

**THE IMPACT OF THE ABSENCE OF COMMUNICATION ON  
THE SUCCESS OF REHABILITATION PROJECTS OF THE  
BUILT HERITAGE: THE CASE OF THE OLD CITY OF  
CONSTANTINE**

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**Key words:** impacts, success and failure of rehabilitation project, management of communication, event-centered projects, Old City of Constantine.

**Abstract.** Since the 1960s of the 20th century, research on the success of projects have been updated and are increasing in cyclical projects (event-centered projects) which appear regularly in excess of budget, or even sometimes incomplete when the event or subject of their creation is over. Within this context, with the appointment of Constantine as the Arab Capital of Culture 2015, the Algerian Government has registered 76 rehabilitation projects for the old buildings of the city, under the guardianship of the Ministry of Culture. The last has designated the *Office National de Gestion et d'Exploitation des Biens Culturels Protégés (OGEBCP)* (National Office for the Management and Exploitation of Preserved Cultural Property) as a contracting authority assistant, given its considerable experience in building management in the city of Tlemcen, Capital of Islamic Culture in 2011. During our investigation, none of the selected projects has been completed, while the allocated budget has been entirely consumed. Why? Who is responsible for this failure? Our role is to investigate the weak links in these rehabilitation projects to avoid future similar failure. It seems like the success of a project depends on the behavior of the main actors responsible for it as well as a number of technical skills that seem difficult to bring together in a single individual. Therefore, we focus on the actors of the project. The process of conservation operations is a delicate one to conduct for the success of the project. The conditioning of shorter deadlines in full event-centered projects is in fact one of the most difficult challenges. We propose to analyze the management of communication between the project actors assuming that, an inappropriate management could have negative impacts on the success

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**of the project.** Our intervention sheds the light on the program for the rehabilitation of the Old City of Constantine, the Arab Capital of Culture 2015, by reviewing the management of communication between the actors and, in particular, its link with the success of the project of rehabilitation in the context of the event. The methods have been exploratory in nature and explanatory. The interview and field observation have been used as investigation instruments.

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1. Overall context.** A project is defined as an activity aimed at achieving a global purpose, engaging the responsibility of the outcome, the definition of resources, actors and methods to mobilize (Midler, 1996). Project performance undergoes a large involvement of actors who get involved in serious communication interactions to ensure both the exchange of information and project success.

The success or failure is a paramount issue in each project. Several researches have been conducted on this subject. The most known research in this field is that of Pinto and Selvin (1988), who have proposed a conceptual model with the objective to help managers and promote the success of their project. These two authors have developed a diagnostic instrument called the Project Implementation Profile (PIP) that allows knowledge of ten key factors for the success and timely follow-up of the project.

The most important factor for Loosemore *et al.* (2003) is communication to ensure success. Similarly, Diallo and Thuillier (2005) have argued for the importance of communication and specified that the communication with the external groups of interest would constitute one of the most effective ways to detect potential problems, and that exclusion of external groups of interest would only increase the propensity of crisis in the project.

The communication differs from one project to another in the need for information and methods of its dissemination to ensure success. For example, the success of a rehabilitation operation depends largely on the quality of the communication between the contracting authority, stakeholders and citizens that must essentially be based on clarity, simplicity and information availability (Raffestin *et al.*, 1996).

Given that principle, Constantine has experienced a large rehabilitation operation to save its old city during the event of Constantine the Arab Capital of Culture 2015. However, the event has ended and no selected project has been completed, and the factors that have led to this failure remain uninvestigated.

## **1.2. Theoretical Context**

**1.2.1. The life cycle of a project.** According to the Project Management Institute in the PMBOK (2017), project management is “*an application of*

*knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities in order to meet the requirements*". The literature recognizes that the achievement of any project goes through a number of phases that constitute the lifecycle of the project. Several researchers have contributed to enrich the knowledge on the number of project phases. One of the best-known models is that of Adams and Barndt (1988), included in both studies of Pinto and Prescott (1988) and Belout (1998-2004). This model contains four phases, namely the design phase, the planning phase, the execution or achievement phase and the closure phase. The number of phases varies according to the nature of project. In rehabilitation projects, according to the Rehabimed method, there are four phases: the recognition phase, the reflection phase, the project, the construction phase, and the last phase of the service life (Table 1). However, Raffestin *et al.* (1996) in their book "*Rehabilitation en Site Occupé*", has cited six phases (chiefly further detailing of the four previously cited phases): the phase of prior contacts and preliminary studies, the establishment phase and tenants consultation, the rehabilitation project phase, preparation of the construction site phase, the construction site phase, and lastly completion and reception phase.

