Interreg Co-funded by the European Union

NEXT Black Sea Basin

SeedGuard

BSB00450, SEEDGUARD: Seed Guardians for Biodiversity, Agrobiodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Climate Adaptation

Module 6. CSCs – Broad public outreach and raising awareness, cooperation and networking

Activity 1.3. Trainings “Guardians of the Seeds”

Content

A synopsis 3
Possible actions for public outreach 4
CSB Audience Development/Engagement Plan 8
Planning to attract new and expand existing audiences 9
In a summary: suggested general ways to attract the attention and the interest of the public 12

A synopsis

Publicity and media presence are important building stones of the CSCs and the CSB. Awareness rising leads to upgrading other necessary building stones such as training and learning.

Publicity and communication encourage the involvement and participation of the locals.

Political actions and policy initiations, as well as the advocacy are fundamental for the future of the CSCs and the CSBs. They are always supplemented by awareness building, publicity and communication.

Mutual support and trust between the CSCs members and other farmers are extremely valuable. As well as their creativity, flexibility and innovativeness. Ability to take decisions independently and voice them are the leads to resilience. Consistency in media appearances and collaboration with public bodies is a must. Maintenance of contacts and exchange with other CSCs and CSBs, nationally and internationally, is contributional to learning and self-training of the CSCs members and the farmers and gardeners' community of the place in building power and forcefulness.

The success of the started CSC or a CSB depends on the successfully built awareness and common understanding of the community members and the key influencing factors, to acknowledge the need to conserve, assure access of farmers to seed and planting material and enhance agrobiodiversity, and admit the objectives and the initiative of the CSCs and the CSBs.

Photos: Setting goals and common vision on building awareness on the PGR

Possible actions for public outreach

Appearance at thematic public events

One of the activities could be the development and implementation of a plan for attracting audiences during thematic festivals, fairs and other events. There, biodiversity, agrodiversity and the resulting cultural diversity of communities could be demonstrated. Of particular importance for attracting interest is the communication of values in the messages to the audiences of a planned event. This is of key importance for generating initial interest and subsequent attendance at the event.

In recent years, the focus of events related to genetic resources and vegetable seed conservation has been on selling. It would be important to shift to education.

Planning for attracting audiences should begin with a study of the interests and desires of visitors to thematic events related to the project theme. This will help to prepare appropriate messages that will attract the attention of audiences and create a sustainable positive relationship with them.

The importance of messages lies in the fact that today most audiences are looking for a match for their interests online. Those interested in topics such as agrobiodiversity, old vegetable varieties, seeds, etc., who would visit a thematic event, expect to be well informed in advance and to receive answers to the question: "Why should I be there?". They want to know what they will learn and experience.

The plan for attracting and gathering audiences is a dynamic document that will be updated according to newly emerging attitudes and interests of the audiences. In order to substantiate the plan and to obtain guidelines for its emphasis, it is good to conduct a preliminary survey to feel the pulse of the audiences. The study will provide information about the needs, interests and satisfaction of the audiences with a planned event.

Considerations to be taken into account when planning the public outreach

The rich agrobiodiversity offers great potential for business development, increased employment and social cohesion. In order to use this potential, care must be taken to ensure its inheritance and revitalization for future development, for the integrity of current and future generations. To this end, dialogue between citizens is key to preserving agrodiversity. A significant factor is the participation of local farmers and citizens in general, as well as ensuring greater access to available knowledge and skills for the general public. In the changing times and demands of consumers, the need for improving the proposals for the public, as well as the continuous development of the professionalism of organizers of cultural events and participants in them, is increasingly clear.

New challenges require international cooperation and knowledge exchange.

The plan should address solutions related to informing the public about the need to preserve local vegetable varieties and their seeds and to include members of seed banks in events such as festivals, fairs, etc. To organize creative events through which to seek and achieve:

- Turning the living experience of preserving heritage seeds into a process that encourages broad citizens' activity
- Involving key stakeholders as factors of supporting ecosystem

• Attracting the interest of diverse audiences to become part of activities related to plant genetic resources

• Encouraging the collaborative creativity of local people to support heirloom agriculture

• Building interpretive presentation and communication skills for quality storytelling and story writing.

