

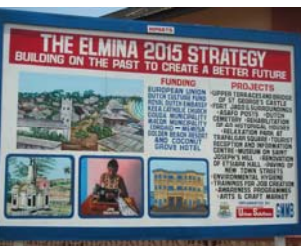
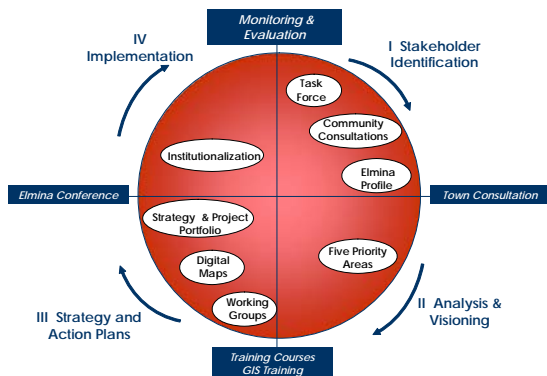
# ELMINA HERITAGE PROJECT

BUILDING ON THE PAST TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE

The Elmina Heritage Project started in 2002 at the occasion of the 300-year celebrations of Ghanaian-Dutch diplomatic relations. Its aim is to restore and manage the mutual cultural heritage existing in Elmina alongside an integrated program to improve the tourist, social and economic conditions of Elmina.

The Elmina Heritage Project comprised two stages:

1. Assistance in preparation of the Elmina 2015 Strategy
2. Assistance in implementation of 10 key projects in Elmina



## Phase 1: The Elmina 2015 Strategy:

### Building on the Past to Create a Better Future

The Elmina 2015 Strategy is a comprehensive development strategy produced by the KEEA District Assembly in close consultation with the people of Elmina. The process started with community group meetings to identify the priority problems of the town. Meanwhile a review took place of studies and reports conducted on Elmina over the years.

One of the highlights of the process was the Elmina Town Consultation, held from 15 to 18 April 2002 and opened officially in a festive ceremony by the honourable Senior Minister J.H Mensah in the presence of Prince Willem Alexander and Princess Máxima of the Netherlands. The presence of this royal couple truly worked as a catalyst for the attraction of other international donors and motivational factor for the local authorities.

1	2	3	4	5
Tourism & Local Economic Development	Fishing & Fishing Harbour	Waste Management & Drainage	Education	Health

At this city consultation the people of Elmina identified five priority areas. Based on these priority areas working groups were established bringing together a wide variety of people from fishermen to hotel managers. These working groups developed the 2015 strategy as well as a project portfolio containing over 80 concrete project proposals for Elmina town.

## Phase II: Implementation of 10 selected key projects

The 2015 Strategy and the 80 project proposals were presented at a high profile donor-conference in 2004. At this event a number of donors and private investors indicated interest in 'adopting' some of the project proposals. 10 key projects were selected for funding under the Elmina Heritage Project:

### 10 Key Projects

1. PREVENTING COLLAPSE OF ELMINA CASTLE
2. FACILITATING COMMERCIAL USE FORT ST. JAGO
3. RENOVATION DUTCH CEMETERY
4. REVOLVING FUND FOR HISTORIC HOUSES
5. RENOVATION OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CHAPEL
6. UPLIFT CENTRAL SQUARE
7. RENOVATION ASAFO POSTS
8. EXPANSION CATHOLIC MUSEUM
9. IMPROVEMENT TOURIST FACILITIES
10. LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

### Project Management

A locally established Project Management Unit (PMU) carried the responsibility for implementation of these projects. The PMU consisted of historians, architects and marketing experts, was assisted by Urban Solutions from the Netherlands and operated in close collaboration with the KEEA District Assembly and the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board.

The Elmina Heritage Project has been funded by the European Commission and the Dutch Culture Fund.

Implementing Agency:  
Urban Solutions, Accra

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ONDER  
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SCHAP



Urban Solutions



# 1 Elmina Castle

Duration: 9 months  
 Contractor: Akaidoo Enterprises Ltd  
 Consultants: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST, Kumasi)  
 Funding: €116.000, European Commission  
 Activities: - Repair works at the upper terraces & walls around the great court  
 - Replacement of the concrete bridge at the main entrance

## BEFORE



Cracks in walls of upper terraces

← Elmina Castle is a UNESCO listed world heritage site attracting over 100.000 visitors a year.

