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Theme 2

**TERRITORIAL COMMUNICATION - PUBLIC INITIATIVES FOR
VALUING TERRITORIES**

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Rural areas have suffered in recent years, profound changes that express a new dynamism and reveal changes in lifestyles, behaviors and expectations of rural, imitating often those who are registered in urban areas. This evolution towards the quality of life improvement determines the knowledge of the different meanings of experiences that seek and live in rural areas. This development, that should be sustainable, involves consultation and dialogue between actors in the territory and tends to establish itself as a piece that contributes to the governance processes and consequently for the development of the area and the generation of positive dynamics in the territories. Sustainable development highlights the need for a collective mobilization, but also the mandatory application of concerted strategies in a context of increasing complexity, uncertainty and change. In this paper we intend to present and discuss, in an integrated and multidisciplinary way, the contributions to the local development of a targeted public communication strategy both to internal to external public.

The public communication concept can be used in multiple perspectives but in this paper we intend to discuss it in its political and institutional aspects that may be incurred on *a communicative process of sectors of society working with targeted information for citizens (...) building a public agenda tool and directs their work (...) to engage the population in the adopted policies* (Brandão, 2006). This is a legitimate way that governance has to inform the

public of the projects, actions, activities and policies that have place and which are of public interest. It is also a way that they have to communicate to what extent the objectives are achieved. If cities have a tradition on consulting experience and dialogue with citizens, based on participation mechanisms, in particular, that has not been the standard in rural areas.

Communication should be in line with the interests of citizens and not just limited to institutional campaigns (usually on the eve of elections). Local and regional authorities should, agree on the responsibility that they bear in the foreground, to implement communication and strengthening the bridges between territories users. Given the use of an increasingly number of supports, the mission is to set a good strategy of means to broadcast priority messages as defined in the marketing strategy and remaining vigilant in order to achieve good coordination and consistency by the territorial issuers.

It argues, in this project, a "territorial marketing with public inspiration" (Renaudin, 2013) in which the elect are encouraged, to increasingly manage the communication strategy, whether on an internal approach or even externally, as for example, to enhance the attractiveness of territory, altering it from the mere appeal to "Visit us / Live here" to the animation of its territory and after for the eventual participative construction of a brand identity. It is also why the territories are seeking, more and more, create or capitalize the events made, to avoid the risk of losing efficiency by not doing so in a shared strategy with neighboring territories.

In previous work, in a place situated in the Centre of the country, we proceeded to an analysis that allowed us to understand which key success factors, conflicts of interest and the existing failures, by applying about 200 questionnaires to residents and key actors (Carvalho, Ruivo, & Veiga, 2013; Ruivo, Carvalho, & Veiga, 2014). In that study development lines of potential tourism have been identified, taking into account the existing resources and opportunities detected in the environment. In further work is wanted the knowledge using a participatory methodology to identify an identity profile that reveals similarities and shared values, that overlap to the internal diversity of the territory and that will favor a common action and work in a perspective of smart specialization.

In the results obtained (Carvalho et al., 2013, Ruivo et al., 2014) it is emphasized that for the generality of users of the territory is relevant the lack of capacity to claim and react to adversity, and to believe in the valuation of innovative projects, based on distrust of public actors because they showed to be powerless to stop scenarios of non development, and to have contributed to the maintenance of certain disruptions and incorrectly interpret images.

One of the ways they used to overcome this scenario was the production and circulation of an informative flyer, communicating to the residents and other users, the main activities and events held in the parish, in each semester. Local authorities, also mentioned a fundamental set of natural environmental components, such as forest and water, understood to be the common unifying element of all residents and those who visit the parish, and for which they want to keep the character of availability and gratuitousness and as space for recreation occupying an area that belongs to everyone. They also made reference to the high occupancy rate of agricultural and forestry production, complemented with animal production activity. These are indispensable for maintaining an environmental and landscape mosaic, the quality of rural and forestry roads, to maintain social and familiar relationship and the tenure and sharing of the land. They are very concerned about the high number of empty family accommodations, close to 20% of the total and for some degradation from other of the buildings, feeling powerless to deal with this problem.

They considered themselves as third generation governance actors, interventive and very selective in the way as they act, as they privileged and created different ways to communicate with their citizens, invested in close relationships, and worked in partnership. They praise the parish council services to be available and open to the public daily, and services that are, as possible free, such as document certification. They highlight the structure and content of their own website, dynamic and updated regularly, with full visualization of documentation of private and public domain, even the documents of parish assemblies and respective public announcements, as well as any event to be held in a local or promoted by a local association. But respondents recognized the existence of deficits, in culture, on training, partnerships, on intervention with co-responsibility of decisions and effects. With a model of communication, residents and other users feel more informed and therefore able to participate, being a great help in building relationships of proximity and the capacity of resolving local problems. In conclusion respondents, representing the local government at the level of parish, managed to build a construct with encouraging results for all stakeholders, with a better perception of desirable against the expected, in a credibility and trust basis, in order to convey a cohesive territory and with a positive image, allowing the entry of investors and projects.

The adaptation of the rural environment to digital technologies so that citizens can profit in information acquired and in the ability to make decisions about public/collective affairs, is also important to boost the consumption of the territory and for companies that are interested in developing potential markets. At this point the focus is the integration of other procedures

in domestic public communication strategy and is seeking partners for its implementation in the territory in order to make more intense the emergence of dialogue, a two-way communication, that increases the sense of belonging and that positively contributes to the creation of an image and attractiveness.

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