The introduction

2. Public participation and sustainability

The adoption of truly participatory and sustainable measures can also be driven by interaction with stakeholders in an interactive process. This can influence the development and implementation of the agro-environmental policies. The European Commission has set the stage for public participation in the adoption of agro-environmental measures. The European Union (EU) is a world leading force in taking action in environmental conservation. The Commission’s Action Plan on Participatory Processes, Stakeholders’ Involvement, and European Policies.

Abstract

2.1. The Framework

1.3. Stakeholders' sustainable management in agriculture - less...
Public Participation is (4) the practice of consultation and involvement of civil society on the agenda of decision and policy-making processes within organizations/institutions responsible for policy development. Looking into what can be expected in terms of “sustainability” from equitable decision-making processes and policies that consider alternative perspectives of natural resource management Therefore it is not surprising that participatory management has gained enormous popularity in academic discourse and current practices. This is particularly evident if we think in about active public participation as advocated by Rowe et al (4), Vasconcelos et al (8) or Pretty et al (9). In most European countries, there are agreements allowing direct involvement of citizens in policy-making regarding matters as diverse as urban development, environmental planning issues or political science. Most of them are locally based, having a intense and immediate impact in local communities, making issues such as representativeness become less pronounced in small electorates and the use of local knowledge of citizens more attractive. Blackstock (11) points out three reasons for the active involvement of stakeholders and citizens in participatory processes: a) individual and social learning results from the exchange of experiences; b) better understanding of the issues, thus bringing about the development of more adequate solutions, meaning that new knowledge brings with it both reflection and a better understanding of the problems; and c) mitigation of existing conflicts results from dialogue practices. A general understanding of the added value of active participation is building up among the public increasing the demand for it and making it quite attractive in different contexts.

2.2 Why is public participation attractive

For Ravez (12) despite the fact that the human species used and modified natural systems over thousands of years, its impact on the planet seems now to be out of control and failures in systems can now be seen globally. He also calls attention to the prospect of a break in our civilization and even the extinction of species making us recede to earlier times of life on Earth. Recognizing that it is obvious that there are many flaws in the systems from which modern society depends, Ravez (12) believes that these systems are complex/reflective, i.e. they have to engage people/institutions and must be considered in their various aspects - technical, social and ideological. Nowadays, the implementation of participation is expected to promote sustainable policies, efficient and equitable and collaborative decision-making practices to assure sustainable resource management (7), (13). Without making the most out of the knowledge available in society, it is difficult to consciously bring about the necessary changes. Indeed, the greater the complexity, the greater the uncertainty, the more (14) and earlier (15) urgency to have citizenship and active agents with distinct social, political and economic profiles involved for joint solution building. The involvement of stakeholders/citizens contributes to the creation of a participatory network that allows for better a) agreements capacity building b) knowledge of reality and c) appropriate solutions (14), (15). So, active public participation turned out to be a key element of environmental planning to enhance the protection of natural resources and support sustainable development benefiting individuals, communities, institutions and governments. It contributes to the betterment of the whole society (16).

3. Workshop methodology

Methodologically, the challenge was to develop a process design for the five half-day workshops, which would be sufficiently standardized and robust to be applied in five different regions of Portugal – namely Castro Verde, Évora, Idanha a Nova, Torre de Moncorvo e Cadaval - to deliver comparable results, while at the same time offering a design open and flexible enough to be adapted to regionally different logics and content driven challenges. Adaptations may be necessary depending on the number of participants, the team, the date or the technical equipment what could have to undergo unexpected changes.

Content driven adaptations would result, for example, from the diversity of the agricultural situations in the chosen locations. Above all there was a constant need to encompass lessons learned from previous workshops without generating distortion when comparing results. The methodological scheme was finally set up as described below (table 1), proving to be able to fulfill all above mentioned requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:30-14:40</td>
<td>Interview with each participant on used agricultural exploration + inventory of his/her preference to discuss between two possible Agro-Environmental Measures (AEM) - Mode of Production (MP) or Integrated Territorial Intervention (ITI). A Flash on “Best Agricultural Practice and Biodiversity” (collection of written ad-hoc answers to 2 questions): - To me, “means…” Meeting with invited experts and consultants</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:40-14:50</td>
<td>Opening Session and Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:50-15:00</td>
<td>Presentation (project team): The project and the Workshop Methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:00-15:30</td>
<td>Evaluation Agro-Environmental-Measures (AEM): Mode of Production (MP) and Integrated Territorial Intervention (ITI) (collective voting of “favorable” and “disadvantageous” Agro-Environmental Measures (AEMs) – 2x3 votes/participant) - Working groups (3-4 pax): Work sheets to explain in depth a consensual evaluation of Mode of Production (MP) and Integrated Territorial Intervention (ITI) - Parallel: experts may be requested by groups to explain unclear issues</td>
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More than evaluating actual environmental commitments, farmers discussed them and, in some cases, proposed new or adapted ones. They explained why commitments were good or bad; what needed to be upgraded, needed implementation. They offered many inputs, suggestions or just comments in order to come up with agriculturally and environmentally friendly solutions.

We can say that workshops knowledge was disseminated and new knowledge about good practices was built. Moreover, farmers pointed out the constraints they faced to apply actual measures in their daily life activity, namely, AEMs to promote biodiversity.

The five workshops carried out took into account the major specificity of the regions according to the 2007-2013 Portuguese Rural Development Program (PRODER) and the Natura 2000 classification. The results should be seen, on a global perspective, as a national contribution to a better knowledge for good practices regarding the implementation of biodiversity conservation measures both for farmers and for policy makers.