The role and the goals of the plan

First, let's introduce some basic concepts:

- Audiences

We use the word "audience" as a universal term when talking about people who are involved in cultural performances. According to Arts Council of England, the term "audience" in its broadest sense means people who are directly engaged with arts, culture and heritage. This includes those who directly view/visit a work of art and/or culture, which can be indoors or outdoors and includes festivals, theatre, gallery spaces, museum collections, digital art, etc. It also includes people who support certain activities with universal meaning as donors and volunteers. It also includes other aspects of visitor engagement, such as learning new things, online experiences, etc.

Photos: Museum and Botanical Garden, Oslo, Norway, an example of interpretation of the PGR

- Audience development

Audience development is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of activities, approaches and philosophies. It is a term used to describe the way in which relationships between audiences and organisations are developed and managed. This process involves growth, improvement and change of audiences over time. Development activities are undertaken specifically to meet the needs of existing and potential audiences and to help organisations develop ongoing relationships with them. The concept combines aspects of marketing, commissioning, programming, education, customer care and distribution. It is a planned approach by organisations to expand the scope and nature of their relationships with audiences. The process supports the achievement of the organisation's mission by balancing social objectives, financial sustainability and creative ambitions.

Photos: Stage performance to attract audiences, International Tourist Fair "Vacation", Sofia

CSB Audience Development/Engagement Plan

An audience development plan is a clear, realistic document for achieving desired goals and change in the interest of the seed banks. The plan may combine social, financial, creative and/or educational goals. Actions listed in the plan may include marketing and communication, educational, environmental and other activities. The plan sets the context for marketing, campaigning for a specific event, activity or season, as well as outreach initiatives. It should provide information for preparation for the execution of specific activity. In practice, an audience development/engagement plan aims to outreach the audience and build deeper relationships of the CSB with it, according to the CSB's capabilities and resources, and by combining efforts with stakeholders. The plan is a forward-looking statement of intent and key to achieving the seed banks' goals in order to be sustainable and up-to-date. The plan, and above all the process by which we arrive at it, is our roadmap for change.

Photo: Discussions on a CSB site with a Norwegian partner, Norway

Planning to attract new and expand existing audiences

The following logic is kept in the planning process:

A. What are the important approaches that can contribute to achieving greater and broader audience interest in the vegetable PGR?

- Understanding the interest and demand of different categories of PGR users, as to tailor publicity and communication to their needs and tastes.
- Wider awareness activities on importance of the vegetable heirloom varieties with the aim to attract small farmers and skilled gardeners and to engage and inspire more local people to get involved in the PGR related activities.
- Emphasis on local creativity, which can lead to the promotion of the location and to demonstration its strengths as a place to live, work and invest in. This, in turn, will lead to increased integrity and a sense of belonging for local people. The perspective to generate economic results will also attract attention of the locals and will drive them to improve the skills and knowledge and to demonstrate talent.
- Offering a combination of activities, installations, engaging narratives about PGR and culture, expressed in gastronomy, audio presentations, visual images, walks and tours that present new perspectives on heirloom vegetables, inviting the audience to explore. Publications, videos, podcasts, etc., can be generated.

The planning process for broad public outreach includes:

• Defining the mission and goals of the CSC or the CSB, such as:

- Social goals: for example, enriching the lives of people;
- Educational goals and emotional goals: expanding the scope and depth of people's engagement with the PGR and increasing the opportunities to gain new knowledge, etc.
- Reputational goals through promotion - to attract locals for specific creativity and types of activities, thus gaining widespread recognition.