Examination in 2000 showed that the structural condition of the the castle was in an alarming state and needing urgent repair. Critical cracks had developed in walls and ceiling due to corrosion of the steel joints, making of concrete popping of the walls.

Because of imminent danger the upper terraces were closed to the public in the 1990's.



Castle St. George d'Elmina, Ghana's UNESCO listed premier heritage site in danger of collapsing

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION



Repair works took place to make the terraces and walls structurally sound.

← A variety of repair works took place: replacement of steel beams, waterproofing of the roof, fixing of doors and windows, installation of new electricity works and internal painting.



Upper terraces have opened again for the public

## AFTER

## BEFORE

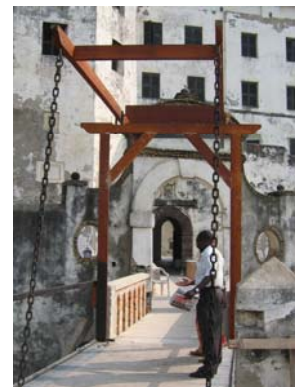


Entrance bridge supported by wooden beams to prevent collapsing

The concrete bridge which provides the only public entrance to the castle was in a state of collapse. The reinforcement in the concrete that had replaced the original wooden beams and deck during an earlier renovation had started to rust and rot. The bridge surface was cracked and large chunks of concrete fell off.

← The bridge has now been replaced with one modelled completely after the original version. Also the woodwork that supports the drawbridge has been renewed.

## AFTER

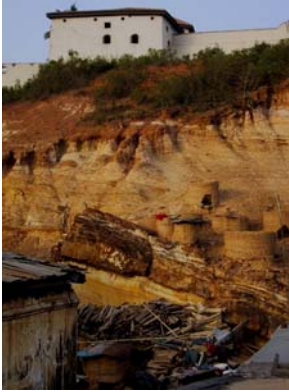


Entrance bridge once again safe and sound

## 2 Fort St. Jago

Duration: 8 months  
 Contractor: Memphis Construction Ltd, Kendricks Construction Ltd, De-bearach Ltd.  
 Consultants: Ablin Consult, GW Consult, K.N.U.S.T.  
 Funding: € 260,000, European Commission  
 Activities: - Internal repair to the Fort  
 - Erosion protection & landscaping

### BEFORE



St. Jago hill suffered heavily from erosion

The four centuries old military fort was in a remarkable good technical state, partly renovated in 1995 with USAID funds. Yet, the St. Jago hill on which it stands is in a lesser state: it is prone to regular landslides and indeed in danger of collapsing due to erosion and illegal building activities.



### UNDER CONSTRUCTION



The Elmina Heritage Project has terraced and landscaped the St. Jago hill, reconstructed the road to the fort and drainage around the hill. Further the doors, windows and floors were upgraded and the roof on the well in the courtyard was repaired.



### AFTER?

Fort St. Jago: a future heritage inn or hotel?

In the early seventies the fort was used as a low budget hotel and once again the Elmina Heritage Project together with the owner of the Fort, the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board, is exploring possibilities to put the fort into commercial use.



Terracing and landscaping works ongoing

## 3 Dutch Cemetery

Duration: 3 months  
 Contractor: Davies Wright Ltd  
 Consultants: QS-Pro consult  
 Funding: € 21.000, Dutch Culture Fund  
 Activities: - Repair works to the graves, walls and entrance gate of the cemetery  
 - Landscaping of the surroundings

### A heritage site ignored for decades

The Dutch Cemetery dates back to 1806. Originally constructed to be the final resting place for Dutch settlers and their descendants it became the place for burying important people in Elmina. Two centuries later the cemetery as well as its immediate environment was in a serious state of decline.

### BEFORE



### AFTER

### Becomes a 'living' cemetery

As part of the Elmina Heritage Project the Cemetery was newly landscaped, the walls and graves were stabilised and freshly painted, plaques with information on the buried were placed and a new gate was installed. Also the surrounding area was upgraded: the landscape was beautified and a staircase going uphill constructed to consolidate erosion and facilitating easy access to the Catholic Museum.



