

THE INTERNATIONAL AWARDS FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES 2012
WHOLE CITY SUBMISSION CATEGORY C

Taiwan's Ceramic Art Town on the Bank of Dahan Stream

Yingge District, New Taipei City





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Overview

Yingge District is located in the most peripheral part of the New Taipei City. Both Yingge and Sanxia are important gateways into the New Taipei City on Dahan Stream. It faces Linkou Plateau on the north and its land elevations slope from northeast to southwest. The district has a total area of 21.12 square kilometers (1.06% of New Taipei City) with less than a third of level ground. The population has increased by 6.3% within 10 years, with a total of 28,073 households (1.95% of New Taipei City). The total population is 87,710 (2.23% of New Taipei City) with a density of 4,155 people per square kilometer.

For the transportation network, Taiwan Railway Western Line currently has Yingge Station and another future station Fengming in planning. The National Highway No. 3 is easily accessible at the nearby interchange. It is also very convenient to reach the National Highway No. 1, Taoyuan International Airport, and Taiwan High Speed Rail Taoyuan Station via Danan Interchange on the National Highway No. 2.

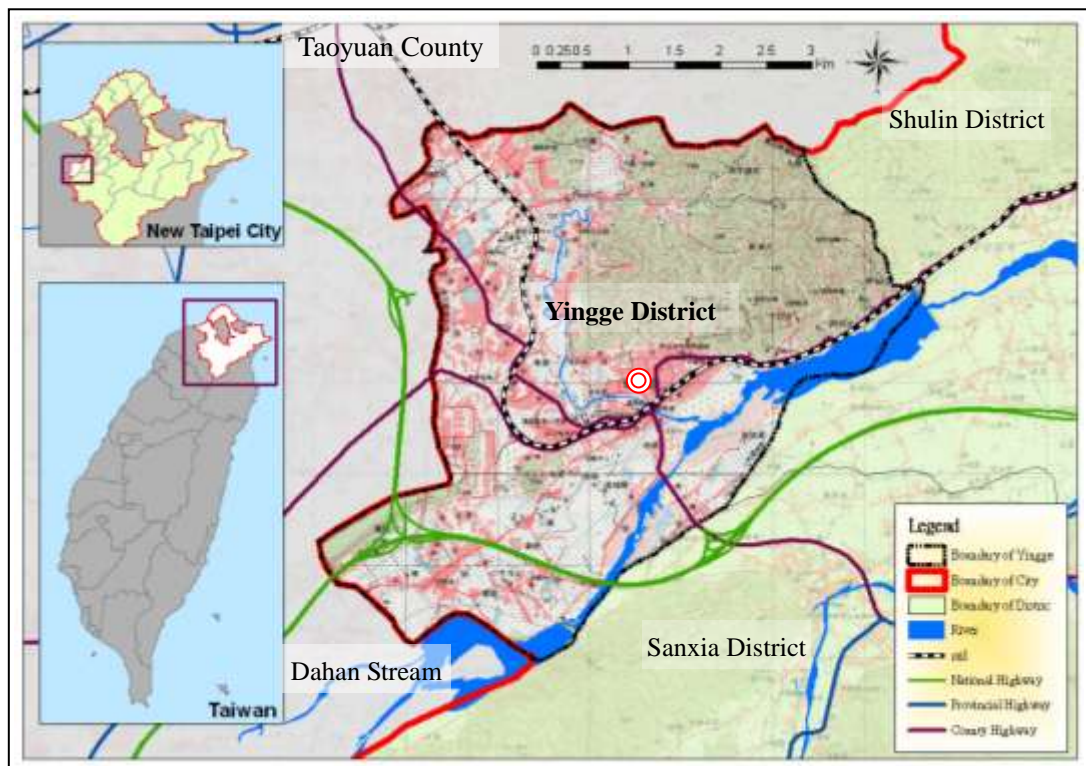


Figure 1: Location Map of Yingge District

Enhancement of the Natural and Built

(A) Protection of the Spiritual Landmark - Yingge Rock

Yingge Rock (Yingge is the Chinese pronunciation of parrot), a sedimentary rock formed over hundreds of years, is an important landmark in the district. There are many easily accessible hiking trails leading to the summit where one can enjoy the cool breeze and beautiful scenery, overlooking the Shimen Reservoir. Legend has it that the rock was originally a mythological bird that did harm to the locals and that treasures were hidden in several caves on the bird rock, giving the Yingge Rock a more legendary color.