B. Planning Phases for broad public outreach and raising awareness

- Analysis of the current situation and potential

- Analysis of public views and attitudes towards seeds preservation and sales. What is audiences' behavior towards old traditional vegetables. Internet/media analysis – what excites the broad public with regards to the PGR. What inspires them to comment on topics related to local vegetable varieties and landraces. What drives the habits and preferences of the broad public? And, finally, who the target audiences are, where they are from, etc.
- Quantitative and qualitative measurements: through interviews, questionnaires, surveys – on site, by phone, email
- Analysis of current public's, seed and vegetable users and various audiences (trends, needs, etc.), of the external environment (expected changes in the environment), of potential audiences (who they are, profiles, preferences, motivation, etc.)

- Strategy definition

- To offer new experiences; new communication platforms and channels; new spaces and resources; opportunities for involving different audiences in activities related to heritage seeds and old vegetable varieties; to add value for the participants (representatives of the broad public) in the CSCs and CSBs campaigns and initiatives - volunteering, membership of the network (could be in different format), preferential serving, discounts, etc.

- Setting clear and measurable goals

- definition of targeted segments of the broad public to be approached, e.g. given segment, families, young people, children, students, etc.; detection of the public's response, satisfaction, willingness to recommend the seed collection/preservation/distribution, etc. To spread information on heritage seeds and importance for "reloading" agrobiodiversity in popular formats such as festivals, fairs, etc. To collect and work on the responses and comments from related organizations and partners. To register public behavior. internet/social media statistics related to the PGR. To offer new knowledge and experiences and demonstrate economic result for the community from utilizing PGR.

- Public Engagement Action Plan and Timeline

- The Public Engagement Action Plan should clearly define the activities, the necessary budget for human capital and the timeframe for achieving the specific outcomes, who is responsible for what, partners and collaborators.
- Evaluation of results and adaptation of the Public Engagement Plan of the CSC or the CSB
- Measuring progress against the set goals in order to make changes if necessary. The measurement is executed by matching the goals, e.g.:

  • reach and attract more public interest in getting PGR seeds;
  • increased audience diversity;
  • engage less engaged audiences;
  • increase the depth and quality of experiences with the seeds of old varieties.

This is achieved through:
1: Adequate value messages to the desired audiences;
2: Connecting the audiences with the CSCs or CSBs results;
3: Emphasis on the access to the seeds and the opportunity to gain new experience and knowledge;
4: Emphasis on the opportunity to include audiences in the activities and the organised events, which will provide them with a memorable experience.

C. Public research

One of the most important aspects of the plan for increasing and expanding public outreach is basing it on data on the expectations, interests, desires and satisfaction of different audiences.

The tool that will be the source of data for the plan could be a survey that will allow testing the success of providing access to the vegetable PGR. Through the survey, we will understand what are the audiences' demands. Without such information, we cannot progress in attracting interest in the PGR. The practices proved, that live experiences are vital, not just the offered content.

In a summary: suggested general ways to attract the attention and the interest of the public

Engage all members of the CSCor the CSB

Public outreach isn't a task for one person. It's an endeavor for all the members of the community and a result from planning the community engagement. Knowing well your goals, clarity and shared understanding of the vision and the purpose about where the CSC or the CSB wants to be are important.

Whom do I want to reach?

The targeted public groups need to be explored, profiled and segmented. Decide where to focus first and next: on the growth markets, on explorers and experiential groups, e.g. young, culturally diverse, etc. Offer interaction at events and during presentations and doing things with own hands is very attractive to young people.

Digital

Digital marketing can bring a great success.

Advertisement

Online advertising works well, next to the traditional one. One strong suggestion – creative messages!

Collaboration

Partnership with various organisations, which fit to our brand, allows reach a much wider public.

Interreg Co-funded by the European Union

NEXT Black Sea Basin

SeedGuard

The document is prepared by LP - UBBSLA in the frame of BSB00450 SEEDGUARD: Seed Guardians for Biodiversity, Agrobiodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Climate Adaptation

The responsibility for the content of this material is that of the author. The content of this material does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union. Reproduction is authorized, provided the source is acknowledged, and any changes are indicated.