



*Citation for published version:*

Ashley, KS, Osmani, M, Emmitt, S, Mallinson, M & Mallinson, H 2014, 'Impacts of cultural dynamics on conservation of Suakin, Sudan', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers: Engineering Sustainability*, vol. 167, no. 6, pp. 264-278. <https://doi.org/10.1680/esu.14.00018>

*DOI:*

[10.1680/esu.14.00018](https://doi.org/10.1680/esu.14.00018)

*Publication date:*

2014

*Document Version*

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

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**Journal:** Engineering Sustainability

**ISSN:** 1478-4629

## **Impact of cultural dynamics on the conservation of Suakin, Sudan**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to explore the impact of local cultural dynamics on the conservation of the built heritage of Suakin, an abandoned historic port on the Red Sea coast, through a collaborative stakeholder approach. The research undertaken involved participatory action research (PAR). This was conducted through a two-day workshop event that included a series of collaborative activities and involved key representatives of Suakin's stakeholder groups. The workshop activities encompassed the production of a rank ordered list of the key local cultural dynamics impacting on Suakin's conservation; agreement to a number of actions to address the obstacles to its conservation; identification of Suakin's cultural values, collectively determined by the stakeholder participants; confirmation of the value of an integrated conservation approach. The research enabled a shared understanding and responsibility between Suakin's stakeholders, and established a commitment to further action to address the key local cultural dynamics impacting on Suakin's conservation. This collaborative stakeholder participation represented a new step in Suakin's conservation and invited the development of more formal protocols to enable the equal representation and participation of Suakin's stakeholders in future conservation activities and initiatives.

**Keywords:** local cultural dynamics; conservation; built heritage.

### **1. Introduction**

Built cultural heritage, such as monuments and historic urban areas, is regarded as an economic, political and socio-cultural resource, and is invested with various values by those seeking to expand it in different ways (Henderson, 2008; Roders and van Oers, 2011; Orbasli, 2008; Rypkema, 2008). Accordingly, conservation philosophy today advocates a values-based approach that determines the significance of a cultural heritage site, and its subsequent conservation (Orbasli, 2008). The common definition of conservation is that termed by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in their 1999 Burra Charter as 'all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance' (ICOMOS, 2000).

(Jokilehto, 2006; Rössler, 2010; UNESCO, 1972). For built cultural heritage to qualify as World Heritage, it must have 'outstanding universal value' (UNESCO, 1972; Jokilehto, 2006). The concept of 'value' in this context refers to a social association of qualities to things, and that is produced through cultural-social

processes. After qualifying for 'outstanding universal value', the heritage is conserved through processes by which the outstanding universal value of the property is protected, and consideration is given to heritage resources in both global and local contexts (Rössler, 2010).

The need for conservation initiatives to address both global and local contexts is recognised throughout conservation legislation and research. This is demonstrated by a defined shift from a primarily monumental and aesthetic appreciation of heritage as isolated objects from UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972), to 'inhabited historic towns' as described in UNESCO's Operational Guidelines (UNESCO, 2008). Emphasising this shift is the World Heritage Convention's inclusion of 'community' in 2007 as a key strategic objective for implementation; and that was intended to ensure participation of local community stakeholders in the identification, nomination, and protection of their heritage (Rössler, 2010). As Jokilehto (2006) argues, the concept of universal value can be seen in the 'authentic' expression of a specific or rather local culture, in addition to the physical and historical characteristics of a heritage. Supporting this argument is Henderson's (2008) view that feelings of authenticity about heritage sites that are living and working communities emerge as critical to both residents and visitors; and that people are increasingly likely to recognise and reject the 'fake' and contrived. Respectively, heritage values ought to be generated by/within the local culture, and to therefore enable the heritage and subsequent conservation initiatives to become an integral part of the local culture (Jokilehto, 2006; Lamei, 2005).

While the need to include local stakeholders and integrate local values and conditions within conservation initiatives has been recognised throughout previous research (Chapagain, 2008; Chirikure *et al.*, 2010; Daher, 2005), there is little evidence of this effectively translating to conservation practice. Many local stakeholders and conditions are not understood within formal government driven conservation initiatives and policies (Chapagain, 2008; Hill, 2011; Nasser, 2003; Zancheti and Kulikauskas, 2007). The numerous international parties that influence conservation legislation, such as international charters, are argued to result in a conventional universal conservation approach that neglects the local socio-cultural dynamics of a specific site (Chapagain, 2008; Jokilehto, 2011). Consequently, a distinct contrast has emerged between the legislative sense of values, the local sense of values, and what is implemented in conservation practice (Orbasli, 2008). Factors that contribute towards the disparity between legislative and local levels include:

- The rapidly evolving context of historic urban areas which results in local cultural values being in a constant state of flux and needing to be engaged in the conservation process on an on-going basis (Araoz, 2011; Henderson, 2008); yet often prevented by the static nature of internationally determined conservation.
- The low financial and technical capacity of many communities, especially within developing regions, which renders the recognition and conservation of a local heritage to be even more vulnerable to the dominance of international forces (Breen, 2007; Forero, 2006).

