

COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF NATURE'S SERVICES TODAY FOR TOMORROW

KOMUNICIRANJE VREDNOSTI STORITEV NARAVNEGA OKOLJA DANES ZA JUTRI

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ABSTRACT

Communicating the value of nature services today for tomorrow

To ensure appreciation of forest related nature's services, they must be presented to the public in an appropriate way. Humans are usually not willing to pay for something they consider as 'free goods'. The challenge is changing the mind-set through awareness-raising. A good communication strategy should convey the message as a tangible concern that contributes to the quality of our lives. Communicating nature's services will help understand the benefits we gain and joy and pleasure they can give us if we treat them with knowledge, respect and wisdom.

The actions taken in the past are not giving the results we need. A multi-stakeholder approach can harness the creativity from stakeholders through solution driven dialogue.

In the LIFE GENMON project (Life for Forest Genetic Monitoring System) coordinated by Slovenian Forestry Institute, the multi-stakeholder approach is used to communicate the forest related nature's services and importance of genetic resources. A clear visual and verbal communication brings the key project messages to life. To forge meaningful connections with core stakeholders it is essential to use compelling and targeted messages. Ultimately, the results will demonstrate the value of engaging supporters in co-creating communications to extend reach and impact.

Keywords: nature's services, communicating, forests, society, forest values, multi-stakeholder approach

IZVLEČEK

Komuniciranje vrednosti storitev naravnega okolja danes za jutri

Za uspešno ozaveščanje javnosti o vrednosti storitev, ki jih zagotavlja naravno okolje, morajo te biti predstavljene na ustrezen način. Ljudje običajno niso pripravljeni plačati za storitve, ki so do zdaj veljale za proste (brezplačne). Spreminjanje načina razmišljanja s pomočjo ozaveščanja je torej velik izziv. Dobra komunikacijska strategija mora posredovati sporočilo o prispevku naravnega okolja h kakovosti človeškega življenja in bivanja. Ozaveščanje in širjenje znanja o storitvah, ki jih nudi naravno okolje, nam pomaga razumeti vrednost teh storitev in veselje ter zadovoljstvo, ki nam jih ponuja okolje danes in nam jih bo tudi v prihodnosti, če ga bomo obravnavali z znanjem, spoštovanjem in modrostjo.

Ukrepi, sprejeti v preteklosti, niso dali zadovoljivih rezultatov. Z aktivnim vključevanjem deležnikov preko usmerjenega dialoga lahko pridobimo ključne informacije in kreativne rešitve, ki jih nato vključimo v komunikacijsko strategijo.

Projekt LIFE GENMON, ki ga vodi Gozdarski inštitut Slovenije, v svojo komunikacijsko in diseminacijsko strategijo vključuje splošne in ciljne skupine deležnikov, s katerimi komunicira o vrednosti storitev, ki jih nudijo gozdovi. S pomočjo jasne vizualne in verbalne komunikacije posreduje ključna sporočila, ki so prepričljiva in ciljno usmerjena (prilagojena posamezni ciljni skupini oz. posamezniku). Tako oblikuje smiselne povezave z deležniki in s ciljnimi skupinami. Rezultati prizadevanj v okviru projekta bodo pokazali dodano vrednost, ki jo prinaša vključevanje deležnikov v soustvarjanje njegovih učinkov in večjega dosega njegovih sporočil in posledično komunikacijske strategije.

Ključne besede: storitve naravnega okolja, komuniciranje, gozdovi, družba, vrednost gozda, vključevanje ključnih deležnikov

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INTRODUCTION

To ensure that the real value of nature's services is adequately appreciated, they must be presented to the public in an appropriate way. Humans are usually not willing to pay for something they take for granted today and is considered as 'free goods' (COULL & VALANTIN 2008). The challenge is changing the mind-set through awareness-raising. A good communication strategy should convey the message as a tangible concern that contributes to the quality of our lives and the lives of our children (IUCN REGIONAL OFFICE FOR PAN-EUROPE 2011). Communicating nature's services will help the younger generation to understand the benefits we gain and joy and pleasure they can give us if we treat them with knowledge, respect and wisdom (WIBORN 2013).

