

BAENA. Stakeholders Engagement in Baena

The Castle of Baena and Torreparedones archeologic site

A participatory approach to cultural heritage management

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES ARE THREATENING A FULLY EXPLORATION OF THESE MONUMENTS AND A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION IS HELPING TO TACKLE THESE LIMITATIONS. A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE HELPS TO TACKLE MANAGEMENT ISSUES OF IN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND OPENS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME CURRENT CITY CHALLENGES.

The municipality of Baena has a large number of heritage sites that are managed by the City Council. Through the Integrated Development Strategy BAENA 2020 the municipality proposed for the period 2016-2020 a framework from which to promote sustainable and integrated development. In particular with regard to heritage management, the strategy contained a line of action called BAENACULTURA that, through various initiatives, aimed to improve the degree of conservation and enhancement of some heritage sites and specifically their management.

Two major projects were included in the action plan:

- **The archeologic site of Torreparedones**, where important Iberian and Roman vestiges were found, showing a sequence of occupation of almost 5,000 years, from the end of the 4th millennium BC until the beginning of the XVI century. The main goal was to recover the site for public fruition through the creation of an archaeological park by bringing together a wide group of stakeholders of the municipality to valorise this natural and historical heritage;
- **The Castle of Baena**; this historical construction is an important asset of the city which has undergone an important range of structural interventions. Taking place from 2005 to 2015, they have returned the Castle to its original volume, therefore creating new spaces. The lack of resources since then has compromised the completion of the project, namely a management model for the use of the space.

In this context the City Council has led the INT-HERIT Project together with a network of small European cities, equally rich in heritage as well as needing to improve the management from a sustainable and integrated perspective, focusing on the way in which the actions to be carried out are implemented and the learning derived from this initiative.

Two incidents occurred at the beginning and during the period analysed (2016-19), both negatively affecting the implementation process of both the BAENA 2020 Strategy and, in particular, the actions included in the BAENACULTURA line. On the one hand, the non-approval by the State of FEDER funds to finance the actions included in BAENA 2020, which has led to a reduction in the number and scope of the actions as well as the degree of priority thereof. On the other hand, a reduction in the population of the municipality combined with the prolonged effects of the economic crisis has also reduced municipal revenues and, in general, caused a negative impact on the local economy. All this has had the consequent negative impact on the management of the sites by the municipality, seeing the political and technical effort that otherwise could have been carried out has initially planned.

However, the development of the INT-HERIT Project has at least partially offset these shortcomings with the activities of a transnational learning project from which positive achievements have been derived in terms of knowledge in the implementation process of the actions above. Two elements sustain the positive impact indicated. On the one hand, the exchange of experiences and know-how based on international cooperation between cities as URBACT promotes. On the other hand, through the contribution of ideas and proposals from the members of the Local Group that has allowed to guide and improve the concrete actions to the political and technical managers of the municipality during the implementation.

In March 2019 the city was seen its efforts rewarded after receiving a positive feedback from national authorities approving the continuation of the excavations in Torreparedones, recognizing the exceptional importance of the site for the history of the city and for the touristic promotion of the region. The project presented by the City of Baena for the protection and enhancement of the archaeological site of Torreparedones is valued at 1,227.068 euros where 75% comes from the state (920,000 euros) and 25% from the City Council (300,000 euros).

Torreparedones Ibero-Roman Settlement

The archaeological site of Torreparedones is located in the heart of the Cordovan countryside, specifically between the municipalities of Baena and Castro del Río. The research was initiated in 80s of the 20th century by a large group of British and Spanish archaeologists showing that the site has a sequence of almost 5,000 years, from the end of the 4th millennium BC until the beginning of the XVI century. It has been since declared an Asset of Cultural Interest and currently integrates the Network of Cultural Spaces of Andalusia promoting



not only its protection and conservation but also its research and dissemination.

In the last years the municipality has made important investments in the area to rehabilitate the site and allow visitors to come in. Recently new funds have been approved by the Ministry of Development, which will consolidate and enhance some of the most recent discoveries.

The Castle of Baena

Restoration and contemporary architecture are present in the intervention carried out between 2006 and 2015 in the Castle of Baena, an action that considers both the conservation work on the historic structures and their ability to integrate into new architectural and urban developments that are capable of revitalizing the surrounding environment. After a very high investment (around 4 million euros, exclusively public), in the rehabilitation and reconditioning, the city is still looking for good solutions for its public use.



The interventions were supported by European funds as FEDER and the city own funds and by 2016 the monument was ready to receive visitors but there was no specific programme to explore its use. Besides some punctual initiatives the sites remained under used although in different situation. Baena Castle remains open to public visits in the last two years, but without concluding a definitive proposal regarding its uses and the corresponding adaptation of its facilities, namely the rehabilitation of the water tanks built in the XX century on the inner space of the castle shown on the pictures bellow during the works.



A participative management model

A solid and effective model for the management of the cultural heritage of Baena requires better planning, more participation from citizens, political commitment and innovative financial solutions and, to optimize the local management system of the heritage.

A political and social debate on the pertinence of investments in cultural heritage always raises a lot of debate, particularly in small cities as Baena where the resources are quite limited. Although there is a general recognition of importance of these investments for the community, such as the creation of jobs and cultural education, the debate often falls on the financial effort that it's necessary to go on with the rehabilitation works when there is other priorities, namely social, that need also to be attended.



In a fragile economic context with little entrepreneurial capacity, the challenge of the city is therefore to devise a management model able to assure the sustainability of the interventions after the works have been completed, creating actual value for the community. This can be done of course with more investments but even more important it requires a new approach to citizen participation where decision-making is shared with several stakeholders that bring fresh perspectives of the problem and new level of participation that real involves people on the management of sites.