Since the landmark represents the spirit of Yingge, after taking into consideration several factors, including tourism, recreation, and best viewing angles, “visual simulation” was conducted and land control was enforced in the surrounding areas by imposing a height restriction zone as part of the urban development plans. The joint efforts of the local government and the residents have successfully maintained, improved, and preserved the spiritual and cultural asset of Yingge.



Figure 2: Yingge Rock

(B) Development of Reclamation Area on Dahan Stream to Display Local Attractions

Sanying Reclamation Area is located on the bank of Dahan Stream, which occupies approximately 32 hectares. Planning and development started in 2009 and the site was designated as a ceramics center for cultural exchange. Its facilities include



landscape art engineering, the New Taipei City Museum of Art, art workshops, a water arena, a sports park, and cable cars. Among them, the New Taipei City Museum of Art was designed by Peter Boronski, the winner of the Museum International Competition. It is expected to incorporate large-scale public art events into natural riparian landscape in the future to extend the values of ceramics industry and create in-depth tourism.

Moreover, a gravel contact oxidation facility was installed in the reclamation area which can treat 40,000CMD of sewage daily in Yingge Creek. After purification, water is discharged to the artificial valley of Sanying Reclamation Area; it further flows through the water arena before going into Dahan Stream.



Figure 3: Simulation and Realization of Sanying Reclamation Area, 2009-2012

Arts, Cultures and Heritage

(A) Ceramics Museum as a Local Cultural Hub

Yingge has the most complete record of the history of ceramic development in Taiwan. It is viewed as a microcosm of Taiwan's history of ceramic development. The Ceramics Museum held its grand opening in November, 2000 and has become a channel that integrates the resources of the public, private and third sectors. The museum has become the new landmark of Yingge, which serves as an important platform for international exchanges of ceramic culture. It has a profound significance in the local ceramic development as well as the progress of marching toward an international ceramics city.

In support of “Revitalization of Local Cultural Industry Project” promoted by the Council for Cultural Affairs of Executive Yuan, the museum launched the “Yingge Wares” branding project, which gave Yingge's ceramic development, hometown sentiments and craft aesthetics a unique brand name as well as a historical and cultural meaning. Through the heritage of accumulated experience in craft aesthetics, a unique brand was created and it represents the transformation of traditional ceramic works to modern, exquisite ceramic artworks.



Figure 4: Ceramics Museum and Its exhibition, 2010

(B) Industrial Transformation to Restore the Economic Vitality of the Local Industry

Yingge started its mass production of sanitary ceramics and ceramic tiles in the 1960s, which quickly opened the door for Taiwan ceramic exports. Taiwan ceramics



participated in the International Expo in the United States in 1966 and subsequently Yingge became the production center of ceramics in Taiwan.

In the late 1980s, the rising costs of raw materials and wages, environmental issues and soaring land prices had caused a continuous rise in the operating costs of Yingge's ceramics industry. In addition, it faced difficulties in saturated foreign markets and technology upgrades. Starting from 1995, Yingge's ceramics industry had declined significantly when many manufacturers of building tiles and sanitary ceramics relocated to low cost countries. Yingge turned to invest herself in local cultural and creative industries based on household and artistic ceramics.

Although Yingge's ceramics industry faced the crisis of the hollowing out of industry and a sunset industry in 1995, the central government promoted an industrial improvement project to upgrade local cultural industries and to entice consumers into buying local products that reflected the uniqueness of local culture. Local ceramicists, highly creative and courageous, rose to the challenge and adopted themselves to new methods of ceramic production and operating models. For example, some ceramicists invested in product research and development while other kilns provided tourists learning experience by organizing tours that introduced the process of ceramic production and DIY pottery classrooms. Pottery studios operated by individual artists and historical site guided tours on Wenhua Road are currently two major attractions that boost ceramic and cultural developments in Yingge. They offer tourists more product options and opportunities to understand and learn the ceramic culture in Yingge.



Figure 5: Industrial Transformation in Several Ways, 2003, 2010

Today, clay-related industries play a major role in industrial development in

Yingge. Among 667 factories registered in Yingge, 254 engage in the ceramic business and they account for 32% of all similar factories in Taiwan. The products include building ceramics, glazed tiles, floor tiles, wall tiles, bathroom wares, decorative or household ceramics, art vases, antique vase reproductions, teapots, housewares, children's toys, decorations and industrial precision ceramics.

