

# إعادة اكتشاف أحيائنا: تجربة القاهرة التاريخية

## ورشة العمل - قبة الغوري

# Rediscovering Our Neighborhoods: The Case of Historic Cairo

Workshop - Al-Ghouri Dome

12-13 / 04 / 2025



# The Approach

As part of the Future of Heritage 2025 conference, the “Rediscovering Our Neighborhoods: Historic Cairo” workshop was a two-day interactive initiative held on April 12–13 at Qubbet al-Ghuri, aiming to reconnect communities with their historic urban environments through hands-on engagement and collaborative design.

The workshop was jointly implemented by Benha University, Arch Space International, and main partner Wael Al-Masri Planners & Architects, and held under the patronage of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, with the support of the Cultural Development Fund and the National Organization for Urban Harmony.

Set in the heart of Historic Cairo, the workshop provided a platform for critical reflection and creative exploration of the city's layered urban heritage. It forms part of a broader regional effort to revitalize historic neighborhoods using sustainable, community-based approaches that prioritize both people and place.

Through a combination of lectures, field observation, group discussions, and co-design activities, the event fostered a vibrant interdisciplinary space—encouraging participants to observe, reflect, and generate practical strategies for heritage-led urban regeneration.





# Under the patronage of





# What We Did

## Exploring Historic Cairo



The workshop began with a series of lectures by a diverse group of experts, introducing key ideas around heritage, adaptive reuse, and participatory design. These talks offered valuable insights into the social,

## Interactive Discussions and Knowledge Sharing



Participants engaged in open conversations and exchange sessions, sharing personal experiences and discussing current challenges facing historic neighborhoods and public spaces in Cairo.

## Learning Participatory Design Concepts



An interactive session introduced participants to key concepts in community-based and co-creative design. Tools and precedents were presented to inspire context-driven interventions in heritage areas.

## Urban Walks and Site Observations



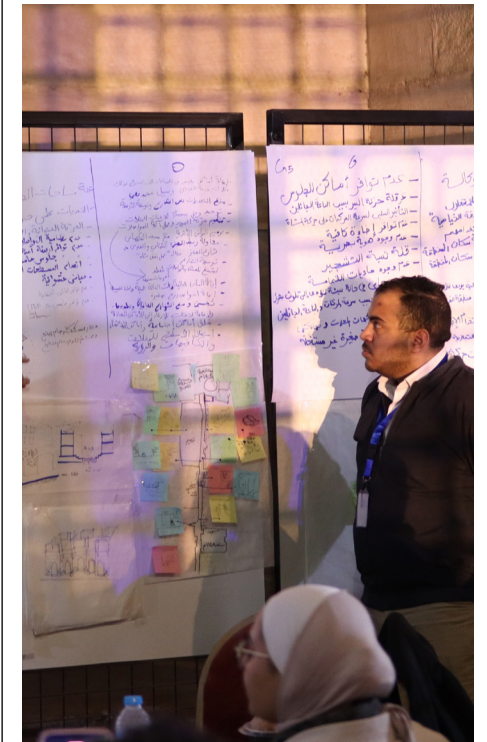
Teams conducted field visits across selected locations in Historic Cairo. Participants documented physical conditions, user behaviors, spatial qualities, and socio-cultural dynamics through sketches.

## Designing Livable and Heritage-Integrated Spaces



Each team developed design ideas based on site observations, focusing on walkability, public space activation, and heritage integration.

## Building a Collective Vision



Teams presented their proposals through sketches and discussions, concluding with a shared vision for more vibrant and inclusive heritage spaces.



# Step One: Preparing Minds for Action

## **Prof. Nasser El-Gizawy**

Academic Leadership  
in Sustainable Heritage



President of Benha University, reaffirmed the university's commitment to heritage through education, research, and community engagement to support the development of historic sites.

## **Prof. Gehan Abdel-Hady**

Bridging Bridging Education and  
Urban Heritage



Vice President of Benha University, highlighted the role of academic leadership in fostering collaboration and innovation in heritage-based urban development.

## **Prof. Ahmad Haron**

Bridging Academia and Practice  
in Heritage Development



Emphasized the importance of integrating academic research with architectural practice to support sustainable revitalization of heritage sites.

## **Prof. Zeinab Feisal**

Engineering Education and Policy  
Integration for Heritage



Led the conference with a focus on the role of engineering and academic research in shaping urban policies that protect cultural heritage.



# Step One: Preparing Minds for Action

## Arch. Hamdy El Setouhy

Institutional Support for Cultural Heritage Initiatives



Highlighted the Ministry of Culture's role in promoting heritage preservation through cross-sector collaboration and support for academic and cultural planning efforts.

## Eng. Mohamed Abu Saada

National Policies for Urban Identity



Discussed the role of national frameworks in protecting urban heritage and guiding harmonious development across historic environments.

## Dr. Nahla Emam

Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage



Shared regional expertise on preserving folk traditions and collective memory as vital components of heritage planning.

## Dr. Omniya Abdel Barr

Documenting and Advocating for Islamic Heritage



Presented strategies for protecting Cairo's historic fabric through research, public awareness, and global collaboration.



# Step One: Preparing Minds for Action

## Arch. Amira Badran

Designing Inclusive and Playable Cities



Focused on placemaking strategies that prioritize accessibility, interaction, and child-friendly design in urban settings.

## Dr. Galal Abada

Cultural Innovation in Public Space Design



Reflected on decades of urban work, showing how creativity and historical depth can coexist in the regeneration of shared spaces.

## Dr. Mona Helmy

People-Centered Urbanism and Participatory Spaces



Presented methods for engaging communities in the design of public spaces, linking identity, memory, and sustainability.

## Dr. Kareem Nabil Hammouda

Heritage in the Age of Social Media



Explored how digital platforms influence urban identity, using heritage sites as tools for city branding and public engagement.



# Step One: Preparing Minds for Action

## Arch. Wael Al-Masri

Bridging Heritage with Urban Design Practice



Shared how in-depth field research and cultural understanding can guide practical urban strategies, using Al-Muizz Street as a model for blending heritage with modern planning.

## Arch. Mouaz Abouzaid

Reimagining Heritage Through Context-Sensitive Design



Discussed inclusive urban interventions that revive historic districts by responding to local needs and preserving architectural identity.

## Dr. Meryem Kübra

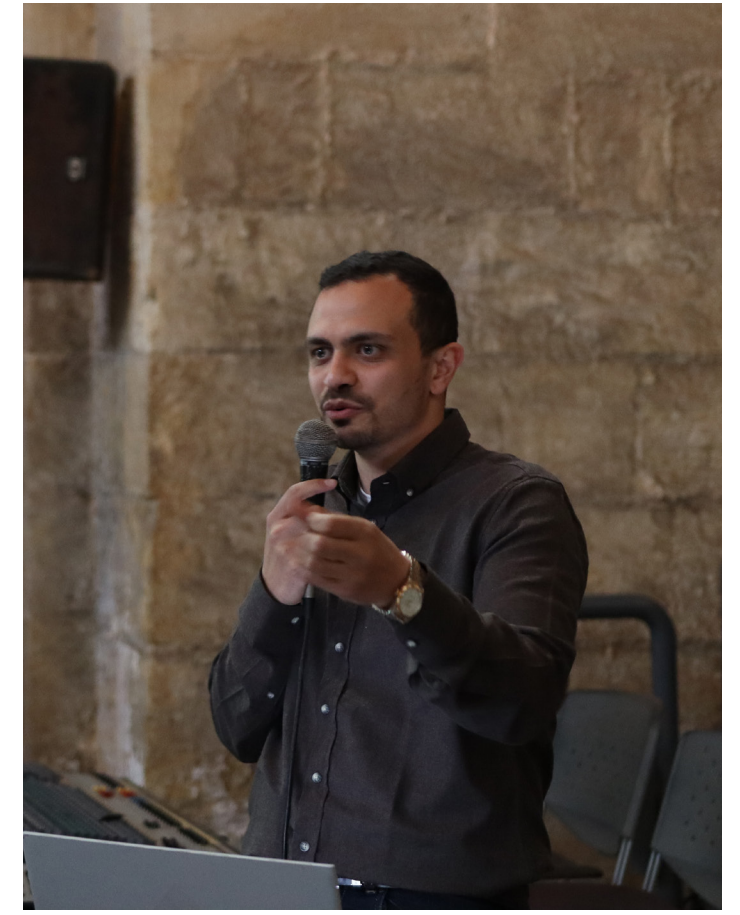
Adapting Historic Structures for Contemporary Use



Explained how adaptive reuse can transform abandoned buildings into resilient, functional spaces while retaining their historical value.

## Arch. Mohammed Sayed

Co-Creation and Tactical Urbanism in Action



Introduced tools and approaches for activating heritage spaces through community involvement and low-cost, high-impact design.



## Step Two: Interactive Discussions and Knowledge Sharing

An open dialogue was held among the keynote speakers, focusing on the topic of Urban Infill Design. The discussion explored how historic urban fabrics can accommodate new interventions while preserving their character. Speakers exchanged perspectives on balancing density, function, and heritage, emphasizing the role of design in shaping inclusive, adaptive, and context-sensitive urban environments.





# Step Three: Learning Participatory Design Concepts

## Workshop Overview

The “Rediscovering Our Neighborhoods: An Experience Between Historic Cairo” workshop took place on April 12–13, 2025, at Qubbet al-Ghuri as part of the Future of Heritage Conference. It focused on reactivating public spaces in Historic Cairo through participatory and sustainable design.

The workshop brought together architects, urban designers, academics, and students to explore new strategies for revitalizing heritage areas. It began with a series of lectures that covered themes such as urban identity, adaptive reuse, participatory planning, and placemaking.

Following the lectures, participants engaged in group discussions and were divided into teams to conduct fieldwork in key locations across Historic Cairo. They analyzed current conditions, observed user behavior, and proposed design ideas to improve public life and highlight the cultural value of these spaces.

Combining theory with practice, the workshop created a collaborative platform to generate practical solutions for enhancing the livability and heritage integration of Cairo's historic neighborhoods.





# Step Three: Learning Participatory Design Concepts

## Workshop Participants

The workshop brought together over 50 participants from diverse academic and professional backgrounds, including architects, urban planners, designers, researchers, and students. This multidisciplinary group contributed a broad range of perspectives and skills to the collaborative process.

Participants joined from across Egypt's governorates as well as from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Yemen—bringing regional insights and enriching the workshop with cross-cultural dialogue. The group was divided into six teams, each tasked with analyzing and reimagining a specific site within Historic Cairo.

This diversity fostered meaningful collaboration and enabled the co-creation of innovative, locally grounded strategies for enhancing public spaces and integrating heritage into everyday urban life.





# Step Three: Learning Participatory Design Concepts

## Workshop Leader

Wael Al-Masri is a leading architect and urban planner renowned for blending tradition with innovation across the Arab world. As founder of Wael Al-Masri Planners & Architects, he is committed to reimagining historic environments through human-centered design and culturally grounded strategies.

His deep connection to Al-Muizz Street and Historic Cairo stems from both personal passion and academic research, particularly his Batchelor's thesis on the urban and architectural values of Historic Cairo. Rather than seeing heritage as static, Al-Masri views it as a catalyst for identity, creativity, and sustainable development.

The workshop was supported by Wael Al-Masri Planners & Architects, whose team played a key role in shaping and delivering the program. His vision enabled participants to engage with real urban challenges and propose context-sensitive, forward-thinking solutions.

Through this initiative, Al-Masri continues to champion a new generation of designers who value heritage as a foundation for inclusive and livable cities.





# Step Three: Learning Participatory Design Concepts

## Workshop Leader

Mohammed Sayed is an architect and urban planner with an academic and professional background in human-centered design and participatory urbanism. His work spans across the MENA region and Europe, focusing on social sustainable regeneration and inclusive design processes.

As a core organizer of the “Rediscovering Our Neighborhoods” workshop in Historic Cairo, Mohammed was responsible for coordinating content, designing field activities, and facilitating collaborative discussions and describe the our role in process of co-creation. His deep understanding of urban heritage and community engagement helped shape the workshop’s approach to reactivating public spaces through co-creation.

With practical experience in both planning and design, and a passion for culturally rooted urban development, Mohammed brought valuable perspective and leadership to the initiative.





# Step Three: Learning Participatory Design Concepts

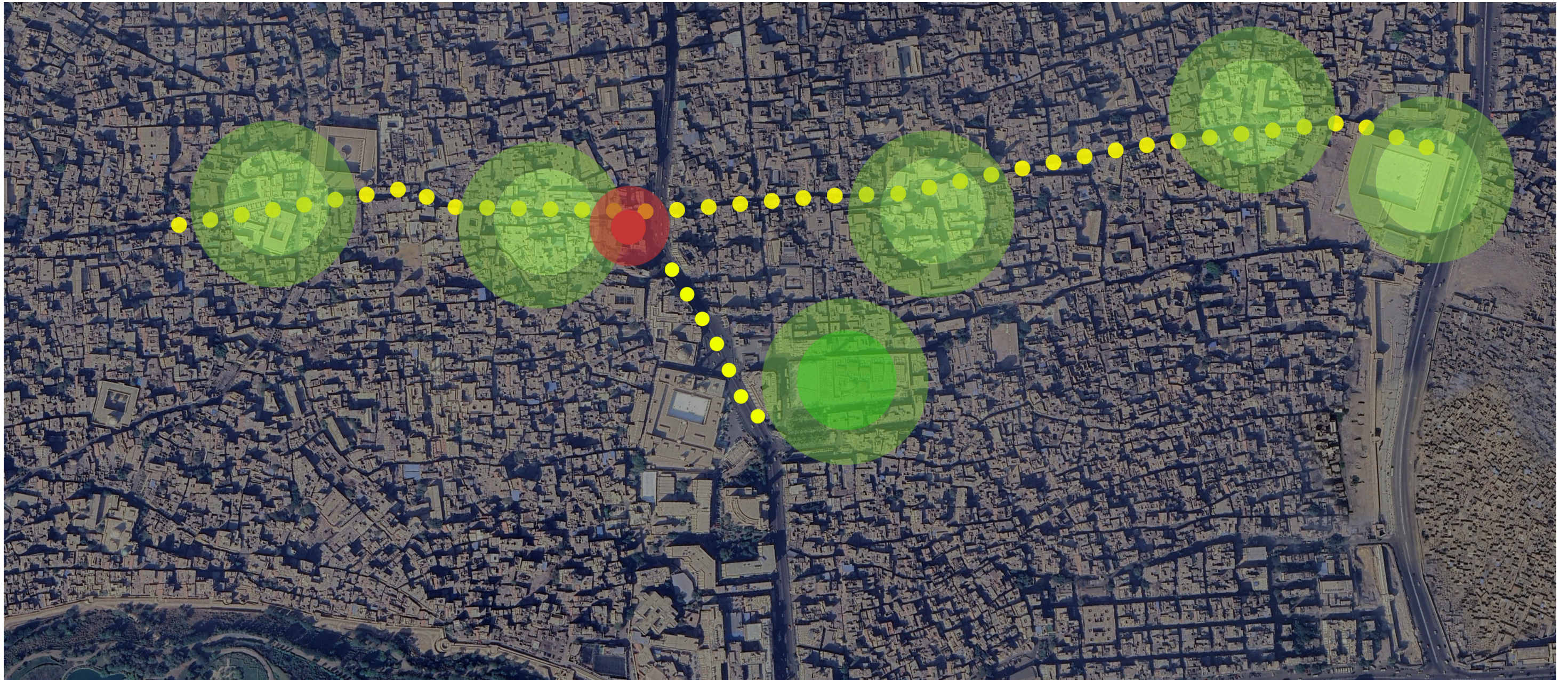
This session introduced participants to the foundations of participatory design and its role in shaping people-centered urban environments. Through engaging presentations and real-world examples, the discussion emphasized the power of co-creation as a tool for inclusive and responsive spatial development.

