

## Spatial Transformation in the Context of Refunctioning and Sustainability; Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel

### *Yeniden İşlevlendirme ve Sürdürülebilirlik Bağlamında Mekânsal Dönüşümler; Lefkoşa Eagle Eye Butik Otel*

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**Abstract:** Currently changes linked to socio-cultural and economic factors and pandemics experienced by society have changed people's needs. Historical buildings reflect the urban and architectural style of the period in which they were constructed, along with the economic, social and cultural accumulation of societies. Preserving buildings, giving them a new function and saving them for future generations, is important in terms of socio-cultural sustainability. The Walled City of Nicosia is a place with dense historical buildings. Many historical residences located in this area are currently in use after refunctioning. With the combination of one or several of these buildings and/or new additions, they have begun to contribute to urban life by transformation for new functions like boutiques, bar, restaurants, café, etc. Linked to this, the study included the refunctioned Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique hotel located at No. 16 Celaliye Street. The aim of the study was to evaluate and analyse the spatial transformations occurring with the new function by considering the architectural, structural and spatial formation of this refunctioned historical building. As a result of spatial transformation analysis, the preservation of the Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel, socio-cultural sustainability, adaptation to the new function and contributions to the urban fabric were revealed. Finally, recommendations are developed for more efficient use in terms of both preservation and sustainability of new functional changes that have been, or will be, implemented.

**Keywords:** Refunctioning, Socio-Cultural Sustainability, Preservation, Cultural Heritage, Nicosia-Walled City

**Öz:** Günümüzde toplumların yaşamış olduğu sosyo-kültürel, ekonomik ve salgınlara bağlı değişimler, insanların ihtiyaçlarını değiştirmektedir. Tarihi yapılar toplumların ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel birikimleri ile inşa edildikleri dönemin kentsel ve mimari üslubunu yansıtmaktadır. Yapıların korunarak, yeni bir işlevle kullanılması ve gelecek nesillere aktarılması sosyo-kültürel sürdürülebilirlik açısından önemlidir. Lefkoşa-Suriçi kenti tarihi yapıların yoğun olarak bulunduğu alanlardan biridir. Bu alan içerisinde konumlanan birçok tarihi konut yapısı yeniden işlevlendirilerek kullanılmaktadır. Bu yapıların bir veya birkaçı bir araya getirilerek ve/veya yapılan yeni eklemelerle; butik otel, restoran, kafe... vb. gibi yeni işlevlere dönüşerek kentsel yaşama katılmaya başlamıştır. Buna bağlı olarak yeniden işlevlendirilerek kullanılan, No: 16 Celaliye Sokak'ta bulunan Nicosia Eagle Eye Butik otel çalışma kapsamına alınmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı yeniden işlevlendirilen tarihi bir konutun mimari, yapısal ve mekânsal özellikleri ele alınarak yeni işlevinde yapılan mekânsal dönüşümlerin (yerinde) analiz edilerek değerlendirilmesidir. Mekânsal dönüşüm analizleri sonucunda Nicosia Eagle Eye Butik Otel'in korunma, sosyo-kültürel sürdürülebilirlik, yeni işleve adaptasyon ve kent dokusuna olan katkıları ortaya çıkartılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, yapılmış ve yapılacak olan yeni işlev değişikliklerinin hem koruma hem de sürdürülebilirlik açısından daha verimli kullanılabilmesi için öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Yeniden İşlevlendirme, Sosyo-Kültürel Sürdürülebilirlik, Koruma, Kültürel Miras, Lefkoşa-Suriçi

