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Recovery of Traditional Houses in a City of Cultural Patrimony for the Humanity *Venezuela*

Good Practice

New for 2002

Categories: Economic Development:
- enterprise development (formal and informal sectors)
Housing:
- access to housing finance

Level of Activity: City/Town

Ecosystem: Tropical/Sub-Tropical

Summary

A wide process of plural participation, with the involvement of academic sectors, civil society representatives of communities of the Historical Centers of Coro and La Vela, with the active administration of the government organizations from the Falcon State and the Republic of Venezuela, led to the incorporation of the cities into UNESCO's list of the Cultural Patrimony of the Humanity. Completed this phase the government promotes the creation of an organization that involves all the actors interested in the matter of the Patrimony and promote the creation of community organizations, in the area of controlled architecture for the City of Coro and in the Historical zone of La Vela. That's how The Association for the Self-manage of Houses from Pantano Abajo (ASOAVI) was born. It began its work with the objective of rescuing and promoting community work, which were been projected in different areas, contributing to the improvement of the quality of life and the sector in general. To date, more than 380 Traditional houses (Raw Earth) have been recovered and at the same time 50 mud artisans have been trained and professionals from the State's Universities who are specialist in handmade construction are involved in the process. Work groups have been established for the rescue of traditional practices and customs. In order to contribute and preserve the cultural identity of the community, "Technical Traditional Techniques of Construction", and "History of the Pantano Abajo Neighborhood" were published. Countless national and international recognitions have been obtained, a new financing is negotiated that opens new fields for the formation of cooperative companies, and for self-financing funds for housing maintenance and different ways of communications

Narrative

SITUATION BEFORE OF THE BEGINNING OF THE INITIATIVE

The area of intervention was in a situation of official abandonment with the houses deteriorating and services collapsed. There were no programs in place to guide the development of the city and avoid insecurity in these areas. The new scenario of being Cultural Patrimony of the Humanity motivated the

community to be organized, and with the official institutions' support the initial steps were taken.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

1. Organization, Legal and Functional statutes of the Self-manage Association: Community members (neighbors affected by the problem), Members of the Official Institution for the Program (Mariano de Talavera Corporation at the beginning, now named as Cultural Patrimony Institute).
2. Administration Of Resources From Official Institutions: Mariano de Talavera Corporation.
3. Formation Of The Members Of The Community And Artisans, They Were Specializing In Basic Principles Of Administration And Handmade Construction: Management of the Program, Artisans, Advisers
4. Properties Selection: The management of the Program
5. Properties Repairing: The Management of the Program, Artisans, Professionals specialized in Inspections, ASOAVI staff and Properties Owners

FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Main Objective Of The Program

The sustainable integral development of the Historical centers of Coro and La Vela, through civic participation. All this in order to rescue their cultural heritage which are already built; guaranteeing the elevation of the quality in the population's life

Objectives

1. Contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the families located in the area, and commit them to the conservation and maintenance of the patrimonial area.
2. Improve and consolidate the traditional houses in the areas below the protection and control of the historical centers of Coro and La Vela.
3. Contribute to the conservation of urban landscapes, and the creation of a favorable atmosphere that allows the recovery of the Historical Centers.

Strategies

1. administration of Special Resources
2. execution by means of Specialized Management
3. Community Organization, and coordination of their participation.
4. execution of works with community participation and support.

RESOURCES MOBILIZATION

Financial: The financial resources negotiated by the Mariano de Talavera Corporation, today known as Cultural Patrimony Institute of Venezuela, with the National Council of Housing. The National Council of Housing has approved the proposed projects and assigned the resources through the Institute of Housing of Falcon State.

Human Resources: The program was managed by the Mariano de Talavera Corporation in 1996, 1997, and 1998. An external Management Specialist was hired and contributed to the efforts of the professional human resources. Later on, by the years 1999, 2000 and 2001; the Corporation itself, with an active and integrated participation of the community, contributed to the human resources.

Technical Resources: The conservation of Traditional Techniques of Construction was achieved by architects and specialized engineers from the Mariano de Talavera Corporation staff; and the Artisans specialized in traditional construction from the community. The Community also supports the research for traditional construction history and techniques. The Corporation contributed office equipment, computers and other technological resources.

PROCESS

The main problem at the beginning of the process was the excluding form as the external management drove the process; the situation was overcome by pressure from the community organization to achieve a bigger presence. The limited resources didn't also allow for the recovery of the houses, which impacted in construction problems in some interventions. This situation was overcome in 1999, 2000 and 2001 of the program. From those years up to now, the resources have improved and the interventions have been carried out on the base of an architectural project guided in first term to the structural consolidation of the houses. Another problem that is yet to be solved is the slow speed or delay in the granting of resources, which has resulted in the temporary distortion in the programs' execution. As a consequence, there is an increase in the operational costs.

