

CREATING SYNERGIES FOR THE REGENERATION OF THE HISTORIC CENTRE

Façade regeneration programme - Cuenca, Ecuador

1. DESCRIPTION

Cuenca has implemented a programme aimed at streamlining the process for obtaining renovation permits and actively engaging property owners, occupants, the relevant local authority departments and the private sector in the improvement of façades.

2. CONTEXT THAT MOTIVATED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRACTICE

Certain areas of Cuenca's historic centre were characterised by building deterioration, graffiti, vandalism, urban insecurity, weakened community ties and a loss of appeal. This situation fuelled mistrust among property owners and occupants, who were reluctant to invest in renovation for fear of further damage.

3. APPROACH/METHOD

- **Assessment and awareness-raising:** the local council first identified priority areas for intervention based on social, heritage and safety issues. It then organised workshops and meetings to explain the programme and encourage residents' support.
- The **local authority's facilitating role:** the local authority supported owners and occupants in launching initiatives in two ways:
 - **Administrative support:** it streamlined the necessary formalities.
 - **Partnerships and incentives:** public-private partnerships were established, notably with companies offering significant discounts on the purchase of paint, with beneficiary owners and occupants acting as the labour force.
- **Physical improvements:** the interventions combined painting façades, cleaning street furniture and restoring heritage features.
- **Artistic interventions:** murals were created with local artists and residents as part of competitions.
- **Enhancing security:** the project was complemented by the installation of CCTV cameras, community alarms and emergency buttons, as well as improved lighting.



Mural on a building facade © Cuenca Municipal GAD

4. EXPECTED/IMMEDIATE/MEASURABLE EFFECTS

Immediate effects

- In the areas concerned, the refurbishment of 211 façades (90 per cent of the total number surveyed) and the involvement of more than 100 property owners.
- Strengthened cooperation between municipal departments and local stakeholders.
- Visual transformation of streets previously perceived as dangerous.

Expected outcomes

- Expansion of the initiatives to other areas.
- Strengthening of housing and social cohesion in heritage neighbourhoods.
- Safer public spaces that are better embraced by residents.

5. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Heritage restoration is more sustainable when it combines physical interventions, community participation and improved safety.
- Administrative simplification and economic incentives encourage residents' participation and private investment in heritage conservation.
- Community ownership is essential to ensure the sustainability of interventions and improve the habitability of historic neighbourhoods.



Before and after the renovation of the facades © Cuenca Municipal GAD

FOR MORE INFORMATION :

<https://www.cuenca.gob.ec/>