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## Introduction

Settlements containing historical buildings, an important part of our cultural heritage, experience a range of difficulties in terms of not responding to the current conditions linked to changing socioeconomic, public building character, etc. (Göçer 2003). Transformation of these buildings is unavoidable in the face of these difficulties. Conceptually, change is the formation of an observable difference in terms of qualities and quantities of the elements of a whole, transformation from one form to another, alteration, replacing one thing with another and innovation (Doğan 1994). The reflection of the transformation concept in architectural building stock is observed as attempts to revive buildings inadequate in terms of space and comfort (Kaya & Aydın 2020, 2) that are functionally old, abandoned to their fate, destroyed or have not yet completed their structural life by using them for a new function. In this context, one of the most frequently chosen preservation methods in the present day of the refunctioning method begins with the adaptation of historical buildings to the change process. Refunctioning, as stated by Ahunbay (2011), is the adaptation to a different function of historical buildings with function destroyed due to changing lifestyles over time and linked desires or the updating of historical buildings that are below standards due to continuing function but old standards of comfort (Ahunbay 2011); in other words, renovation. The renovation technique involves exposing monumental building and civil architecture works to a process of redesign (Kuban 2000). For this reason, the historical importance, architectural character, identity and use until the time of refunctioning for the historical building are important points that require attention during the refunctioning stage (Atalan 2020). With the aim of preserving, sustaining and repairing these buildings, the 3rd item of the Venice Charter states that the aim of preserving and repairing cultural assets is to preserve them as a historical document, as much as they are works of art. The 4th item states that the basic attitude in preserving cultural assets is to ensure permanence and continuity. The 5th items states that preservation of monuments can always be facilitated by using them for any useful social purpose. This type of use may be desired; however, the plan or decorations of the building should not be changed for this purpose. Within these boundaries, changes required for the new function may be designed and this may be permitted. As understood from these items, cultural assets may be refunctioned in line with current needs, but this should be performed in a way respectful to, and without harming, the existing artistic, original, and historical features (ICOMOS 1964). In this context, historical buildings without function may gain a new use with adaptation. Conversion for reuse of historical buildings is a policy followed for sustainable development in many locations (Atlanta, United States of America, Canada, Hong Kong, North Africa, Australia) (Langston *et al.* 2008). Completion of conversions in terms of sustainability may provide many benefits in cultural, economic and social terms to society due to the reuse of existing resources (Kuleli, 1998). Linked to this, refunctioning/adaptation approaches are among the most commonly chosen preservation approaches in terms of sustainability in the present day. The sustainability concept defends the need to define buildings with ecologic, economic, social and cultural dimensions for the qualities of the interaction between them, complementing each other and their identities (Çelebi *et al.* 2007, 2 & Kohler 1999). In this context, sustainability may be investigated by separating into different sections like ecological sustainability, economic sustainability, and social and cultural sustainability (Belgin Dikmen & Toruk 2017). Within the scope of the study, the focus is on social and cultural sustainability. Social sustainability focuses on the continuity of traditional social spaces linked to social conditions like feeling of belonging, trust, participation, cultural identity and quality of life (Ročak *et al.* 2016). Moving from this point, at the point of ensuring sustainability of historical buildings cultural assets may be refunctioned in terms of

preserving social and cultural values and continuity of cultural identity.

Cyprus is an island that has housed many different civilizations from past to present. On the island in general and in the capital Nicosia, it is possible to see the rich historical and cultural heritage carrying traces from the Byzantine (395–1191), Lusignan (1192–1489), Venetian (1489–1571), Ottoman (1571–1878) and English (1878–1960) periods. Within the scope of the study, the focus is on the example of the refunctioned Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel, a second degree listed building located in the Suriçi (Walled City) district of Nicosia within the historical texture. The building has a history including 700-year old Byzantine roots as revealed by analysis by historians (Nicosia Eagle Eye 2021, Güvenir Beyatlı, 2021). The refunctioning of the building began in 2017 and functional conversion occurred with the addition of a new section in April 2019 (Güvenir Beyatlı, 2021) and it began use as a boutique hotel. As a result of spatial transformation analysis, the contributions to preservation of the building, sociocultural sustainability and urban texture were revealed and recommendations were developed for functional changes to be more efficient in terms of sustainability and preservation.

## Material and Method

The main material considered within the scope of the study is the Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel located in the walled city of Nicosia district with functional transformation completed and currently operating with its new function. The repair and reorganization processes of the chosen historical building were investigated with the aim of identifying the physical and functional transformation. In this context, relief studies related to the building, history, current photographs showing the repair process, and the renovation project comprise the basic material in the research. Verbal interviews were held with the owner, operator and designer of the space, Master Architect Birgül Güvenir Beyatlı, a digital archive (photographs) was created by visiting the space and the spatial transformation was analyzed. Within the scope of the research, spatial transformation was investigated with the visual and physical analysis method on the basic material for the old and new functional use of the building.

