European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards (2026)
1786-Education, Training and Skills 3. Education, Training & Skills

GrWEMmdq

SCHOOL OF RENOVATION, awareness raising and educational programs for high quality renovation of built heritage

Entry details

General information

Main country of application: Slovenia

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

> Slovenia

Brief description of the project

> The School of Renovation was established at the initiative of The Association of Historical Towns of Slovenia. It raises awareness of the importance of built heritage and improves practices in its renovation. It works with a diverse audience, with youth, teachers, adults and the elderly. The key activities of the School of Renovation are the organization of workshops at various locations across the country, the preservation of traditional crafts, rewarding high-quality renovated buildings or public spaces, and technical assistance to citizens. It works in partnership with heritage protection and educational institutions, connecting them in joint activities.

Start date of the project: 2015-01-01

Completion date of the project/ initiative: ongoing

Website(s) of the project/nominee: https://solaprenove.si/

Facebook page of the project, if any: https://www.facebook.com/solaprenove/?locale=sl_SI

Instagram page of the project, if any	https://www.instagram.com/sola.prenove/
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:

> Activities are held at various sites of built heritage, as well as of local and national designation.

Is the project focused on or taking place in heritage included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, either as an individual site or as part of a larger World Heritage property? If so, please specify which one.

> Activities also take place at UNESCO (tengible and intangible) heritage sites. The School of Renovation has a permanent location in Škofja Loka (UNESCO ICH), operates in Ptuj (UNESCO ICH), Idrija (UNESCO WHL), and dedicates thematic workshops to architecuture of J. Plečnik (The works of J.Plecnik in Ljubljana, UNESCO WHL).

Is the project focused on or taking place in a heritage designated as a European Heritage Label? If so, please specify which one.

> no

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

What steps have been taken to ensure that the site / project is inclusive and accessible to as wide an audience as possible?

> All activities are intended for the public, with target groups ranging from the children to youth, adults, heritage owners and contractors, professionals, public servants in municipalities and conservation services.

Please indicate whether your project falls under the subcategory of Education, Training, or Skills (select one type only, as applicable):	✓ Education

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Contact details

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Other relevant participants

- Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, (IPCHS), Poljanska 40 1000 Ljubljana,

- University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture, Zoisova cesta 12, 1000 Ljubljana

- Secondary Civil Engineering, Geodesy, Environmental Protection and Vocational High School Ljubljana, Dunajska cesta 102, Ljubljana

- Škofja Loka School Center, Podlubnik 1b, Škofja Loka

Concise summary

Concise summary

The School of Renovation was created at the initiative of The Association of Historical Cities of Slovenia which connects 24 historical cities that are facing a significant shortage of qualified contractors for the renovation of their rich architectural heritage. Together with their partners they have formed a strong team, where each contributes to the implementation of the activities. The key activities are organizing workshops on capacity-building for renovation, promotion and raising public awareness. It presents awards to owners for high-quality renovated buildings, and provides assistance with technical advice to citizens. Activities can be seen on the web https://solaprenove.si/

The workshops are organized at cultural heritage sites or at sites proposed by municipalities and individuals. The most common topics are repair of stone masoning, lime mortars and plasters, dry stone walling, timber construction, roof tiles, carpentry repair, damp in buildings...They last from 1 to 5 days. They also enable the acquisition of professional competences for craft professions in the National Vocational Qualification. An average of 6 workshops are held each year.

The School of renovation awards building owners for high-quality renovations and widely promotes them through publicity and “Open house” events. In this way, building owners raise public awareness and share their experiences. The School has been laying the groundwork for years to implement the principles of the European Union as declared in the Davos Charter and the New European Bauhaus: sustainable development is only possible by taking into account the environment, and built heritage, which transcends the boundaries of cultural heritage, is an integral part of it; the beauty of the landscape and built environment was created in past by human that took the environment into account; high-quality renovated heritage improves the quality of life for everyone.

The School of Renovation is financed by The Association of Historical Towns of Slovenia, with co-financing from the Ministry of Culture. The average annual cost of the workshops is €35,000 per year. This method of financing enables the program to be implemented and all participants to attend free of charge. Its activities has grown and now operates throughout Slovenia. It connects a wide audience and has seen an increase in interest among young people. Their motives are to acquire knowledge for building maintenance, living in the countryside, working with nature, self-sufficiency, and improving the quality of life - goals that are consistent with sustainable development and NEB.

Objectives and work undertaken

Aims and objectives of the project/initiative.

