



Revitalization of the old medieval fortress and old house of the 'Eminagica family' in the municipality of Tesanj

Tesanj, Eminagica house and fortress © Ferhad Mulbegović



- Positioning of monuments as an attractive tourism destination
- Wide participation of civil society
- Illustration of the comparative advantage of United Nations agencies working together

BACKGROUND

The Municipality of Tesanj is centrally located at the intersection of all major roads in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and houses a medieval fortress which had been completely abandoned and lacked maintenance. Situated on the outskirts of the fortress, and in a similar if not worse condition, was the prominent Eminagica family's former residence, an architectural jewel dating back to the age of the Ottoman Empire. The municipality of Tesanj applied to the Open Call for municipal projects with a proposal for the restoration of both monuments, including a cultural tourism plan. The proposal would rely on local co-financing to achieve its aims.

PROCESS

Many civil society organizations were involved in preparing the proposal. A number of local schools specializing in trades such as cooking, traditional designs, and crafts were also involved. The schools contributed their expertise in helping to portray the monuments as attractive cultural tourist destinations for more than their external beauty. They showed the possibility of engaging a visitor in a variety of activities during his/her stay, including sampling of local food and crafts.

Outcomes

The municipality had encountered problems in obtaining licences for the reconstruction and because of limited funding for completion of the projects. United Nations agencies teamed up to assist both in liaising with national authorities and in providing co-financing for completion of the projects. A local oral-history project was also established to stimulate and sustain a new wave of interest in local history. A documentary was produced on the life of the Eminagica family using authentic documentation, and their descendants were interviewed to paint a more personal picture of life during that period. This case also illustrates the comparative advantage of cooperation between three United Nations agencies, namely between UNESCO and UNDP for reconstruction, UNDP for workshops and classes, and UNICEF for inter-cultural education intended for schools.

Both monuments are now equipped to service tourists, most notably as: summer festival destinations; classrooms and lecture halls offering lessons about traditional activities in the Ottoman Empire; and moreover, sites where history can be experienced through participation in a living culture.