European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards (2025)
1232-Education, Training and Skills 3. Education, Training & Skills

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School of Arts and Crafts of the Fabbrica di San Pietro in Vaticano

Entry details

General information

Main country of application: Holy See*

In case there are other official partners involved in the project, please list the country(ies) they come from

> Italy and Vatican City State

Brief description of the project

> The School aims to train new generations of artisans, sustaining and passing on to them the heritage of knowledge and skills handed down by the workers of the Fabbrica di San Pietro.
> The project is an opportunity also, and above all, for many young people who are sincerely motivated in learning a craft despite not having the means or sufficient conditions to achieve it.

Start date of the project: 2023-01-16

Website(s) of the project/nominee: www.fondazionefratellitutti.org; www.basilicasanpietro.va

Does the site or heritage in question have national/regional/local cultural heritage designation or protection status in its country?: Yes

If yes, please specify:

> Basilica of Saint Peter - Vatican City

Is the site or heritage in question included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, either as a single World: Yes

Heritage Site or as part of one larger site?

If yes, please specify:

> Basilica of Saint Peter - Vatican City

If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to the public?	Yes

If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to people with disabilities?

> Basilica of Saint Peter, place where the project is mainly developed, has general measures to contrast architectural barriers; in addition, specific projects for people with different disabilities are being developed.

Contact details

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Organisation of the owner	Fondazione Fratelli tutti
Name of the project leader	Fr. Francesco Occhetta S.J.
Project leader's position	Director of the School of Arts and Crafts
Organisation of the project leader	Fondazione Fratelli tutti - Secretary General
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Other relevant participants

Fabbrica di San Pietro - Partner
Associazione Be Human - Partner

Concise summary

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The School of Arts and Crafts project was born on January 2023. Through this initiative, the Fondazione Fratelli tutti and the Fabbrica di San Pietro choose to recover that “practical knowledge,” linked to the savoir-faire, which is transmitted from generation to generation as the creative act of the very mission of the Fabbrica di San Pietro.
The School intends for the participants to grow through a formation that involves spiritual and community, anthropological and cultural, ethical and experiential dimensions in a spirit of service for others.
The teaching method is based on inductive learning through laboratory experience based on the analysis and solution of problems related to operational practice.
The courses are developed in semester-long modules with full-time activities and are completely gratuity-free, as well as room and board.
The teaching is entrusted to specialists in the relevant subjects, professionals in the field of cultural heritage, university professors from various Italian universities, expert connoisseurs of the Basilica together with craftsmen of proven experience.
The training activity includes cycles of frontal lectures and in-depth seminar meetings, as well as inspections and study visits. The laboratory lessons will be held in the Vatican City, in the workshops of the Fabbrica di San Pietro, where aspiring artisans will have the opportunity to practice and work in close contact with "sanpietrini" (the Basilica of Saint Peter craftsmen).

Objectives and work undertaken

Aims and objectives of the project/initiative

The School bets on “thinking with hands.” The training courses have as their objectives the development of manual skills, art-historical learning, knowledge of the materials used, the acquisition of technical and technological skills and the human growth of young craftsmen, with a view to the integral development of the person, as an alternative to the loneliness of knowledge and growing professional individualism.
In this sense, participation in the School contributes to the creation of an educating community around St. Peter's Basilica, triggering virtuous mechanisms and processes.

Any historical and technical research undertaken for the project/initiative

The School's history is in the wake of an ancient tradition dating back to the late XVIIIth century. Leaning on a popular professional School for the training of master masons for architecture, in the late XVIIIth century the Fabbrica di San Pietro established the "Studio Pontificio delle Arti" for the training of aspiring "sanpietrini" and craftsmen in general. The "Studio Pontificio" was free, open on holidays and afternoons. For the Fabbrica it was an act of love and responsibility, and it also responded to the real need to provide adequate training for new generations of "sanpietrini" to be employed in the Vatican Basilica. 250 years later, the Fabbrica di San Pietro, in collaboration with the Fondazione Fratelli tutti, has chosen to return to promoting the transmission of “practical knowledge,” with aims similar to those that had guided it in founding the "Studio Pontificio".

Activities carried out and stages of implementation of the project/initiative

The School, established in January 2023 and now in its third edition, is free of charge and offers four courses: Stonemasons and Marble workers, Bricklayers Plasterers and Decorators, Carpenters and Mosaicists. Classes are held

on the premises of the Fabbrica di San Pietro inside the Vatican City. The courses last six months, with compulsory attendance. There are 600 hours of classes, of which 200 are devoted to basic and address teaching and extracurricular activities and 400 reserved for laboratory practice.
The School is reserved for 20 young people aged between 18 and 25 who hold an artistic license diploma, a technical institute diploma (with reference to CAT courses), a professional institute diploma (with reference to Maintenance courses), an IeFP professional diploma (with reference to the diploma for Woodworking Technician and Artistic Workmanship Technician), or a foreign qualification equivalent to the Italian one. University students who meet the requirements are also admitted.
The basic teachings included in the teaching plan are: History of Art Techniques, Fundamentals of History of Architecture, Elements of History of Construction, Materials Technologies and Executive methods of Artifacts, Peculiar Elements of St. Peter's Basilica, Biblical and Theological foundations.
The School will issue a Certificate of Acquired Skills upon passing a final exam. It was also chosen to make the learning achieved by the students visible in the Italian National System, thanks to a memorandum of understanding with Enaip Lombardia.