The School of Renovation operates with the objectives:

1. ORGANIZATION OF WORKSHOPS: The aim of the workshops is to improve skills for high-quality building renovation. The practical skills with which our architectural heritage was built are disappearing. School of Renovation preserves them through training. The workshops are intended to help anyone who wants to renovate his property or is professionally involved in the renovation of cultural heritage. The target groups are 1) adults, owners or contractors, professionals working in institutions, 2) young people seeking career guidance and their teachers, and 3) children who need to be introduced to the heritage.

2. BUILDING CAPACITIES OF COMPETENT RENOVATION CONTRACTORS THROUGH NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND GENERAL EDUCATION: The NVQ enables the acquisition of qualifications with competencies acquired through lifelong learning. Workshops enable contractors to acquire the skills needed for high-quality building renovation. Encourage construction companies and craftsmen in the field of building heritage renovation to improve the skills of their employees. Improve and strengthen cultural heritage content in schools to inspire young people about heritage.

3. RAISING AWARENESS OF THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF RENOVATION, BY REWARDING OWNERS OF RENOVATED BUILDINGS, TRAINING TEACHERS, PARTICIPATION IN CONSULTATIONS: Raise awareness of the social importance of preserving cultural and other built heritage among general public and in diverse communities, among young people, minorities, school teachers, decision-makers, etc. Increase heritage education in schools. Establish a special award for high-quality renovation. Organize expert consultations and respond to invitations from local communities.

Any historical and technical research undertaken for the project/initiative.

75% of the most valuable cultural heritage is located in historical towns. Before the School of Renovation was established, it was empirically determined that there is a significant lack of knowledge and implementation for the high-quality renovation of cultural heritage. Vocational schools have warned of a decline in interest in handicraft and craft professions. There is also insufficient awareness of the values of cultural heritage, especially among young people.

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

The School of Renovation has teamed up with partners and expert institutions, which ensure the professionalism of workshops with experts from various fields (architects, builders, restorers, craftsmen, materials technologists, teachers etc.). It uses its website, social networks, media, and the publications to share experiences and advice on renovation. Organizing workshops throughout the country and at various heritage buildings and communities was a priority task. The National Vocational Qualification was developed in 2005 for professions required for heritage restoration. (https://npk.si/en/catalogues/?field=22#filter) The School of Renovation joined and designed its workshop programs that it is possible to acquire professional competences according to the NVQ.

The design of the international project School of Renovation for New Generations and 21st Century Heritage (https://sola-prenove-za-nove-generacije.si/), funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2022–24, aims to train teachers and develop didactic tools for teaching cultural heritage in primary schools.

Before the School of Renovation initiative, social recognition for heritage preservation was mainly directed at professional groups, architects, and companies. By establishing awards exclusively for owners of renovated buildings in 2018, it promotes the idea that the renovation of architectural heritage is not only a private interest but also a public benefit. It improves the quality of life, contributes to sustainable development, and mitigates climate change.

The School of Renovation responds to invitations from local communities and local museums to participate in conferences and meetings on heritage in their environment. It participated in Piran (an initiative of the Italian community of Piran on cemetery heritage), and several workshops are being held at the Posavje Museum in Brežice and the Bela Krajina Museum in Metlika and municipalities. It also organizes its own conferences, to which it invites the professional public and decision-makers (such as the first NEB conference, together with ZAG 2025).

Challenges or problems encountered and solutions found to overcome them.

The challenge at the early stages of the workshops was enviting participants. The School of Renovation tackled this by publishing announcements with the help of local journalists and in local newspapers. Over time, it also published the planned workshops on its website and on the websites of its partners, the most active of which is the IPCHS. In addition, the website was enriched with practical advice for owners and a collection of links to renovation manuals, aided by regular updates on social media. In this way, it is trying to become a hub of knowledge. The method of providing information proved to be appropriate. Visits to the website and workshops are increasing. The challenge for the future is to recruit competent NVQ contractors more effectively. This cannot be achieved without broader social support, and increased efforts will be needed in this direction.

European significance

European significance of the project/initiative/nominee.

Our cultural heritage is a blend of mutual influences. The message conveyed by all activities is precisely this: international and regional heritage is not territorially separate. The challenges are shared: sustainable development, inclusion of all (from cities to rural areas, from cultural heritage to all other built structures) and improving the quality of life for all. In this way, the foundations for the implementation of the principles of the EU have been laid for years, as declared in the Davos Charter and the NEB: in the common European area, more needs to be done to increase interest in the renovation of unused heritage and improve renovation practices, as this ensures a higher quality of life, fewer spatial conflicts, and less environmental impact. The school is a small model that has been proven to lead to positive results and could be developed into a broader EU initiative.