To redress the imbalance between legislative and local levels in the conservation of built heritage, a call has been made for a collaborative goal-orientated approach that engages the stakeholders involved (Bott *et al.*, 2011; Fahmi and Sutton, 2010; Zancheti and Hidaka, 2011). This enables stakeholders to enjoy a greater degree of consensus and a sense of ownership over their heritage, and its safeguarding, which is recognised as a key requirement by international conservation policy makers and the donor community (Araoz, 2011; Chirikure *et al.*, 2010). To achieve this approach, stakeholders need to first share their intentions towards the actions that need to take place (Lisitzin, 2005). However, a clear differentiation can be made between those 'shared intentions' derived from individual initiatives (but commonly shared), and those derived from collective actions and commitment (Gilbert, 2009). It can be argued that collectively derived 'shared intentions' underwrite collaborative activity and a shared responsibility towards a common goal (Grosz and Hunsberger, 2006; Perkin, 2010; Tomasello and Carpenter, 2007). To help generate 'shared intentions', effective communication and understanding needs to be facilitated between stakeholders to convince all parties of the merits of working together (Bott *et al.*, 2011; Grimwade and Carter, 2000; Zancheti and Hidaka, 2011). Enabling such mutual exchange between all stakeholders is essential to enable a more relevant bottom-up approach that respects the values and true needs of existing communities and places, rather than top-down confrontational approaches that impose a more restricted set of pre-determined ideas and criteria (Jokilehto, 2011; Lamei, 2005; Rypkema, 2008). Yet as Aas *et al.* (2005) argue, a lack of communicative method is a major challenge that prevents essential understanding, and subsequent collaboration and responsibility amongst conservation stakeholders, and must therefore be investigated further.

This paper details the research undertaken to explore the impact of local cultural dynamics on the conservation of the built heritage of Suakin, an abandoned historic port on the Red Sea coast, through initiating a collaborative stakeholder approach.

## **2. Context**

Suakin was once Sudan's major port and one of the largest ports on the Red Sea, and still provides the gateway between Eastern Africa and Jeddah on the pilgrimage route to Mecca (Figure 1). Yet despite Suakin's historic and cultural significance, the old town is increasingly threatened. Physical deterioration has ensued as the historic coral block buildings were largely abandoned following the opening of Sudan's new Port Sudan, in 1909 (Figure 2). Development pressures were introduced following the opening of Suakin's new Osman Digna Port in 1991 (Salim, 1997) (Figures 3).

**[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]**

**Figure 1. Suakin location plan (author's illustration, 2013).**

**[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]**

**Figure 2. Deterioration of Suakin's historic coral block buildings (author's photo, 2013).**

[INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE]

**Figure 3. Growth of Suakin town following opening of new Suakin port in 1991 (author's annotation of Google Earth image, 2013).**

Numerous studies and proposals for Suakin's conservation and revival have been produced including surveys, a number of formal UNESCO reports, and an application for World Heritage status (Greenlaw, 1995; Hansen, 1973; Lane, 1994; XXXX, 2012). However, many of these proposals have not materialised on the ground. Causing this were a number of financial restrictions, such as limited government resources (Salim, 1997), and difficulty to obtain available funds for conservation initiatives in comparison to Sudan's more immediate needs (Hansen, 1973). Legal restrictions presented the other major challenge to Suakin's conservation, including private ownership of the historic properties preventing government led interventions, and restrictive government legislation preventing privately led interventions. Suakin has thus remained on the World Heritage Tentative List since 1994 without full status being gained (XXXX, 2012). While the majority of previous research focused on the historic and/or physical environment (Greenlaw, 1995; Hansen, 1973; Lane, 1994), two examples did also attempt to address Suakin's conservation in relation to its socio-cultural and economic context.

- The first example is a proposal made by Salim (1997) in the 1990s, which identified the major challenges preventing Suakin's conservation as being finances, ownership, and lack of active involvement of both government and non-government parties. National and local stakeholder committees were formed, and international involvement sought from foreign governments and organisations such as UNESCO. The development of an initial 'Action Plan' and 'Master Plan' for Suakin were suggested. These 'Plans' included: identification of resources; reconstruction and development priorities; resolution of reconstruction and development obstacles; roles and relationships of the stakeholders concerning Suakin's reconstruction and development; reconstruction and development guidelines; and future prospects and viability for the proposal.
- The second attempt was by Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) in 2007, and funded through UNESCO, to address the future of NCAM's 'Suakin Development Plan' (SDP), and the recognition of Suakin's cultural heritage (XXXX, 2007). The SDP was developed by NCAM in 2007 for historic Suakin's conservation and sustainable development of the surrounding new town. A range of Suakin's stakeholders participated in a workshop, and a number of conservation-related parameters identified concerning the future of the SDP and Suakin's cultural heritage, including: Suakin's cultural value; Suakin's conservation and development drivers; ownership as the major obstacle to be addressed; suggested restorations and reconstructions; and the over-arching consensus that the revival of 'life' within Suakin's abandoned historic town was essential to its restoration and reconstruction (XXXX, 2007).

