

USER PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF PRESERVATION

A Case Study of Bologna Historical Core Preservation Project

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ABSTRACT

Historic city centres all over the world have suffered from neglect as well as harmful developments. Many historic districts have been ripped off their traditional fabric & cultural essence, due to insensitive decision of the governing bodies. Many renewal / preservation projects have failed to retain the socio-cultural essence of space / area. The main reason for all these is the fact that planners / architects completely disregard the communities or inhabitants living in such old historic areas, and refrain from indulging into an interactive participation with the communities for whom they are working. This paper looks into the importance of community participation in projects of historic preservation and the impact it has on the success of such projects. The case of Bologna Preservation Project is discussed, where community participation has been the key to its success.



Deteriorated Conditions in the Historic Core Prior to the Beginning of Preservation Programme. (Source: Pier-Luigi Cervellati)



Typical Buildings after the Restoration. (Source: Dr. D. Binan Archives)



EXCERPT FROM THE TEXT

The local authority provided financial assistance and technical advice. The contractual arrangements made in this respect controlled speculation and exploitation of the project for political purposes. The project, thus, ensured to keep the area inhabitants intact in their living milieu.

This understanding of Bologna Master Plan, which happens to be its important specialty, was accepted in 1974 as a valid principle, by the European Council as an approach of holistic preservation.

The individuals who experienced the Bologna Project have realized that, what counts in the environment is the qualitative values and not the quantitative ones, and those values are directly connected to their lives. This conclusion indicates the interaction situations between the enlightenment process and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Experiencing a design process is not only a creator of environment but also a re-creation of the society. The citizen who participates in the process becomes aware of the past of the city and feels responsible for its future. As already mentioned above, besides being a successful renewal and preservation work, this project has proved to be an achievement in the improvement of social consciousness and enlightenment.