



VIGAN (PHILIPPINES)

Community Participation: A Heritage Conservation Practice for Sustainable Urban Revitalization

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In a globalized and innovative world, local communities are playing an increasingly important role in heritage conservation. Along with the benefits that go with the inscription on the World Heritage List, there are special challenges for the local communities living in or near the World Heritage sites. Increased visitation to a site, one of the desired benefits of World Heritage status, can also call for involvement at all levels to have this growth and its heritage conservation carefully managed.

The Heritage City of Vigan is a virtuous example of cooperation between local communities to ensure the preservation of its tangible and intangible heritage. Even before its inscription as a World Heritage Site and its recent success as one of the New 7 Wonders Cities, Vigan has already a strong relationship with the local community through engagement in planning and management of programs and innovative heritage management practices. The local communities and other stakeholders have been a dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate partners to the city as they work together in all aspects of implementation and development of heritage conservation. In the 1990s, Vigan was a 2nd class municipality with an annual revenue of 27 million pesos, hardly enough to defray the salaries of its employees let alone deliver the most basic services. It was a diminishing community adversely affected by historical misfortunes beyond her control.

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Photos: City of Vigan



keepers of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The sustainability of Vigan's conservation management lies in its ability to engage the local stakeholders, the local community – the owners of the heritage houses, teaching institutions, artists and crafts-men, and business owners to instill the value of their heritage, which stems from being the primary trading post in Northern Philippines during the Spanish era.

Throughout the decades, the local government has maintained its focal position in engaging all stakeholders and leading development through heritage conservation-based policies. This strategy may be useful for other sites as Vigan has proven that empowering the community and the local stakeholders is key on ensuring that they are committed in conserving heritage as they are its primary guardians. The development of heritage-based tourism and the empowerment of local artisans and craftsmen have been likewise key in ensuring a self-sustaining city, where revenue is both generated for the private individuals to fund the maintenance of historic buildings and for the city, to ensure that the machineries to monitor conservation and sustainably develop the site are in place.

Watch the presentation

Copy the link or scan the QR code on your phone to watch the full presentation.

<https://youtu.be/H9KhHDge9Hw>