Both Salim's (1997) proposal and NCAM's initiative (XXXX, 2007) identified a number of actions supposedly needed for historic Suakin's reconstruction, and development of the surrounding new town. Both endeavours recognised Suakin's stakeholders, and began to involve them in efforts towards Suakin's conservation. Yet there is no evidence of follow up on actions for both studies. Hence, this research adopted participatory action research to enable Suakin's stakeholders to collectively explore the impact of local cultural dynamics on the conservation of their built heritage, and establish a shared intention and responsibility towards this.

### **3. Method**

To explore the impact of the local cultural dynamics on the conservation of Suakin's built heritage, an ethnographic approach and participatory action research (PAR) was conducted through a two-day workshop event. The workshop involved a series of collaborative activities and discussion between Suakin's stakeholder participants, and was facilitated by the lead author. Day 1 involved the stakeholders' ranking of the local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation, and determining a number of actions to address these. Day 2 involved the stakeholders' identification of Suakin's cultural values, and the plenary session.

#### **3.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)**

This research sought to address the local cultural dynamics impacting on Suakin's conservation through a collaborative stakeholder approach. Yet there was no previous evidence of such an approach, and methods to achieve this, conducted within the specific context of Suakin. Consequently, a review of available research methods was conducted. Methods that involved the stakeholders on an individual basis, such as interviews and questionnaires, did not facilitate the representation and collaborative participation of Suakin's stakeholder groups required for this research. Participatory action research (PAR), an umbrella term for a variety of participatory approaches to action-orientated research (Kindon *et al.*, 2007), did however enable the researcher and participants to work together collectively to examine the issues under investigation (Bergold and Thomas, 2012; Dover, 2008; McIntyre, 2008; Pain *et al.*, 2012; Predota, 2009; Wadsworth, 1998). Through such collaborative activity, PAR had the major advantage over other research methods of generating a shared ownership of the research project by the researcher as well as the participants (Denzin, 2000). This was critical to this research to establish a shared understanding amongst Suakin's conservation stakeholders, and a collective responsibility towards further action. Similar to the local cultural dynamics addressed through this research, previous studies had conducted PAR through participant workshops to address varying stakeholders' perspectives. For example, workshops were used to facilitate instruction, activity, and discussion, and subsequently established effective dialogue between stakeholders to reach a common ground (Borg *et al.*, 2012; Silverman *et al.*, 2008). A major benefit of such an approach is the ability to design a carefully structured and reflexive process; and enable stakeholders to have profound influence on both strategic and delivery levels of the research being conducted (Borg *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, PAR was conducted through workshop activities for this research to enable the inclusion of stakeholders, as both participant researchers and

research subjects, to collaboratively address the local cultural dynamics impacting on Suakin's conservation.

### 3.2 Sampling Frame

Suakin's major stakeholder groups, and representative workshop participants, were identified through discussions with those involved in previous research (XXXX, 2007; Salim, 1997), and selected according to their previous, current, or potential/future roles towards Suakin's conservation (Table 1). The participants were organised into their stakeholder groups 'Government' (G), 'Investors' (I), 'Consultants' (C), and 'End Users' (E), to conduct the workshop activities.

**Table 1. Workshop Stakeholder Groups and Participants**

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	STAKEHOLDER GROUP ROLE (S)	PARTICIPANT CODE	PARTICIPANT POSITION
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal government party: Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) responsible for Suakin as an antiquities site, and the 'Suakin Development Plan'.</li> </ul>	G1	Head of Conservation
		G5	Senior Inspector for Archaeology (Previously Director of NCAM's Suakin Office)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Sea State Government: authorities for state Suakin is located within; partners with and directs/influences Government and foreign investment efforts within Suakin and the surrounding area.</li> </ul>	G2	Ministry Department Manager, Ministry of Culture
		G3	Ministry Manager, Ministry of Tourism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities: part of the State Government; close relationship with and influence over the local community and their support towards conservation and development initiatives.</li> </ul>	G4	Suakin Commissioner Representative
		G6	General Director of Government and Civil Service (and local Beja tribe representative).
<b>INVESTORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Government Ministry of Physical Planning and Development: responsible development (and conservation) initiatives within Suakin and the surrounding area, and direct State funds towards specific developments/initiatives.</li> </ul>	I2	Director and Architect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foreign research parties: have funded, and intend to fund, research efforts that contribute to Suakin's future conservation, and previous restoration of Suakin's historic structures.</li> </ul>	I1	Co-Director and Archaeologist, Suakin Archaeology Project (involving excavation and reconstruction efforts), Cambridge University
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational parties: educational groups regularly visit the site, potentially influencing future investment towards the site's conservation and establishment as an educational resource.</li> </ul>	I6	Student, Red Sea University, (previously conducted research in Suakin, and often visit the site, potential implementation of future research efforts contributing towards Suakin's conservation, and attracting funding for Suakin as an educational resource.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International development parties: current and future funding of new developments within Suakin's historic town and surrounding area that directly impact the historic town as a 'cultural heritage'; previous funding of missions towards Suakin's conservation as a cultural heritage; potential</li> </ul>	I3	Gender Consultant, UNIDO (recently funded new Suakin Fisheries building within the historic site – potential to fund future conservation and development efforts.)