Participants explored how communities can be actively involved in decision-making and design processes, using interactive maps and collaborative methods. This step served as a key transition from theoretical learning to field application, preparing teams for their upcoming site visits and interventions.





## Step Four: Urban Walks and Site Observations



Participants were divided into six teams, each assigned to a specific location within Historic Cairo. These included the northern wall near Bab al-Futuh, Bayt al-Qadi Square and the Qalawun Complex, the stretch between Sabil-Kuttab Abdel Rahman Katkhuda and Al-Salihdar Mosque, the area surrounding the Al-Ghourri Complex, Bab Zuweila and the Khayamiya Market, as well as the square around Al-Hussein Mosque.

During the walk, teams explored the selected areas through direct observation, sketching, photography, and documentation. Each group analyzed how the spaces are currently used, identified barriers to movement, and assessed spatial qualities. The teams also reflected on opportunities for reactivating neglected or underutilized zones, proposing ideas to enhance the area's accessibility, usability, and cultural relevance.







Data Collection

دراسة حركة المشاة والدراجات وراكبي المواصلات

تركز هذه الاستمارة على حركة المشاة وأنماط التنقل داخل الموقع. تساعد في فهم ديناميكية الفضاء من حيث مسارات السير وكثافة الاستخدام وأماكن الاختناق أو العوائق المحتملة.

الموقع : السور الشمالي المحاذي لباب الفتوح ومسجد الحاكم بأمر الله



المكان	التاريخ – الوقت	حالة المناخ	الإسم
عدد المشاة	عدد راكبي الدراجات	عدد مستخدمي المواصلات	أي تعليق خاص


1- أين تقع المسارات الرئيسية التي يسلكها المشاة في الموقع؟ ارسم الأسهم على المخطط لتوضيح الاتجاهات الأكثر شيوعاً.

Study of pedestrian, bicycle and public transport movement

رصد الأنشطة الثابتة

تهتم هذه الاستمارة بـ الأنشطة الثابتة والفعاليات التي يقوم بها الناس أثناء تواجدهم في المكان وهم في حالة سكون نسبي، مثل الجلوس أو الوقوف أو البيع والشراء الهدف هو الحصول على لقطة عامة لما يختار الناس فعله في الفضاء العام: كم عددهم؟ ماذا يفعلون؟ أين يفعلون ذلك؟ ومتى؟

الموقع : السور الشمالي المحاذي لباب الفتوح ومسجد الحاكم بأمر الله



1- ما هي الأنشطة التي يقوم بها الأشخاص أثناء تواجدهم؟ (مثلاً: الجلوس على الرصيف أو على مقاعد، الوقوف والتحدث، التسوق من بائع متجول، الصلاة أمام مسجد، الانتظار في طابور، إلخ). اذكر أنواع الأنشطة الملحوظة بالتفصيل

2- أين تنتشر هذه الأنشطة الثابتة داخل الموقع؟ حدد المواقع: مثلاً "جلوس تحت مظلة ظل عند الركن الشمالي"، "بائع شاي عند زاوية الشارع"، "تجمع سياح أمام سبيل أثري". سيساعد ذلك في معرفة/اين يتم هذه الفعاليات

3- كم تقريباً عدد الأشخاص المشاركين في كل نشاط؟ (مثلاً: 3 أشخاص جالسين على المصطبة، تجمع من 5-6 أشخاص حول بائع العصير). هل يزداد العدد في أوقات معينة؟ متى يبلغ النشاط ذروته؟

Monitoring fixed activities

رصد الفئات الاجتماعية والعمرية

تتأثر هذه الاستمارة بتوافق الفئات الاجتماعية والعمرية للمستخدمين في الموقع، مثل توزيعهم حسب الجنس (ذكور/إناث) والفئة العمرية (أطفال، شباب، كبار السن... إلخ). بهدف الرصد إلى تكوين صورة عن هوية المستخدمين ومن يشعر بالارتياح في المكان أو يستمتع به

الموقع : السور الشمالي المحاذي لباب الفتوح ومسجد الحاكم بأمر الله



الفئات العمرية	العدد
10-0	
20-10	
30-20	
40-30	
50-40	
60-50	
+60	

الذكور	الإناث

1- هل يبدو أن الأسر موجودة (مثلاً نساء مع أطفال) أم الأفراد في الغالب؟ وجود أسر يشير إلى إحساس بالآمان والراحة للأسرة في المكان

Monitoring social and age groups



# Data Collection

### رصد الواجهات والفراغات

تُبنى هذه الورقة بـ الواجهات المعمارية والفراغات العمرانية في الموقع، أي الخصائص البصرية للمكان: المباني، واجهاتها، والفراغات العامة من هل هي متجانسة أم مشوهة؟ محفوظة أم متهاكة؟ – وتأثير ذلك على تجربة – ساحات وشوارع وأزقة. بهدف الرصد إلى تقييم جودة البيئة العمرانية المستخدم البصرية والوظيفية. يشمل ذلك توثيق العناصر البارزة مثل المباني الأثرية، والمحلات، وكذلك الخدمات الحضرية (الإضاءة، سلال المهملات، المقاعد).

الموقع : السور الشمالي المحاذي لـباب الفتوح ومسجد الحاكم بأمر الله




1- صف حالة الواجهات المعمارية في الموقع: هل المباني تاريخية ذات طابع تراثي؟ ما مدى صيانتها أو تدهورها؟ (مثل: "واجهة سبيل أثري مزخرفة ومجددة" أو "بيت قديم في حالة انهيار جزئي"). حدد .؟..أي مبانٍ بارزة أو معالم معمارية مهمة

Monitoring architectural facades and public spaces

### رصد الهوية وإقتراح الأنشطة

تركز هذه الاستمارة على الهوية المميزة للمكان والانطباعات الحسية والشعورية العامة التي يتركها الموقع لدى الزائر. هنا يشمل أجواء المكان والإحساس بالأمان، بتقييم الخصائص غير الملموسة أو بالراحة، والضوضاء والروائح، ومدى ارتباط الهوية التاريخية الهدف هو فهم كيفية شعور في الفضاء وما الصورة الذهنية بالمكان التي تتكون عنه

لموقع : السور الشمالي المحاذي لـباب الفتوح ومسجد الحاكم بأمر الله



1- صف انطباعك الشخصي عند التواجد في المكان: هل تشعر بالراحة والأمان؟ أم بالتوتر وعدم الارتياح؟ هل الجو العام ودي وممتع أم صاخب؟

2- ما مدى الترتيب في الموقع؟ (نظافة الشوارع، وجود قمامة، روائح كريهة أو طيبة). النظافة تؤثر ؟. بشدة على الانطباع العام

3- هل تشعر أن المكان حيّ وتنبض بالحياة أم مهجور؟ مثلاً: وجود الكثير من الناس يتفاعلون قد يعطي شعوراً بالحيوية. الفراغ والهدوء الزائد في موقع مقترض أن يكون نشطاً قد يعطي انطباعاً بالركود أو الكآبة

Identity monitoring and activity suggestion





Each group of participants was assigned a specific site in Historic Cairo, and within that site, every team conducted a comprehensive urban analysis based on five parallel observation tasks. This holistic approach ensured that spatial, social, visual, and cultural aspects were all examined simultaneously, laying the groundwork for informed and context-sensitive design proposals.

## 1- Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Public Transport Movement

Mapping circulation flows and identifying connectivity gaps or barriers to accessibility.

## 2- Monitoring fixed activities:

Observing permanent or semi-permanent uses in the space—such as vendors, resting spots, and gathering points—and assessing their impact on spatial quality.





### 3-Monitoring social and age groups:

Recording who uses the space (children, youth, elderly, residents, tourists) and how inclusive or exclusive the environment is for different demographics.

### 4-Monitoring architectural facades and public spaces:

Assessing the visual language of the buildings and how their materials, proportions, and functions shape the urban experience.