The actions that have been taken in the past are not giving the results we need. HOHNEN (2001) suggests that we should work together to find the right path forward. A multi-stakeholder approach can engage and harness the creativity from wide and balanced cross-section of stakeholders through solution driven dialogue (HOHNEN 2001).

"Learning to engage in dialogue means to move from hearing to listening. It means taking one step beyond fighting, beyond adversarial, conflict-based interaction... Dialogue is the foundation for finding

consensus solutions which integrate diverse views and generate the necessary commitment to implementation. It can form the basis to take us one step beyond talking towards common action" (HEMMATI et al. 2002).

HEMMATI et al. (2002) view communication as a tool to exchange views (opinions) among stakeholders in a Multi Stakeholder Platform (MSP). It includes the expression of views in combination with the understanding of views to the point of mutual understanding (HEMMATI et al. 2002).

In the LIFEGENMON (2016) project, coordinated by Slovenian Forestry Institute, the multi-stakeholder approach is used to communicate the forest related nature's services in connection to the 360-degree brand communication. A clear visual and verbal communication creates maximum awareness and brings the key project messages to life. 360-degree brand communication means showcasing the use of compelling and targeted messages, both online and offline, in an effort to forge meaningful connections with core stakeholders. Ultimately, the results will demonstrate the value of engaging supporters and champions in co-creating communications to extend reach and impact (DARI-GAN MERENDA 2013).

METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

The communication strategy of the LIFEGENMON project is carried out in two focused tasks. General dissemination and communication addresses the following stakeholders:

- Kindergarten children
- Pupils in primary and secondary schools
- Students at Universities
- Pedagogues
- Socially active groups (different for each country)
- Media

In task Targeted dissemination and communication the most important groups of stakeholders have been identified through dialogue between project partners:

Policy makers – key actors (the ones to convince) in the legislative process on a local, regional and European scale.

Municipalities within the region – local authorities can give necessary promotion and credibility

needed for the maximisation of dissemination impact. They are also very appropriate partners for spreading information to target areas.

Active groups (ASP – Women organisation; third university for everlasting education, recreational sports associations and others, different per project country) – through "spreading the good word", socially active groups can increase the dissemination impact if addressed appropriately.

Academic audience – academics are often opinion makers, e.g. what they say usually resonates in public and professional space.

Chamber of Commerce – the Chamber of Commerce is an important player in the legislation department. It is very important to include big business in our dissemination strategy, because no legislation or regulation get passed without their influence. We need to raise their awareness of the importance of our main dissemination strategy topics.

Professional Chambers – smaller, but more specific legislation and regulation impact. Also a base of

professional experience. We also need to raise their awareness of the importance of our main dissemination strategy topics.

NGOs (such as professional associations, mountaineering organisations, scouts, hunters associations, climbers association, UMANOTERA – SI, WWF, Birdlife and others) – NGOs are well heard opinion makers among the urban population and are traditionally inclined to support the topics of our dissemination strategy. Very important players in any legislation process if activated.

Forest owners – forest owners are the ones that do (or at least approve) the majority of the actual work done in the focus area. It is aim to reach them with the conservational aspects of our dissemination strategy.

Unions of forest workers – they need to be addressed to spread the information on genetic forest protection and the future of European forests based on genetic diversity.

Civil protection service and volunteers – they are first to be activated at any major disaster events in the areas, due to extreme weather conditions or un-appropriate forest managing. Their activities are well visible

in the public and can spread the word on the need for sustainable forest management and an early warning system for changes in forest populations.

Tourist organisations – sustainable and eco-tourism is becoming very popular. They are also traditionally inclined to support the topics of our dissemination strategy and reach a wide audience with their marketing so it makes sense to include them in our dissemination activities.