(C) Innovative Ceramic Technologies Marketed Internationally

The research and development efforts of local manufacturers, ceramicists (15 individual studios in the area), and relevant associations have continuously innovated technology. Take the renowned “eggshell porcelain bowl” for example. This technology has produced the world's thinnest ceramic work, also known as a dancing porcelain artwork. The thin eggshell bowl vibrates when you breathe on it.

In Shanghai World Expo 2010, the design concept of Taiwan Pavilion was based on the theme of “Mountain, Water, Nature, Soul and City”. Every visitor to the Taiwan Pavilion was offered a cup of tea as a symbol of hospitality, and the Yingge made tea cups were the souvenirs for visitors to take home. Sky-lantern shaped tea cup sets were for sale after the exhibition, which made Yingge the representative of Taiwan's ceramic art creations and crafts technologies.



Figure 6: Sky-lantern Shaped Tea Cup Sets, 2010

(D) Setting up a Vocational High School to Pass Sown Ceramic Technologies

During the process of industrial transformation, in addition to research and development, the Taipei County Government set up Yingge Vocational High School, which had the one and only Department of Ceramic Engineering in Taiwan. Its teaching method combined mentoring, technology and art as the main focus with a vision to pass down local ceramic art and culture



Figure 7: Masters Teach Apprentices the Ceramic Skill, 2012

(E) Preservation of Historical Buildings and Monuments as Reminders of the Past

Among 43 historical buildings in Yingge, WangYang Residence and ChengFa Residence were designated as historic sites in 2006. WangYang Residence shows a unique integration of Eastern and Western architecture, featuring red bricks that made up the main body of the house and a Baroque-style façade.

Located on Jianshanpu Road and Chongqing Street, the Ceramics Old Street was transformed from 11 houses built by the immigrants during the Qing Dynasty to its current look. But it retains the original ceramic features and culture, and attracts many tourists from near and far every year.



Figure 8: WangYang Residence and Ceramics Old Street, 2012

The old cultural features of Yingge can be found in many historical residences, including Tzeng Residence, Zheng Residence, Xu Residence, Yu Residence, Xiao Residence, You Residence, and Huang Residence. Huang Residence was used as a

dormitory for the Japanese Kamikaze aircraft pilots during World War II. This place is a representative example of a residence that bears defensive functions. It is self-sufficient, like a castle, with drinking water system, underground drainage system, and fortifications. Huang Residence has profound significance in the history.

Environmental Best Practices

(A) Number One in Promoting Environmental Protection

In response to global warming and climatic anomalies, Yingge District served as a demonstration district and launched several environmental protection policies, such as keep garbage off the ground, recycling and per bag trash collection fee. The concept of user charge and the need to save money had reduced the volume of trash by 50% (55.29 tonnes per day before policy implementation in 2008 vs. 29.2 tonnes per day after the implementation). Recycling rate also increased from 3.29 tonnes per day before policy implementation to 3.71 tonnes per day after the implementation with an increase rate of 12.8%. Moreover, through the promotion, kitchen waste was recycled and reused from 2.1 tonnes per day in 2003 to 8.89 tonnes per day. The volume of the waste was reduced from the source which significantly cut down the volume of trash. The goal is to have zero waste.



Figure 9: Demonstration District of the Per Bag Trash Collection Fee Policy, 2009



Furthermore, greening was carried out in many public plots: 22,100 meters of roads were transformed, and planting was done in 600 areas. 300,000 square meters of greening area can effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow down global warming. The comprehensive environmental protection plan has given Yingge the “Cleanest City” district title.

(B) Turning the Waste into Reusable Materials

The Shimen Reservoir, sitting on the upper reaches of Dahan Stream, has an annual need for dredging to remove sludge in the dam. In the past, sludge was sent to a landfill. After technology research and development conducted by local ceramicists, now sludge can be reused and turned into ceramic materials. Not only does it give unique characteristics to the local industries but solves the problems of sludge disposal and resource consumption.



Figure 9: Ceramicists Introduced How to Turn Sludge into Ceramic Materials , 2012

(C) Community Mobilization for Environmental Protection

In addition to routine sanitation maintenance tasks performed by the cleaning unit, local volunteers organized an environmental protection volunteer group of 339 people. The hours of volunteer service can reach up to 6,337 hours a year. The locals also formed a river patrol group to patrol riparian areas, locate sources of pollution, promote water education, and build up environmental awareness in hopes of making joint efforts to protect environment.