## 4 Historic Houses Revolving Fund

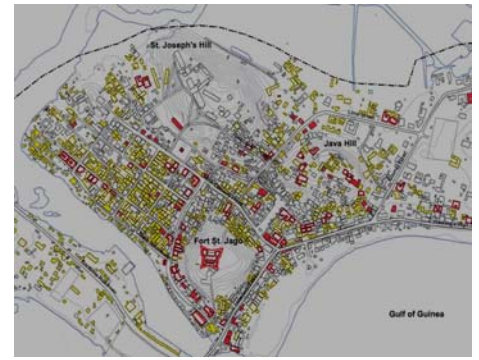
Duration: 10 months  
 Contractor: Sammy Ray Construction Ltd, Sambethy Investment Ltd, Llimpey Decon Ltd  
 Consultants: QS Pro, Tony Asare  
 Funding: € 400,000, European Commission  
 Activities: Renovation and repair works to 15 historic houses in Elmina town

BEFORE

AFTER



15 houses have now been renovated; they are turned into home-stays, bars, restaurants, beauty-saloons and museums.



### Alarm bells ringing

A "quick scan" commissioned by the Elmina Heritage Project in 2002 revealed the alarming figure that over 40% of the housing stock in Elmina was in a poor technical state.

### A new future for houses from the past

The Elmina Heritage Project established a credit facility to provide financial assistance to owners of historic houses in the centre of Elmina for the purpose of renovation of their properties. Owners of these houses could apply for a credit line. The grant was conditional: 20 % of the contract value had to be deposited in a revolving fund and the applicants had to open up part of the renovated house to visitors and start activities to generate revenue. With these funds a revolving fund has been installed with the aim of expanding the renovation activities.

## 5 Nana Etsiapa Community Hall

Duration: 8 months  
 Contractor: Davies Wright Ltd  
 Consultants: QS Pro  
 Funding: € 47,000, Dutch Culture Fund  
 Activities: - Reconstruction of the roof  
 - Improvement sanitary facilities

### Community pulse is beating again

The Methodist church complex, located in the middle of town comprises three buildings: old Dutch chapel, school building, and a church. The original Dutch chapel lost its roof in 1999 during a tropical storm, and has since been without function. The adjacent pre-school was in a very bad state. The local Methodist community restored the church in the 1990's. The Elmina Heritage Project followed suit and renovated the former chapel and the pre-school.

BEFORE

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

AFTER



Nana Etsiapa Hall is now the thriving hart of the Elmina community, and being used for meetings, exhibitions and cultural or sports events.

## 6 Uplift Central Square

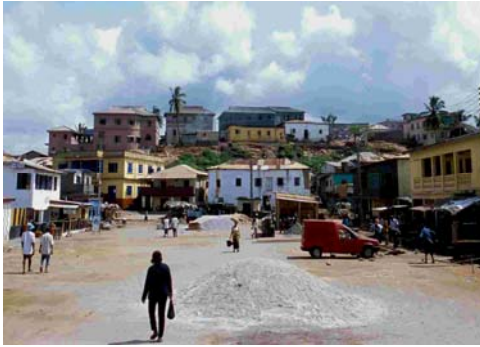
Duration: 8 months  
 Contractor: Davies Wright Ltd  
 Consultants: GW Consult, QS-Pro, Tony Asare  
 Funding: € 81,000, Dutch Culture Fund  
 Activities: - Refurbishing Nana Kobina Gyan Square  
 - Replacement of staircase on St. Joseph's hill

### A square without Identity

Located between the Methodist church complex and the Dutch cemetery, Trafalgar square was the main open square in Elmina Town. Ignored for many years the square was slowly but surely being encroached on. It served as a bus station, funeral venue and parking place.

### Now once again the place to be

To retain and utilise the open space to its full potential the project has landscaped the area and transformed it into a true public square where residents and tourists alike can come to relax, have a drink or enjoy a performance. The square has been renamed Nana Kobina Gyan Square after Elmina's most famous Chief who was expelled from his country under English occupation. A statue to his memory now stands proudly in the middle of the square as a monument of the bravery of the Elmina people.



