

THE PAST LOST TRAIN IS THE NEW FUTURE!

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Abstract

The northeast region of Portugal named Trás-os-Montes is an historical province of Portugal, integrated in the Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro region, where breathtaking landscapes made up of abounding vast plateaus, river valleys, mountains and castles. The people of Trás-os-Montes are authentic, hardworking and characterized by their honesty, tenacity and willingness to win, always ready to help others. Historically this region has always maintained its own identity, largely due to the fact that it is a region of difficult access. In this context of isolated region the train has always been the main vehicle for transporting not only people and goods, but also news and news that came from the rest of the country, particularly from the cities of Lisbon and Porto. This train line – the Tua line – shaped the economy and the living of the people in this region during more than 100 years [2]. In 1991, for essentially economic reasons due to the low use of the train, the section of the line between the two most important cities in the Northeast of Portugal, Mirandela and Bragança, was permanently disabled [2]. During an eight weeks DEMOLA project, from October 2019 to January 2020, a team of five students together with the representative of CIM-TTM based in Bragança, Portugal, putted all their effort and enthusiasm in designing new and disruptive concepts to recover the disabled old train line from Mirandela to Bragança. This design thinking project was driven through a co-creation process with CIM-TTM [3]. After running several field works, one of them consisted in travelling in a four-wheel-drive vehicle along the actual Tua line (the train tracks have been removed since 1991), the team clearly perceived that the heritage of the Tua line was far more than the old steam train or the removed train tracks, that can be exhibited in a transport museum. With the closure of the Tua line, people in the villages near the stations lost part of their identity because the train, in addition to being a means of transport, was a bridge between people and their families who left in search of a better life, always with the promise of returning home one day. With this DEMOLA project, the team realized that the legacy of the memory of the Tua line, of its importance for the people of Trás-os Montes, should be preserved and passed on to future generations. For this, nothing better than building a modern interpretive centre, taking advantage of the buildings of the station itself in the village of Vale da Porca, Macedo de Cavaleiros, precisely halfway between Bragança and Mirandela. In figure 1 it is represented a prototype for the interpretative centre. In this interpretive centre, the people of Trás-os-Montes will be able to tell everyone who passes by what life was like in the times of the Tua line and thus honor the memory of those times and pass on their customs and traditions to future generations.



Figure 1: The prototype of the Tua Line Interpretative Centre