	investment towards Suakin's conservation as a cultural heritage.	I4	Retired World Bank Employee (and current Suakin Mayor), (although not previously involved in Suakin, the World Bank represent a multi-lateral development agency that could provide access to future funding towards Suakin's conservation.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local industries: representing current local context that must be responded to by conservation and development efforts; currently influencing development and growth within the historic town and surrounding area directly impacting the conservation of the historic site; potential to attract and direct funding towards the site's conservation, and new development efforts that would support the site's conservation.</li> </ul>	I5	Fish Landing Site Manager, Suakin Fisheries (recent construction of new Suakin Fisheries building within Suakin's historic town, and direct impact of this on the site's conservation status).
		I7	Port Manager, Suakin Port, Sudan Sea Ports Corporation (currently fund new developments throughout Suakin, potential to fund conservation efforts).
<b>CONSULTANTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National and local consultants: previously involved in direct efforts towards Suakin's conservation; involved in new developments throughout the local area that could potentially impact Suakin's conservation, and/or representing consultants who could become involved with Suakin's conservation.</li> <li>Foreign consultants: previously involved in direct efforts towards Suakin's conservation.</li> </ul>	C2	Conservator Restorer
		C3	Architect Restorer and Urban Planner
		C4	Conservation Architect and Suakin Project Consultant
		C5	Architect and Town Planner
		C1	Architect and Suakin Project Consultant
<b>END USERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local landowners and residents: influencing the potential conservation of privately owned properties within historic Suakin; representing current local context that must be responded to by conservation and development efforts; potential to participate within future conservation efforts improving and/or providing their homes and/or local facilities.</li> </ul>	E1	Local Landowner
		E2	Local Resident and Head of Historic Suakin Town Community Committee
		E3	Representative, Khatmeya Sufi Sect (Local Religious Group)

### 3.3 Workshop Design and Activities

The aim of the workshop was to explore the impact of local cultural dynamics on the conservation of Suakin's built heritage. The major local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation, identified through previous research (Hansen, 1973; Lane, 1994; XXXX, 2007; Salim, 1997), were the focus of the workshop design, and included: 'financial restrictions'; 'ownership'; 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration'; 'political and legislative support'; 'response to the local context'; and 'conservation knowledge and awareness'. The workshop activities were carefully structured and sequenced according to the recurrent stages of action and reflection within participatory action research (PAR) (Pain *et al.*, 2012), to enable the stakeholders to collectively within their groups address the issues under investigation (Figure 4). An exhibition, provided by the lead author throughout the workshop, explained the context of Suakin's historical and cultural significance and proposed conservation (Figure 5). An introductory presentation outlined the workshop background concerning the conservation of Suakin's built heritage. The workshop aim, activities, and expected outcomes were then explained, including: the stakeholders' individual and then collective group ranking of the local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation; collective determination of a number of actions to address these dynamics; collective identification of Suakin's cultural values; and plenary session.



Activity templates were completed by the stakeholder participants individually (Activity 1) and collectively within their stakeholder groups (Activity 1, 2 and 3) (Figure 6).

**[INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE]**

**Figure 4. Typical stages of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Suakin's workshop activities (author's illustration, 2013).**

**[INSERT FIGURE 5 HERE]**

**Figure 5. Exhibition set up throughout workshop event to the context of Suakin's historical and cultural significance and proposed conservation (author's photo, 2013).**

**[INSERT FIGURE 6 HERE]**

**Figure 6. Workshop activity templates being completed collectively by the participants within their stakeholder groups (author's photo, 2013).**

Activity 1 provided a background explanation for each major local cultural dynamic impacting Suakin's conservation. 'Financial restrictions' concerned limited financial resources at government and local levels, the need for a fundraising strategy to address this, and long-term feasibility for potential investment. 'Ownership' involved conflicts between the owners themselves, the government's restriction by the owners, and the owners' restriction by the government, to implement conservation and/or development efforts within historic Suakin. 'Stakeholder inclusion and collaboration' consisted of a lack of collaboration due to divergences between stakeholders' interests and operations, and the need for increased local involvement. 'Political and legislative support' was explained as involving a removal between the interest and understanding of 'top' governmental and policy-making levels, and 'bottom' local levels, and a reliance on 'top down' conservation approaches, policies and strategies towards Suakin's conservation. 'Response to the local context' involved the local community often neglected by, and not included within, conservation efforts. 'Conservation knowledge and awareness' concerned an inadequate awareness of conservation-related issues at both local and decision-making levels. The stakeholders were asked to first individually, and then collectively within their groups, rank these dynamics in order of importance to be addressed, and to carefully consider and discuss their justification for these rankings. Following completion of the Activity 1 templates, a representative from each stakeholder group presented their group results to the rest of the workshop participants.

