

Athar Lina (www.atharlina.com) is a participatory conservation initiative that aims to establish modalities of citizen participation in heritage conservation based on an understanding of the monument as a resource not a burden. Athar Lina (The monument is ours) believes that only when cultural heritage is beneficial to the community, will the community become an active partner in its conservation. It sees the conservation decision-making process as an inclusive participatory process between stakeholders and believes that conservation can be a vehicle for development. Athar Lina is run by the Built Environment Collective | Megawra, a twin organisation including an NGO and an architecture firm (www.megawra.com)

Phase 1 of the project (June-Nov 2012; funded by the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute in partnership with the Ministry of Antiquities, included a series of participatory workshops, seminars, and exhibitions targeting representative stakeholders. It produced as output a concept paper for interventions in and around the street's monuments to turn them into a community resource.



Role playing exercises & participatory design workshop (AL1); Craft class in AL2; Shajar al-Durr Dome; Stucco conservation in Shajar al-Durr Dome (AL3)

One recommendation, to target children through an educational heritage awareness campaign resulted in the Athar Lina School for Art and Heritage, in a primary governmental school in the street (Feb – Apr 2013; private donations).

A second recommendation, the conservation of Shajar al-Durr Dome (1250) and rehabilitation of an adjacent building into a community | cultural centre was implemented in collaboration with MoA. (Nov 2013 – Dec 2015; the American Research Centre in Egypt and the Barakat Trust - UK). Funding was also obtained from the US Ambassadors' Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) to conserve the three 12th century domes of Shajar al-Durr zone, the popular neighbourhood shrines of S. Ruq

Another aim to promote tourism and raise awareness of the street's history is being achieved through mapping, street art and branding workshops that feed into an annual tourist promotion event, Spend your Day in Khalifa - with guided tours, exhibitions and performances such as Chirine el- Ansary's Khalifa Inside Out (www.nonretour.com) telling the stories of the street. (Nov 2013; British Council; Dec 2014; UNESCO Egypt; Jan 2016, crowdsourcing and additional funding from aic|finance; October 2016; as part of Egypt Heritage Network during the "People and Heritage series of events" supported by the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute and the Swedish Institute Alexandria).



Chirine el-Ansary storytelling performance; Map of street at northern entry; Khalifa Community Centre (AL3); Domes of Ja'fari & 'Atika (AL4)

This is in addition to the opening of al-Khalifa Community Centre as a collaborative effort between Athar Lina, BEC-Megawra and a committee of al- Khalifa residents. Pilot activities included a medical clinic with nominal fees and a daily summer school and after school program for neighbourhood children teaching heritage, art, crafts, Quran, reading, writing and sports and run by volunteers. This is in addition to Khalifa exchange, a capacity building quid-pro-quo program in which local artisans and designers exchange skills. The centre also hosts activities curated by BEC-Megawra addressing issues of architecture and urbanism. Its program includes city walks, film screenings, lectures and workshops.

Work on the urban level started in 2015 with an urban survey and research project to develop a parallel sustainable system of waste management in collaboration with Cairo University's Faculty of Planning and Takween and in close consultation with MoA and Cairo Governorate. (Jul-Dec 2015; based on research made possible with individual support from IIE). Al-Khalifa Open Spaces Program was then initiated to transform abandoned plots into places for sports and recreation. Darb al-Husr Sports area was designed by Athar Lina and funded and implemented by Cairo Governorate. This is in addition to Al-Khalifa Ground Water School, a research and educational program that aims to find integrated solutions for the problem of rising groundwater and salt (Funded by ARCE and additional funding from the US Embassy in Cairo). Where the first phase was just finished which was a conservation school to investigate groundwater problems in historic areas (November 2016), which had the participation of professors from the universities of Oregon, Cornell, TU Delft, Helwan and Cairo as well as Takween for Integrated Community Development in addition to a group of experts and specialists in the field.