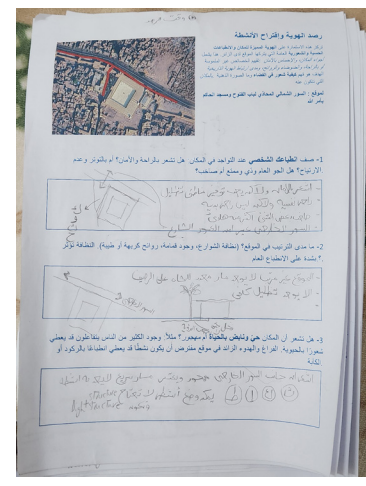
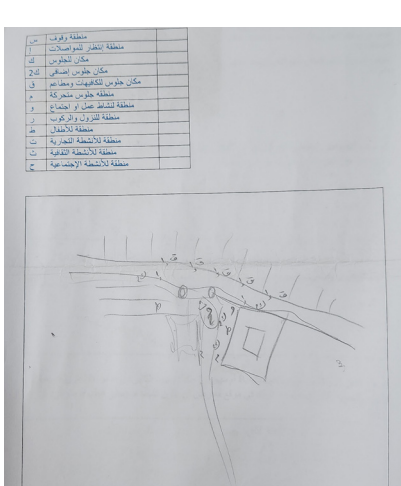
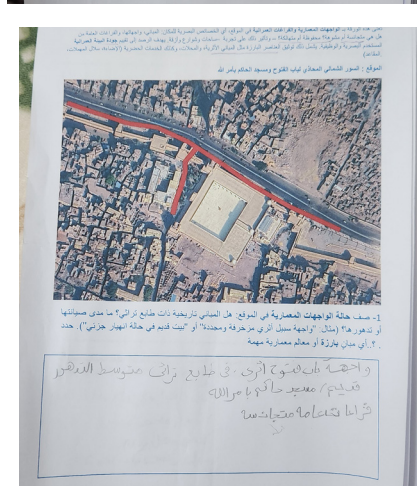
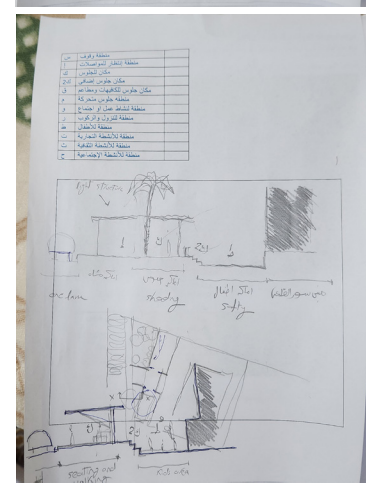
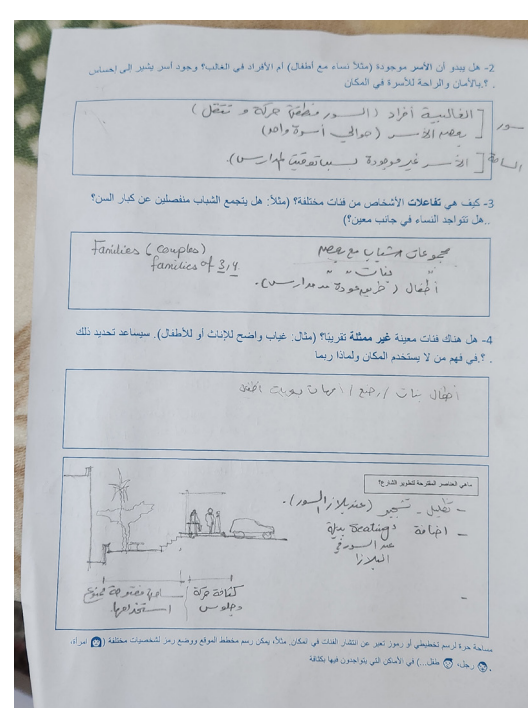
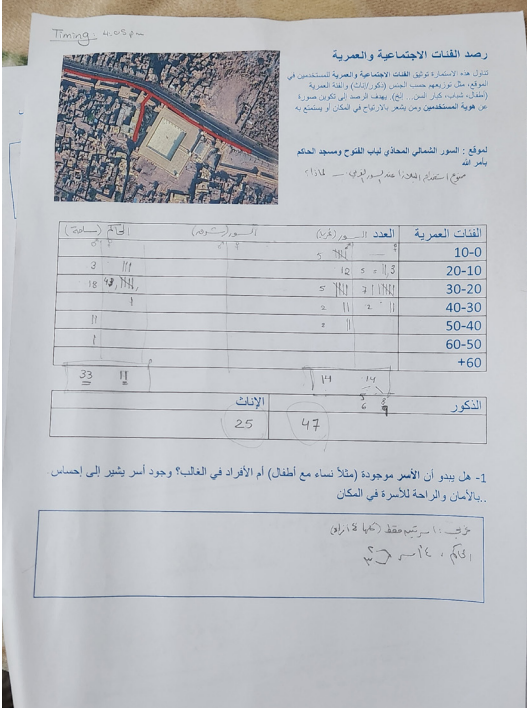
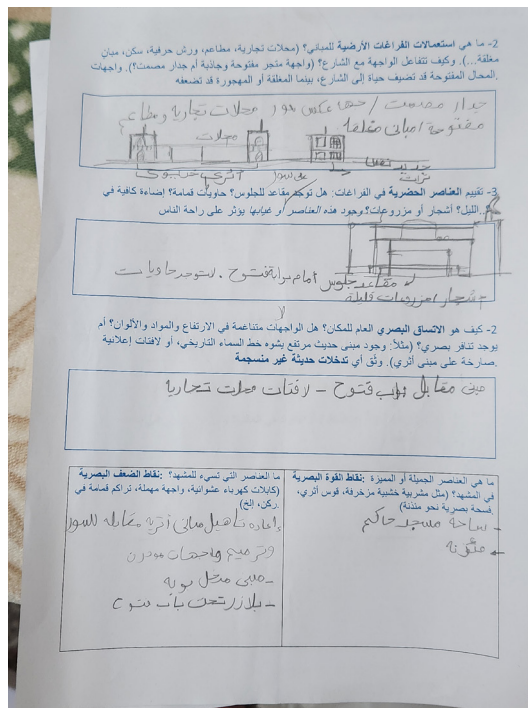
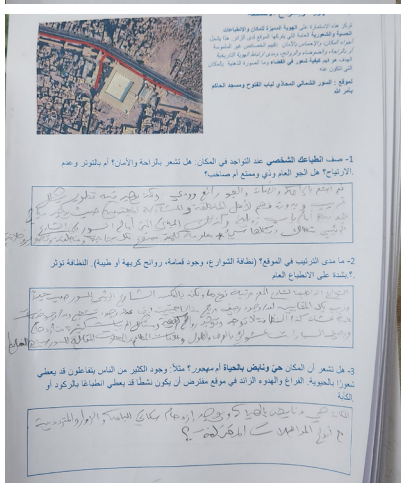
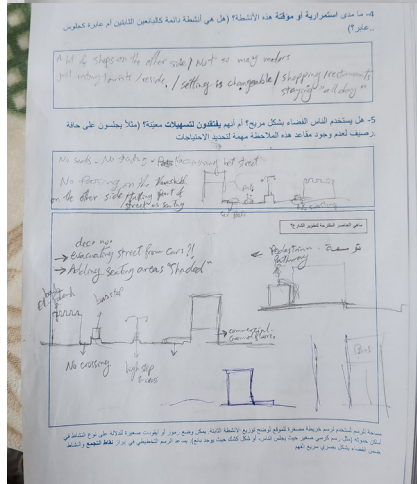
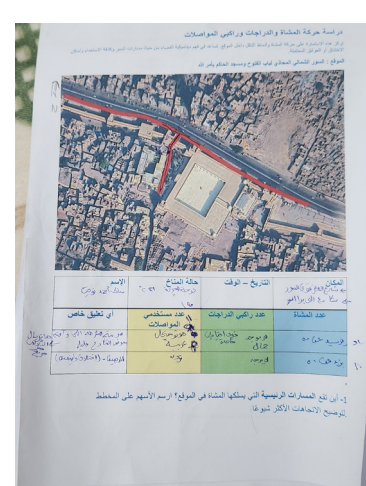
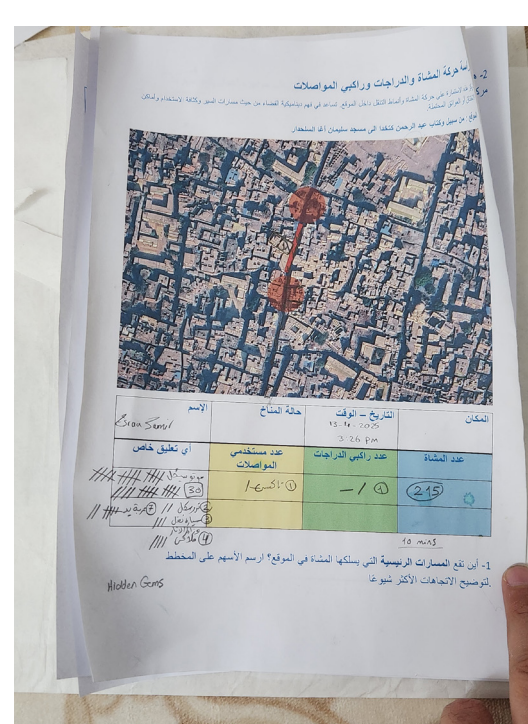
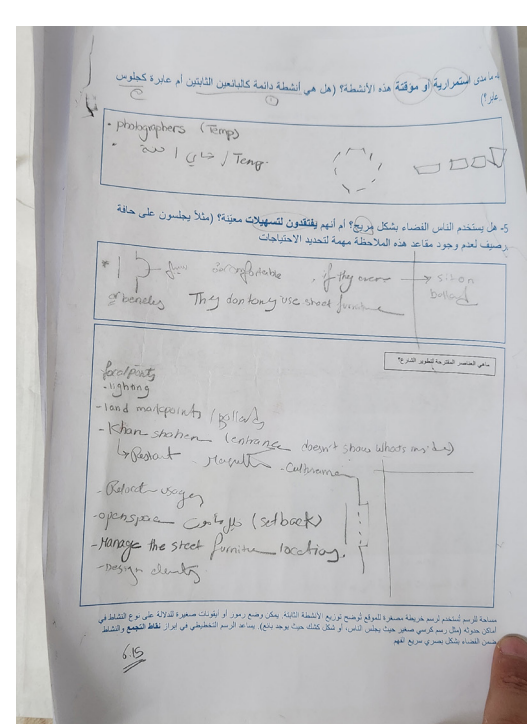
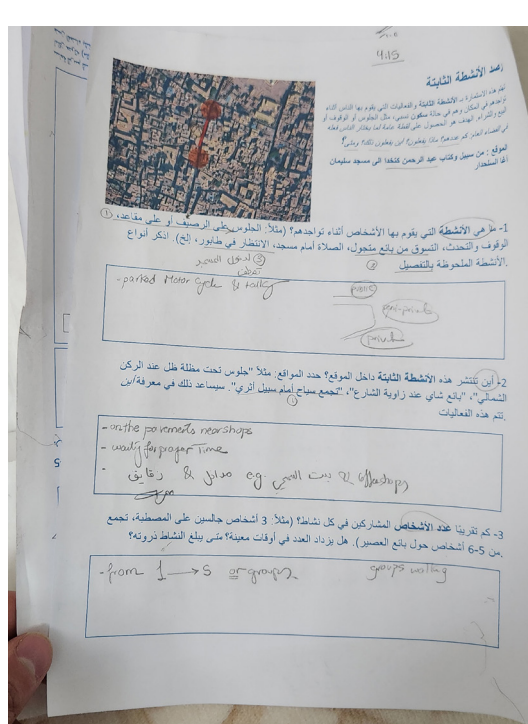
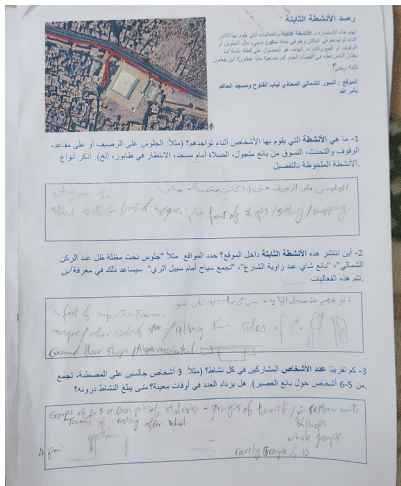
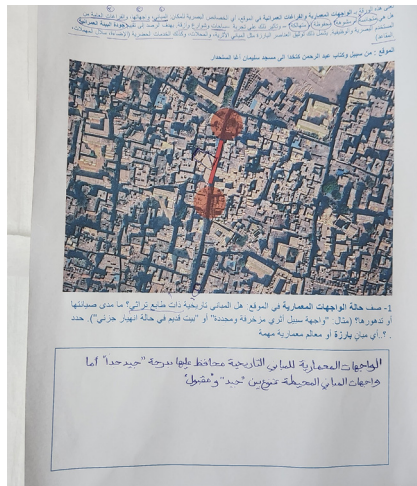
### 5-Identity monitoring and activity suggestion:

Interpreting the symbolic and cultural identity of the site and proposing new activities or interventions that reinforce its unique heritage and community relevance.





## What did they propose ?



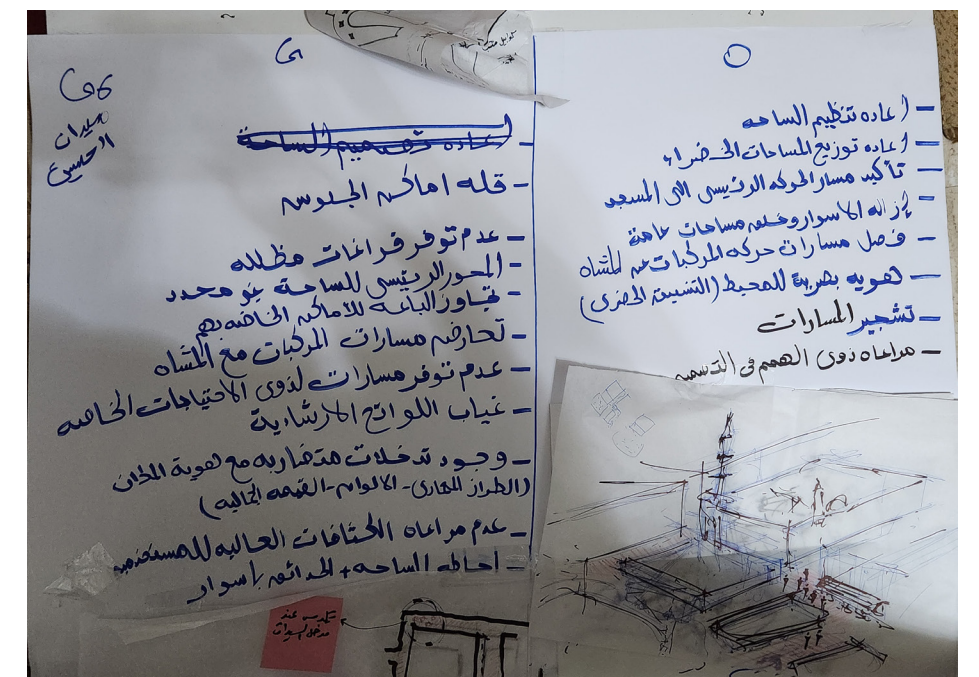
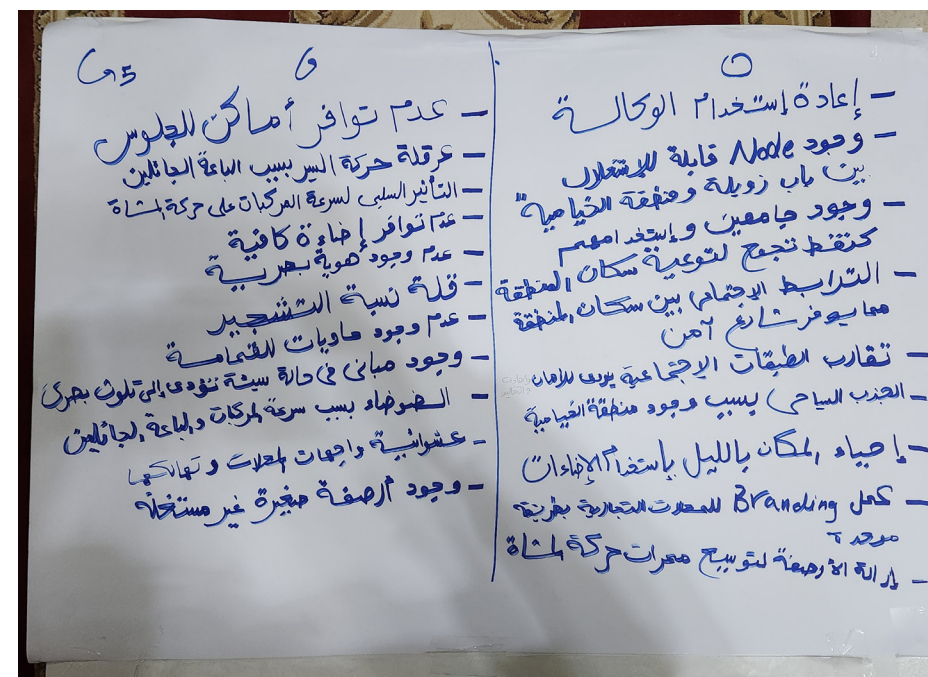
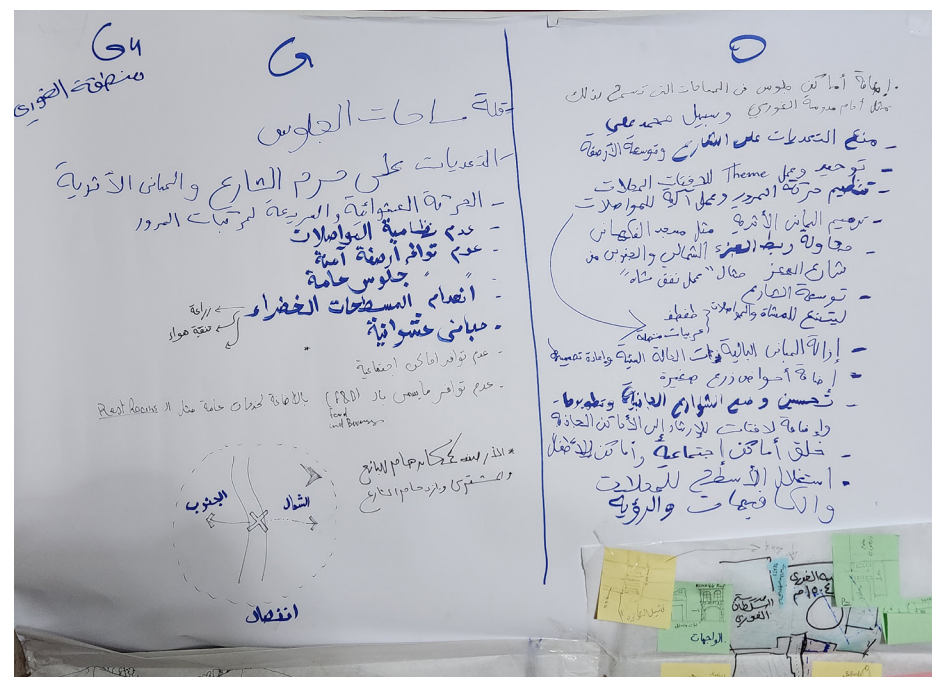
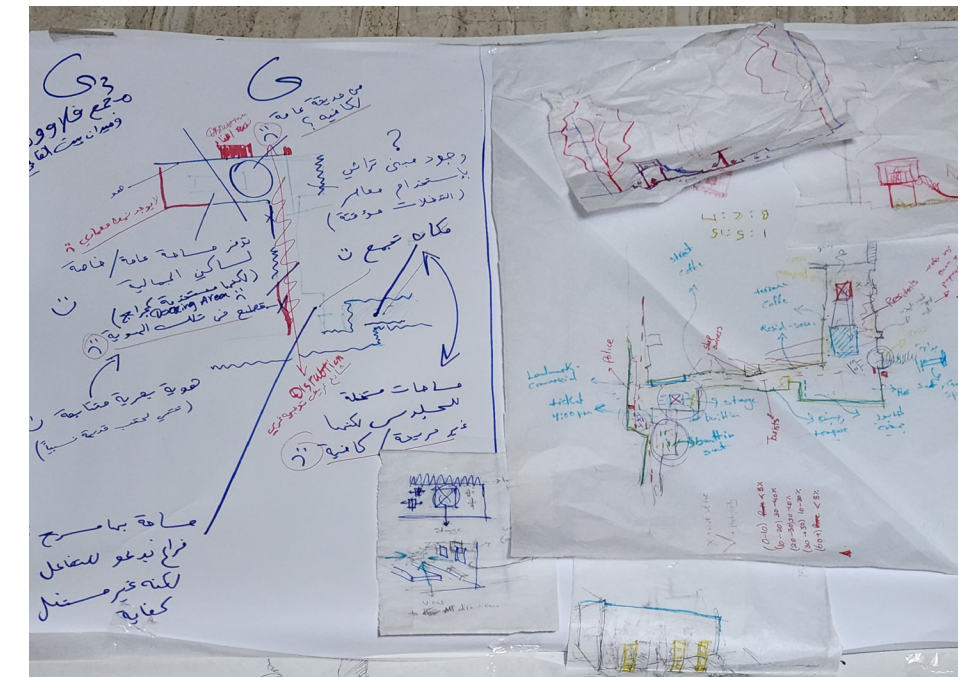
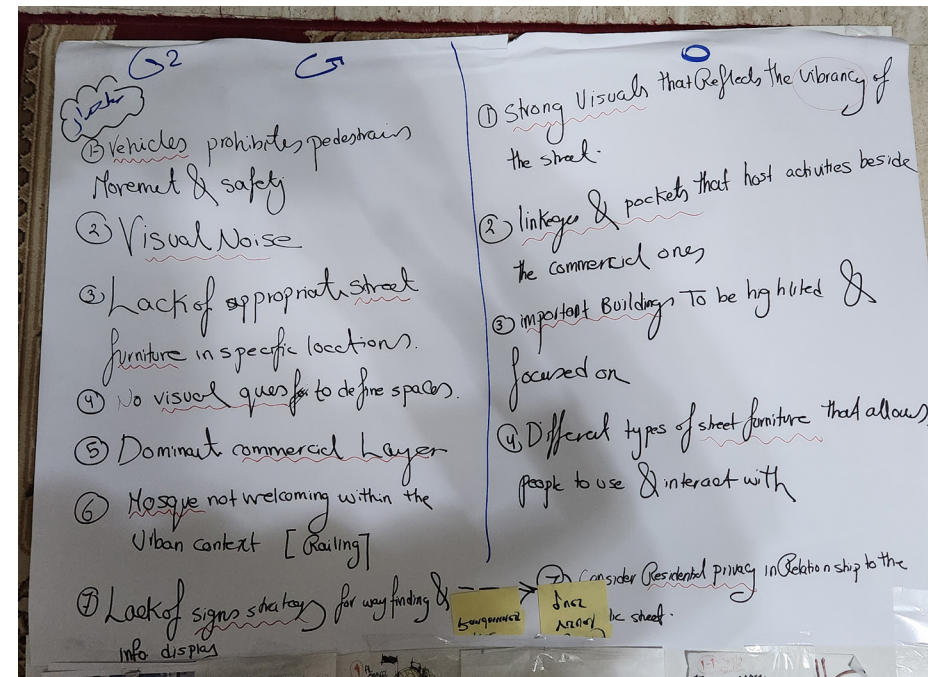
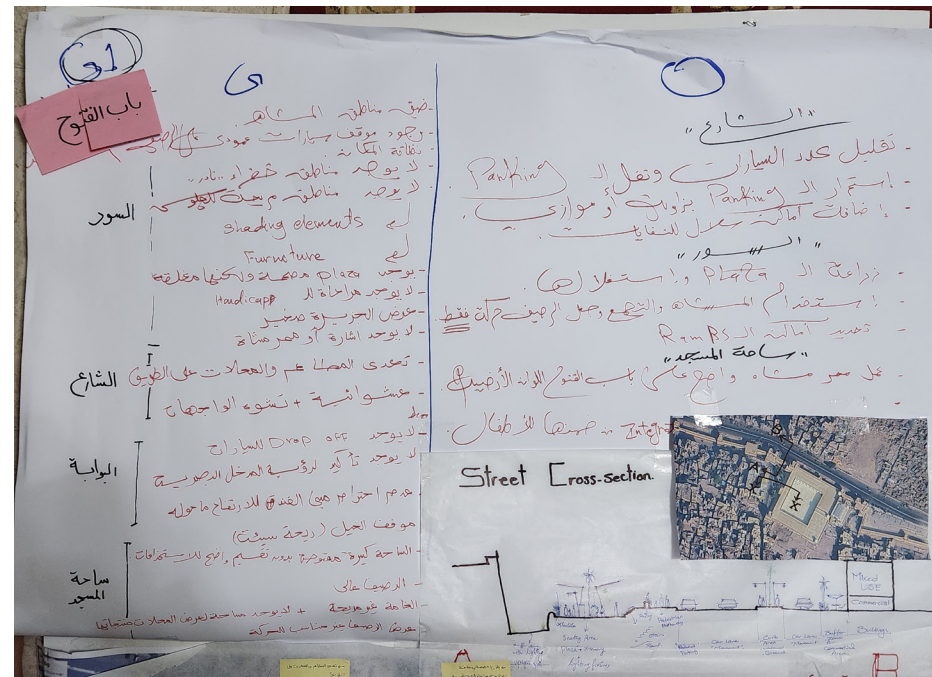
Throughout the workshop, each team conducted on-site observations across different zones of Historic Cairo, focusing on everyday use patterns and the hidden potentials of public space. Participants documented challenges related to mobility, facades, street life, and urban identity through hand sketches, mapping, and activity logging.