Activity 2 enabled the stakeholders to collectively within their groups determine a number of actions to address their top three ranked local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation identified during Activity 1. The stakeholders were also asked to include a timescale for the implementation of each of these actions as either imminent, short-term, medium-term, or long-term. Following the completion of the

Activity 2 templates, a representative from each stakeholder group presented their group results to the rest of the workshop participants.

Activity 3 involved a presentation on cultural heritage 'values' and conservation made by a UNESCO World Heritage Centre consultant. This provided a background on the concept of 'cultural values' within conservation, and encouraged the stakeholders to consider what Suakin's cultural values were to them. This consideration of what they were trying to conserve, and why, was intended to develop a sense of collective motivation between the stakeholders towards implementation of the actions proposed during Activity 2. The stakeholders collectively within their groups then identified Suakin's cultural values, and listed/ranked them in order of significance (the most significant being listed first). It was explained to the stakeholders that their cultural values for Suakin could be whatever they wished, and not selected from a prescribed list. Following completion of the Activity 3 templates, a representative from each stakeholder group presented their group results to the rest of the workshop participants.

A plenary session, facilitated by the lead author, invited all workshop participants to raise questions or remarks concerning the activities that had been conducted. Quantitative analysis of the completed activity templates determined average rankings of the local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation by the individual stakeholders, and stakeholder groups. Qualitative analysis of the completed activity templates, and observational notes completed throughout the workshop event, determined similarities and differences between the stakeholders' responses, and over-arching themes between the workshop activities. Tabled summaries of the activity results present the workshop findings throughout the results and analysis section (Tables 2-5).

### **3.4 Methodological Challenges**

A number of challenges were encountered during the organisation and implementation of the workshop event for this research. Although invited, key political and authoritative stakeholders concerning Suakin's conservation, including the Red Sea State Governor and the Sudan UNESCO Ambassador, did not attend the workshop event; due to a lack of availability. Previous examples demonstrate the necessity for this key political support, as numerous proposals for Suakin's conservation have been made; yet were not endorsed as legal measures and part of the political agenda, and were therefore not implemented (XXXX, 2007; Salim, 1997). Therefore, the potential impact of this research was not realised as much as it could have been if all key political and authoritative figures had been present during the workshop event. That said, invited stakeholders who were not able to attend the workshop event, and/or their representatives, stated their keen interest in what had been achieved through this research, and their enthusiasm to participate in future initiatives. Throughout these discussions it was specified that enabling a greater awareness of Suakin's conservation, and longer-term notice of initiatives conducted towards this, would encourage greater participation. Also suggested to encourage attendance of future events, and formal endorsement of outcomes generated, was the recognition by Sudan's government and specialist organisations such as UNESCO of the on-going work towards Suakin's conservation. Working towards

these suggestions, the Sudan Federal Government's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) have since provided their formal recognition of this research. Accordingly, NCAM have agreed to facilitate formal correspondence and invitation to key political and authoritative figures concerning future events associated with this research.

The second major challenge encountered during the organisation and implementation of this research was achieving equal representation, and participation, of Suakin's stakeholder groups within the workshop activities. This was due to an expressed reluctance, by some of Suakin's Government stakeholders, to include local stakeholders in the workshop conducted for this research and future activities. The expressed opinion was that local stakeholders did not and should not have significant input or authority towards Suakin's conservation, as this was considered the responsibility of Government stakeholders. This challenge is reinforced by previous research that demonstrates local communities are often marginalised and unable to participate in, initialise, or continue conservation programmes (Bergold and Thomas, 2012; Hill, 2011). In addition to the capacity of local levels to participate in the conservation process, Chirikure *et al.* (2010) question whether conservation actors from these 'top' governmental and management levels are adequately skilled to effectively engage the local communities. This challenge was overcome to an extent within this research, as efforts by the lead author to facilitate the workshop event ensured local stakeholders were equally represented. This does however question the probability that all Suakin's stakeholder groups, notably local parties, will be equally represented in future conservation initiatives, especially those implemented through government levels.

#### 4. Results and Analysis

The following section presents the findings of the workshop event.

##### 4.1 Activity 1: Ranking of Suakin's Local Cultural Dynamics

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the individual stakeholder (Table 2) and stakeholder group (Table 3) rankings of the local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation completed during Activity 1. The focus of Activity 1 was not to highlight and then analyse the major differences between the stakeholders' responses; it aimed to encourage the stakeholders to reflect on and rank the local cultural dynamics in order of importance, or urgency to be addressed, in preparation for Activity 2.

