

RESTORATION TRAINING WORKSHOP SCHOOL



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
4. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
8. CULTURE, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

REGENERATION, EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE, LIFE-LONG LEARNING,
TRAINING, CONSERVATION, HERITAGE, YOUTH, EMPLOYMENT, NATURAL
DISASTER



1. Puebla and culture

Puebla is one of the most important states of Mexico and ranks first among the 'States with the highest number of Pueblos Magicos (Magic Towns)' according to the Federal Secretary of Culture. In addition, due to its historical, architectural and urban value, it was declared a World Heritage City in 1987.

In 1999, an earthquake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale damaged 800 architectural heritage buildings in 120 municipalities. Never before in the history of Mexico had the Fondo Nacional de Desastres Naturales (National Natural Disaster Fund – FONDEN) allocated a budget to restore damage caused by an earthquake to architectural heritage. In this context, the Puebla Restoration Training Workshop School was created.

2. Goals and project implementation

2.1. Main aim and specific goals

The Restoration Training Workshop School develops and trains young people with two-year specialised workshops to become technicians in the conservation and restoration of the State's cultural heritage. It is an innovative and concrete response to three problems:

- » The youth unemployment rate.
- » The gradual extinction of traditional trades.
- » The deterioration of historic city centres.



THE SCHOOL TRAINS YOUNG PEOPLE IN SPECIALISED WORKSHOPS FOR TWO YEARS TO BECOME TECHNICIANS IN THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE STATE'S CULTURAL HERITAGE.

2.2. Development of the project

In 1985, the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security created the "Workshop Schools and Trade Houses Programme" based on the "Learning by Doing" model, with 70% practical training and 30% theory. "Learning by doing, and working by learning" was implemented throughout Spain and, starting in 1990, it was exported to Latin America and the Caribbean with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

After the 1999 earthquake, and given the lack of skilled labour to undertake reconstruction tasks, the government recognised the need for a training programme in traditional construction systems. For this reason, in 2000, a collaboration agreement was signed between the AECID, the Secretary of Culture of the State of Puebla, the Benemérita Autonomous University of Puebla (BUAP) and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). The Puebla Restoration Training Workshop School project was born in 2001 as part of the training centres that were being implemented throughout Latin America. Specifically, in Puebla, the establishment of a workshop school focused on traditional construction systems, was a well-received idea (supported by all three levels of government and academia) because it responded to the need to rebuild the built heritage damaged by the 1999 earthquake. This natural event, in addition to the material damage, exposed the gradual loss of intangible heritage represented by traditional construction techniques, since there was no specialised or knowledgeable workforce that could work on historic buildings to prevent their collapse.

The Puebla Restoration Training Workshop School is a practical educational programme for young people with technical training in traditional trades, such as: construction, carpentry, stonemasonry, ironwork and forging, and electrical and hydro-sanitary installations. Its objective is to promote the conservation of built heritage through the training of skilled labour, thus offering better opportunities for employment and development.

After nine generations, more than 387 technicians have been trained as qualified workers in the conservation of built heritage, more than 400 students have graduated from extension courses, and more than 367 intervention actions carried out in various buildings of historical value. The tenth generation is currently underway, continuing, among other activities, the continuity of the so-called “work orders”, which are conservation actions and practical activities that students carry out following the learning model implemented by the AECID.

The School has become a model of success in the training of professionals specialising in cultural heritage conservation. Its work has contributed to preserving the cultural richness of the state of Puebla and improving employment opportunities for young people in vulnerable situations.

**WORKSHOPS ARE OFFERED IN TRADITIONAL TRADES SUCH AS:
CONSTRUCTION, CARPENTRY, STONEMASONRY, IRONWORK AND FORGING,
AND ELECTRICAL AND HYDRO-SANITARY INSTALLATIONS.**

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

The School benefits society in three ways: it preserves the tangible cultural heritage of the State of Puebla, safeguards the transmission of traditional techniques, and offers new life opportunities to an underprivileged sector.

The School offers theory in its various workshops and practical training in its different buildings. It provides the people of all ages with tools to improve their wellbeing, strengthening access to training and culture through “extension courses”, disseminating protection and safeguarding actions, and developing mechanisms that improve the appreciation and enjoyment of artistic expressions that stimulate creative thinking.

3.2. Evaluation

The training offered by the Workshop School is divided into two areas:

- » Academic, with classes in three curricular areas: administrative, theoretical and technical construction.
- » Practical, with hands-on exercises in one of the five workshops following the “learning by doing” approach: this consists of working directly on buildings, applying what has been learnt in the academic area.

This training is based on the following parameters: 70% of practical application and 30% of theoretical knowledge, so that the progress made by the students can be gradually verified through a monthly assessment process.

The tools used to evaluate the five training workshops are:

- » Questionnaires (for the theoretical evaluation of the workshop).
- » Observation guides.
- » Checklists (for the practical activities to be carried out).

The minimum average grade that students must obtain is 8.0. This is in line with the evaluation processes required by the Puebla State Institute for Job Training. Upon completion of the training through this entity, a certification process is carried out in order to validate the knowledge acquired and thus obtain a certificate accrediting the students as assistant restoration technicians in the workshop they have chosen.



3.3. Key factors

Currently, the Puebla Restoration Training Workshop School is the only one in the country with the model implemented by AECID and a founding member of the Network of Workshop Schools of Latin America and the Caribbean. Almost 23 years after its creation, the Workshop School has had different key factors that make it unique and that place it at the forefront of the recovery of the State's cultural heritage, as well as the integration of the youth into the professional world. The following statistics help to describe and understand the importance of the programme in the state of Puebla:

- » 5 specialisation workshops.
- » 387 graduates as restoration technicians.
- » More than 30 extension courses offered to the community.
- » More than 400 work orders / conservation actions carried out in different heritage buildings in the capital and the state, such as: Atlixco, San Andrés Cholula, Puebla, San Pedro Cholula, Yehualtepec, Tepeaca, Izúcar de Matamoros, Huaquechula, among others.




- » 437 alumni of extension courses.
- » 20 municipalities served.
- » 9 generations developed.
- » The tenth generation is currently underway with 15 young students.

3.4. Continuity

As a fundamental part of the development of the Restoration Training Workshop School, it is necessary to have administrative, theoretical and constructive technical staff, constructive, qualified and specialised in the development, management and implementation of projects focused on heritage conservation. Similarly, specialised materials and safety equipment are important for the development of practical training. Finally, financial support (scholarships) is needed to prevent students from dropping out and to help them meet their expenses during their training.

Furthermore, the implementation of the programme in a city with great architectural and historical diversity requires

the training of skilled labour for the preservation and safeguarding of its historical legacy. This has made the Puebla Workshop School the only one in the country with the model implemented by the AECID. The Puebla Workshop School can be replicated mainly in the states of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz and Mexico City. For this programme to be successfully replicated, it is important to take into account the objectives, training workshops, infrastructure, curriculum, evaluation and budget, among others.



THE SCHOOL PROMOTES THE CONSERVATION OF THE STATE'S TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, WHILE SAFEGUARDING TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES AND OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES TO AN UNDERPRIVILEGED SECTOR.

4. Further information

Puebla was a candidate for the sixth UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (November 2023 – March 2024). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June 2024, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

This article was written by Enrique Glockner, Secretary of Culture of the State of Puebla, Mexico.

Contact: [cultura \(at\) puebla.gob.mx](mailto:cultura(at)puebla.gob.mx)

Website: www.puebla.gob.mx