The findings revealed recurring needs for clearer circulation, shaded seating, facade revitalization, and better integration of cultural landmarks. Across the proposals, a strong emphasis was placed on reactivating underused edges, supporting inclusive social activities, and promoting sustainable micro-interventions that honour the heritage context while enhancing livability.



# Step Five : Designing Livable Spaces

## Opportunities and Gaps for Each Site



During this step, all groups analyzed their assigned locations in Historic Cairo to identify key strengths and weaknesses. Common strengths included the strong cultural identity of the spaces, the presence of historic landmarks, and the steady flow of pedestrians, which offers potential for vibrant public life. Many sites also showed opportunities for cultural storytelling and community engagement rooted in heritage.

At the same time, participants observed recurring challenges such as a lack of shaded seating, visual clutter, poor signage, and disconnected pedestrian routes. Several facades were poorly maintained or visually disconnected from their surroundings. These findings helped guide the next design phase, where each group proposed practical, people-centered solutions to enhance the livability and heritage value of the sites.









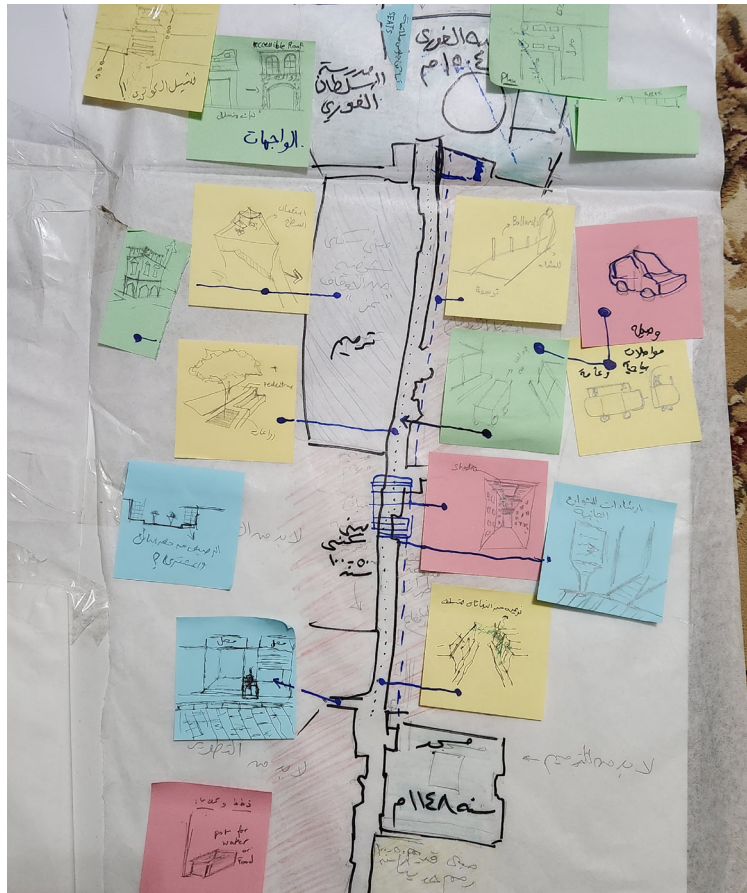


## Step Six : Building a Collective Vision

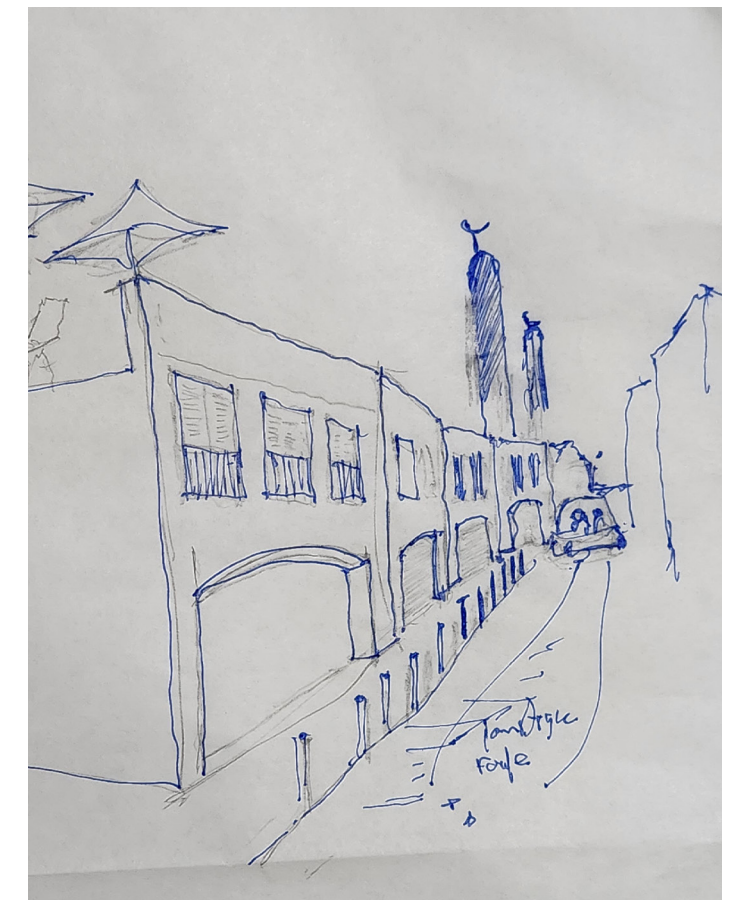
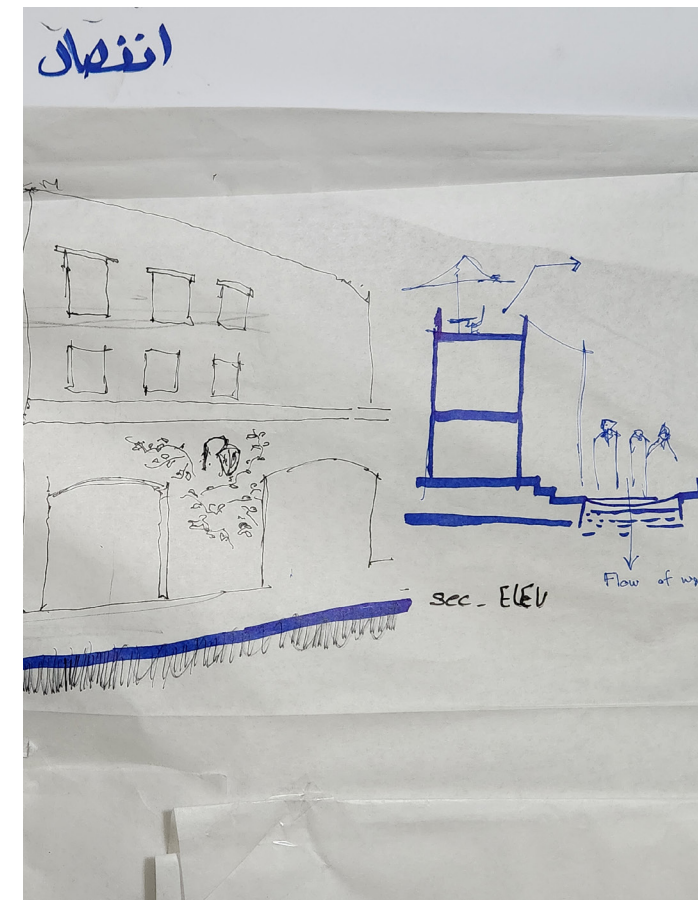
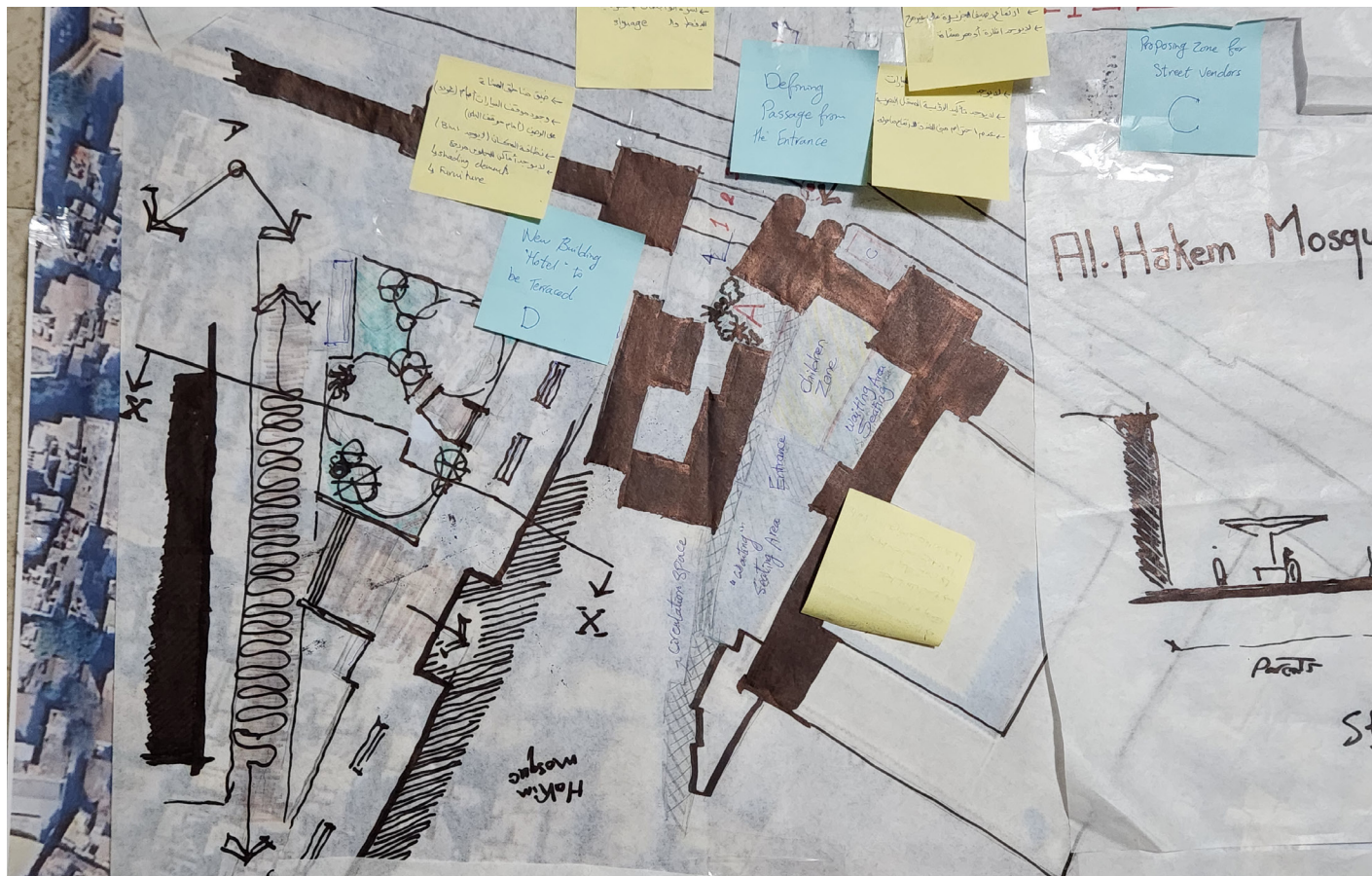


Participants collaborated in groups to develop strategies for improving the study area, focusing on mobility, public spaces, edges, policy and planning, as well as community engagement. Each group created sketches and conceptual solutions to address these key aspects.





