At the beginning of the 21st century, the Medina of Marrakesh is facing significant changes. The old town had been isolated and preserved by the French protectorate policy during the first half of the 1900s. After the withdrawal of the colonial power, the former incarnation of Muslim cultural life declined to a residential area for the poorest rural population.

During the 1960s, Morocco, under the reign of King Hassan II, embarked on a modernization program that included the renovation of the old town. The Medersa Aglou el Kébir was restored, and the old town began to attract tourists. The renovation of the old town continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with the restoration of many historic buildings.

Today, the Medina of Marrakesh is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and its restoration continues. The old town is now a vibrant cultural hub, with museums, galleries, and a variety of shops and restaurants. The traditional mud brick architecture and narrow alleyways have been preserved, creating a unique atmosphere that draws visitors from around the world.

Gentrification is a concern in the Medina, as some areas have become more affluent, leading to rising property values and increased tourism. The government has implemented policies to ensure that the cultural heritage of the old town is protected, while also encouraging sustainable development.

In conclusion, the Medina of Marrakesh is a living example of how a historic area can be preserved and revitalized while maintaining its cultural identity. The ongoing efforts to preserve and enhance the Medina show the importance of balancing cultural heritage with modern needs and aspirations.

Notes
1. The ordinary house with an inner courtyard in the Moroccan town is called a riad. The riad is the center of the town, and the buildings are arranged around it.
2. Libraries, museums, and art galleries are common in the old town.
3. The Medina is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognized for its architectural and cultural significance.
4. The government has implemented policies to promote tourism while preserving the cultural heritage of the old town.

References

Image Credits
- Image 1: The medina of Marrakesh, showing the traditional architecture and narrow alleyways.
- Image 2: A modern building with a traditional design, indicating the ongoing efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of the old town.

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