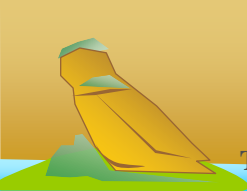


Figure 10: Volunteers Inspect Water Quality and Illustrate Water Knowledge, 2012

Community Participation and Empowerment

(A) Joint Efforts of Manufacturers to Improve Business Environment

Early immigrants relocated from areas along Dahan Stream to Jianshanpu for cultivation and pottery production. The kiln industry took off in the 1960s and low houses on Jianshanpu Road were torn down to make room for stores that sold ceramic products. In the 1980s, due to the prevalence of plastic products, the business on Jianshanpu Road declined and the busy, bustling street scene no longer existed.

Collaborating with the Department of Commerce, some local manufacturers and the Ceramic Arts Development Association successfully established a “Ceramics Old Street Commercial District” on Jianshanpu Road and a pedestrian zone project in 1996. Other manufacturers, business owners and local residents further organized the Ceramic Culture Visitors Management Association. There are more than 70 community-based organizations registered. Each organization has its own purposes and services, but all of them commit to the tasks of integrating ceramic and cultural resources, promoting cultural industry marketing, and improving the local environment.



Figure 11: Ceramics Old Street Commercial District, 2012

(B) Community Service of Local Volunteers

The Ceramics Museum attracts more than 780,000 visitors every year. 65% of the volunteers serving in the museum are local residents of Yingge. Volunteers assist in serving visitors, organizing books and reference materials, and supporting activities, and have won the 16th National Outstanding Volunteer Group Award from the Council for Cultural Affairs. The participation of the local community members not only have made the ceramics teacher training workshop and ceramic education for elementary and junior high school students possible, but have invigorated the richness of Yingge's local cultural industries.

Some kind mothers also volunteer for the “Female Patrol Team”, serving as traffic guards during the time when school lets out to ensure road safety for every child.



Figure 12: Volunteers Take Care of Elder Orphan and Children, 2012



Figure 13: Female Patrol Team and Environment Training for Volunteers, 2011

(C) Tourist Bus Route in Yingge Funded by Manufacturers

After Yingge’s successful transformation to a cultural and tourist attraction, it experiences heavy doses of visitors and traffic on weekends and holidays. In response to environmental protection policies that emphasize energy conservation, carbon emission reduction, and driving less, the Ceramics Museum worked together with the local manufacturers and business owners to arrange free Sanxia - Yingge Weekend Culture Bus tours for tourists. Buses run every 40 minutes, which eliminate traffic and parking problems. There are also tour guides on board introducing the local history and attractions of Yingge. The tourist bus route has 12 stops, including classic ceramic kilns, the Ceramics Old Street, and the Ceramics Museum.