**Table 2. Activity 1 Individual Stakeholder Rankings of Local Cultural Dynamics Impacting Suakin's Conservation**

LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC	FR	O	SIC	PLS	RLC	CKA
AVERAGE RANKING	1	2	3	4	5	6
G2	3	1	4	5	2	6
G4	5	1	4	2	6	3
G5	1	4	5	2	3	6
G6	1	4	5	2	6	3
I1	1	4	6	2	5	3
I2	1	2	4	6	5	3
I3	1	6	2	5	3	4

I4	2	3	1	5	4	6
I5	2	1	4	3	5	6
I6	2	3	1	5	4	6
C1	5	3	1	6	4	2
C2	1	3	2	4	5	6
C3	4	2	3	5	6	1
C4	2	1	3	6	4	5
C5	4	1	3	2	1	5
E1	5	1	2	3	4	6
E2	4	5	1	3	2	6
E3	1	4	4	2	3	4
E4	4	3	3	6	5	1
E5	2	3	6	5	1	4

**Table 3. Activity 1 Stakeholder Group Rankings of Local Cultural Dynamics Impacting Suakin's Conservation**

LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC	O	FR	SIC	CKA	RLC	PLS
AVERAGE RANKING	1	2	3	4	5	6
GOVERNMENT	4	1/2	5	1/2	6	3
INVESTORS	1	2	4	6	3	5
CONSULTANTS	1	4	2	3	5	6
END USERS	1	2	4	6	3	5

1 + 2: Jointly ranked by the stakeholder group as the joint first and second local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation.

Activity 1 revealed the same average top three local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation generated by both the individual and stakeholder group activities. These top three local cultural dynamics in order of importance, or urgency to be addressed, included: 'ownership' (O); 'financial restrictions' (FR); 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration' (SIC). The individual stakeholder activities revealed an average ranking of a 'political and legislative support' (PLS) as the fourth major dynamic, 'response to the local context' (RLC) as the fifth, and 'conservation knowledge and awareness' (CKA) as the sixth. The stakeholder group activities revealed an average ranking of 'conservation knowledge and awareness' as the fourth major dynamic, 'response to the local context' as the fifth, and 'political and legislative support' as the sixth. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, there were a number of significant contrasts between these average rankings and those by the individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups. These demonstrated the specific interest and agenda of the stakeholders and stakeholder groups. For example: emphasised importance with subsequent first or second ranking of 'financial restrictions' and 'ownership' by the majority of individual Investors, as this immediately impacts the ability to invest in and implement Suakin's conservation and development efforts; Government's group ranking of 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration' lower than the average stakeholder groups' ranking, as Suakin's conservation is generally conducted through Government levels, and often without the inclusion of other stakeholders considered a necessity.

## 4.2 Activity 2: The Impact of Local Cultural Dynamics on Suakin's Conservation

Table 4 illustrates proposed actions and timescales determined by each stakeholder group during Activity 2, to address the top three local cultural dynamics ranked by each stakeholder group during Activity 1.

**Table 4. Activity 2 Stakeholder Group Actions Addressing Local Cultural Dynamics Impacting Suakin's Conservation**

LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC ADDRESSED: OWNERSHIP (O)		
STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ACTION	TIMESCALE
Government	<b>O1.</b> To identify property owners to take responsibility and action.	Imminent
	<b>O2.</b> To enable collaboration between property owners and government to overcome 'stalemate' situation between private ownership and legislative restrictions within the historic site.	Imminent
Investors	<b>O3.</b> (Same as Action O1.)	Imminent
	<b>O4.</b> To provide Government compensation of private land within historic Suakin with larger land areas elsewhere more commercially viable in the short-term. This enables historic Suakin property to be used by Government, other public bodies, or re-sold.	Imminent
Consultants	<b>O5.</b> To generate a new local order to permit land registration within historic Suakin under current owners' name, with options for the family to implement construction/conservation works, to divide the land between the owning family members, or re-sell.	Imminent
End Users	<b>O6.</b> (Same as Action O4.)	Imminent
LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC ADDRESSED: FINANCIAL RESTRICTIONS (FR)		
STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ACTION	TIMESCALE
Government	<b>FR1.</b> To increase awareness of Suakin's conservation to enable investment in conservation initiatives (through various facilities, events, and activities).	Long-term / On-going
Investors	<b>FR2.</b> (Same as Action F1.)	Imminent
	<b>FR3.</b> To provide a contribution from Suakin's port (for example, a toll paid by ships and ferry passengers) towards a conservation fund.	Imminent / Short-term
Consultants	No proposed actions by Consultants.	
End Users	<b>FR4.</b> To enable property owners to implement construction to integrate historic Suakin with local economy, and therefore generate income towards future/on-going conservation initiatives.	Medium-term
LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC ADDRESSED: STAKEHOLDER INCLUSION AND COLLABORATION (SIC)		
STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ACTION	TIMESCALE
Government	No proposed actions by Government.	
Consultants	<b>SIC1.</b> To facilitate consultation with public parties to develop a management plan applicable to all stakeholders, and encouraging their collaboration.	Short-term
	<b>SIC2.</b> To produce a guidance plan for implementation of all conservation/archaeological/development works to ensure they are appropriate and coordinated (enabling collaboration between the stakeholders involved within these initiatives).	Imminent
	<b>SIC3.</b> To develop a Masterplan including zoned areas for various activities (enabling collaboration between the stakeholders involved within these initiatives, and following 'guidance plan' outlined in Action SIC2).	Medium-term
Investors	No proposed actions by Investors.	
End Users	No proposed actions by End Users.	
LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC ADDRESSED: CONSERVATION KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS (CKA)		
STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ACTION	TIMESCALE
Government	No proposed actions by Government.	