Designs propose enhancing walkability and heritage experience through shaded paths, active facades, and cultural signage that reactivates underused spaces.

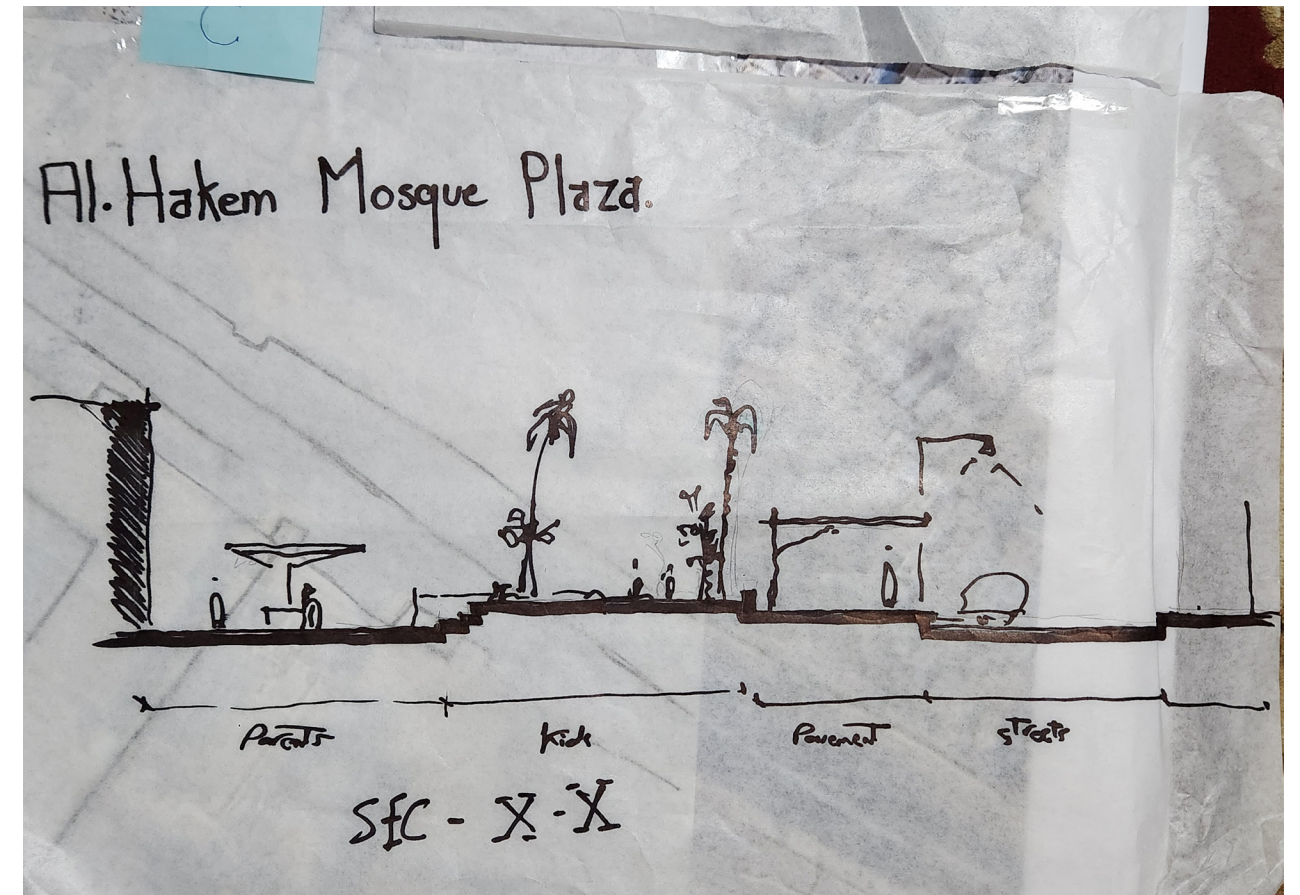
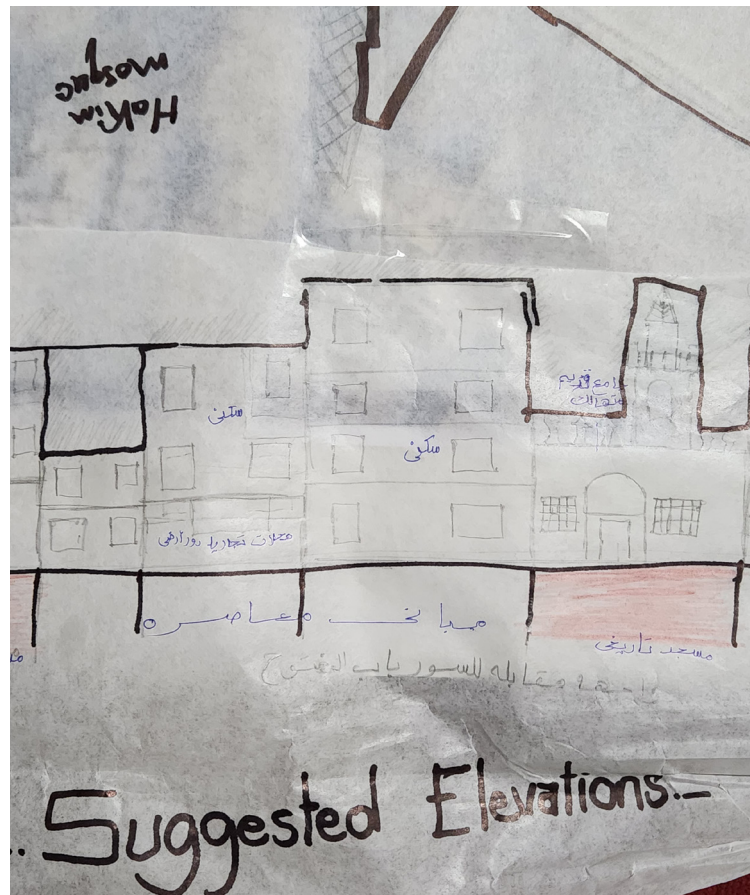


Proposals focus on organizing open spaces near key landmarks with greenery, seating, and clear movement paths, turning them into vibrant, people-friendly zones.

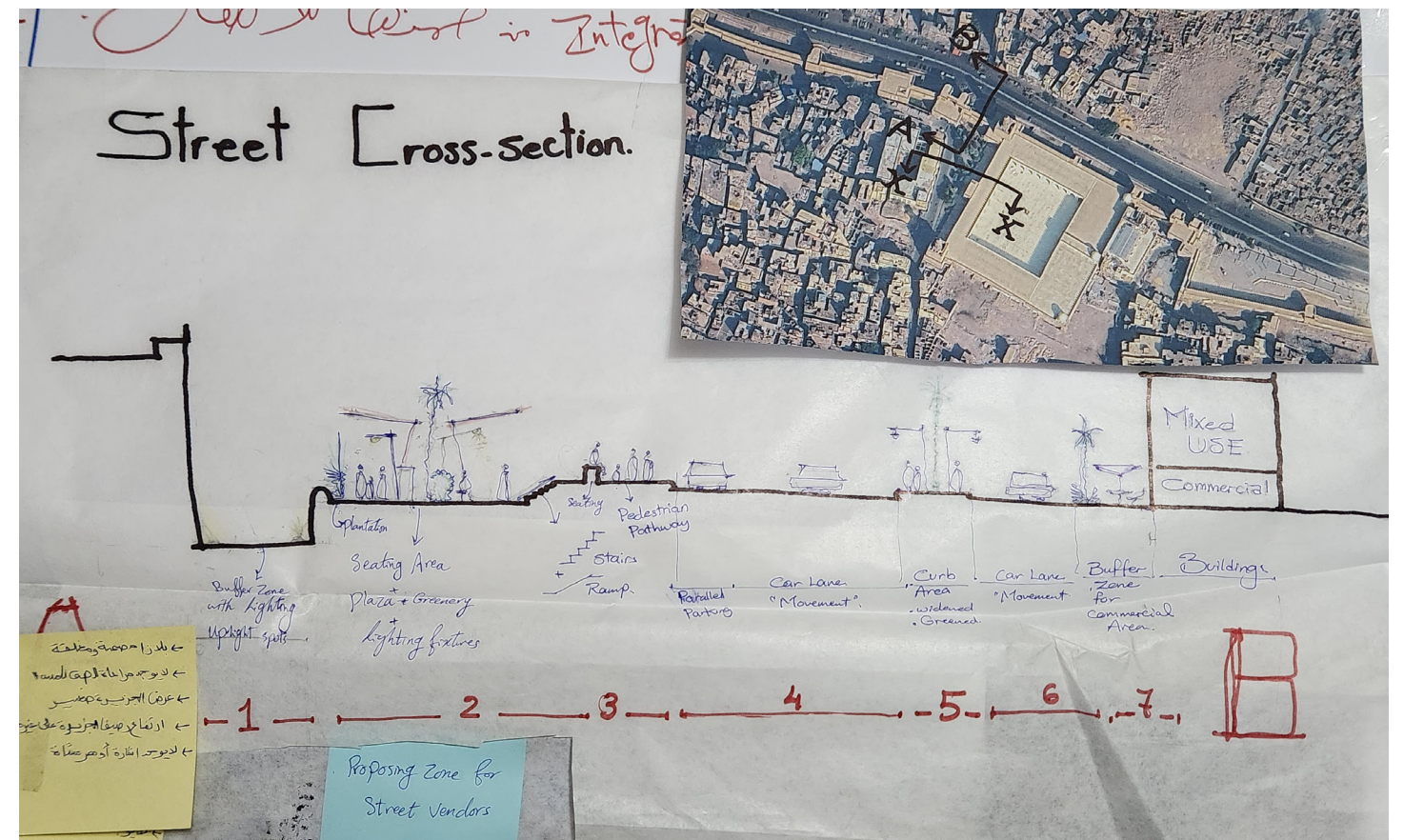
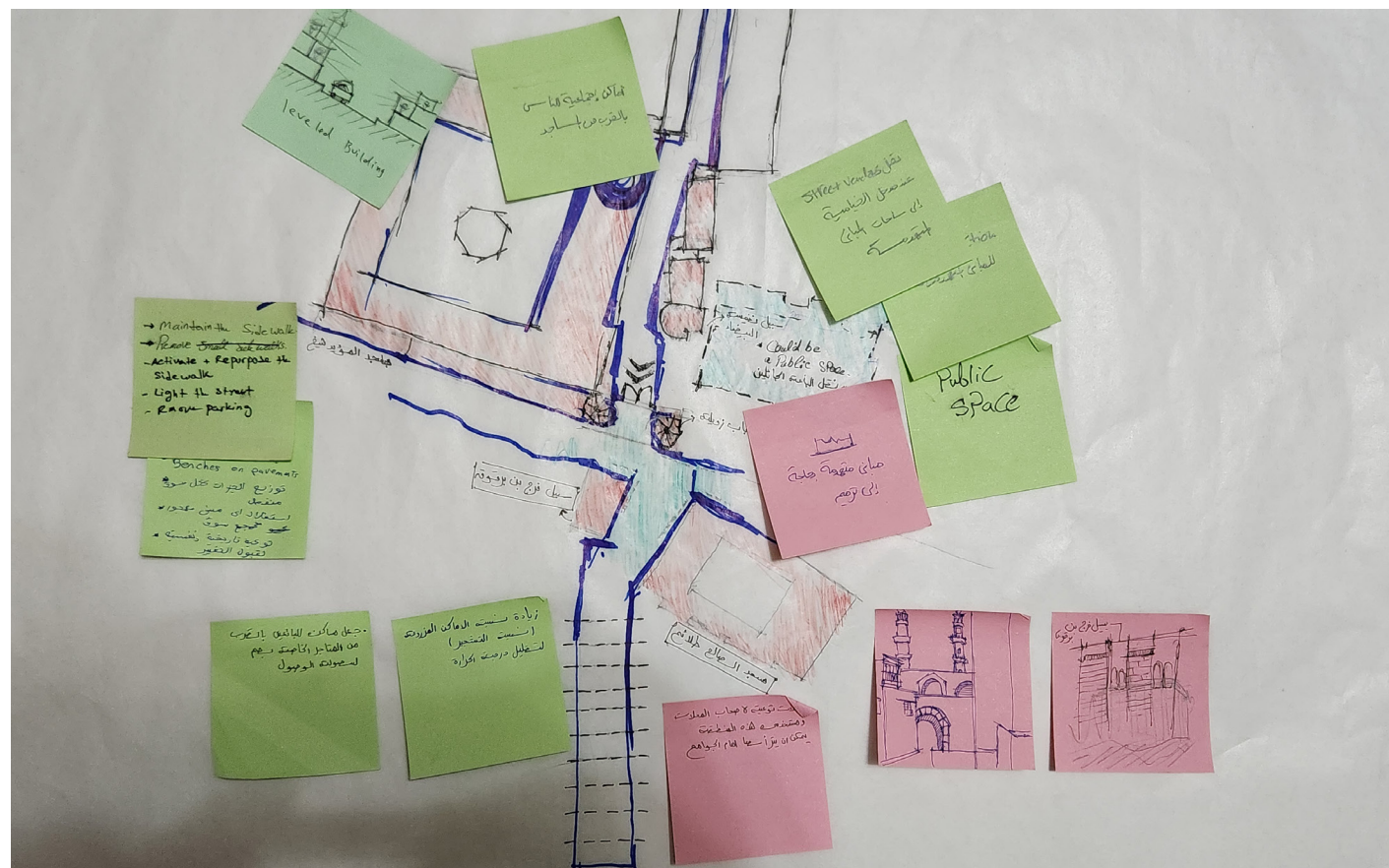






