

Caring for heritage together

Vilnius Community capacity building programme



563,000



Cultural heritage
for sustainable development



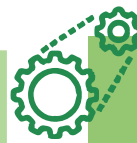
Challenge

The Old Town of Vilnius has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1994. Despite invasions and partial destructions since the 17th century, it has preserved an impressive complex of Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and classical buildings, as well as its medieval layout. The renovation of residential houses, characteristic of the Old Town of Vilnius, requires financial, human resources and craft skills. A large part of this built heritage belongs to private owners, who may not be aware of the heritage value of their property or the financial means to maintain them. How to help private owners maintain and enhance their properties?



Solution

The Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency, set by the municipality of Vilnius, initiated the Community capacity building programme in 2001 as part of the old town revitalisation programme adopted in 1998. This programme raises awareness among the locals about the heritage value of private buildings and public spaces located in the Old Town, and supports private owners to maintain and renovate their properties. Through the Community capacity building programme, private property owners can get financial support for the upgrade of their property amounting to up to 50% of the costs for roof renovation, street facades and building surroundings and up to 40% of the costs for yard facades and landscaping.



How ?

- 1 As part of the launch of the Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Programme in 1998, the city published some information material:
 - Brochures on the “Preservation of the authentic elements of the built fabric of Vilnius Old Town” and “How to take part in the Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Programme”
 - Investors and conservation guidelines
- 2 In 2006, the Agency started the Vilnius wooden architecture preservation strategy as part of, and under the same conditions as the Community Capacity Building programme, to bring specific support to owners of buildings made of wood.
- 3 As part of the Community capacity building programme, the Agency organised public consultations and debates about the renewal of public spaces in the Old Town – the most important ones having been for the renewal of St. Annes Square and Vokieciu Street in 2019 - 2021.
- 4 The Community capacity building programme is complementary to other actions initiated by the Agency, including the Vilnius traditional city crafts programme, which promotes, revitalizes and develops historic craftsmanship, notably through training programmes.

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Budget/Financing

€ 6.3 million

- The municipality of Vilnius allocated a budget of € 6.3 million to the Historic centre community development programme for the period 2015-2021.
- In 2021, the operational budget of the Agency was € 155,000, and the budget of the Community capacity building programme was € 840,000.



Management

- The Agency and the Department for cultural heritage protection of the municipality of Vilnius oversee the implementation of the Community capacity building programme.
- At the Agency, three employees are responsible for liaising with property owners, making agreements and contracts with them, and coordinating financial support.
- The renovation and maintenance works are supervised by the Agency and the Municipal unit for housing administration, and carried out by private enterprises.



Transferability

- Initiate a dialogue with property owners to explain the principles of sustainable heritage conservation and encourage them to better understand the heritage values of their property.
- The upgrade of historic houses should preferably start by retrofitting the roof and the basement.
- Pay careful attention to the authentic details of the house (doors, windows, elements of architectural decor).



Impact

- During the first phase of the programme (2001-2008), 60 renovation works were carried out.
- During the second phase of the project (2015-2021), 932 balconies were renovated in 79 houses, as well as 20 roofs and 11 facades. Six houses were completely retrofitted.
- Surveys among property owners show that the programme is highly valued by those who have benefited from it.



Links

- www.vsa.lt
- <https://www.vsa.lt/en/community-engagement/community-development-programme-will-be-updated/>
- Photographs of the Old Town: <https://www.govilnius.lt/visit-vilnius> and <https://visitworldheritage.com/en/eu/vilnius-historic-centre-lithuania/5e1ea201-d0a2-4390-8e32-596a4ca5a90b>



Contact



VILNIUS

Gediminas Rutkauskas
 Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency
g.rutkauskas@vsa.lt
j.raugaliene@vsa.lt

BEFORE



AFTER



(c) Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency, author Kestutis Masaitis

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