Table 1. The phases of rehabilitation project. Source: Rehabimed, 2007.

Phase	Step	Definition
<b>The Recognition phase</b>	1. Preliminary study	Collect the decision to proceed of the proponent, developing through a prior diagnosis that performs a first objective estimate of the proposal for intervention.
	2. Multidisciplinary study	Perform an analysis of social, architectural, historical, and constructive areas.
<b>Reflection and the project</b>	3. Diagnosis	Synthesize collected data in the prior phase. Analyze problems and their causes to give a comprehensive vision on the potential and the deficits of the building.
	4. Reflection and decision framework	Plan for the project by confirmation of intervention criteria (from conservation through transformation)
	5. The project	The drafting of specifications
<b>The construction phase</b>	6. Rehabilitation	The achievement of the project
<b>The service life</b>	7. The maintenance	This step allows to maintain the building up to a future rehabilitation date.

**1.2.2. Success factors for success or failure of projects.** Success or failure is a key issue in every project. The evaluation of this question depends on four dimensions defining the project. Pinto and Slevin (1986) state that a project is

considered successful in its implementation if it meets the following criteria: (1) delivered within the contractual deadlines (time criterion), (2) implemented without exceeding the budget (financial criterion), (3) achieves all the objectives set initially (effectiveness criterion), and (4) it is accepted and used by the customer for whom it was intended (customer satisfaction criterion). The last criterion relates fundamentally to quality. If one of these is missing the project is deemed to fail.

Many researchers and practitioners have been involved in building knowledge about the factors that hinder success in helping professionals improve the management of their projects and ensure their success. One of the best-known models is that of Pinto and Selvin (1986), which is also included in Belout's studies (1998, 2004, 2011). These researchers have developed a diagnostic tool that has been called PIP (Project Implementation Profile), it allows to know the ten key factors of success and follow them over time.

(1) The "project mission" indicates that the main objectives must be clear and well defined not only for the project team, but for the other departments of the organization.

(2) The "top management support" means that the project management support may involve aspects such as the allocation of sufficient resources (financial, human, time, etc.), as well as the project manager's confidence in supporting them.

(3) The "project schedule plan" indicates the development of a detailed plan of the necessary steps of the project implementation process.

(4) The "client or citizen consultation" refers to the necessity to know the needs of future clients of the project.

(5) The "personnel" factor relates to the personal recruitment, selection and training of the project's human resource, who must have the necessary skills to carry out their duties within the team.

(6) The "technical performance" indicates the availability of the technology and expertise needed to accomplish the specific steps of technical action.

(7) The "client acceptance" refers to the customer's acceptance of the project result and is satisfied.

(8) The "monitoring and feedback" factor: refers to the importance of the provision of control information at each stage of project implementation.

(9) The "communication" factor provides for the communication and exchange of information between the project team, the rest of the organization and stakeholders in the execution of the project and all its tasks.

(10) The "problem solving" takes into account the ability to identify and deal with unforeseen problems that arise during project implementation.

The project's mission factors, top management support, client consultation project planning, staff, technical performance and customer acceptance are linked to each other in a sequential manner which means that when a criterion is met, the

other begins. However, this sequencing is not absolute, because in reality considerable overlaps and inversions can affect the order of factors.

The factors communication, control and feedback, and problem-solving have a relationship with all other factors, which means that the presence of these three factors is essential to reach the others as shown in Fig. 1 below.

Communication is an important ingredient and essential to the success of a project (Loosemore et al, 2003). For Bellout and Zimiri (2011), communication is the only factor that has a significant relationship with the success of construction projects.