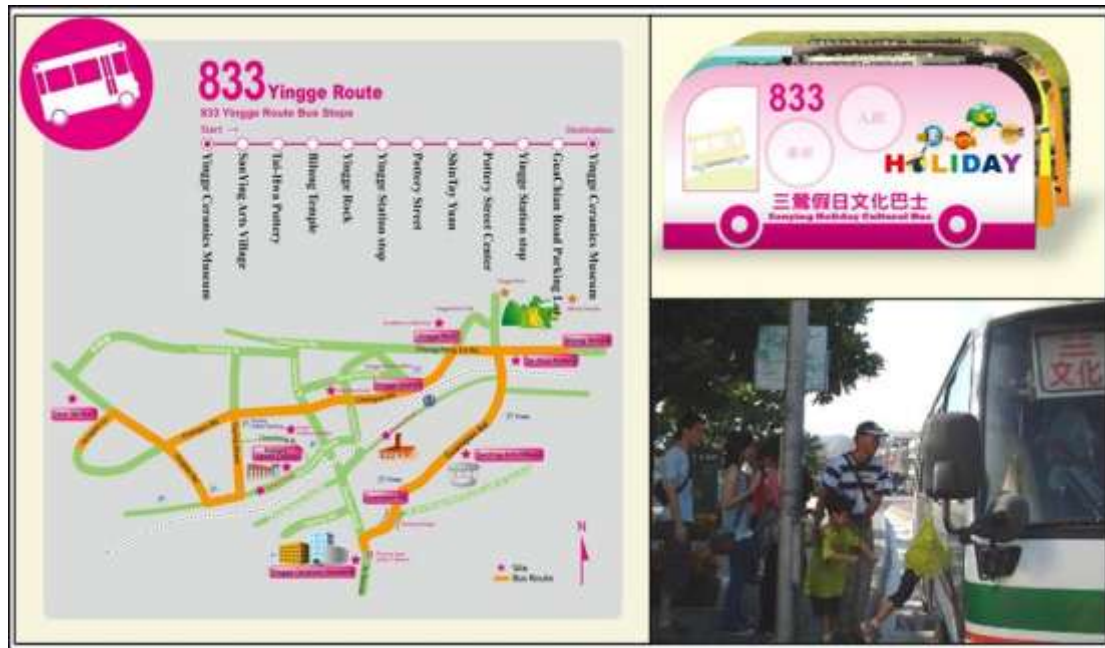


Figure 14: Sanxia - Yingge Weekend Culture Bus, 2012

(D) Ceramics Festival Showing Local Ceramic Features

Yingge Ceramics Exhibition started in 1988; it was first regarded as a busy local commercial trading activity because of the lack of coordination of local cultural activities. It was not until 1996 that the public and private sectors successfully integrated their resources and incorporated relevant cultural activities to organize “Yingge Ceramics Festival”, which made the headlines in Taiwan local events. The festival also stirred up the confidence and solidarity of business owners in local cultural industries. Nowadays Yingge Ceramics Festival is the most important annual event among the local cultural and creative industries. It is also a major index of urban and rural developments of Yingge and ceramics exhibition and sales.



Figure 15: Yingge Ceramics Festival, 2011

Yingge Ceramics Festival has been officially selected as one of the 12 large-scale annual-festivals in Taiwan. During the festival, artworks of internationally renowned local ceramicists, kilns and artists will be on display with an emphasis on the uniqueness of local ceramic culture. The goal is to drive tourism, leisure and cultural industries of Yingge, to bring together community organizations, and to reach a consensus on the ceramic culture through community participation.



Figure 16: Foreign Ceramicists Exchange Experience, 2010

Healthy Lifestyle

(A) Organic Vegetables

To promote organic farming, the New Taipei City Government and Yingge Farmers' Association organized “organic promotion citizen farms” at the end of Sanying Bridge to offer citizens the joy of self-sufficient farming and healthy, organic vegetables. 30% of the vegetable harvest will be distributed to disadvantaged groups to share a healthy, sustainable lifestyle.



Figure 17: Vegetable Harvest was Distributed to protectorys

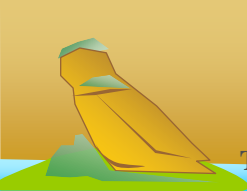
(B) Yingge's Walking Trails

There are 18 walking trails in Yingge. Centering around the Yingge Rock, these trails connect to some local religious temples, a century-old red cedar and a millennium-old banyan tree. They are popular hiking paths for both local residents and visitors in early mornings as well as weekends. Hikers can overlook beautiful mountain views, and discover history and stories hidden behind plants as well as on several sites. Visitors can take a forest bath and lead a lifestyle of health and sustainability (LOHAS).



Figure 18: Walking Trails Center around the Yingge Rock, 2011

There are also other walking trails connecting the train station, Sanying Reclamation Area, the Ceramics Museum, and the Ceramics Old Street. Tourists can



choose a trail to explore the major attractions in Yingge.