Carrying out communication activities goes beyond the narrow scope of the project to reach the highest impact through:

Connecting (in Slovenia cooperation with Slovenia Forest Service, University of Ljubljana – Biotechnical Faculty, Slovenian Academy of sciences and arts, etc.; participation at and organisation of events and conferences, trade fairs, media events etc.)

Dialogue (organisation of Workshops, receiving and evaluating feedback)

All activities are supported by media presence, web updates (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, project web-site) and publications (newsletters, leaflets, teaching materials for teachers etc.).

MONITORING METHODS AND RESULTS

The impact of the activities will be monitored through lists of participants and an advanced monitoring matrix, based on questionnaires and interviews of participants at project's events. The monitoring is carried out by an internal project monitoring team, project partner Centre for information service, co-operation and development of NGOs.

The LIFEGENMON team has by end of 2016 reached over 4000 people at over 90 different events and the LIFEGENMON website had over 8300 users who viewed over 30000 pages (Source: Google analytics).

Results and progress of implementation will be presented in LIFEGENMON progress reports and scientific and professional articles.



Figure 1: Participants at the LIFEGENMON events per target group from July 2014 to June 2016
Slika 1: Udeleženci na LIFEGENMON dogodkih za ciljne skupine, od julija 2014 do- junija 2016

POVZETEK

Za uspešno ozaveščanje javnosti o vrednosti storitev, ki jih zagotavlja naravno okolje, morajo te biti predstavljene na ustrezen način. Ljudje običajno niso pripravljeni plačati za storitve, ki so do zdaj veljale za proste (brezplačne). Spreminjanje načina razmišljanja s pomočjo ozaveščanja je torej velik izziv. Dobra komunikacijska strategija mora posredovati sporočilo o prispevku naravnega okolja h kakovosti človeškega življenja in bivanja. Ozaveščanje in širjenje znanja o storitvah, ki jih nudi naravno okolje, nam pomaga razumeti vrednost teh storitev in veselje ter zadovoljstvo, ki nam jih ponuja okolje danes in nam jih bo tudi v prihodnosti, če ga bomo obravnavali z znanjem, spoštovanjem in modrostjo.

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kov v soustvarjanje njegovih učinkov in večjega dosega njegovih sporočil in posledično komunikacijske strategije.

Komunikacijska strategija projekta LIFEGENMON se izvaja v dveh projektih aktivnostih preko različnih deležnikov in ciljnih skupin. Splošna diseminacija naslavlja otroke, študente, pedagoge, razne interesne skupine in medije. Usmerjena diseminacija pa aktivno vključuje v svoje aktivnosti odločevalce, regionalne oblasti, interesne skupine, akademsko sfero, gospodarske in obrtne zbornice, lastnike gozdov in njihova združenja, sindikate gozdnih delavcev, službe za civilno zaščito in prostovoljce ter turistične organizacije.

Povezovanje deležnikov in dialog s ključnimi organizacijami na področju (v sodelovanju z Zavodom za gozdove Slovenije, Univerzo v Ljubljani - Biotehniška fakulteta, Slovensko akademijo znanosti in umetnosti) preko (so-)organizacije konferenc, dogodkov in sejmov je ključno pri izvajanju projektih aktivnosti. Ozaveščanje in prisotnost na socialnih omrežjih pa dopolnjujeta in skrbita za širšo prepoznavnost ciljev projekta.

Učinek aktivnosti se spremlja preko seznamov udeležencev na dogodkih in preko monitoringa napredka projekta na podlagi vprašalnikov in intervjujev udeležencev.

LIFEGENMON ekipa je konec leta 2016 dosegla več kot 4000 ljudi, na več kot 90 različnih dogodkih, spletno stran LIFEGENMON je obiskalo več kot 8300 uporabnikov, ki so si ogledali več kot 30.000 strani.

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