

Co-creating Cultures of Water: Safeguarding Natural and Cultural Heritage

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How can the human and social sciences, articulated through citizen science and the dynamics of co-creation, dialogue and develop transdisciplinary projects that contribute to the sustainability, maintenance and safeguarding of the heritage(s) of Cultures of Water in northern Portugal?

Introduction

The creation of policies that seek to improve the way human communities interact with maritime and riverine ecosystems is not a new topic, but it remains a pressing issue in what UNESCO has declared to be the Ocean Decade (2021-2030). It is essential to obtain answers that can materialize in direct interventions in the preservation and recontextualization of the heritage linked to the oceans, lakes, rivers, and water reserves (aquifers, springs, etc.). In this sense, it is urgent to develop partnerships and projects with a focus on creating greater awareness and participation of different sectors of society. The Social Sciences must not be separated from these processes and must play a central role in creating an increasingly broad awareness for the preservation of coastal and riverine heritage(s). It is intended to contribute to the valorization of common heritages, alerting to the importance of Cultures of Water in the History, daily life and future of these communities.

Context

The project's focus is geographically situated in the north and northwest of Portugal, which includes the municipalities from Caminha to Ílhavo. Though the coastline is the most obvious target of the work in progress, the more inland waterways will not be forgotten. The co-creative study of the Cultures of Water project is based on a consortium led by the Transdisciplinary Research Center «Culture, Space and Memory» of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto and involves more than two dozen partners.

Figure 1: Partner: NGO Rio Neiva (Esposende, Portugal) / *Stories from both sides* (New European Bauhaus Project, 2021)

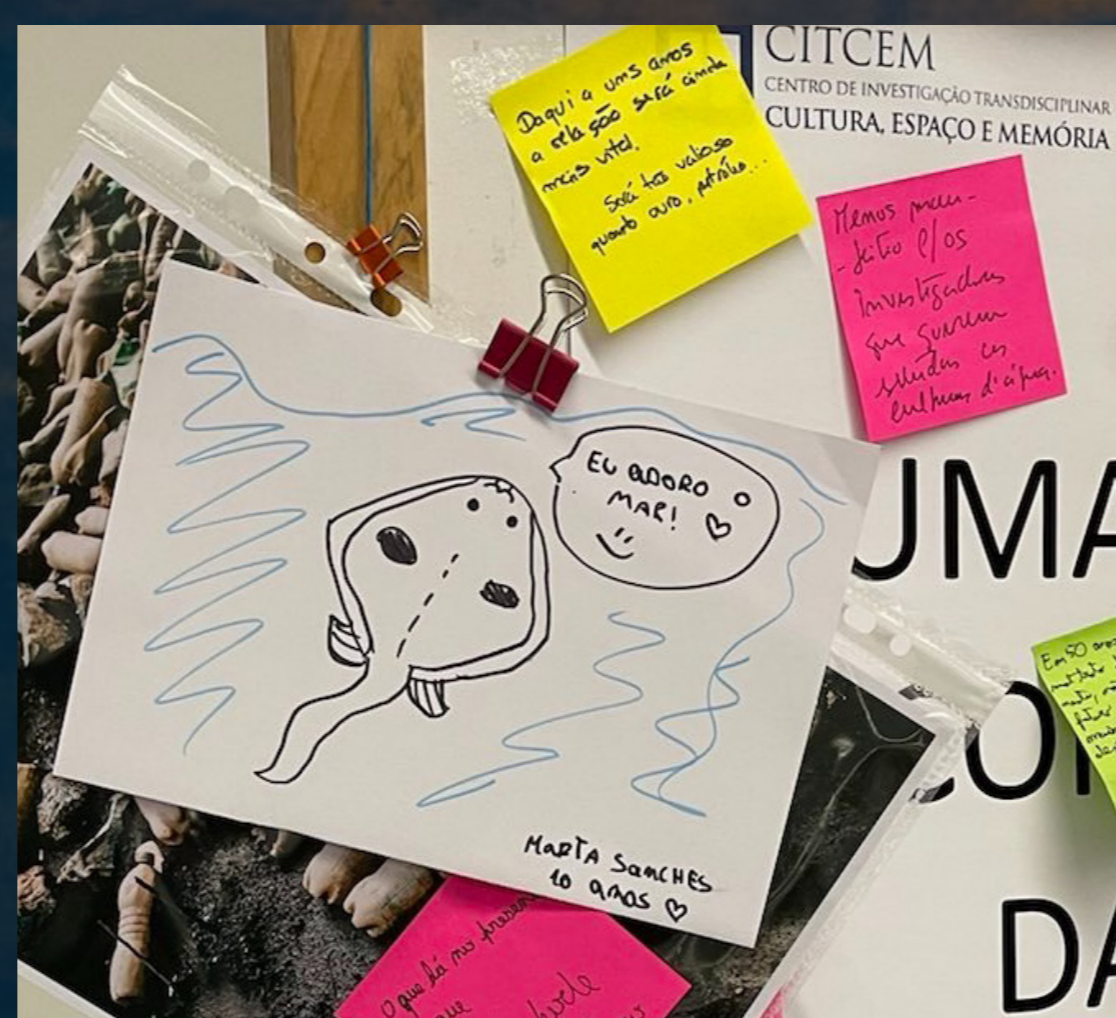


Methods

The work in progress is based on three axes:

- 1) Mapping projects (completed or in progress) with a view to capitalizing on the knowledge generated, either by CITCEM researchers or by partner entities;
- 2) Holding workshops and laboratories with the aim of involving in the dynamics of co-creation of (new) knowledge the greatest possible number of perspectives of analysis and daily experiences of Cultures of Water;
- 3) Promotion and participation in scientific, educational and science dissemination events in different social and disciplinary areas. The aim is to establish processes of mutual dialogue between the academy, partner entities and local populations, which result in a (more) informed, conscious and voluntary participation of people linked to Cultures of Water and to the heritage(s) of this region.

Figure 2: Examples of activities with audiences of different ages during the NEI - European Researchers' Night, Braga, 2022 (CITCEM)



Expected Results

With the establishment of projects that have Cultures of Water as an object of study, we seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Dynamization and enhancement of pre-existing knowledge;
- Co-creation of new content;
- Involvement of local populations in public decision-making processes;
- Promotion of reflection groups;
- Approximation and dialogue between the public and private spheres;
- Organization of events for the dissemination and communication of science.

Figure 3: CITCEM researchers at NEI 2022 (Braga)