BEFORE



UNDER CONSTRUCTION



AFTER

## 7 Asafo Posts

Duration: 4 months  
 Contractor: BCG Contract Works, Witlas Enterprises Ltd.  
 Consultants: KEEA District Assembly  
 Funding: € 35,000, Royal Netherlands Embassy  
 Activities: - Rehabilitation of Asafo post 1,2,4,5  
 - Reparation and repainting of statues

### Unique heritage in dilapidated state

During the 18th century, the wards in which Elmina was divided constituted themselves as army units: the Asafo companies. These companies turned out at calamities or marched out during wars. In the 19th century they played an important role in the general administration of Elmina. In times of peace there was some rivalry between the different Companies, sometimes resulting in street-fights. Some Asafo Companies have shrines in which relics are kept.

The three most spectacular shrines – No. 1, 2, 4 and 5 were once colourful buildings with statues set in an almost surreal combination of themes drawn from the Bible, the sea, and the military. But over the years the shrines had deteriorated to a very poor state, even the once vivid colours could no longer hide the state of ignorance.



BEFORE



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

### Being restored to its full splendour

With assistance of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Accra, the KEEA District Assembly is now renovating the Asafo posts. Once completed they will be turned into museums offering visitors a the unique experience of seeing these shrines and hidden treasures from the inside.

## 8 Catholic Museum

Duration: 4 months  
 Contractor: Davies Wright Ltd  
 Consultants: GW Consult, QS Pro  
 Funding: € 22,500, Dutch Culture Fund  
 Activities: - Renovation existing museum & replacement of furniture  
 - Extension of ground floor



### A hidden gem

The classification museum was hardly appropriate for the collection of historic catholic relics in a cramped room at St. Josephs Hill. The building was hidden and the random visitor would find the door locked.

The unique collection containing beautiful relics, such as a golden drinking cup from 17th century, diaries of the missionaries in the 19th century, clothes of all the bishops of Ghana's Central region and an impressive set of the Stations of the Cross in Elmina by an African (or Black) Jezus, was simply gathering dust.

BEFORE

AFTER

### Properly polished for the public

The Elmina Heritage Project has in cooperation with the Catholic Diocese of Cape Coast constructed a new building that is the new home of the Catholic's museum's impressive collection, and also presents artefacts displaying the historic significance of Elmina in the world. The museum is part of the heritage walk and now includes a friendly reception for visitors.

## 9 Tourist Facilities

Duration: 12 months  
 Contractor: Allor & Sons Ltd  
 Consultants: GW Consult, SNV  
 Funding: € 80,000, European Commission  
 Activities: - Establishment/ coaching of tourist office, signposts, tourism products  
 - Construction of Arts & Crafts market

### Tourists receive a warm welcome in Elmina

Lack of information was an important reason tourists did not enter Elmina town. People simply did not know what is there was to see. A number of initiatives have greatly improve the tourism infrastructure in Elmina

- Elmina Tourist Map was the first product of the Elmina Heritage Project. To stimulate people to explore the town of Elmina the map suggests a heritage trail/ walking route highlighting the significant buildings and places of interest along the route and offers background stories to understand the rich history of the town.
- Signboards have been posted along the route for easy reference
- A tourism information centre at Nana Kobina Gyan Square is fully operational
- Adjacent to the square an arts & crafts market has been constructed
- A lagoon cruise and a sea boat cruise are now on offer for the tourists

Bright red and easy to spot: the Elmina signposts



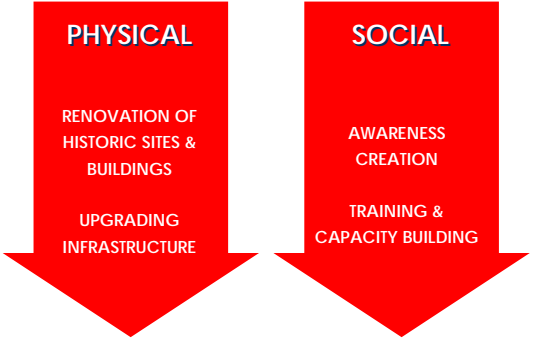
### A novelty in Ghana: authentic sea cruise experience !