## Research Findings

### Description of Building

The Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel building is located at No: 16 Celaliye Street in the walled city of Nicosia district, the capital of Northern Cyprus (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Location of the Building (Nicosia Eagle Eye, No:16 Celaliye Street, Walled City of Nicosia)

The 700-year old building is a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree listed building that has remained sturdy until the present day. The building was not used after 1974 and was in a very poor state. The building had been abandoned to its fate among the piles of rubbish (Nicosia Eagle Eye 2021; Güvenir Beyatlı 2021). When the history of Nicosia is examined, the 13th century was described as one of the most important period of Nicosia history. Guy de Lusignan bought the island and founded the Kingdom of Cyprus in the middle ages. Some of the historical buildings seen in the present day began to be constructed in this period, with building continuing during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Ottoman period and the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the English period. The iron grilles used in the building along with the high and small windows clearly indicate the need for security or protection. For this reason, when the decorations found on the building and different buildings in the district are examined, they carry traces of the Byzantine period, while they were later dated definitively to the Lusignan period and Genovese and Pisan residents lived here. Undoubtedly, as stated in the history of this building, Venetian and Ottoman touches were added. The building is thought to possibly have been a merchant warehouse/residence or even a church or monastery (Nicosia Eagle Eye 2021; Güvenir Beyatlı 2021).

The location of the street and entrance to the building after completion of renovation in 2019 is shown in Figure 2. With the aim of reviving the architecture and historical texture in Nicosia, the building was refunctioned and opened as a boutique hotel.