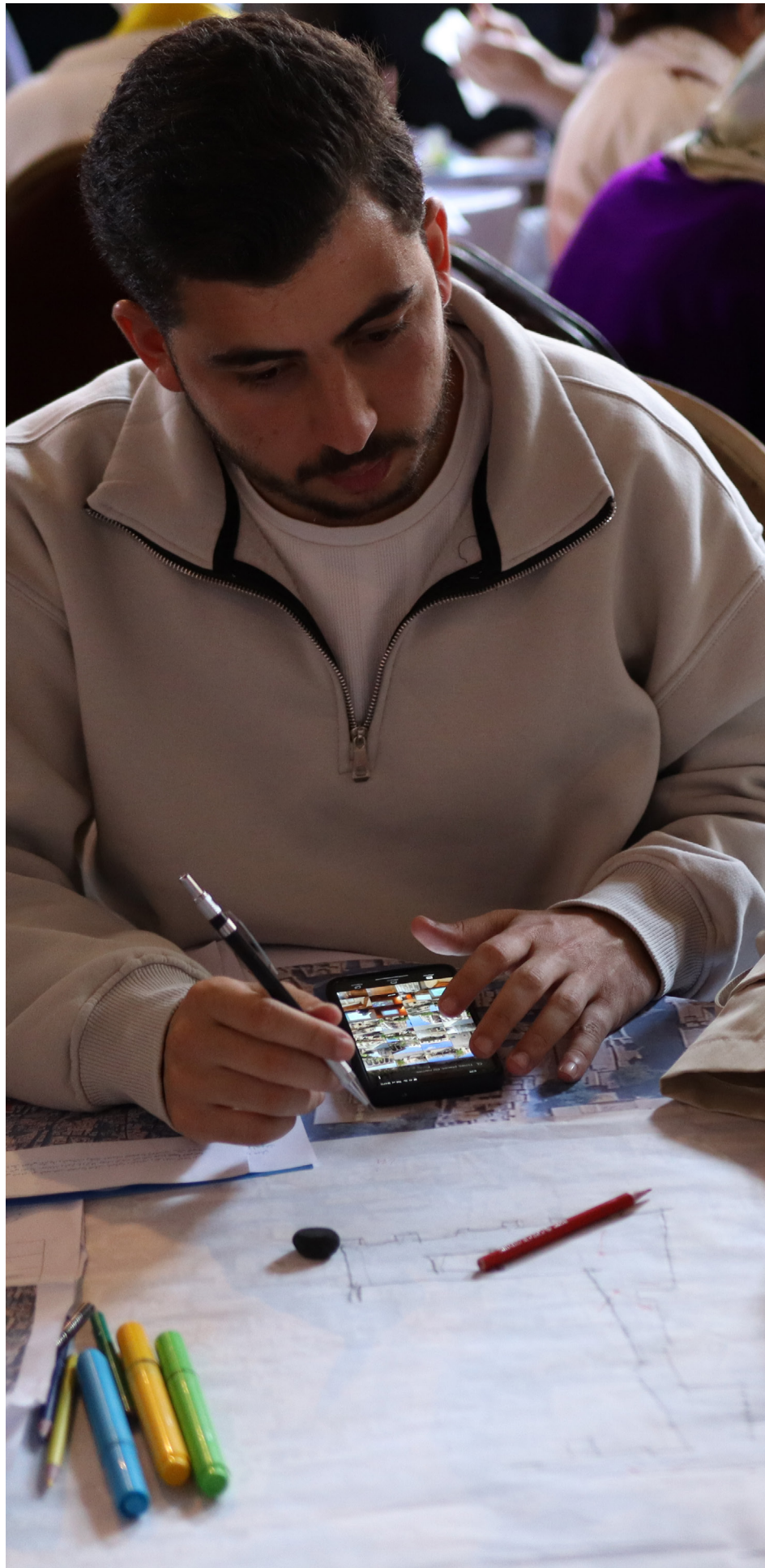


Introduce modular street furniture and flexible edge treatments to adapt spaces for daily use and special events. Encourage micro-retail and craft stalls to enhance street vitality.

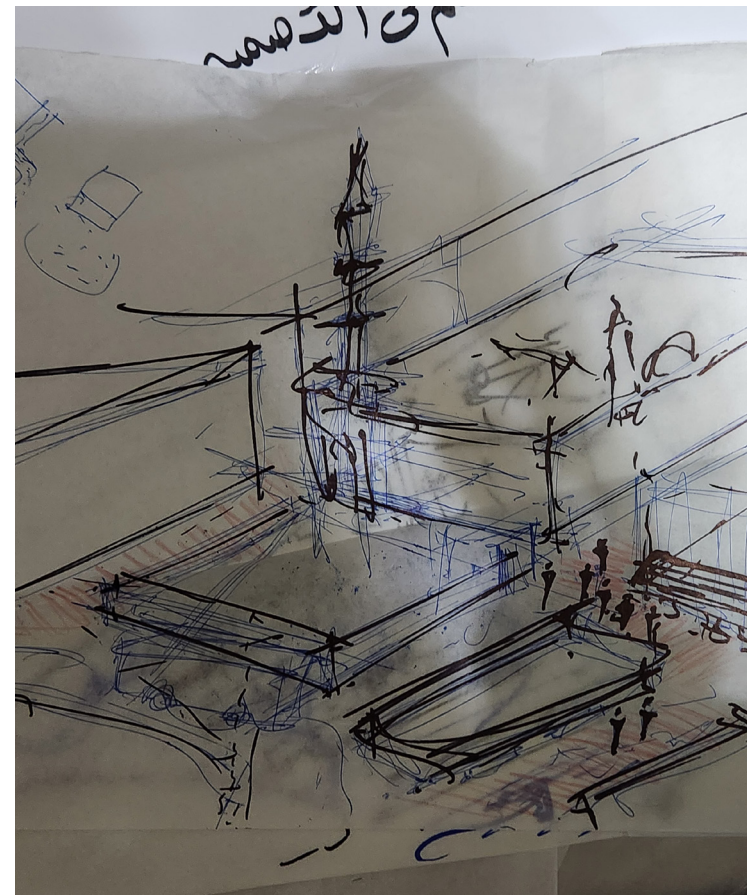
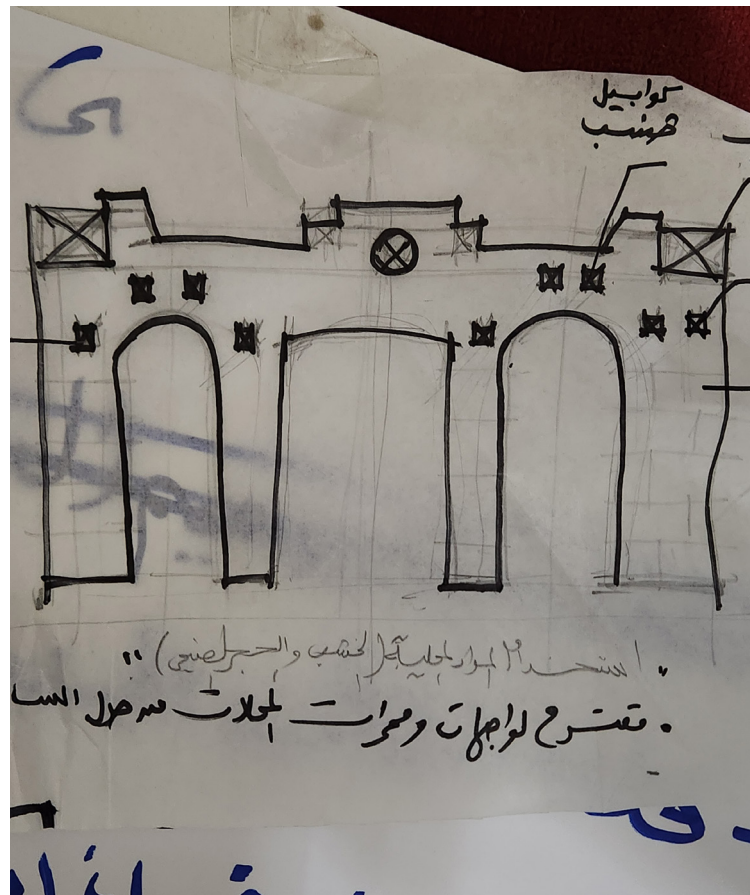


Use creative wayfinding and storytelling trails to connect nodes of heritage. Implement lighting and facade art to animate spaces after dark and support local identity.

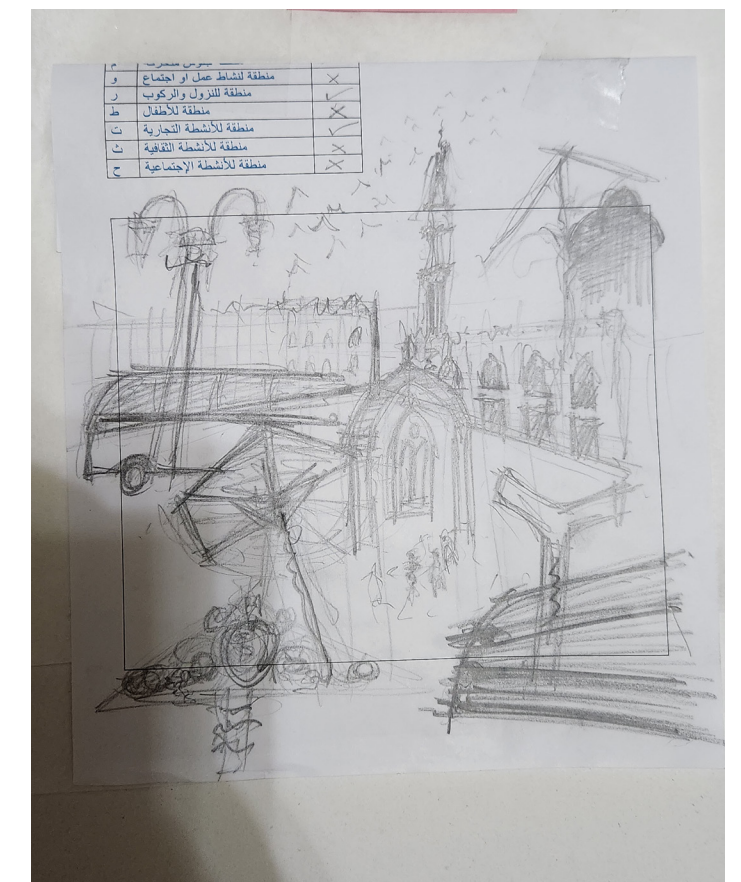
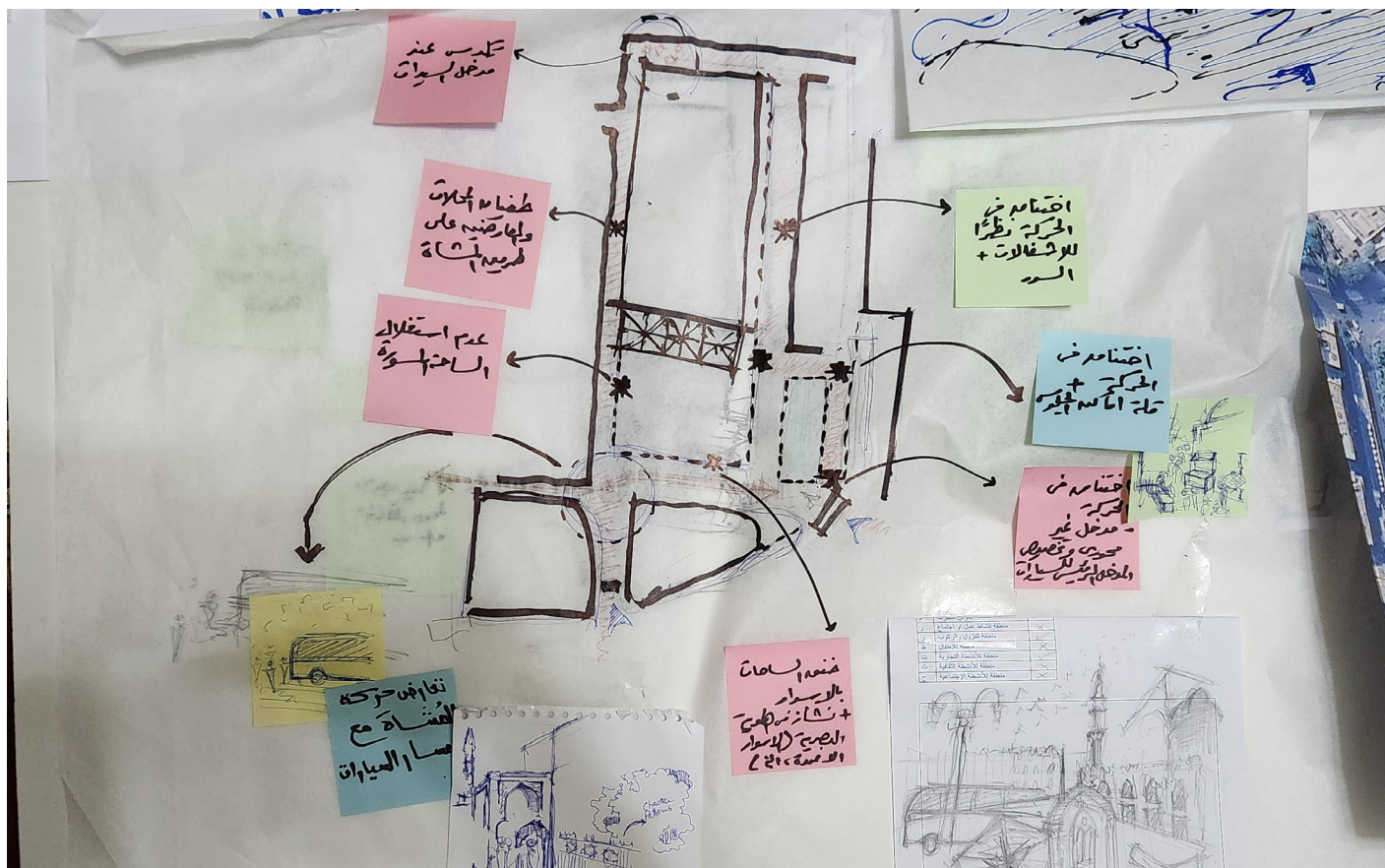








Designs focused on organizing circulation, improving pedestrian flow, and redefining plaza boundaries to create a more legible and accessible public space.