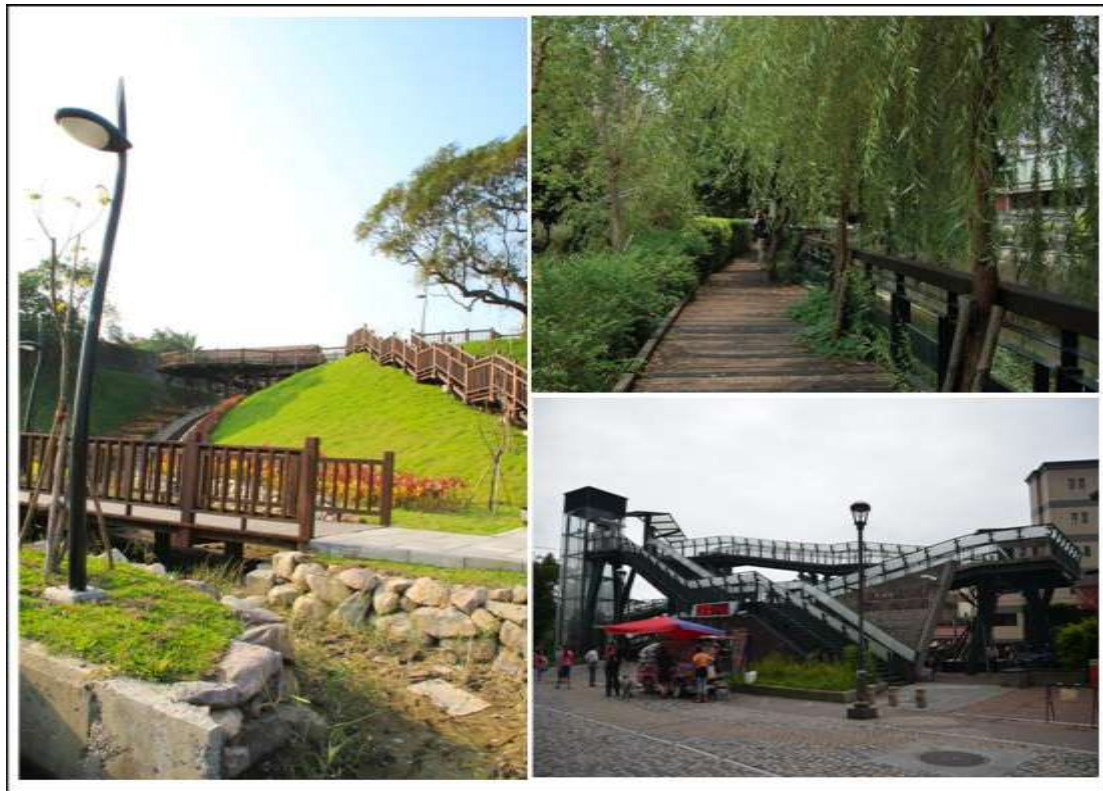


Figure 19: Walking Trails Connecting the Train Station and the Ceramic Old Street, 2009-2112

(C) Bicycle Path Linking Nearby Towns

The 23-km long left bank bike path of Dahan Stream is part of the network of bike paths along the riverbanks in metropolitan Taipei. The bike path is about 5 km long in the Yingge area. From Yingge, the bike path takes you to the estuary in the north along Dahan Stream and to Taoyuan County in the south. Sanying Reclamation Area has become a rest stop for bikers for its ideal location. It is common to see bikers taking a break at Sanying rest stop before they continue their trips.



Figure 20: Bicycle Path in Sanying Reclamation Area, 2012

Strategic Planning

Yingge is a diversified district that combines art, culture, history, environmental protection, health, and passion. The urban development and construction of Yingge District has undergone dramatic changes in recent years and it has become a well-known livable area as well as Taiwan's Ceramics Town.

The three aspects of future development plans are as follows: (a) on the regional level: Yingge will seek collaboration with Sanxia in the developments of regional culture and local tourism industry; (b) on the landscape level: Yingge will continue to improve the waterfront space to create a livable waterfront city through the riverbank development of Dahan Stream; (c) on the cultural industry level: Yingge Ceramics Museum, and the future New Taipei City Museum of Art will be the window into the local culture and industry. Yingge will focus on industry talent training and industry-academia cooperation, promote strategic alliance of cultural and creative industries, and create a new image of ceramics center as the foundation for local industrial technologies and the hub for brand exports.



Figure 21: Simulation of Banks along the Dahan Stream , 2010



Figure 22: Creating the Ceramic Brand belong to Yingge , 2008-2010

Conclusions

Yingge was once a community that purely relied on the development of ceramics industry. Under the influence of global division of labor, Yingge experienced a downturn of industrial development. Instead of being defeated, Yingge was able to combine the local community with the ceramics industry to create a successful and unique brand image through a series of strategies (e.g., industry transformation, and technological innovation with an emphasis on tourism and culture) put together by the public and private sectors. During the period of transformation, the local residents exhibited strong confidence in their local culture and a respect for the environment. Through the cooperation among different community organizations, the environment was improved and the consensus was formed. The achievements have proven that Yingge is not only an environment that makes her residents proud but a livable community that offers industrial, environmental and cultural resources.