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Authors: Francisco Durán Vian, Miriam Serrano Martínez, Juan José Pons Izquierdo



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Citizen participation as a social shift tool in projects of urban fluvial space recovery: A case study in Spain.

Francisco Durán Vian, Miriam Serrano Martínez y Juan José Pons Izquierdo

PhD student, research staff and teacher in charge
Department of History, Art History and Geography, University of Navarra (Pamplona, España)

Contact email: fduran@alumni.unav.es

Research highlights

- This study tests the change in inhabitants' perception after an urban river restoration.
- Inhabitants have reconciled with the river area and visits have been multiplied.
- The degree of satisfaction is higher in people involved in participation actions.
- Communication strategy was a key factor for the rise of knowledge and consciousness.
- Environmental education actions and social feedback were also essential.

Abstract

This article reviews the impact of social participation on the results of projects aimed at the improvement and conditioning of fluvial spaces for public use. This work focuses on a partially materialised fluvial rehabilitation in Arévalo (Ávila), a Spanish rural settlement. The hypothesis of the study was that the project's success depended not only on its technical aspects but also on the involvement of local population from its beginning and on the information and environmental education that they received. Once the first stage of the project was completed, and in order to measure the project's performance, some indicators related to the developed activities were collected and a survey was carried out. The results show that, thanks to a social feedback process, there was a rise of the fluvial space knowledge and consciousness of the environment among the population, as well as a reconciliation with the river area.

Keywords

Environmental education, Environmental management, Nature restoration, Perception surveys, Public engagement, Urban riverscapes.

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