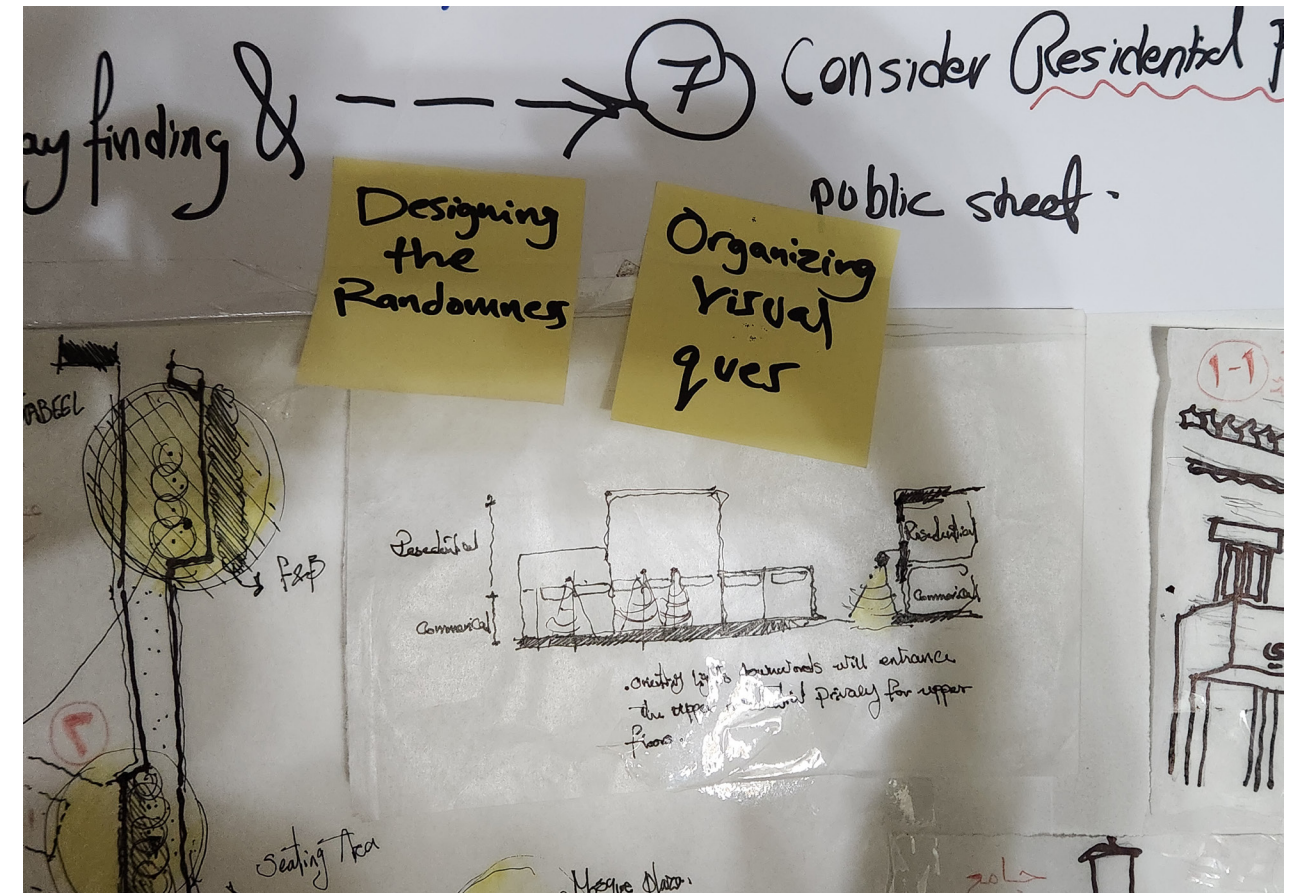
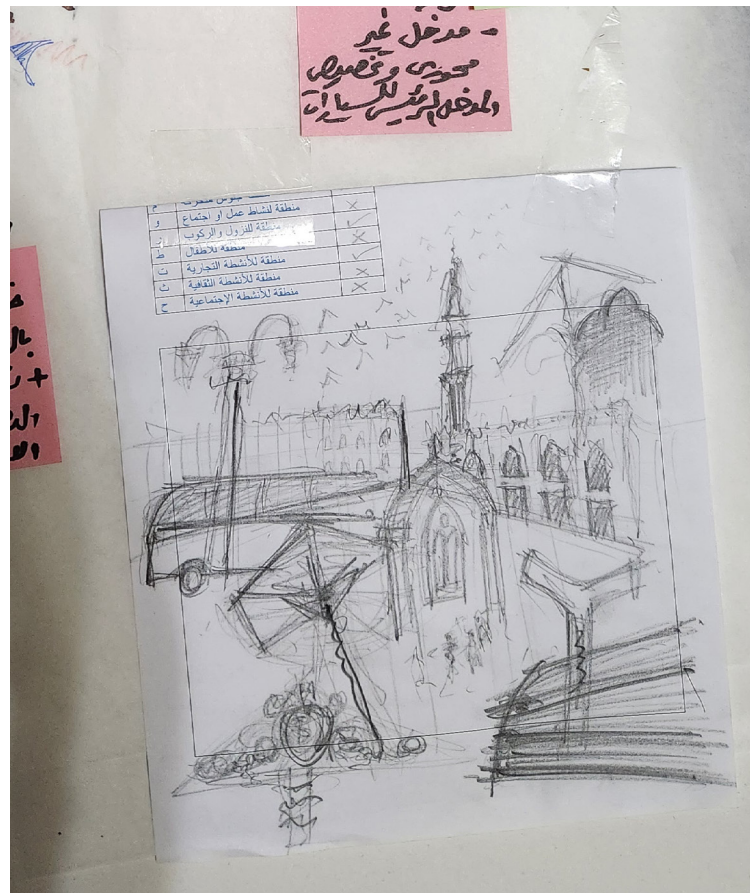


Participants proposed integrating shaded gathering areas, showcasing historical facades, and activating the square with cultural and community-driven uses.

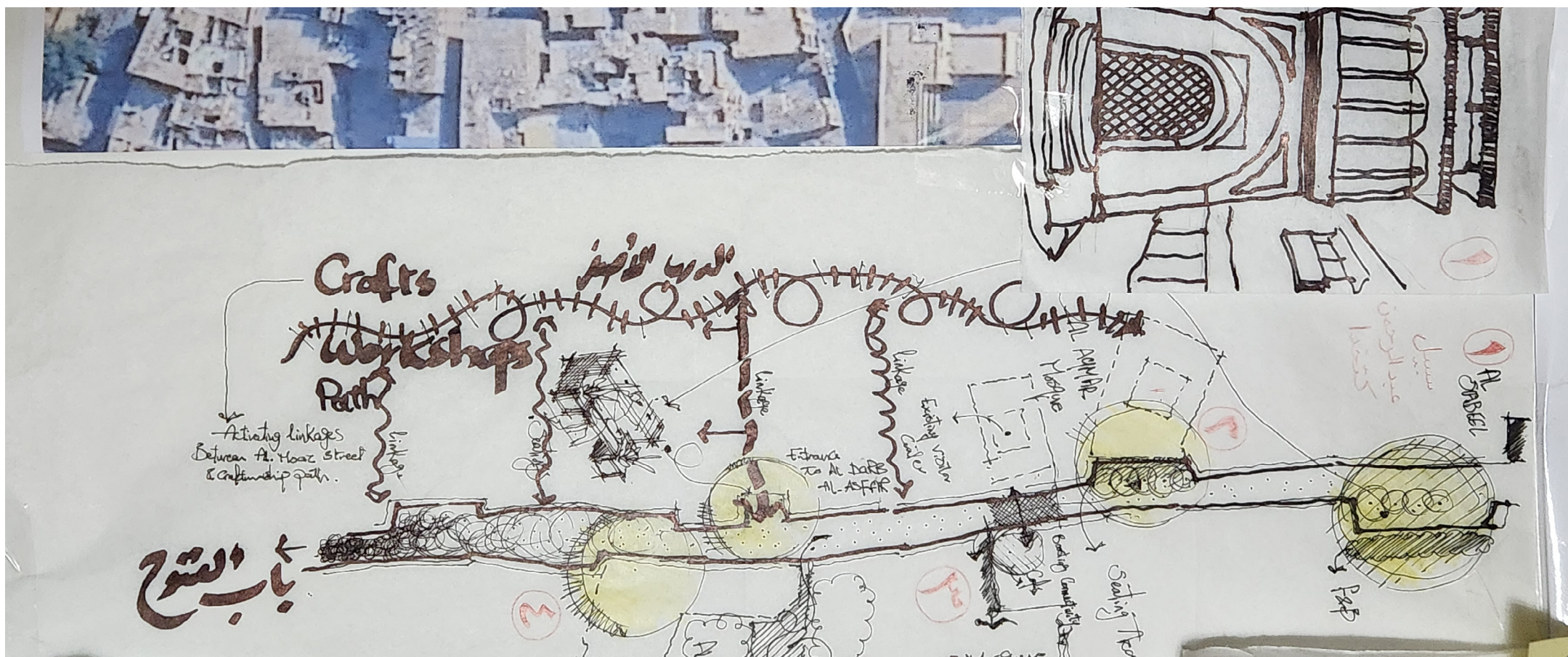








Participants proposed redesigning facades to enhance visual appeal and encourage interactive, people-friendly ground-floor uses.

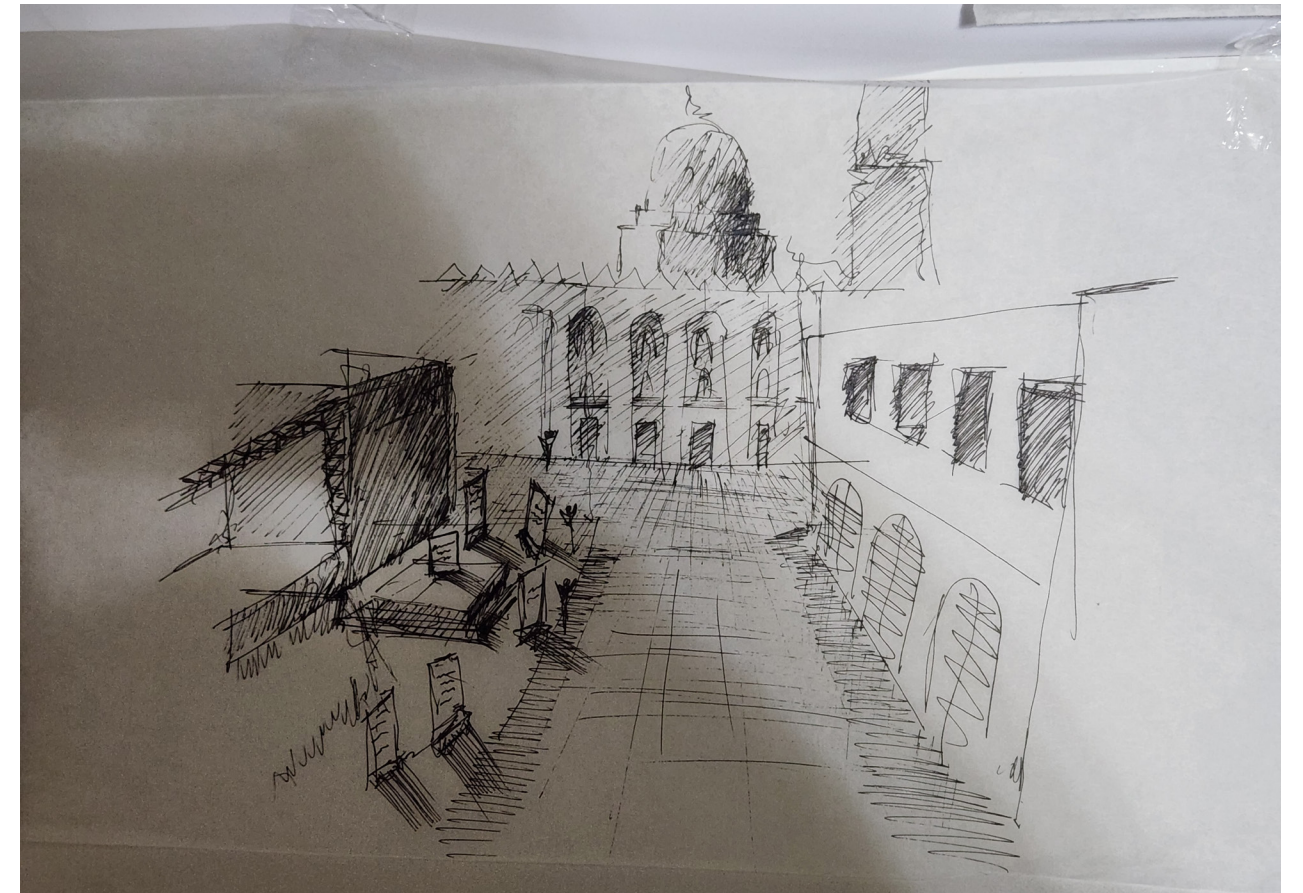


Transform the spine between Bab Zuweila and Al-Gamr Mosque into a cultural promenade—linking cafés, workshops, and prayer areas with shaded seating zones, soft paving, and curated wayfinding.