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.

A network of education has been developed, with field workshops, meetings, and awards for quality renovations. To date, over 800 participants have attended (in total 50 workshops with approx. 15 participants and 1-2 meetings per year). Attendance is growing, especilaly the number of youth. There have been 51 award recipients to date, who proudly continue to share their experiences. During the Open Days, interaction has developed between them and those facing a similar challenge. The results are available on the website, along with useful information.

> Workshops initiated by municipalities have an impact on cultural heritage preservation practices. One such example is a workshop on dry stone walling in Škofja Loka. It has led to a better management and higher-quality renovations of the remaining structures in the vicinity of the town. Workshops on the lime plaster (municipality of Koper), the restoration of hayracks (municipality of Cerkno), etc. had a similar impact. As part of the School of Renovation for New Generations project, a methodology for incorporating heritage content into lessons has been developed, four manuals for teachers and didactic tools ("heritage chest") have been prepared.
>
> Conservators from IPCHS participate in each workshop with their theoretical or practical contributions, and some of them become initiators of workshops in their own fields. Examples of this include workshops on carpentery in Podlanišče-Cerkno, on preserving the heritage of cemeteries in Piran and the current workshop on shingle-roofing, initiated by conservators from Kranj https://solaprenove.si/event/delavnica-skodlarstva/ . At the same time, at least one or more conservators attend the workshops as listeners, gaining technical knowledge and thus moving from theory to practical experience. Based on their constant participation, we can estimate that at least 100 conservators employed at IPCHS have actively participated in the workshops. Participation can be verified on the attendance sheets, kept regularly.

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

> The social importance of the work can be considered innovative because The School has developed a network of education through workshops in the field. It involves a wide audience. In conservation, public services share their experiences on site. The conservation profession has thus become more accessible to the public and more active in practice.
>
> The renovation school does not distinguish between cultural heritage and other, not designated built heritage. It understands built heritage as a unified corpus of the architectural legacy of our ancestors, in which designated cultural heritage represents qualitative models. All built heritage contributes to quality of the better environment, high-quality living, so its owners deserve the widest possible support.
>
> Frequently asked questions are heard. The answers are provided by explanations and practical work on the site. They are also published as advice on the website and thus available online to contractors, designers, investors, and conservators. https://solaprenove.si/navodila-za-obnovo-stavb-kulturne-dediscine/

Steps taken to reach people who have not previously interacted with the site/project. This might include youth, local communities, non-traditional audiences, people with disabilities, etc.

> Ten years ago, workshop participants were predominantly elderly, motivated primarily by their love of heritage. The aim of the School of Renovation was to attract as many young people as possible. The first shift in the structure of participants was made possible by cooperation with primary schools, secondary vocational schools, and the Faculty of Architecture. Targeted workshops were prepared for them (Idrija High School, Faculty of Architecture Ljubljana, Škofja Loka Secondary School of Woodworking, Bukovščica Branch Elementary School, etc.). Reaching the target audience was made possible also by the Renovation School website and social networks (FB and IG) with regular posts about current events. The Renovation School website offers teaching materials and expert advice on renovation to contractors, owners, and designers alike. Today, the workshops are attended by a very diverse audience, from the elderly to the youngest, from job seekers to students, from owners to public servants.

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).

> From August 2024 to August 2025 (1 year), there were 9,441 views of the website. In August 2025, the website had 557 views.
>
> Participation in the workshop is limited to 10 to 15 people due to space constraints and the nature of the work, an average annual attendance is 80 participants, including meetings. The number of workshop participants can be verified with attendance sheets.
>
> Fb: 1600 likes, 1200 followers

> Instagram: 271 followers

Environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the project (e.g. contribution to climate action and environmental protection; measures to ensure long-term financial sustainability or future viability; benefits for people and communities, where relevant).

