

Preface and acknowledgements

The study presented here is the outcome of a mission on behalf of the Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan to Gilgit-Baltistan in September 2009. The linkages between cultural preservation and the restoration of historical monuments and their impact on regional economies, skill development and tourism were to be analysed by two independent researchers. The holistic approach of all kinds of activities under the umbrella of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) needs to be kept in mind when evaluating the effects of a combination of development measures.

Therefore our gratitude goes to all supporters during the fact-finding mission. AKCSP Pakistan provided us with excellent logistical support and organised the itinerary in a way that during the short span of time well-prepared experts provided the necessary data and information on the spot. Foremost our thanks go to Salman Beg and to Safiullah Beg whose expertise and company in the field proved most valuable. In Altit our queries were answered by a variety of experts including Richard Hughes, Shukrullah Beg and members of WSE. Focus group discussions with members of TMS including Ghulam Murtaza, Dispenser Mumtaz and Mukhi Vilayat Ali proved very valuable. During our visit of Ganesh we had a focus group discussion with members of Ganesh Kalan Heritage and Welfare Society including Sadiq Ali and Nazir Hussain. In Khaplu and Shigar our mission was enriched by meeting Sher Ghazi, Mubashir und Bushra, who organised and prepared our visit of the palace and adjacent buildings followed by a gathering with Khaplu TMS including President Haji M. Iqbal and Joint Secretary Ghulam Hussain (both members of NALA) and Deputy General Secretary M. Raza Bughti. Site visits of impressive rehabilitation projects in the muhalla of Hunduli and Banpi provided valuable insights as well as the inspection of the conserved Khanqa Nurbakhshe Mualla and Astana Syed Mir Muhammad. An evening meeting with members of Shigar TMS was organised by its president Wazir Fida Ali who had prepared the subsequent visit of Abruzzi school project and site of new central mosque in Shigar and accompanied us during the focus group discussion with Shigar TMS. The brief stop at BEDAR premises in Skardu concluded the field visit. After collecting data and evidence it is not surprising at all that to date AKCSP Pakistan has received a dozen UNESCO awards since 2002 for its excellent performance in preserving built heritage.

In addition AKRSP Pakistan was of great help and we received valuable support from Izhar Ali Hunzai, Abdul Malik and Ghulam Amin Beg who shared their vast knowledge of community development in Gilgit-Baltistan with us. From the private tourism sector Naunehal Shah and Amjad Ayub provided much appreciated background information.

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