



# Re-visiting the Park: Reviving the “Cultural Park for Children” in Sayyeda Zeinab in the shadows of Social Sustainability

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## ARTICLE INFO:

### Article history:

Received 04 February 2018

Accepted 08 May 2018

Available online 12 October 2018

### Keywords:

Child Park;

Community

Participation;

Social Sustainability.

## ABSTRACT

*This paper aims to question the level of success of one of Egypt's contemporary architectural milestones which is the Aga-Khan Award winning project of the Child Park in Sayyeda Zeinab - designed by the Egyptian architect Abdel-Halim Ibrahim; from a community participation perspective. Stemming from the fact that the level of successful community participation in architecture and urban design projects affects the sustainability of the added value, this paper tackles the current process of operation of the Park and the adjacent pedestrian street, as complimentary aspects of a community participatory process, and evaluates the social sustainability of the project as well. The study sheds light on the operation of the park after twenty eight years of the initiation of the project, it explores its functional and social role in the district of Sayyeda, located at the center of Cairo city. However, the project has to be revised and analysed from a critical perspective to evaluate the degree of its success in affecting the local community, and the level to which it contributes to the approach of local community participation. In order to achieve this end, the paper adopts a two-fold methodology. The first is a literature review of the initial ceremonial participatory process of building the Park and the initial role intended by the architect whether related to the park itself or to the adjacent Abu-ElDahab Street. The second methodology is a qualitative analysis of the current state of the park and adjacent street, based on site investigations, behavioural mapping of the current status, analysis of the roles of the beneficiaries, interviews conducted with different stakeholders about the present challenges of the role of the park in the district. Based on those two main research approaches, the paper concludes with a framework and several guidelines to enhance the social sustenance of the place through rephrasing the park's role in relation to the changing needs of the community.*

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN AFFAIRS (2019), 3(2), 84-94.

[Doi:10.25034/ijcua.2018.4704](https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2018.4704)

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## 1. Introduction

Reviews of many renowned projects reveal that the level of successful community participation in architecture and urban design projects affects the sustainability of the added value of such projects in their contexts. This paper aims to question the level of success of a contemporary architectural milestone in Egypt; namely the Aga-Khan Award winning project of the Child

Park in Sayyeda Zeinab - designed by the Egyptian architect Abdel-Halim Ibrahim; from a community participation perspective. The

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