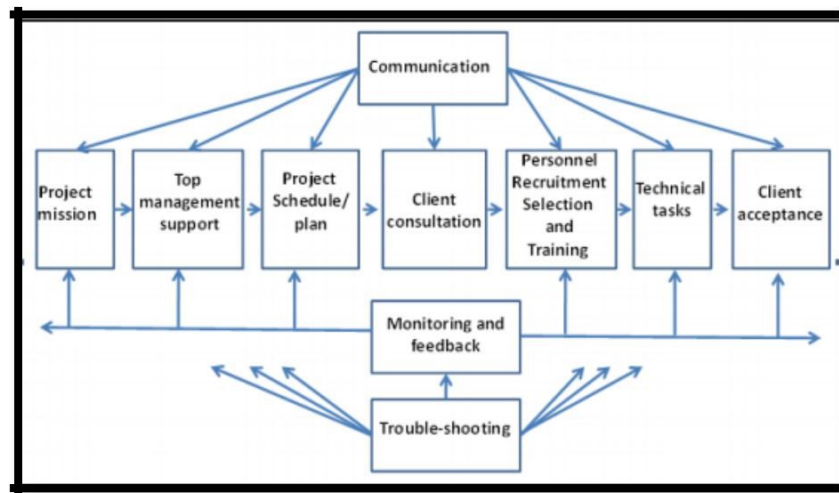


Fig. 1. The ten key success factors of the PIP project. Source: Slevin and Pinto, 1986:58)

**1.3. Research questions.** Our research focuses on the communication as a factor of success or failure in the rehabilitation projects based on the study of Bellout and Zimiri (2011), who have suggested communication to be the only factor that has a significant relationship with the success of construction projects. In this context, we set our research as: **Has the absence of communication affected the rehabilitation projects of the program of Constantine, the Arab Capital of Culture 2015?**

Our hypothesis states that **the absence of the communication in the preliminary phases and the lack of coordination between stakeholders are part of the causes of the failure of rehabilitation projects.**

The originality of this article lies in its attempt to understand the importance of communication in the process of the operations of conservation of the built heritage with the conditioning of the event-centered project.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. The case study

**2.1.1. The status of the case study.** Our case study is based on the program for the rehabilitation of the Old City of Constantine as the Arab Capital of Culture 2015. Constantine, metropolis of the East of Algeria located 400 km east of the capital Algiers, has one of the oldest cities in the world (2500 years old). A very heterogeneous site, rocky, very rugged and cramped, and a very high density and a high concentration of trade characterize the city. This city has in its center several buildings of a very high architectural value, including the Mosque of El Kettania, the Medersa (school), the French Lycée Aumale (currently, Redha-Houhou), Dar El Imam (the house of the imam), the Souks (markets), traditional houses, a palace of the Bey, all of which have assigned the city a peculiar status. Nonetheless, with all its monuments, this old city is in a state of advanced disrepair. According to the *Plan Permanent de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur des Secteurs Sauvegardés (PPSMVSS)* or simply the permanent plan for development and conservation of safeguarded areas of the Old City of Constantine (2013), around 575 buildings are partially degraded and 227 buildings are in ruins as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** The state of degradation of the old city of Constantine. Source: *PPSMVSS*, 2013.

Degraded buildings: <b>575</b>	Partial degradation	<b>191</b>
	Advanced degradation	<b>248</b>
	Extreme degradation	<b>136</b>
Ruined buildings: <b>227</b>	Partially ruined	<b>139</b>
	Ruined	<b>88</b>

**2.1.2. The rehabilitation program of the old city of Constantine in the event of Constantine, the Arab Capital of Culture 2015.** On 30 December 2012, the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) has designated Constantine as the Arab Capital of Culture for the year 2015. To this effect, the Algerian government has listed several projects under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, to improve and develop the cultural conditions of the city of Constantine. The program has included both new projects and rehabilitation operations of areas of heritage value for the historic center. For this event, the Ministry of Culture has designated the Directorate of Culture of Constantine as the Contracting authority and the National Office for the Management and Exploitation of Preserved Cultural Property (OGEBEC) as contracting authority assistant with the city's prefecture, the latter being responsible for follow-up of the urban operation. The choice of the OGEBEC is made with respect to the latter's experience in the management of the program, *Tlemcen Capital of Islamic Culture 2011* (Hamma

and Petrisor, 2017). Within its prerogatives, the OGEBC has conducted a preliminary estimate based on the state of degradation of the site in order to clarify the operation cost. The Directorate of Culture has registered these budgetary appropriations with the regulatory authority. The program has been validated by the Ministry of Finance and registered in the centralized sectoral program on 06 May 2013.

