

WHV – Let's Heritage

Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) at Patan, Gujarat, India

PROJECT DATES

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (2014)

06 May - 15 May 2023

THE SITE - Rani-ki-Vav, on the banks of the Saraswati River, was initially built as a memorial to a king in the 11th century AD. Stepwells are a distinctive form of subterranean water resource and storage systems on the Indian subcontinent, and have been constructed since the 3rd millennium BC. They evolved over time from what was basically a pit in sandy soil towards elaborate multi-storey works of art and architecture. Rani-ki-Vav was built at the height of craftsmens' ability in stepwell construction and the Maru-Gurjara architectural style, reflecting mastery of this complex technique and great beauty of detail and proportions. Designed as an inverted temple highlighting the sanctity of water, it is divided into seven levels of stairs with sculptural panels of high artistic quality; more than 500 principle sculptures and over a thousand minor ones combine religious, mythological and secular imagery, often referencing literary works.

OBJECTIVES - The project is part of a nationwide campaign extending the outreach of the first 'Let's Heritage' program, implemented in 2017 by the Elixir Foundation at Rani-ki-Vav. It aims at promoting heritage preservation among youth and local communities, documenting and spreading examples of active participation, stimulating a sense of responsibility and connecting international and local people with the management and conservation authorities.

ACTIVITIES - The volunteers will organize and take part in multiple hands on and awareness raising actions, from heritage walk to classes, curated experiential study visits, expert panel discussions, presentations and cultural performances with local youth, school students and community representatives. The participants will also organize cleanup, painting and photo contests to promote heritage site and youth involvement. The project will have focused efforts to leverage social media platforms for promotion.

PARTNERS - UNESCO New Delhi, Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, Archeological Survey of India, Government of Gujarat, Gujarat Tourism, Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Shri & Smt PK Kotawala Arts College, Collectorate of Patan, Kala Pratishthan, Meri Sanskriti Cultural Center

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