At the regional scale, the social learning resulting from the three-hour debate sessions could contribute to: a) analyses of implementation of the existing commitments and its effectiveness for biodiversity; b) to promote the dissemination of individual knowledge/experiences exchange and to contribute to a better implementation of measures aimed at biodiversity conservation; and c) to contribute to a greater awareness of farmers to the market opportunities created by the promotion of biodiversity and the promotion of environmental services.

5. Participants assessment

In a process such as this, it is of utmost importance to know how the participants evaluate the sessions, in order to make re-adjustments and improvements when needed and to improve these methodologies to make them more efficient. Therefore, the main results of the evaluation accomplished at the end of the sessions are presented here.

From a total of 105 participants, 98 answered to the survey, highlighting as the most positive aspects: a) The straightforward way all farmers exposed the problems of the region; b) The contact with farmers with different ways of doing agriculture; c) The interaction between participants and the exchange of ideas in a constructive and structured dialogue considering it as always a positive; d) The open and interested participation of all stakeholders and openness from facilitators and organizers; e) The opening of the debate on issues that directly affect this region; f) The freedom to select the measures to be put into practice; g) the plurality of ideas and opinions included in the debate.
In the opinion of the participants, the benefits of the process are:

- the awareness regarding the existence of institutions that study/listen to them and talk to the responsible authorities, proposing new insights to be incorporated in the legislation for the primary sector
- the knowledge about different point of views on certain topics and different opinions and
- the exchange of experiences and creation of synergies, and
- a better understanding of various topics resulting from their discussion and the highlighting of the problems farmers are facing.

The understanding that the problems are common to all farmers and the possibility to correct some of the Agro-Environmental Measures (AEM) according to the specific needs of each region were aspects very relevant also.

**Concluding Remarks**

Besides, being possible to identify the economic, generational and gender profile of the participants, one of the positive results of the five forums that took place in different parts of the country, within a period of two months, was the development of a global vision in real time.

The farmers in these sessions, insistently expressed the inexistence of the rural extension support, and therefore the absence of sound technical support to farmers in their daily management decisions and/or access to funding – governmental subsidies.

The rural extension, previously implied a technician of proximity working closely with the farmer giving the technical requested. This technician guided the farmer on the best way to explore the land taking into account the social, economic and environmental factors. Government extinct these services of rural extension for over a decade and farmers were left on their own.

The technicians and farmers enjoy the debate, agreeing that these moments for debating and sharing experiences and ideas are very important, namely a farmer comment "we should have a better interaction with local technicians".

To overcome this difficulty, farmers associations and/or cooperatives of producers often hire a technician, to explore funding opportunities, to inform farmers about the existing available funding and helps them to develop projects directed at these funds. This sort of technical support often advises farmers to take up management strategies directed to changing their estates into land uses eligible for funding, making decisions that are quite often perversive to the type of exploration of the region.

Measures imported directly from the EU might have been more adapted and ad-

justed to the country reality if farmers were effectively heard before they were implemented, to adequate them to the region, adapted to the local economy, the cultural values and able to preserve the environment. The standardization of these measures responding to a different reality - the Nordic models – are having perverse consequences that discourage the collaboration of many farmers already overwhelmed with measures, stating that – "The existing ones are enough!".

Our society is based on networks. Therefore, any effort to reinforce the existing ones and to build new ones is indispensable to contribute to our society's long-term resilience. The aim of a participatory process is to connect people in a genuine effective way so that these links are able to make a difference for direct intervention in the generation of public policy. Making the most of local knowledge emerging from different stakeholders, in an equitable and respectful approach to their joint work, it is possible to make this difference come true.

**Acknowledgements**

Thanks the Foundation for Sciences and Technology for having partially funded this research through the support to MARE – Strategic Program UID/MAR/04292/2013.

**References**


1.4. Fruta feia: uma cooperativa portuguesa que salva “fruta feia” do lixo

Iva Miranda Pires, Carlos Jesus

Abstract

Developing and implementing better systems that reduce wastefulness is a cornerstone of any transition to a more sustainable world. In Europe, estimates say that up to 50% of healthy edible food is lost along the entire food supply chain. Massive waste occurs in the field and at large groceries if products fail to reach pre-defined marketing standards that include rules establishing what products should look like (not related to health issues) in terms of size and shape and so are considered “ugly” and unsellable. Grocers argue that they have to follow strict cosmetic standards for fruit and vegetables since otherwise consumers will not buy them. The consequence is that tons of edible food are thrown away every year in the most developed countries.

However, nowadays there is a growing movement to promote and sell ‘ugly’ products and even large groceries are changing their practices and creating areas dedicated to the sale of out-of-size products at lower prices. In Portugal, it lead to the creation of the cooperative Fruta Feia. A young environmentalist created this cooperative in Lisbon in 2013 under the motto “Pretty People eat Ugly Fruit”. The rapid growth of the cooperative moving from an idea to a successful business that has 14,000 people on the waiting list shows that many people review themselves in a more sustainable consumption model that helps to rescue 15 tons of potential food waste per week. The aim of this paper is to discuss food waste in Portugal and creative ideas to fight it, like the one proposed by Fruta Feia.

Key words: food waste, food supply chain, sustainability, Portugal

1. Introdução

"Cada dia a natureza produz o suficiente para nossa carência. Se cada um tomasse o que lhe fosse necessário, não haveria pobreza no mundo e ninguém morreria de fome." Mahatma Gandhi

Num mundo cada vez mais globalizado, o desperdício de alimentos representa um sério problema de sustentabilidade, seja pela pressão colocada sobre os ecossistemas, com o gasto inútil de recursos ambientais e econômicos associados, que pode comprometer a capacidade de crescimento das gerações presentes e futuras, seja pelo fato de milhões de toneladas de alimentos serem lançadas ao lixo anualmente, num mundo onde um sexto da população mundial passa fome (FAO, 2009)