A commission composed of the Director of the National Office of Management and Exploitation of Preserved Cultural Property (OGEBC) and the project manager of the Permanent Plan for the Development and Conservation of Safeguarded Areas (PPSMVSS) of the old city of Constantine, has visited the site in order to select the program for rehabilitation projects for 2015.

The OGEBC has constituted an on-site technical unit responsible for the study and monitoring of the program as adopted by the Ministry of Culture. On 20 October 2013, a prior selection of twenty-one engineering consultants has been made: (a) twelve from Constantine, and (b) nine from Algiers and neighboring cities. Of these twenty-one engineering consultants, sixteen have operated in partnership with experienced foreign consultants in the field of rehabilitation. The official date of the commencement of the studies has been set on 03 January 2014. Nevertheless, with the commencement of studies, the collapse of the buildings of the program has required the installation of companies for emergency works. A selection of several companies has been made by the OGEBC based on the companies' respective qualifications and field experience. May 2014, more than 23 companies have been installed with an order of provisional service.

**2.1.3. Problems encountered during the program.** According to the Contracting authority assistant, several problems were encountered at the beginning of the rehabilitation phase:

- (1) Insufficient housing to relocate all inhabitants of the planned buildings before the beginning of the study phase;
- (2) Problems of compensation for traders who did not want to leave their premises because of non-regularization of their business registers;
- (3) The lack of virgin grounds to program the car parks;
- (4) An overlap between the program of work of the various networks and the work of the project;
- (5) The citizens have asked for the choice of samples or pilot houses because they believe that other buildings deserve to be chosen more than those of the program for this they refuse any kind of collaboration with the assistant to the project management ;

The owners of the pilot houses did not want to leave their homes.

All these problems have caused a remarkable delay in the progress of the projects. After 5 years of work and 74 projects, only two mosques (the Hacen Bey Mosque and the Great Mosque) were completed in June 2017 (more than a year late). However, the rest of the operations seem to be at work stoppage, either momentary and / or permanent.

### 2.3. Methods

The case study is exploratory and qualitative, investigating not only which factors influence the course of the rehabilitation project, but also how the communication factor can affect other factors and the success of this type of project in the different phases. We have retained the concepts of the specific research question in order to formulate an interview grid to use to confirm or disconfirm the proposals of the research in a semi-structured interview with public authorities (at least 3x10 project actors, according to Clark & Wheelwright's typology, 1992). The indicative questions are presented in Table 3. In our case study, we interviewed 3 of 18 actors who have a direct relationship with the project. Our choice is based on the most active actors on the project (contracting authority, contracting authority delegate and contracting authority assistant).

The results of the interview were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

**Table 3.** The maintenance guide (1992).

<b>Questions</b>	
<b>What are the problems encountered during the rehabilitation phase?</b>	
<b>01</b>	How many actors are involved in the program?
<b>02</b>	What actors are referred to in the different phases of the program?
<b>03</b>	What is the general objective of the intervention of the actors in each phase?
<b>04</b>	What are the used media for communication?

### 3. Results

We present the results in the form of a table and graphs to analyze better the communication in the different project phases.

#### 3.1. The dynamics of communication during the different phases

Table 4 shows the lifecycle of the program of Constantine the Arab Capital of Culture 2015, the actors involved in each step of the project, the objective of their interventions, and the types of media used for communication.



**Table 4.** The evolution of communication during the different phases

Phase	Step	Actors	The objective of intervention	Media
<b>The recognition phase</b>	1. Preliminary study	1. Ministry of Culture	The choice of the contracting authority and its assistant	- Face to Face - Meeting - Phone
		2. Contracting authority: the Wali	The first responsible	
		-Contracting authority delegate: the Directorate of Culture	The representative of the Ministry of Culture in the province	
		-Contracting authority assistant: the National Office for the management and exploitation of preserved cultural property	The choice of the buildings for the program Preliminary estimate of the program	
	2. Multidisciplinary study	-Project management team: OGEBEC	The establishment of technical sheets on the selected buildings	
<b>Reflection and the project</b>	3. Diagnosis	Project management team delegate: Directorate of Culture	The choice of engineering consultants	- Face to Face - Meeting - Phone
		Contracting authority assistant	The choice of engineering consultants Monitoring of engineering consultants' work	
		Engineering consultant	The study of the different historical buildings	
		Daira (sub-prefecture)	Rehousing of inhabitants	
	4. Reflection and decision framework	Contracting authority delegate: Directorate of Culture	The negotiation with the engineering consultants on the projects' amounts	Meeting
		Contracting authority assistant		
	5. The project	Contracting authority	The drafting of specifications	
<b>Works</b>	6. Rehabilitation	1. Contracting authority delegate (Directorate of Culture)		-Face to Face Meeting - Phone - The letters -E-mails
		2. Contracting authority assistant: OGEBEC	The choice of companies	
		3 Daira (sub-prefecture)	The rehousing of the inhabitants	