Between 2017 and 2018, within the framework of the INT-HERIT project, the city put in place a strategy to build cooperation among all actors namely to design a solution of the shared ownership of the site, namely between the owner of the land (trying to avoid big expropriation costs) and both municipalities with the support of a technical partner in the project, the University of Cordoba, but also with the local high school to support the excavation work by students of archaeology. Namely, in the case of the amphitheatre, a dialogue was established between the main concerned parts, the two municipalities



and the land owner to implement a model of shared costs between both municipalities and minimize the costs of expropriating the land, and initiate the excavation works that will lead ultimately allow to open the site for visitors.

The recent discovery by researchers from the University of Córdoba of the Roman amphitheatre, has led to research and excavation works where public-private-social cooperation has been a constant that has proved successful and can be a reference on how to sustain in the future stable mechanism of shared management by a broad network of actors.

A small part of the enclosure of the old Iberian-Roman city is located in the neighbouring municipality of Castro del Río. The remains of a Roman amphitheatre have recently been discovered in this area. Specifically, it is a privately owned agricultural plot. These circumstances have led to an embryonic formula of public-private cooperation with the presence of other local and institutional actors. In 2006 the consolidation of structures, creation of a circuit for visitors and construction of the welcome centre in Torreparedones permitted to open the site for visitors while excavations are still going on.



"INT-HERIT helped to change the mindset of a city that for many years remained indifferent to its past and is now looking to recover this values from that past."

*Juan Manuel León de Toro, ULG Member,
Professor of History at the local high school*

"The ULG has stated in the operational framework the need to promote entrepreneurship and job creation, as well as to make more flexible the public-private use of spaces such as Castillo or Torreparedones inviting social groups and private companies to enrich the cultural offer of the municipality. Private management could improve a public management that by itself, will always be insufficient and unsustainable"

António Zafra, Baena Project Manager





"Volunteering dedicated to protecting and promoting patrimony is still scarce but one thing is for sure, what is being implemented has a strong impact in people. We can see that people build an important commitment to cultural heritage through volunteering. The municipality should count on people not only to the 'making' but also to contribute to the definition of 'what to do' and 'how to do it'"

Pilar Pineda, ULG Member, President of the Volunteering Platform of Córdoba

"We should start from the will of citizens to use the space and build a lively atmosphere. We need to setup a management group where these inputs can be heard and that could program and plan all activities that can be implemented at the site"

María Perez, ULG Member, Professor of History and of the Theatre Workshop



"We need to explain people what interventions have been done at the castle that help them to interpret and understand what they can see today when visiting the castle. Baena has a lot of patrimony, the castle, Torreparedones archaeological site, the 'holly week'", our gastronomy, the olive oil, but we need to define strategy. It has a lot of potential but we still have to do a lot of work"

Angela de las Morenas, ULG Member, Technical Engineer



"In Torreparedones, we are developing workshops on archaeology and its practices for young people. It's a way of learning about their city patrimony and building a sense of appropriation so they can feel it as something that belongs to them"
Luis Miguel Serran, History Teacher



"El proyecto INT-HERIT me ha resultado muy interesante a nivel particular y en tanto que uno lo puede trasladar al Ayuntamiento..., ves manera de trabajar desde otras perspectivas que te hacen darte cuenta que pueden hacerse cosas cambiando la manera de pensar o de organizarse... También la involucración de la población y de los políticos es esencial..."

Manuel Albendín
ULG Member, Arquitecto Municipal

What's Next?

The need to base the management of cultural heritage resources on sustainable models is evident. Given the wealth and abundance of these assets in European contexts, together with the limited means with which to address comprehensive interventions, the cooperation between actors is critical, both in its early stages and in successive planning, implementation and follow-up phases.

In the specific case of archaeological sites, the feasibility and necessary efficiency of intervention and management programmes can be cleverly guided from the start by means of small-scale actions capable of establishing limits, prudently orienting investments and feeding strategies of cooperation between the actors that can be very satisfactory for an integrated and sustainable development of archaeological assets.

Planning, citizen participation, political commitment, financial innovation, all from a sustainability perspective they are once again the cornerstones on which a solid and effective implementation model for the management of Baena's cultural heritage could be sustained. In this sense, the work is done, but

there is no doubt that only a living heritage managed from a sustainability perspective (particularly economic) can guarantee its future survival and stimulating its permanent re-appropriation by residents. This is an area of intelligent management, of taking advantage of opportunities, of fostering innovation and active participation of all actors.

The changes operated are starting to produce results but there is still a long way to actually change the current scenario, and as the city enters the 21st century it looks at its future with optimism and confident that these first steps will drive the city into a new era of civic participation and empowerment of citizens that will ultimately will foster social and economic development of the city and its region.

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By Pedro Soutinho, INT-HERIT LE

Videos

Torreparedones Video Case: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GifxpLGoEPI>

Baena Castle Vox Pop Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvwAXGAZRts&t=106s>

Baena Heritage Vox Pop Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzMezMfwrGY&t=4s>

Baena Volunteer Scheme Vocx Pop Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYbgCOBYWQs>

Baena Transnational Meeting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBSIjd_uLOA

About the INT-HERIT Project

The INT-HERIT project is an Implementation Network under the Urbact Programme that identifies, collects and exchanges knowledge across nine small to medium-size cities sharing similar challenges when tackling cultural heritage protection, conservation or valorisation. Implementation has all sorts of constraints and variables that may influence the final results. New smart, low cost initiatives are being implemented to overcome these constraints by adopting an integrative and participative approach towards stakeholders aiming to increase the value created for the community through heritage conservation projects. This article provides an overview of some of the initiatives currently taking place in the city in order to contribute for a knowledge base of solutions that will be hopefully useful for other cities across Europe while managing their cultural heritage."

