

# ***THE ROLE OF THE RURAL ANIMATOR IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY TOURISM***

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## *Questions*

- Why do we need rural animators in community tourism?
- What do rural animators do?
- When do we expect rural animators to take action?
- What are the skills and competencies a rural animator should have?



## *Why do we need rural animators?*

- The concept of rural animation emerged initially in under-developed countries and was related mostly to capacity building of rural communities and officials, to become competent to benefit from aid programmes
- In Europe animation was connected to community development – a rather more restricted concept to rural development, but still a close “relative”
- Rural animation became more directly used as a term in the 1990s, mostly through the LEADER Initiative, which brought up concepts like “endogenous development” and “bottom up approach to rural development”



## *Why do we need rural animators?*

- Rural animators were needed in third world countries to encourage, organise and/or deliver learning,
- Community development aimed to help rural communities become more self-confident, organise themselves collectively, resolve internal conflicts, operationalise their needs, manage funds from development programmes etc....
- The LEADER Initiative introduced the local partnerships, i.e. local governance structures that called for a “mediator” who would bridge public and private interests, local and central government and so on
- The contemporary profile of the rural animator combines all the above



## *The rural animator's scope of action*

- initiates and sustains community activities related to the local economy;
- encourages the re-establishment of social bonds and the reinforcement or re-establishment of local identity;
- stimulates everyday economic and social activity using a bottom-up approach.
- facilitates change - social, ecological, economic and cultural in rural communities.
- mediates the formation and operation of local partnerships and networks, either formal or informal;
- provides a link between decision-makers and the local communities;
- helps rural communities to implement rural regeneration programmes;
- helps rural communities to build their capacity for development.





## ***Rural animation: an interdisciplinary approach***

Rural animators need a good knowledge and understanding of the paradigm of sustainable rural development

They also need to understand a large number of different fields , and be able to decide which expert can provide support, and communicate with these experts

The European Masters Programme for Rural Animators provides a good indication of the different fields or disciplines a rural animator should be familiar with :

- Sustainable agriculture
- Human and social capital, welfare and public services
- Environmental planning and management
- Cultural development
- Rural tourism
- Innovation and SMEs
- Education and lifelong learning
- Diversification of rural economies.



## *Time scale for the rural animator's intervention*

- Pre-development and development phases
- Pre-development phase - sometimes refers to the phase that precedes development, when a capacity is generated among local people to work purposefully in collective action
- The time scale of predevelopment is not defined strictly - rather than being regarded as a stage that precedes development, it may be seen as continuing alongside development, with the role of animation and capacity building been continuous too
- What is the time scale required for a community development process to develop into a process of successful social and economic regeneration?



## *Skills and competencies of the rural animator*

- Strategic thinking and planning competencies
- Social communication skills: building trust, ability to interact easily with every member of the community, resolving conflict,, stimulating innovative thinking
- Research skills, to allow finding out the community's needs and problems
- Management and coordination skills





## *Skills and competencies of the rural animator*

According to *Izquierdo*, a local animator takes:

- from **“Tarzan”**, its ability to “live in the jungle”;
- from **“Macguiver”**, its ability to combine simple elements of the environment to get spectacular results;
- from **Sherlock Holmes**, perseverance to discover possible resources and capacity for observation, analysis and deduction;
- from **Kung Fu**, the ability to combine his energy and the one of the opponent to target the resulting effort;
- from **Indiana Jones**, perseverance and unwavering faith in the pursuit of social cohesion and territorial excellence;
- from **Asterix and Obelix**, defending the village against the empire, and
- from **Almodovar** the passion and forcefulness to project him/herself through their works



**THANK YOU**