

PRESENTATION IN FULL AND IN ENGLISH

Good afternoon everyone and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today at this very important conference.

My name is Sandra Gonzalez and I am the mayor of Tomiño, which is a small and very rural municipality in Galicia which is a part of Northern Spain on the border with Portugal.

Before I go on to speak in more detail about our market and its development I thought it would be a good idea to show a short video about our area and our project.

(VIDEO OF FOUR MINUTES APPROX TO RUN HERE AND END WITH THE MAP OF WHERE TOMIÑO IS)

(What the situation was like before the market renovation project)

As a council we knew that we had a major problem with our urban growth. And in truth the fact was that it had been developing over the years without a specific plan. The result was that now the local people were living in isolation without a recognizable social nucleus in the town where they could meet each other. The centre of the town had become no more than a crossroads with cars taking over all the available space.

The centre was busy, noisy, polluted and dangerous for pedestrians,

In Galicia the traditional indoor markets are normally found in the centre of the town and so is the case with Tomiño.

But over the last 20 years or so the market had become less relevant to the local people and as a result had fallen into disrepair.

As a council we wanted to know why this was. What were the causes?

As a council we asked ourselves the question – did this major building in the centre of the town have a future as a market and if so how, or should we consider changing its use so it could become a library for example?

As politicians it is our role and even obligation to recognize problems and to ask questions but also to understand and accept that we do not always have the answers.

(THE PROCESS)

So as a council we approached and contracted a multidisciplinary team that included architects, a social psychologist, an interior designer, a tourism expert and landscapers to do research, to design and to run the project. This team then proceeded with the following process

They first asked a wide selection of local people why they had stopped using the market in the first place. The answer was that the market had changed because it now offered the same products as the supermarket and not local products. The only people who continued to buy at

the market were older people who were long accustomed to doing their shopping there, had a good relation with the market stall owners and because the prices were cheap.

The market traders when interviewed said that their intention was to attract people by having low prices so as to compete with the supermarkets. As the local producers in the Tomiño area are very small they simply do not produce the quantity to offer very cheap prices so the market started to source their products from outside the area. For example not selling fish caught in the local estuary but buying factory farmed fish from overseas.

From these interviews it was clear, that what the market was offering was not what the people wanted and that the sales strategy of the sellers was wrong.

It has always been possible in Tomiño to buy local products, but at that time, it was necessary to visit different farms, which is very uncomfortable for the client. The markets in Galicia have always been places where small farms could sell their products and that had been lost, so their reason for existing was also lost.

All the people who were asked were clear that they wanted the market to continue being a market, but more modern, with local products, healthy food and above all a to be a comfortable and pleasant place so that it could be a social meeting place, just as the markets had always been in Galicia.

Another group that were interviewed were local people without jobs and people who had indicated that they wanted to start a business: this group were asked what would be the best conditions for them to settle in the market.

(CONCLUSION)

It was clear that the people of Tomiño wanted a market that talks about the local gastronomy, where they can find products "from home" with guarantees that they are good for their health and want to do their shopping in a pleasant atmosphere. Therefore, the sellers had to understand that to win new customers they had to stop thinking only about the price and start thinking about the people who are more and more concerned with health and healthy eating.

I think that it is important to note that from the start the objective was to have a project inspired by the people who it was for and who would use it - rather than have a project designed from above by people perhaps removed from the situation. In other words a project from the bottom up rather than top down. This way the people have a personal investment in the project and a personal investment in it going well and being successful.

THE RENOVATION PROCESS

The market was renovated and redesigned at the same time as the plaza. The traffic has been eliminated by re routing it and the area is now a green zone. It was created to ensure that Tomiño once again had a clear nucleus that was not only a meeting point for commerce but also as a social meeting point. An integrated area that is pleasant to be, safe and comfortable and one that boosts local trade.

I can safely say Life has returned to Tomiño.

The second part of the Project was to find a way to run the market and to make sure that the growth and development was continued.

The first thing was to create an association of sellers. Then a professional, external company was hired to manage the market in collaboration with the association

A determined effort was made approaching local associations to encourage them to carry out activities in the market

Every year there are a range of gastronomic and cultural activities, that are financed by the city council, that take place in this central area

All new business is concentrated in this central area such as a new wine bar and a new restaurant

A smaller market has opened in Goián, a nearby village

(TOMIÑO TODAY)

Today in Tomiño the square is full of life as is the market and together they are the centre, the heart of Tomiño and the surrounding area.

The market continues to concentrate on selling local products of high quality and at a fair price.

There has been a change in the profile of the market traders with young sellers and women dominating the list of stall holders. Young women in particular have created new types of stalls

The older sellers have given way to their children who are bringing in new ideas of marketing and promotion

Spaces for exhibitions, musical performances, book presentations, coffee and food to take away or eat there, all these have been created and have proved to be very successful

Cooking activities to teach how to use the products of the market and with an emphasis on healthy living have proved very popular.

Special evening markets, Sunday markets and thematic markets using both indoor and outdoor spaces now occur throughout the year bringing in not only local people but people from across the border from Portugal and nearby larger towns.

I am very proud to say that the regional government of Galicia has studied the work at Tomiño and has incorporated many of the ideas in their promotion and financial assistance of the transformation of other indoor markets in Galicia. They have also instigated a certificate of excellence for markets with Tomiño being the first recipient.

THE FUTURE

It is important to remember that a market cannot be static and that it must constantly review and reconsider its role in society. It must be kept fresh and relevant at all times and to be constantly aware of its competitors, changes in the public mood and their wants and needs.

At the moment there is a general emphasis on health and the role food plays in that – this promotion of healthy food is very much part of what Tomiño is doing now and also planning for the future. Not just aimed at the consumer but also as part of the ongoing training for the sellers.

This will include for an example the production of a range of healthy weekly menus. A day by day list of recipes using products from the market to ensure a healthy diet.

As lack of time is often given as the reason most people use fast food outlets or supermarkets there is a place for the market to provide an alternative. We are looking at Online sales but to maintain the social aspect of the market the customer needs to come to collect the order from the market. This can be done even when the particular stall is closed as a collection point will be set up where the bar/café is situated.

We are planning on setting up an animal and vegetable waste recycling plant.

Over the next year we are aiming for the total elimination of plastic from the market.

I would like to finish by saying that Markets are no longer considered the cheap place to buy but they must not become just places for the well off or the trendy as this year's fad or fashion.

At the heart of what a market is must stand the concept of value for money – locally produced, high quality and healthy food at a reasonable price sold in a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere.

A market must be a place for everyone on the social and economic spectrum both commercially and socially.

A market must be a place for everyone to shop together and to socialize together.

Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to any questions you may have