



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

The “Blue Mosque” of Cairo restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture



Cairo, Egypt, 2 May 2015 – Restoration of the 14th century Amir Aqsunqur “Blue Mosque” in Al-Darb al-Ahmar has been completed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) as part of the larger Al-Darb al-Ahmar Urban Regeneration Programme.

The Minister of Antiquities, Mamdouh El Damaty, and the Governor of Cairo, Galal Said, joined His Highness the Aga Khan in marking the occasion at the Mosque.

The “Blue Mosque” restoration, begun in 2009, is part of the broad revitalisation project undertaken in Islamic Cairo by AKTC. The Mosque has been closed since 1992 due to damage it had suffered from an earthquake in the same year.

The restoration, executed by teams of 60 to 80 craftsmen and conservators, included the removal of temporary structural supports installed following the 1992 earthquake and the installation of seismic retrofit measures, particularly in the minaret base, that will reinforce the durability of the building in the event of an earthquake. Other restoration efforts included the conservation of delicate marble panels and Iznik ceramic tiles and large-scale roofing and façade conservation.

In restoring the Mosque, AKTC adopted a strategy that leverages culture to alleviate poverty. As in many of the locations in which it works, it worked to create a critical mass of activities that not only focuses on the restoration of monuments, but the creation of public spaces, water and sanitation improvements, education and health initiatives, and microfinance.

The World Monuments Fund and the Selz Foundation were also key supporters of the restoration of the Amir Aqsunqur Mosque.

Overall, the broader urban revitalisation project in Al-Darb al-Ahmar includes:

- Creation of the 30-hectare, 74-acre Azhar Park
- 7 major historic monuments conserved;
- 1 archaeological site excavated;
- 175 local craftsmen trained;
- 1040 people employed;
- 121 houses rehabilitated/constructed
- 5,500m² of streets paved
- 3 public open spaces rehabilitated or created
- 3.1km of underground sewage systems installed
- 2,071 locals completed technical and vocational education training
- 1,629 individuals assisted with long-term employment outside the project
- 259,000 workdays for skilled/unskilled labour generated.

For more information, please see: <http://www.akdn.org/hcp/egypt.asp>

Press contact:

Sam Pickens
Aga Khan Development Network
E-mail: info@akdn.org
Website: www.akdn.org

Read online at: <http://www.akdn.org/press-release/blue-mosque-cairo-restored-aga-khan-trust-culture>