The population's participation has been in general terms active and enthusiastic. The government organizations have maintained a dynamic relationship with the community, guaranteeing the independence and respect.

Motivated by the changes in the political scenario some difficulties have been experienced, but solutions are usually found.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Along with new experiences gained, the communication among the community organization, the official organisms and the different private associations with similar objectives, has improved. The ASOAVI from Pantano Abajo has achieved a significant position inside the Falcon State, and is one of the most recognized in Venezuela. In the international field integration has been initiated with similar institutions and the presence in scenarios like the Andres Bello Agreement, the Enterprise Roles in Switzerland, and the Agency of Economic Cooperation from Spain.

- The decision making process has demonstrated the maturity of the organization. Along with the execution of the programs, The ASOAVI has improved in responsibility, in the planning, direction and management of the program. The ASOAVI is a community organization without ideological commitments, and also without religious or political partisan. Opportunities are offered for an equilibrate performance, wider than other organizations. Our limitations are based in the limited financial resources; however we have been defining performance strategies in order to overcome this situation.

In addition, the position and the prestige by the leadership of the organization have given us a very positive image, which has been displayed to the community. This excellent performance has opened up opportunities for growth and consolidation as an institution.

- To the incoming programs the financial flow of resources will have more expedite ways, and the administration will be responsibility of the community organization, which, at the same time, implies the evaluation and selection of the human resources and the better coordination of technical resources.

- As for the behavior of the community already assisted, the new situation calls for major changes in family integration, like their health habits, their interest in education. All this linking with community activities, such as cleaning their compounds, providing support to the common activities and also to the special programs for older people and children.

SUSTAINABILITY

In the financial aspect a definition of the investment has been achieved in non-returnable resources to non-reproductive funds, and resources to be recovered as credits. To follow up on this idea, a recovery mechanism is proposed that will let us create a fund for the permanent maintenance of the houses. The operation of this mechanism will consolidate the experience, and will also open new spaces for the generation of new employment sources. With this argument we are just trying to stimulate the improvement of the neighborhood life conditions and social benefits.

In the cultural field, members of this association have been rewarded for their values and also for their fight for the preservation of the traditional scheme in their houses. The ASOAVI of Pantano Abajo has been defending the traditional customs of the community, since the first years of the programs. We also have been trying to keep the harmonic relationship between our constructions and the environment, which is possible using the better materials to repair the houses and always keeping a healthiest relationship between men and nature.

LEARNED LESSONS

The main lesson that we have learned, was the value of the community cooperation, and the strength that it has in order to achieve a common goal. We have also learned the capacity to reach goals through the organization, formulation of projects and planning. This experience has allowed us to know the choices that we have in order to administrate different projects for the public administration. These projects have placed us in an advantageous position if we compare ourselves with other similar organizations. The approach to the human being to understand the dimension of their social lacks, opening spaces for the search of their solutions.

TRANSFERABILITY

The experience of Pantano Abajo was transferred to other sectors of the city of Coro and also to La Vela, both situated in Venezuela. Taking as an example the community organization of Pantano Abajo, another ASOAVI has been created. These Associations are located in San Nicholas, Cabudare and Chimpire, all are neighborhoods situated in the city of Coro. La Vela, which is a small but beautiful town situated at 15 minutes from Coro, have also its ASOAVI. At this time, the program is executing in all these sectors. We have also attended different cities and events in Venezuela, in order to share our experience, and to tell people the significance and greatness of the community organizations.

Key Dates

ASOAVI's Foundation date 30/04/1997

Beginning of the First Program 15/10/97

UREKA Gold Medal in 1999

Carora Ravell National Reward in November,1999

Habitad 2000 National Reward in 10/02/2000

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Type of Organization: Professional Association

Nominating Organization

National Council of Housing (CONAVI)
Avenida Principal de las Mercedes con Calle Orinoco
Edificio CONAVI
Caracas
Venezuela.

Tel: 0212 - 9913211 / 0013871/9918309
Email: conavi@fol net.com

Partners

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF HOUSING
Avenida Principal de las Mercedes con Calle Orinoco
Edificio CONAVI
Caracas
Venezuela.

Tel: 0212 - 9913211

Type of Partner Support: Financial Support

INSTITUTE OF THE CULTURAL PATRIMONY OF VENEZUELA
Villa Santa Ines
Avenida Principal de Cacmarillo
Postal Code 1010
Caracas
Venezuela

Tel: 0212 - 4824317 /4825337/4826295

Fax: 0212 - 4829695/4829513

Email: ipc@reacciun.ve

Type of Partner Support: Technical Support

Financial Profile

YEAR	ESTIMATE	PARTNER A	PARTNER B
1996	270.000,00 \$	100%	Nil
1997	389.557,00 \$	100%	Nil
1998	195.000,00 \$	100%	Nil
1999	1.099.075,00 \$	99%	1%

2000	735.799,00 \$	98%	2%
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