Challenges or problems encountered and solutions found to overcome them

The Basilica, specifically the Technical Office, has put forth considerable organizational efforts aimed at effectively facilitating the inclusion of workshop activities within the Jubilee sites.
Another peculiar aspect was to make the theoretical and practical knowledge of elderly artisans usable to classes of young students; this was made possible thanks to a teaching method that considers the intergenerational transition an added value with a generative sense.

Results and impact

Summary of the main results achieved and knowledge that has been gained. List the ways that the project/initiative contributes to the preservation and/or enhancement of the historical, cultural, environmental, educational and/or social values of the heritage in question. Mention the project's impact on conservation policy and practice, if any.

The experience of fraternity, which characterizes the applied method, creates positive synergies not only among students but transversally among all those who in various capacities interact with the School, from "sanpietrini" to teachers to staff, giving rise to an innovative approach that goes beyond the frontal lesson.
The result is the creation of a community based on strong interpersonal relationships that persist even after the courses are over.
With reference to the Project's impact on the conservation processes, it should be noted that at the end of each edition, students who are particularly talented and predisposed to teamwork are asked to keep on collaborating at the various sites of the Basilica.

Aspects of the project that can be considered innovative within its area or field.

- The project is based on a holistic training model for the growth of the person in all spheres of the human: bodily, intellectual but also relational and spiritual. The method bets on “training the hand but also the spirit”; the student, enveloped in the majesty and beauty of art, can experience the divine, outside and inside herself/himself, and begin a process of discovery and knowledge of her/his own inner world.
- The School offers an immersive experience of community life: for the duration of the courses, students are housed free of charge in apartments where they live together, collaborating with each other and experiencing fraternal relationships. Every aspect of their day is shared.
  Students are offered a well-rounded accompaniment, including group dynamics through sharing meetings and re-reading of the experience by people with expertise in the field.
- The training proposal represents a model that can be exported in its basic cores.

Measures to ensure the sustainability/future viability of the project (in terms of future plans and funding).

> The School Management has retained various private donors who invest in training, ensuring a multi-year stability of the Project.

Dissemination of the project's results and knowledge gained and any outreach or educational activities.

> The dissemination of the Project takes place through the following channels: Embassies to the Holy See, Secretariat of State and Apostolic Nunciatures, Italian and non-Italian educational institutions - such as Art High Schools, Technical and Professional Institutes -, Episcopal Conferences, Third Sector entities and social platforms.

Participation in the initiative (number of participants/audience/users per year and/or, in the case of websites and digital platforms, information regarding visitor numbers and online interaction).

> 20 students per edition

Involvement of youth, community, non-traditional audiences and/or people with disabilities.

> The School includes also young people with SLD (Specific Learning Disorders), adopting forms of mentoring and corrective mechanisms in evaluation.

Contribution to intercultural dialogue and to the protection of cultural diversity.

> We encourage the participation of non-Italian students to flourish the dialogue between different cultures and religious affiliations.

Transferability of the initiative to other contexts and its scalability potential.

> The initiative can be replicated in other settings in Europe, such as the "Fabbricerie" or the main buildings of worship.

European and international dimension

European significance of the project/initiative/nominee.

> The School's values intersect well with the founding values of Europe such as the protection of artistic and cultural heritage, the preservation of the historical-anthropological legacy to be handed down to future generations, across physical political and religious borders.
> In this sense, St. Peter's Basilica, through the School, offers a context in which every woman and every man can feel welcome and thus contribute, with their educational, religious and experiential backgrounds, to forming "one big family".

Costs of the project/initiative

Costs of the project (in euro), financial and management arrangements, funding partners and/or the type of funding.

> € 200.000 funds from private donors

Funding provided by the European Union or the EEA/Norway Grants (including programme, year and amount of the Grant), if any.

> No fund has been provided by the European Union.

Additional information

How would winning the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award benefit you, your project and/or your organisation?

> The certification of the Project by a European institution on the occasion of the Jubilee year would represent a great goal that could give the School further momentum by increasing the participation of non-Italian students.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, what will the monetary award be used for?

> Covering part of the laboratory costs of the third edition: teachers' tenures and materials.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, who will be the recipient of the monetary award?

> Fondazione Fratelli tutti

How did you find out about the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Word of mouth
Is this the first time that this entry has been submitted to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Yes
On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with this online submission form?	✓ 10
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Bricklayers_Basi... 2.5 MiB



Bricklayers Plas... 9.3 MiB



Bricklayers_Basi... 9.1 MiB



Lecture 2.jpg 8.5 MiB



Stonemasons_B... 8.2 MiB



Stonemasons a... 7.9 MiB



Bricklayers Plas... 7.5 MiB



Lecture.jpg 7.1 MiB



Bricklayers Plas... 7.0 MiB



Stonemasons a... 6.2 MiB



Bricklayers Plas... 5.5 MiB



Bricklayers_Basi... 5.3 MiB



Bricklayers_Basi... 4.7 MiB



Carpenters_Lab... 3.3 MiB



Bricklayers Plas... 3.2 MiB



Bricklayers_Basi... 3.1 MiB



Carpenters_Lab... 3.0 MiB



Bricklayers_Basi... 2.9 MiB



Stonemasons_B... 2.6 MiB

DOCX

Photo Captions ... 8 KiB

PDF

Scuola Arti e M... 2.3 MiB

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Scuola Arti e M... 6.1 MiB

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Entrant Declara... 69 KiB

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