Duration: 9 months  
 Contractor: SNV, ATAG, OBAP  
 Funding: € 100,000, European Commission  
 Activities: - Training of tour guides & staff of tourist office  
 - Training of artisans  
 - Training of business people

*'To establish Elmina as a must-go destination for cultural tourists an attractive package of products has been put together that keeps visitors occupied in Elmina for a number of days'*

*'As the traditional source of income - the fishing sector - is declining, the development of sustainable tourism can signify a major improvement for a number of people which will have a ripple effect on the entire community'*



**Physical Improvements and Social Capital**

To firmly establish Elmina as Ghana's premier tourist destination physical improvements are not sufficient. It is very important that the social infrastructure is strengthened so that the local community recognises the potential of the tourism industry and is able to benefit from it as an alternative source of income. .



**Tour Guide Training.**

A typical tourist would come to Elmina,, visit the castle and leave. Visitors seldom ventured around in town and as a result did not spend any money in the local economy.

To further encourage tourists to explore the town, the Elmina Heritage Project commissioned SNV Ghana to train a selected group of youngsters to become tourist guides. They learned about the history of the castle and the significant landmarks in town, about the way people in Elmina live and work and also about how to approach tourists. Also the harbour with its colourful boats, flags and traditional sayings featured in the curriculum to eventually become part of every tourist's itinerary.

**Artisans Training**

Options for tourists who wanted to bring souvenirs from Elmina were limited. This training programme run by Aid to Artisans Ghana (ATAG) targeted the local artisan's community: they were trained in new skills and techniques in creation and marketing of artifacts. The programme also brought them up to date with the latest developments in product development, as well as consumer demands from the national and international market. The objective is for Elmina to become a must-go destination for those tourists interested in buying traditional and contemporary craft and art.



**Business Training**

For the restoration projects to become sustainable in the long term it is important that the people of Elmina recognise the value of heritage as an economic asset and know how to capitalise on these assets.

Business training programmes were offered by OBAP Business Services to the successful participants of the artisans training, aspiring tourism entrepreneurs and to those Elminians coming forward to set up or improve or start their business. The project also provides technical assistance in financial management to the KEEA District Assembly and neighbourhood and community-based organizations.



# ELMINA HERITAGE PROJECT: ACHIEVEMENTS

## Traditional skills are kept for the future

The renovation works in town provided ample opportunities for Elminians to become qualified in the special restoration techniques of historic buildings. A selected number of workman and artisans were coupled to the different renovation projects to learn the skills "on the job" and revive traditional building techniques.



## Employment created locally

All contractors working on the renovation projects had to hire a minimum number of local staff to make sure that the projects worked as an employment generating machine. More than 10 different contracting companies and consultants were hired and at the height of the project as many as 500 people would be working on the different projects throughout town.



## Additional investments in infrastructure

Recognizing the economic potential of the Elmina district, major infrastructure improvements are taking place: the highway from Accra to Elmina is almost finished reducing travel time to three hours, basic services such as water, electricity, public transport and telephone coverage are being improved, the bridge over the lagoon has been renewed and perhaps most importantly: dredging of the Benya lagoon has commenced.



## Private sector sees potential Elmina market

The improvements in Elmina town, have attracted a steady stream of investors in tourism related businesses from Accra. A number of them have taken up space in the renovated properties for a guesthouse, a souvenir shop or a travel clinic.

In addition, other industries are discovering Elmina. Kakum Rural Bank has recently opened a branch in Elmina, the town now also has a very popular internet café, and a Chinese/Ghanaian fish processing plant has been constructed providing employment to over 150 of Elminians

Local entrepreneurs were also quick to materialise on the increase in visitors. In recent months already four bar/restaurants have expanded their business all reporting a significant increase in patronage from visitors and locals alike.



## Making Elmina a better place

Environmental awareness has improved; people take more care of their surroundings. Slowly but surely Elmina is becoming a cleaner and healthier place to live, work and play:



## Building on the Past to Create a Better Future for Elmina

Implementing Agency:  
Urban Solutions, Accra

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