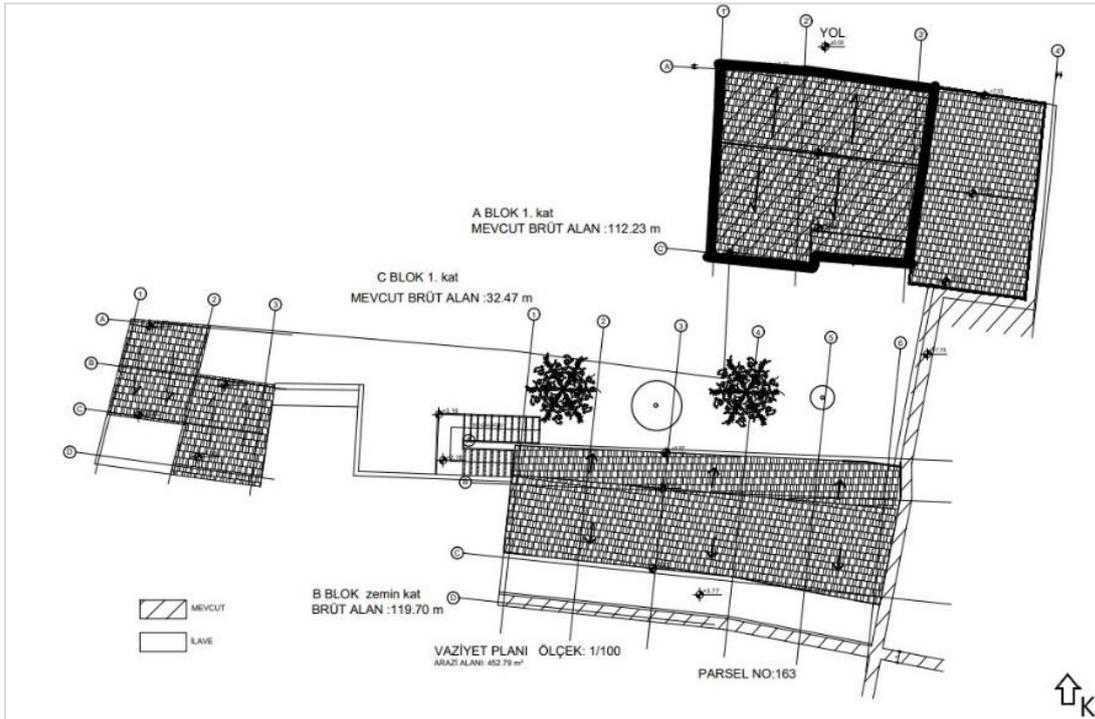


**Fig. 2.** (a) and (b) street facade of the building (c) and (d) main entrance of the building

### **Architectural Characters of the Building**

The present building, registered as group II building according to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus “Supreme Council of Immovable Antiquities and Monuments” comprises a ground floor (entry floor) and 1st floor. As seen in the site plan of the building in Figure 3, the building located in the front is original and the rear parts are sections added in accordance with the original. Within the scope of the study, the focus was on the original part of the building. The ground floor of the building was preserved as it was originally. On the first floor, the room located in the east end was added linked to the character of the original building, while the remaining parts were preserved.

The main entry door to the building opens directly onto Celaliye Street. The two-wing wooden entry door with wrought iron details was placed in the building by considering the original period. This door opens into the ground floor entry hall. The original pictures of the building can be seen in Figure 4.



**Fig. 3.** Site Plan of the Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel [6]



**Fig. 4.** (a) street facade of the building, (b), (c) and (d) courtyard of the building in 2016 (Güvenir Beyatlı, 2021)

The original building contains a total of eight rooms on the ground and first floors. The ground floor has four rooms and the first floor has four rooms.

### Material and Technical Features of the Building

The load-bearing system for the original portion of the Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel comprises yellow stone, adobe and a wooden carcass. The original ceilings in the building remained in place to the present day in places. The original rafters in the ceiling used rusty wooden overlays. The floor of the building was laid with ceramic tiles reflecting the original period. The first floor is reached from the outside by a wooden staircase with classic wooden bannisters through an arched corridor. The roof of the building is a hipped roof, covered with Marseille-type clay tiles. Iron grilles were used on the windows. The floor of the building is massive wood. Passage within the building and to the balconies is through arches with wide openings (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5.** (a) balconies of the building, (b), (c) and (d) interior of the building in 2016 (Güvenir Beyatlı, 2021)

### Renovation of the Building

The building was purchased by Master Architect Birgül Güvenir Beyatlı in 2016 and project work began. Revival of the Degree II listed building by refunctioning as a boutique hotel in accordance with the original building was approved by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Supreme Council of Immovable Antiquities and Monuments. According to decision, Degree II buildings must be preserved in accordance with their original form with priority given to the textural value. It is necessary to renovate in a way that does not disrupt the texture of the façade, especially. In this context, it is necessary to preserve the original building, add any additions so they are compatible with the original, and maintenance and repair must be completed according to these criteria. All additions were renovated with permission from the preserved buildings council. During the renovation of the building, the originality of the building was researched by historians and original wall decorations and all historical details were investigated and preserved. The building was refunctioned as a boutique hotel in 2019.



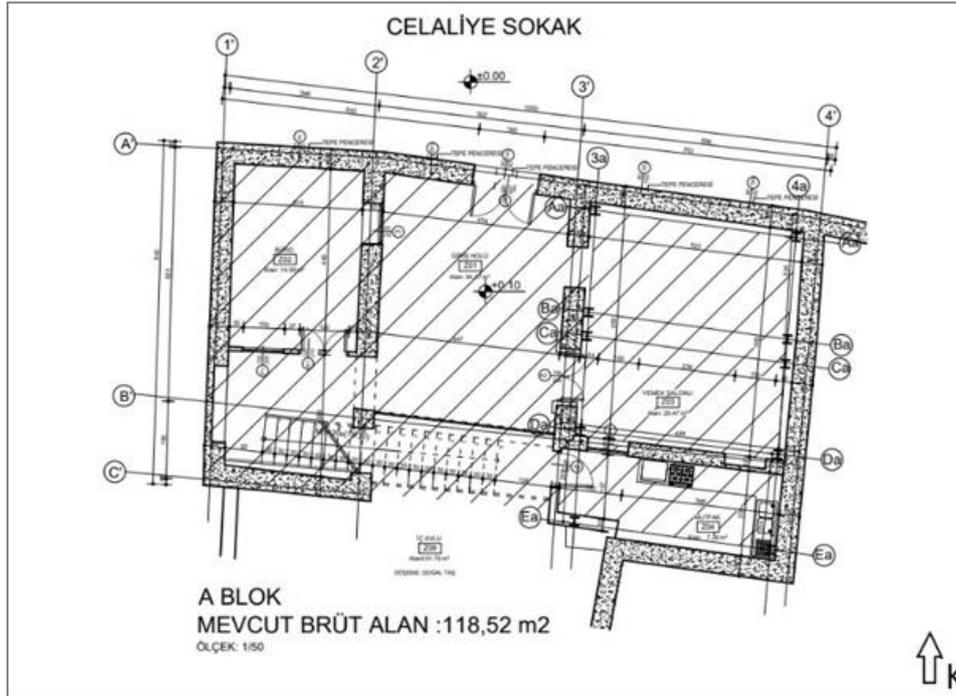
**Fig. 6.** (a) street facade of the building (b) and (c) main entrance of the building, (d) courtyard of the building after renovation