Phase	Step	Actors	The objective of intervention	Media
		4. CPA (City Hall)	The momentary evacuation of places	
		5. Engineering consultant	The study	
		6. Company	The achievement of the emergency work	
		7. The Directorate of Trade	Census of trade for the displacement negotiation with traders for the closure	
		8. Directorate of Religious Affairs	The closure of mosques	
		9. Directorate of Transport	The evacuation of the parkings	
		10. SONALGAZ (gas and electricity supplier company)	Displacement of electricity cables	
		11. SEACO (water supplier company)	The rehabilitation of water pipes	
		12. Algérie Telecom (telecommunication company)	Displacement of telephone cables	
		13. Traders	The closure of their premises	
		14. Neighborhood Association	Consultation	
		14. Owners/tenants of chosen buildings	Displacement	
		15. Citizens	The occupation of the site	
		<b>The service life</b>	7. Maintenance	

To present better the analysis of the evolution of the actors during the different stages of the program, Fig. 2 shows the number of stakeholders in each step.

In Fig. 2 it can be seen that before the realization phase, only three actors have been involved in the program but after the commencement of the rehabilitation project, fifteen new actors have integrated into the program.

To check the evolution of communication during the different phases, we have conducted an analysis of the communication between the entire actors in the program during the rehabilitation phase. These analyses are presented in Table 5 to better know the relationship between the actors. The yellow box shows if there is a communication between the actors appearing in the horizontal line and the vertical

column and bearing the same number. These results show that only the project assistant has a relationship with all stakeholders of the program, so the citizens have no relationship whatsoever with the program's stakeholders.

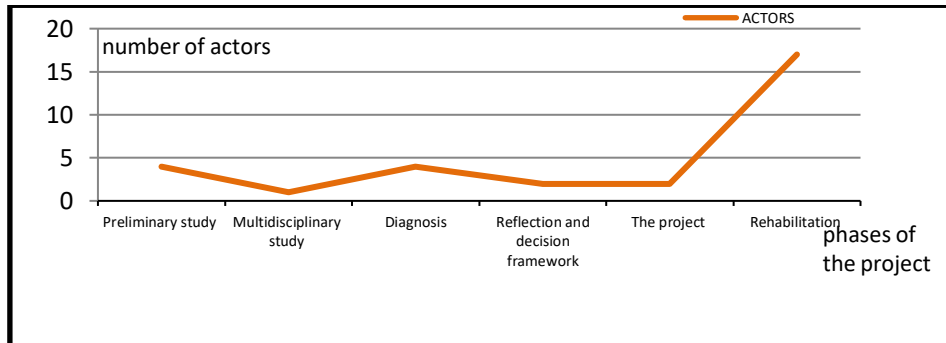


Fig. 2. The evolution of communication during the different phases

Table 5. Relationship between the different actors.

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
The Ministry of culture (01)	■																	
The Wali (prefect)	■	■																
The Directorate of Culture (03)	■	■	■															
OGEBEC office (04)	■	■	■	■														
District (05)		■	■	■	■													
CPA (City Hall) (06)		■	■	■	■	■												
Engineering consultants (07)		■	■	■	■	■	■											
Realization company (08)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■										
The Directorate of trade (09)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Directorate of Religious Affairs (10)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■								
The Directorate of Transport (11)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■							
SONALGAZ (12) (electricity and gas supplier company)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
SEACO (13) (water supplier company)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Algérie Telecom (14) (telecommunication company)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Traders (15)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Neighborhood associations (16)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Owners/ tenants (17)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Citizens (18)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

■ Interpersonal communication.

### 3.2. Analysis of the results

From the beginning of the rehabilitation phase, the project had several problems requiring the intervention of the other actors namely the direction of the trade, the direction of the services of the various networks, the direction of transport, the direction of the religious affairs and the Neighborhood Association. We find that there is a lack of coordination and communication in the preliminary phase that affected the program in terms of time.

