

Best practice 35: Historic City of Ourense, Spain

Scale: Urban

Stage of tourism development: Beginning

Main objective: Improve urban quality of life

Categories of effects:

Effects on urban governance

- Integrated urban planning
- Stakeholder participation
- Steering government

Effects on quality of life

- Built heritage diversity
- Cultural practices and representations
- Urban economies

The historic city of Ourense, situated in the South of Galicia suffered in the 1980s from a serious crisis of its historic city centre in terms of economic, social, environmental and cultural significance: ageing of residents, low occupancy rate, high levels of social marginalization, deficiencies in urban infrastructure and public services, and under-use of cultural heritage threatened by serious state of deterioration. This contributed to a gradual decline in traditional economic development, environmental quality and social inclusion. The 1997 Special Plan for Internal Restoration was the first step of a long term participatory initiative from the municipality aimed at bringing life back to the heart of the city, restoring heritage buildings, improve residents' quality of life, provide low cost housing for young people and boost the dynamics of cultural and economic renaissance based on restoration activities, improvement of public areas, accessibility, waste management and cultural development. Besides many successful rehabilitation, environmental management and pedestrianisation operations in the city centre, social inclusion and employment programmes were developed for marginal groups, including the creation of a training centre for the construction sector. The management of all restoration processes was centralized in a single municipal office clearly visible to facilitate and increase efficiency of citizen participation processes. Many cultural initiatives were implemented with the objective of attracting regional cultural tourism: conversion of a cloister into a cultural forum, construction of a hotel for pilgrims, creation of a new library and historical and arts archives, creation of a school of arts and trade, conception of thematic craft streets, creation of the Ourense International Festival of Independent Cinema and the planned development of the thermal area in Burgas. These projects show that the city expects much from tourism development in improving quality of life and boost urban dynamism. The project was designated "Good Practice" in architecture and urban design by the UN-Habitat in 2004.

Source: UN-Habitat, 2004. Best practices Database in Improving the Environment.

Link:

http://www.bestpractices.org/database/bp_display_best_practice.php?best_practice_id=1200