Investors	No proposed actions by Investors.	
Consultants	<b>CKA1.</b> To produce a guidance plan for implementation of all conservation/archaeological/development works to ensure they are appropriate and coordinated (providing information to increase awareness amongst stakeholders involved within these initiatives).	Imminent
	<b>CKA2.</b> To increase awareness of Suakin's conservation through various facilities, events, and activities.	Imminent
End Users	No proposed actions by End Users.	
<b>LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC ADDRESSED: RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL CONTEXT (RLC)</b>		
<b>STAKEHOLDER GROUP</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>
Government	No proposed actions by Government.	
Investors	<b>RLC1.</b> To increase awareness of Suakin's conservation, and the local context that must be responded to by conservation initiatives.	Long-term / On-going
	<b>RLC2.</b> To consider Suakin's historic appearance, and on-going socio-cultural activities in future developments.	Long-term / On-going
Consultants	No proposed actions by Consultants.	
End Users	<b>RLC3.</b> (Same as Action RLC2.)	Long-term / On-going
	<b>RLC4.</b> To engage Suakin's whole/surrounding area and all stakeholders in future efforts and potential benefits.	Long-term / On-going
<b>LOCAL CULTURAL DYNAMIC ADDRESSED: POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT (PLS)</b>		
<b>STAKEHOLDER GROUP</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>
Government	<b>PLS1.</b> To enforce legal regulations that enable/specify the roles and responsibilities of conservation actors, ensuring a relationship to reduce the contrast between them.	Medium-Long-term
Investors	No proposed actions by Investors.	
Consultants	No proposed actions by Consultants.	
End Users	No proposed actions by End Users.	

Activity 2 resulted in a total of sixteen actions determined by the stakeholder groups, having deducted a number of overlaps, to address the local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation. Reflecting the average individual stakeholder and stakeholder group rankings during Activity 1, the major focus of the actions determined during Activity 2 addressed 'ownership', 'financial restrictions', and 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration'. Subsequently, 'conservation knowledge and awareness', 'response to the local context', and 'political and legislative support' received comparatively fewer specified actions. Although individually addressed, the relativity between the local cultural dynamics was revealed throughout the actions suggested to address them, such as: increasing stakeholders' awareness suggested to address 'financial restrictions', 'conservation knowledge and awareness', and 'response to the local context'; and legislative and formal planning measures suggested to address 'ownership', 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration', 'conservation knowledge and awareness', and 'political and legislative support'. Reinforcing these recurrent themes suggesting the relative impact between the local cultural were a number of direct statements by the stakeholders. For example: the suggestion that 'financial restrictions' would be resolved as a result of first addressing the other local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation; and a lack of 'conservation knowledge and awareness' explained as a major contributing factor to inadequate 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration', therefore actions addressing 'conservation knowledge and awareness' also addressed 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration'.

### 4.3 Activity 3: Identifying Suakin's Cultural Values

Table 5 illustrates the stakeholder groups' ranking in order of importance or significance (the most significant being listed first) of Suakin's cultural values determined during Activity 3. This followed a brief presentation made on cultural heritage 'values' and conservation by a UNESCO World Heritage Centre consultant (see previous 'Method'). The results illustrated in the following table have been categorised into the two major themes of 'tangible' and 'intangible', and within these a number of sub-themes.

**Table 5. Stakeholder Group Perspectives on Suakin's Cultural Values**

SUAKIN'S CULTURAL VALUES	STAKEHOLDER GROUPS' RANKED RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL VALUES			
	GOVERNMENT	INVESTORS	CONSULTANTS	END USERS
<b>TANGIBLE VALUES</b>				
• <b>Architecture/Built Form</b> (Style, materials, methods.)	1	NR	1	1
• <b>Physical Environment</b> (Natural lagoon port.)	4	NR	2	NR
<b>INTANGIBLE VALUES</b>				
• <b>Historical Significance</b> (Trade and pilgrimage.)	2	1	3	4
• <b>Living Culture</b> (Tribal influences, music, folk narratives, dance, clothes, food.)	3	3	4	3
• <b>Suakin's Cultural Mix</b> (Suakin representing a hub of many cultures (such as Islamic/Arab, African, and European cultures through Suakin's trade and pilgrimage) co-existing/interacting.)	5	2	5	2

NR: No recognition of cultural value by stakeholder group.