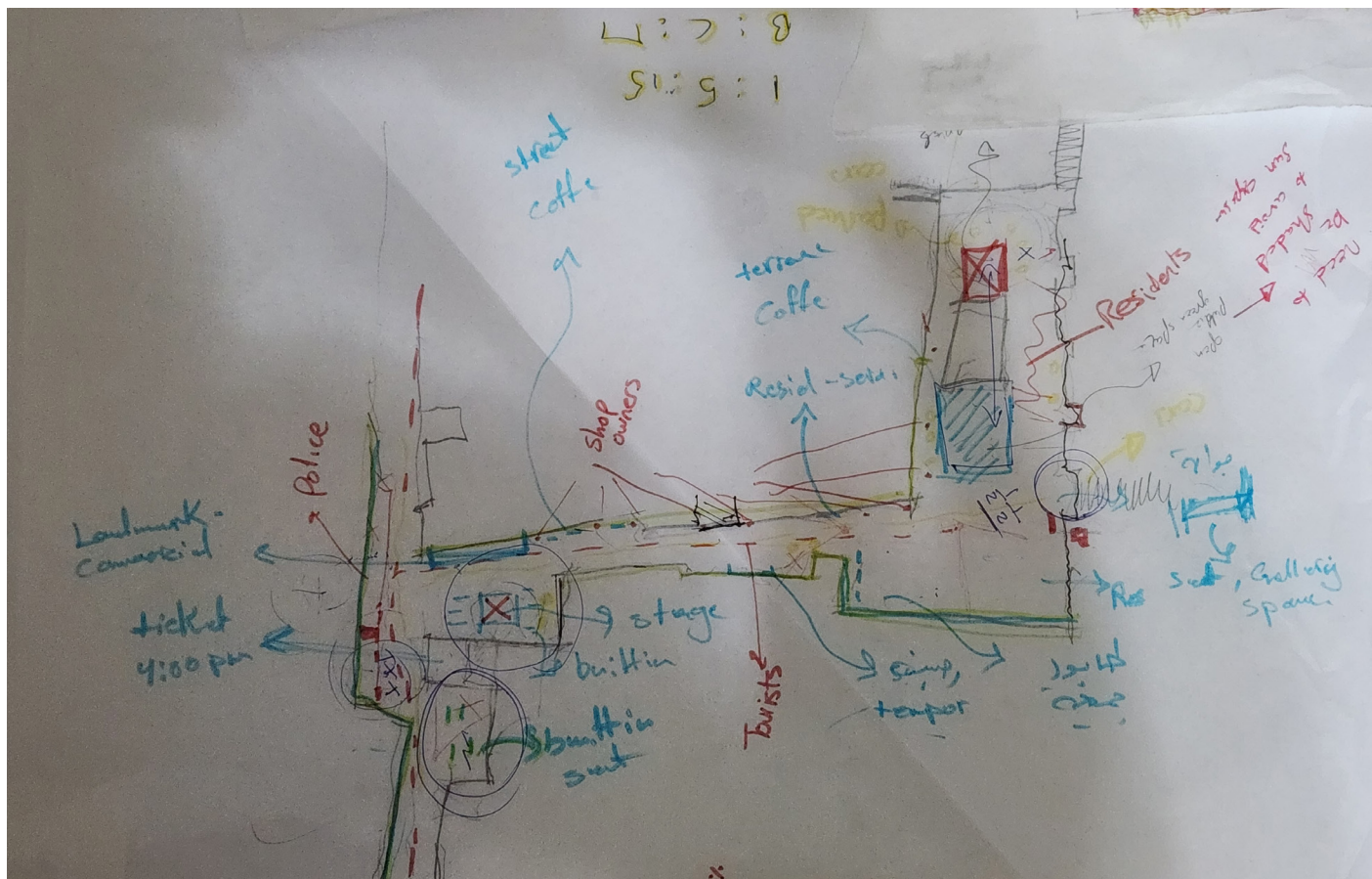








Encourage collaborative design thinking through group discussions, leading to creative and site-responsive urban sketches and layout proposals.



Develop intersection nodes as active cultural spots, enhancing spatial orientation and enriching user experience through multifunctional design.







## Step Seven: We discussed the output



Each group collaboratively explored ideas and tackled key challenges within their assigned focus areas.







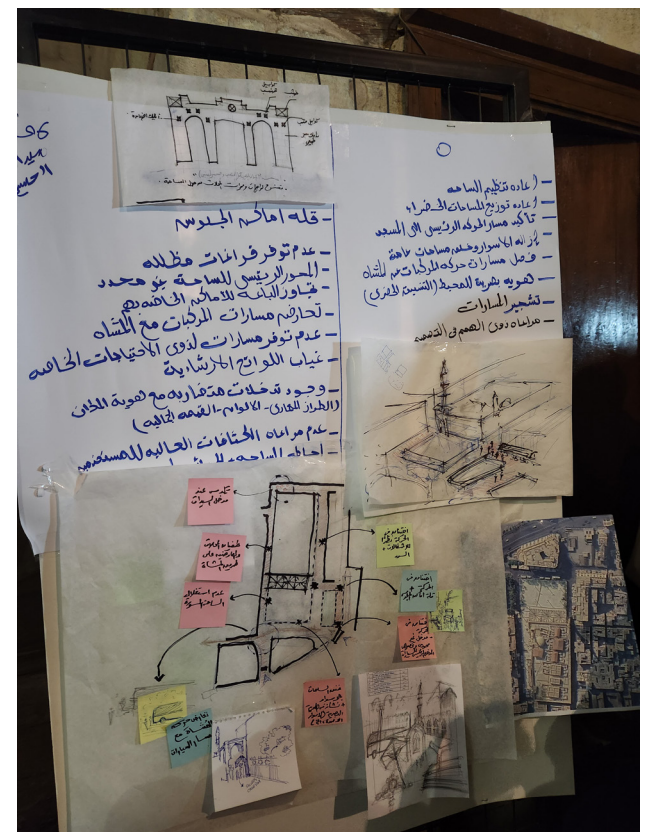
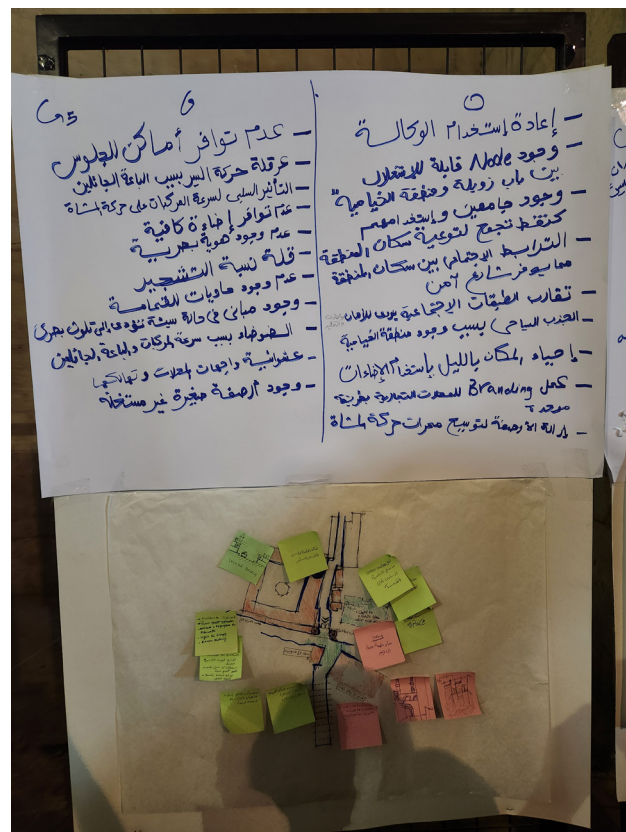
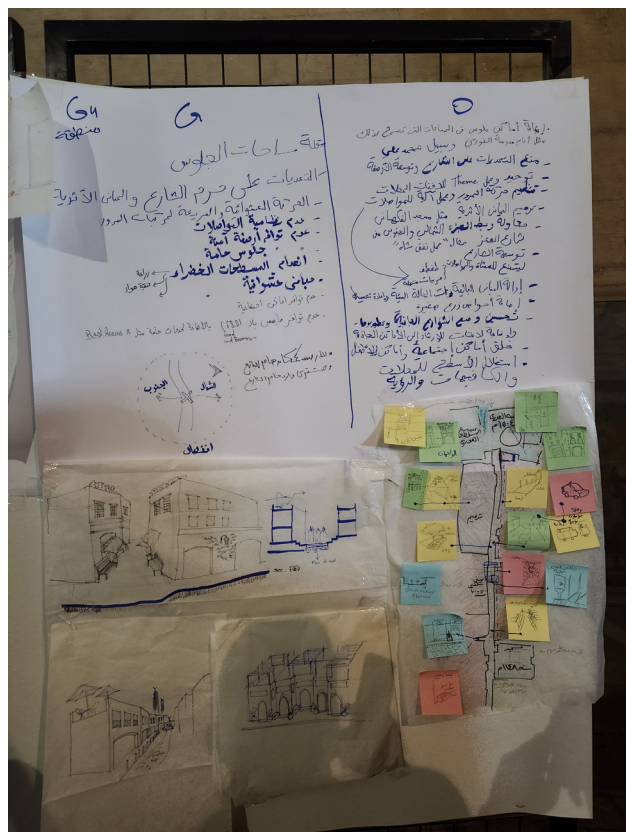
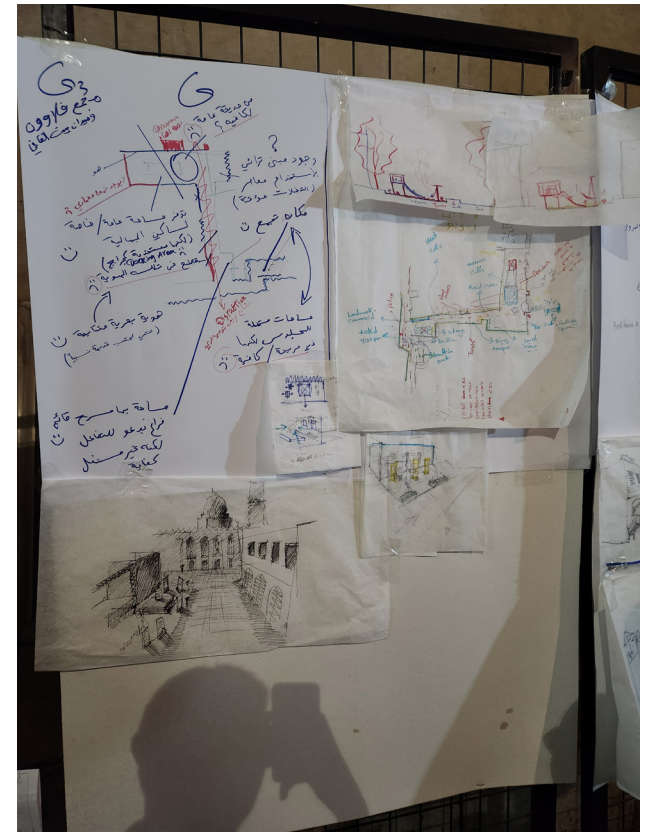
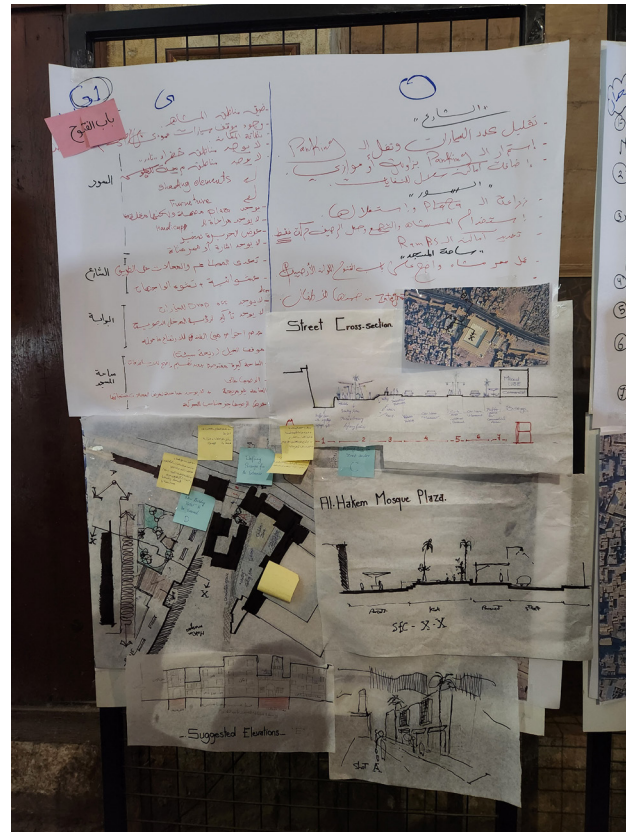
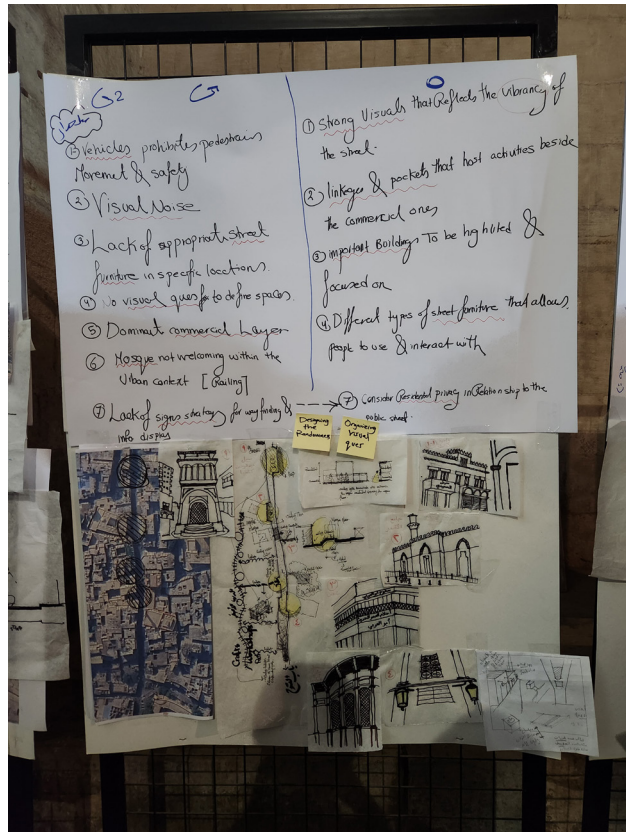
Each group presented their ideas on a mood board.



At the end of the workshop, each group presented their ideas using mood boards

showcasing sketches, observations, and proposed interventions to reimagine the historic urban spaces of Cairo.





The final boards captured each group's vision for reactivating historic spaces. Through sketches, maps, and concise proposals,

teams presented solutions that tackled connectivity, public space activation, façade improvements, and sustainable urban strategies—demonstrating a deep, site-specific understanding and a creative approach to reimagining heritage areas.











## Final Step: Closed of workshop and friendly discussion



The workshop concluded with group reflections and open dialogue among participants and guests.



This final exchange not only celebrated the collective efforts but also fostered a sense of community, shared purpose, and future collaboration.



# Our team

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Mouaz Abouzaid  
Meryem Kübra  
Amira Badran  
Mohammed Zaki Sayed

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Ahmed Haron  
Sameir Hammad  
Mohammed Refaat  
Mohamed Abdel-Baki Ibrahim  
Khaled Abdel-Hady  
Noha Nabil  
Khaled Dewidar  
Nancy Abd Elmonem

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Dalia Magdy  
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Mousa Abu Douash  
Ibrahim Al-Hindi  
Tarek Ali





# Our team

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Rodina Abdullaa  
Ahmed Al-Rhodesly  
Esraa Samir  
Adie Alnobani  
Farida Hossam  
Mustafa Salem  
Doha Yasser  
Habiba Mohamed Rashad  
Rafeef El Ghazoly  
Shahd Farah  
Mohamed Amin  
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Zainab Emad ELDin  
Maged Mohammed  
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Alaa Abdallah  
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Zainab Almansour





## Our organizers team:



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**Nada Mohamed**



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**Mohammed Marzook**



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Acknowledgment ....



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