### Spatial Analysis

The ground floor plan comprises a total of four rooms organized as an entry hall, section used as an office, dining room and kitchen.

The ceilings of all rooms on the ground floor had their character preserved. The original wooden ceilings were strengthened and repaired using original rafters. Openings present in the walls were preserved in their original form. There are rooms located to the east and west of the main entry. The rear section of the room located to the east of the main entry on the ground

floor currently contains an area used as a kitchen (Fig. 7). The rear section of the room located to the west of the main entry passes into the stairway hall. The main entry opens to a space considered to be a transit area with a two-wing door. This space allows passage to the dining room, kitchen and courtyard (Fig.8).



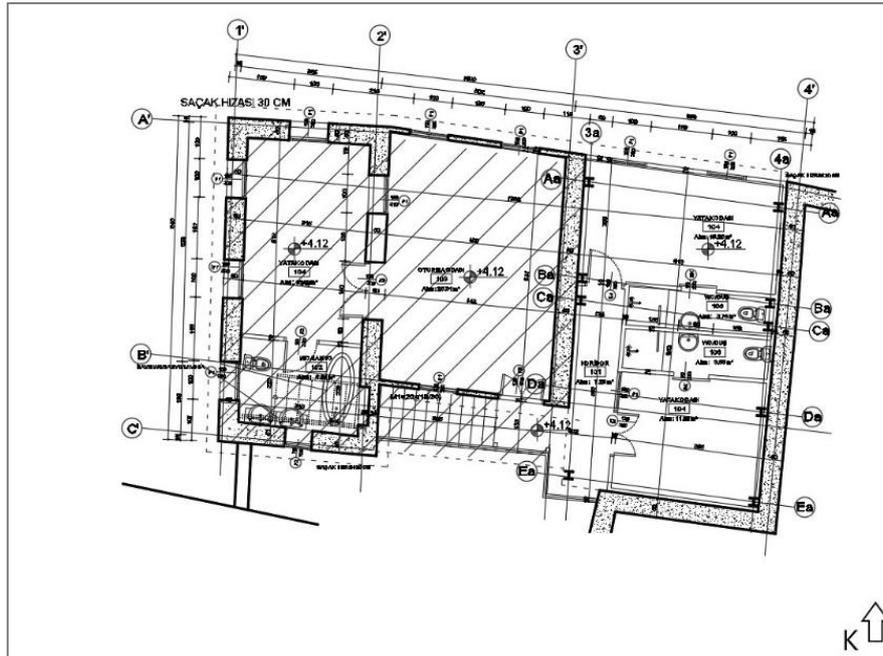
**Fig 7.** Ground Floor Plan (Güvenir Beyatlı, 2021)



**Fig. 8.** (a) main entrance of the building, (b) director office room (c) (d) dining room of the building after renovation

The first floor is reached through the rear section of the room located to the west of the main entry on the ground floor. As can be seen from the first floor plan, there are two rooms located in the west. In the east section a room was added in accordance with the original. The room renovated as a suite room in the east section is entered through a sitting room with a bedroom in the internal west section. The original wooden ceilings were preserved and a semi-open shower and WC were added within the room so as not to damage the existing walls. Figure 10 (b) shows the added wet space.