The stakeholder group presentations at the end of Activity 3, and as shown in Table 5, revealed an initial general focus on Suakin's tangible values. Suakin's intangible values also received the highest ranking by all of the stakeholder groups apart from Investors, who recognised only Suakin's tangible values. Yet intangible values, despite their lower ranking compared to tangible values, occupied the majority of the discussion during Activity 3. This was especially apparent amongst End Users, and demonstrated the direct link these values had to their everyday lives and subsequent relationship with Suakin and its conservation. Reinforcing this major focus on intangible values were the common values shared by all stakeholder groups as 'historical significance', and 'living culture', both intangible.

#### **4.4 Plenary Session**

During the concluding plenary session there were no further questions or prevailing remarks raised concerning the previous workshop activities. The discussion focussed rather on how to progress towards implementation of the suggested actions to address Suakin's conservation. Suggestions were for these actions to be developed into a formal management system for both Suakin's conservation and development through formal legislative and planning measures, on-going consultation, and collaborative efforts between stakeholders. Also suggested was this management system be submitted as a key document within Suakin's application

for World Heritage status. To ensure effective implementation of the suggested actions and formal recognition of the intended management system, many participants emphasised the importance of having key Government officials present at future events.

## **5. Discussion**

The workshop activities enabled the stakeholders to individually, and collectively within their stakeholder groups, rank in order of significance the major local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation. The collective result of these activities revealed 'financial restrictions' and 'ownership' as the first two major local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation, and 'stakeholder inclusion and collaboration' as the third. 'Conservation knowledge and awareness', 'response to the local context', and political and legislative support' received varied rankings by the individual stakeholder and stakeholder group activities as the fourth, fifth and sixth local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation. A total of sixteen actions and corresponding timescales to address these dynamics were then determined within the stakeholder groups, each group addressing their top three ranked dynamics. The relative impact between the local cultural dynamics and determined actions to address them was emphasised throughout the activity results. A major focus on the local living culture, and the need for Suakin's conservation to respond to this, was revealed throughout the actions addressing the local cultural dynamics, and the identification of Suakin's cultural values within the stakeholder groups.

Previous research has already established the impact of a number of dynamics explored during this research on Suakin's conservation, such as 'ownership' (Lane, 1994; Salim, 1997) and 'financial restrictions' (Salim, 1997; Hansen, 1973). Yet the structure and implementation of the workshop activities conducted for this research enabled a shared understanding between the stakeholders, and included the stakeholders themselves as an integral part of the research. This resulted in the stakeholders' collective responsibility to achieve those actions specified throughout the workshop activities, expressed during the workshop's plenary session towards Suakin's conservation, and recurrent emphasis throughout the workshop activities to: enable stakeholders to contribute towards Suakin's conservation through increased awareness and participation; implementation of suggested actions through formal legislative and planning measures. These findings reinforce the acknowledged need throughout previous research to address the living cultural context of conservation (Chapagain, 2008; Zancheti and Kulikauskas, 2007), and a collaborative stakeholder approach (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Zancheti and Hidaka, 2011). Yet, for which there is little evidence of being successfully achieved within the specific context of Suakin. Previous efforts have attempted to join Suakin's stakeholders together, including the formation of stakeholder committees (Salim, 1997), and a workshop event concerning the 'Suakin Development Plan' (XXXX, 2007). Yet neither of these attempts included the stakeholders within the design of the research being conducted, or future intentions resulting from the data obtained. Thus, the outcomes generated through previous efforts lacked a collective stakeholder understanding and input towards Suakin's conservation, which is required to generate shared goals and



a collective responsibility towards future action (Grosz and Hunsberger, 2006; Perkin, 2010). An important factor addressed in this research.

## **6. Conclusion**

This research aimed to explore the impact of local cultural dynamics on the conservation of the built heritage of Suakin through a collaborative stakeholder approach. The workshop activities resulted in the ranking of local cultural dynamics impacting Suakin's conservation, a number of actions to address these, and identification of Suakin's cultural values, collectively determined by the stakeholder participants. The workshop activities began to generate the communicative structure necessary to encourage Suakin's stakeholders to work together. This enabled a collaborative process between the stakeholders through a shared understanding and collective commitment towards further action. There is no evidence of this inclusion and collaborative participation between Suakin's stakeholders previously achieved, and that is demonstrated throughout this research as essential to progress Suakin's conservation effectively. As warranted by the stakeholders, their determined actions need to be implemented through formal legislative and planning measures, working towards a formal management system for Suakin's conservation. These efforts should be facilitated through a protocol that addresses Suakin's local culture, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach with equal representation and participation of Suakin's stakeholders throughout future initiatives.

## **Acknowledgements**

This research was funded by the EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council); the workshop event conducted for this research enabled through financial support by the UNESCO Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, and conducted in collaboration with Mallinson Architects and Engineers, and Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, towards the future registration of Suakin as a World Heritage Site. The authors would like to acknowledge the support the local Suakin community, and all the participating Suakin stakeholders who made this research possible.

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