

Seed Funding Global South 2022 – Project report

Sustainable preservation of urban heritage

- **Chair at TU Berlin:** Chair of Building Archaeology and Heritage Conservation
- **Partner country/countries:** Jordan / Lebanon
- **Partner institutions:** Jordanian University and Lebanese University
- **Addressed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**



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SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Creating human settlements that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable can be a challenging task, especially in historic urban centers where sustainable development must also consider heritage conservation. Attempts at revitalizing city centers and implementing rehabilitation measures from a top-down approach, without community involvement, have resulted in catastrophic consequences in urbanism and the built environment. This detachment from local communities has led to excessive dependence on transitory sectors such as tourism. On a smaller scale, walking through most city centers in the MENA region reveals a puzzling mix of new local materials and concrete jungles, replacing historical materials with new plastics and necessitating air conditioning to adjust the temperature.

To tackle the challenges related to sustainable heritage conservation and architecture, the Chair of Building Archaeology and Heritage Conservation at TU -Berlin, with the support of the seed project, conducted several visits to different countries in the MENA region to collaborate with partners in the Global South. The first visit was to Beirut in July 2022, followed by a more extended visit to Erbil in the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan in northern Iraq and a longer joint workshop in Jordan with colleagues from the Lebanese University.

These visits resulted in a cluster of projects to understand local architecture and indigenous building materials to reuse them in building restoration. The projects also range in scale from smaller projects to more extensive projects targeting local communities to raise awareness and build capacity.

In total, the project cluster spans five projects. The first project is a joint master's thesis supervision between the Lebanese University and the master's program in Building Archaeology and Heritage Conservation that targets the sustainable rehabilitation of a vernacular Beirut house.

The second project focuses on the same geographical scope yet targets an earlier era. It is a joint excursion for students from both the master's programs in Heritage Conservation and Built Archaeology in Germany and Lebanon, taking place in May 2023, partly funded by DAAD-Promos.

The last project applied for is "Recycle a Building," which will take place in Erbil. This project is on a larger scale and includes training units for students in Iraq, Lebanon, and Germany. Part of the project involves rebuilding a partially demolished building using recycled mudbricks from the same building. The project also includes a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building actions.

Besides these projects, the Chair of Building Archaeology and Heritage Conservation at TU - Berlin is developing large-scale projects with the German Jordanian University and the Lebanese University. These upcoming projects will focus on traditional architecture in the southern region of Lebanon and the northern region of Jordan, covering various periods. There is also a possibility of involving other German universities as partners, and the projects may include the exchange of teaching staff between the participating universities.

The objectives of this collaborative project fall within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 11 and 17.