by restoring the Citadel and adding a visitor centre. The conservation and adaptive reuse of a historic *hammam* and government building into a hotel are also involved, as are the upgrading and landscaping of public space around the Citadel perimeter. The creation of a sustainable public park with development initiatives taking place in adjacent neighbourhoods is also part of the programme. This initiative relies on a 'Public-Private Partnership Framework', which is new to Syria.

Preceding pages:

As part of the Aleppo Area Programme, the Perimeter of the Citadel of Aleppo has been upgraded.

Aleppo Area Programme

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has made a long-term commitment to working with the people and Government of Syria to support and contribute to the improvement of prospects for economic, social and cultural development. These efforts are undertaken within a 'Framework for Development Cooperation Agreement' between AKDN and the Government of Syria, which was ratified by the Syrian Parliament in 2002.

AKDN programmes in Syria span six provinces (Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Lattakia, Sweida and Tartous), and serve both rural and urban populations. Priority areas include rural economic development, employment and enterprise development, enhancing the quality of services, strengthening civil society organizations, protecting cultural heritage and developing sustainable tourism.

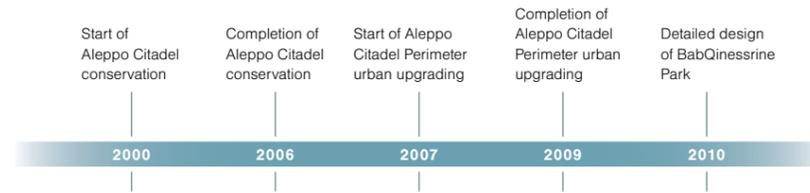
The Aga Khan expressed the interest for AKDN in Syria: "My interest in working in Syria is to take the various lead countries of the *umma* and say, let's start, let's move together, let's revive our cultures so that modernity is not only seen in the terminology of the West, but in the intelligent use of our past."

The Historic Cities Programme (HCP) has been active in Syria since 1999, when the Government of the Republic of Syria approached the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) for assistance in the restoration of the three citadels of Aleppo, Masyaf and Salah al-Din. A partnership agreement was signed with the Syrian General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in 1999. Consistent with the Area Development approach developed by AKTC in Egypt, Pakistan and elsewhere, under the agreement AKTC would also work to improve the area around the Citadels. During the early stage of the Citadel restoration projects, HCP expanded the initial scope of pure conservation work to include the contextual dimensions of the three sites. Building on its work on the Citadel of Aleppo, HCP expanded its mandate to include the planning and landscaping of the Citadel Perimeter, the creation of a new Park, and social development projects in the Old City.

One of the oldest cities in the Middle East, Aleppo developed as a cross-roads between East and West, straddling important trade routes linking the desert to the sea. Until 1930 the city remained more or less confined within its medieval boundaries, limited by its walls and early suburbs, which were surrounded by pistachio, fig and olive groves.

Today, approximately 100,000 people, or five per cent of the population of the city as a whole, live in the historic Old City. A great many monuments are

Phasing 2000 → 2010



Opposite page:
The work done at the Citadel (here, the entrance to the bridge tower) is a key component in the expansion of tourism in Syria.



Above, a mason carries out arch consolidation work on an Ayyubid room at the Citadel.

Below, protective work on wood at Tower 42 is being carried out.

found amidst the historic fabric of the city and it was recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1986.

Within this World Heritage Site lies the Citadel of Aleppo, located at the heart of the Old City. The area around the Citadel used to act as an oversized roundabout, with a constant stream of vehicles cutting off access from and into the historic town and creating a rupture in the urban fabric. In 2006, HCP initiated a planning project on the Perimeter of the Citadel, working in close collaboration with the Old City Directorate and the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ). The scope of the planning project includes major infrastructure improvements, traffic management plans, landscape design and proposals for the reuse of key historic structures.

In 2007, a 'Memorandum of Understanding' was signed between the Governorate of Aleppo and AKTC to create a Park located at the edge of the Old City and to formulate a socio-economic project in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Bab Qinessrine Park will be an important gateway to the Old City. Capitalizing on the efforts already undertaken on and around the Citadel, the Park will attract locals and tourists, thereby providing opportunities for employment and services.

Although Aleppo is the second largest city in Syria and receives over four million tourists every year, proceeds from tourism have not led to a status of relative well-being for the population living around the Citadel. Aleppo's population to the east and south of the Citadel is considered amongst Syria's most marginalized, with income levels per capita that are often below the level of US \$1 per day. The reasons for this are numerous, but foremost amongst them are a general lack of employment opportunities, low education levels due to high drop-out rates and inadequate upkeep of residences.

Three key areas of socio-economic intervention have been established in the two neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to the future Bab Qinessrine Park, with local needs researched through a baseline survey. These initiatives include increasing literacy levels amongst those above fifteen years of age; ensuring education for potential school drop-outs; increasing access to health and promotion, as well as revival of cultural heritage; raising family incomes through vocational training and employment; providing linkages with micro-credit; the improvement of access to and upgrading of open spaces; and the physical improvement of dwellings.

The thrust of these efforts in Aleppo is to enhance the historic urban fabric and stitch together two attractive poles on the northern and southern ends, realizing the potential for these projects to become significant contributors to the economic development of the Old City.