In our theoretical framework we mentioned that the factor of communication is related to the achievement of other factors is why we note that the absence of communication in the preliminary phase makes the achievement of other factors impossible. We summarize this in the following points:

(1) The lack of dissemination of the objectives of the project to all stakeholders means the absence of the first factor

(2) The increase of the amounts of the program because of the lack of a dialogue between all the actors to estimate all the actions (absence of the 2nd factor)

(3) Elimination of all stakeholders in the preliminary phase leads to the appearance of new tasks in the rehabilitation phase (absence of the planning factor)

(4) No communication has been made with the citizens, meaning the absence of the fourth factor.

(5) The assemblage of a team includes all the actors after the beginning of the phase of rehabilitation (absence of the fifth and sixth factor).

### 3.3. Discussion

This article has attempted to demonstrate the communication between the rehabilitation project actors and its impact on the project's success. According to Kerzner (2009), effective communication concerns the availability of reliable information to the right stakeholders at the "*good time and in a cost-effective manner*" and aims to continue restoration of stakeholders' understanding of the project deliverables" (Davis, 2016). However, the results have shown that in the preliminary phase of the rehabilitation program of the old city of Constantine, the communication has been established only between the main project actors: (a) Ministry of Culture, (b) contracting authority, (c) contracting authority delegate, and (d) contracting authority assistant. However, as from the study phase launching, we have observed the participation of several actors. Table 4 (works and rehabilitation) shows us that the intervention of each actor has been undertaken to resolve problems encountered during the works.

The literature of the subject shows that the crucial element of communication is to obtain the commitment of the stakeholders for the success of the project

(Turner, 2009) in the planning phase to identify the roles and responsibilities of each (UNESCO, 2014). This explains why stakeholders' commitment negligence in the preliminary phase of the program has caused several obstacles in the progress of the program, and this confirms our previously stated hypothesis.

Table 5 displays the relationship between all the project actors. The results show that only the contracting authority does have a relationship with all the actors. This fact does not go along with the recommendations of the literature of the subject. The latter urges all project stakeholders to participate in periodic dialog through meetings aimed at guaranteeing information dissemination and progress of the operation to be timely informed about encountered problems, identify the responsible actors, and make appropriate decisions, and ensure the success of the project (Raffestin *et al.*, 1996). For Garel *et al.* (2001), the success of a project rests upon technical behavioral competencies of actors that seem difficult to bring together in a single individual. Therefore, the contracting authority assistant cannot manage the entire program alone. We also note that the citizen actor who is one of the most important actors in the realization of projects has only a relationship with the neighborhood associations.. In the International Charter for Conservation of Historic Cities and Urban Areas (1987), the participation and the involvement of the inhabitants of the entire city is crucial to the success of the conservation operation.

According to Stork and Sapienza (1992), concerned individuals with communication vary according to the stages of the project's lifecycle (Table 4). However, the analysis of the interaction between the different actors shows that there is phase difference, omission, and negligence. Adams and Barndt's (1988) model that has resumed Pinto and Prescott's (1988) and Rehabimed's (2007), namely the phases of projects, has not been implemented in the project for the rehabilitation of the old city of Constantine. The communication or rather the absence of communication was behind the failure of this operation while the budget has been consumed.

### Conclusions

The results of our study come to reinforce similar researches on factors affecting projects' success. We conclude that, in a context as specific as the operations of conservation, the absence of communication has a negative impact on the operations of conversation.

Undertaking a conservation action on an occupied site requires a strategy consultation where each actor is well informed about its role in the process. The user in the first place is an indispensable agent to the breaking-in phase of the operation. The lack of awareness among the inhabitants, the destructive ignorance

on the part of the actors, the mismanagement of public authorities, and the insouciance of central decision makers make action-research efforts, favoring the participation of the user in the first place, very likely to fail.

### Acronyms

ALECSO: Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization

EC: Engineering consultant

OGEBC: Office National de Gestion et d'Exploitation des Biens Culturels Protégés (*National Office for Management and Exploitation of Preserved Cultural Property*)

PPSMVSS: Plan Permanent de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur des Secteurs Sauvegardés (*Permanant Plan for Development and Conservation of Safeguarded Areas*)

UNESCO: Organization of the United Nations for the Education, Science and Culture

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