> The School of Renovation promotes in practice the preservation of architectural heritage. Its renovation means sustainability in all aspects and contributes to climate action, for benefit of all community.
>
> The renovation is about taking into account the characteristics of the space and adapts to them. Through its setting, architectural heritage shows respect to the environment, to nature and its resources. The materials drawn from nature dictated the method of construction. The use of local materials is also rational and economical due to short transport routes. The building materials from which it is constructed are of local origin and because they are already processed, prepared, and installed, are also ecological. The renovation is environmentally friendly and does not create pollution from construction waste. This is also a contribution to mitigating climate change. Renovating architectural heritage means understanding the weather conditions in which the construction developed. Human settlements avoided the adverse effects of the climate; they were not built on floodplains and were protected from wind or heat. The setting of buildings is adapted to this, reducing negative climatic effects and the energy consumption for heating or cooling. Construction adapted to climatic conditions is evident in the design of buildings, with roofs being the most characteristic external reflection of this adaptation. The buit heritage contributes to energy efficiency with the energy that was already used for its construction. The energy that we use today as the biggest polluter of the planet—namely, production in the construction industry and energy from intercontinental transport—is already built in heritage for centuries. The reduction in the carbon footprint that renovation enables is underestimated in this regard.
>
> Social sustainability is ensured by working with a wide audience, especially young people, as mentioned in the sections above. Activities supports the local economy and a wide diversity of craft professions from an economic perspective, they enables the preservation and revitalization of craft and construction skills, job opportunities and connections between generations. A well-maintained environment provides a high quality of life, while the higher quality of tourism also brings economic benefits, which is of great importance in historic towns. The School of Renovation focuses in spread understanding and preserving these values.

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

> In short, dissemination is carried out:
> - through workshops and lectures in the field throughout the country
> - by organizing and participating in meetings and conferences throughout the country
> - by presentaition awards for high quality renovations
> - through information and promotion via the website
> - through promotion on social networks and YouTube
> - through publication in the press, brochures, monographs, and manuals.

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

> The School of Renovation participates as a partner or lead partner in European projects, and builds on intercultural dialogue. Every year, it participates in the celebration at the European Cultural Heritage Days. It does not exclude anyone, works with all segments of the population, and operates in all regions of Slovenia. It responds to initiatives from national communities and minorities, such as the consultation on the preservation of cemetery heritage initiated by the Italian community in Piran. A characteristic feature of Slovenia is its great geographical, climatic, and architectural diversity within a small area, and this are values that should be understood and preserved. Above all, it strives to reach rural areas and cover as wide a range of diverse spatial planning and construction topics as possible. It is open to all interested parties, regardless of age, education, gender or nationality, and participation in the workshops confirms this.

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

> The School of Renovation could serve as a model for encourage communities and society to better understanding their environment, renovate existing buildings to a high standard, and reduce the priority given to new construction. Preserving existing buildings through dissemination, as tested by the School of Renovation, could be a useful approach in European policies to support the preservation of a quality living environment and reduce the impact of climate change.

Any related work that still needs to be completed, if applicable.

> The School of Renovation is an ongoing process. It will continue to raise awareness of the importance of cultural heritage among young people and organize workshops for teachers. It will continue with training in the field and will try to influence broader social acceptance of the renovation of architectural heritage as an effective contribution to sustainable development, effective measures to mitigate climate change, and effective improvement of the quality of life for all.
>
> One of the goals of the Renovation School is to increase the capacities of competent renovation contractors through National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) mechanisms. It has not yet achieved satisfactory results in this segment. It sees the challenge in market economy mechanisms with profitability values, where quality is not a priority. This is particularly evident in the construction industry, so it is expected that broader social support and support from decision-makers will be needed.

Costs of the project/initiative

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

> Annual expense of all activities is €35,000.
>
> 43% of the funds is provided by the Association of Historical Towns of Slovenia, economic interest association. The funds are used for employee salaries, coordination and promotion.
>
> 57% is provided from public budget, by The Ministry of Culture of Slovenia. Funds are provided to the partner of the School of Renovation, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and is used for the implementation of workshops, the payment of external experts (lecturers and mentors of practical workshops), and publicity (costs of manuals, brochures, monographs).

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

> The project School of Renovation for New Generations and Heritage in the 21st Century, which has been completed in 2024, was financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

Additional information

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

> It will contribute to the wider recognition of the SCHOOL OF RENOVATION and encourage more participants. It will confirm the appropriateness of the work method. Personally, the team members will understand this as recognition for the efforts made to increase the acceptance of built heritage among the public.

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

> Monetary award will be used for organization of additional workskops of the School of Renovation.

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

The Association of Historical Towns of Slovenia, in the name of The SCHOOL OF RENOVATION and its partners:

- Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage,

- University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture,

- Secondary Civil Engineering, Geodesy, Environmental Protection and Vocational High School Ljubljana,

- Škofja Loka School Center.

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?	✓ 9
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