The section added in the east end was designed as two small hotel rooms with a connecting corridor. Ventilation and lighting for the added rooms is provided from north and south aspects. No opening was made in the east wall, which is an adjoining wall. Traces of a bay window located in the existing structure can be seen on the north façade of the building. As this would prevent vehicle traffic due to proximity to the street, it was not added to the building in line with the decision of the Supreme Council of Immovable Antiquities and Monuments.



**Fig. 9.** First Floor Plan (Güvenir Beyatlı, 2021)



**Fig. 10.** (a) living space of the suite room, (b) living space of the suite room (c) and (d) bedroom of the suite room after renovation

### Structural Analysis

This building, refunctioned as a boutique hotel, preserved the load-bearing and division walls in original form and created spaces accordingly. In some sections strengthening of the existing building was performed. Steel columns were added to structurally strengthen the ceilings of the ground floor (Figure 8-Picture 4). Generally, the original load-bearing elements and structure of the building were preserved and additionally strengthened with different load-bearing systems.

### Investigation of material/Architectural elements

Additions were made at intervals according to need after cleaning the existing rafters in the ceilings by preserving the original material in the building of the Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel. Classic massive wooden fittings were cleaned, broken and demolished sections were completed. The first floor is reached via a wooden staircase with classic wooden bannisters from an arched corridor. The demolished wooden staircase was strengthened in its existing form and use was continued (Figure 6). The roof of the building used Marseille type roof tiles. The wooden railings used on the balconies were cleaned in accordance with the original, repairs were

performed and missing pieces were completed. The yellow stone and adobe sections that were destroyed in the internal and external walls of the building were completed and then plastered and painted. The iron grilles on the windows were renovated. Wooden fittings that were suitable for use were renovated, and pieces that could not be used or were missing were completed to be compatible with the original.

#### **Investigation of furniture/colour/texture use**

The color and furniture style used in the indoor spaces were conceptualized with inspiration from the style obtained from written sources about the history of the building. Choice of furniture was fully compatible with the character of the building and its original form.

When the building facades of the Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel are examined, it appears the building envelope of the building reflect the refunctioning. The uniqueness of the building is maintained, while the colour and textures used in the façade were identified to be appropriate to the existing character of the urban texture.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Within the scope of the study, the building of the Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel located in walled city of Nicosia was investigated. The currently existing building appears to have begun a new life within the city with its new function. Within the scope of the study, the building was investigated with visual and physical analyses, investigation of written sources and interviews. The original building, preserved through refunctioning, was analysed, and it was observed that while the functional transformation was performed in line with features like the plan and material use in the original building and reflects the historical past, it will continue to be viable in the current conditions. It appears that the refunctioning of the structure linked to the original character preserved it in accordance with cultural values and the identity of the existing building was maintained. Additionally, the reuse/adaptation implementations ensured cultural continuity with the new form of the building in terms of social and cultural sustainability. Renovation of the original character, compatible with the originality within the city, was a successful project in terms of continuity of the character of the city and urban texture. At the same time, the new functions given to the physical formation of the building appropriate to the original identity should be performed by considering analyses about whether it ensures continuity for the future and in this way, it was identified that the renovations provided successful results. The refunctioning after renovation of historical buildings will contribute to making and implementing preservation decisions from the scale of a single building to the whole district.

The Nicosia Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel, investigated within the scope of the study, is a successful sample at the point of social and cultural sustainability about performing adaptations by preserving in terms of architectural/interior design and protecting the existing elements and textures in the transition to a new life. At the same time, it shows that an alternative form of use is applicable for the preservation of many residential buildings located in the walled city of Nicosia district, which cannot function in accordance with their original purpose and are now in disrepair and unmaintained. In conclusion, in transformation projects for historical and cultural buildings, the revival of buildings with new functions in line with the needs of their location, meeting the needs of users, and adapting appropriate to their surroundings are important steps in terms of social and cultural sustainability.

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