



## Initiatives in Rural Galicia



Initiative	Estruming Days
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## The Experience

Estruming Days is a platform for innovative training, intrasectoral networking, and current communication of small organisations linked to rural Galicia. It is a group of companies and professionals that use, transform, and energize rural resources in an innovative and sustainable way.

They want to naturalise the so common rural-urban hybrid identity in contemporary Galician society, and to promote it as a differential value. In addition, they want to facilitate the meeting, exchanging and collaboration between professionals from different sectors and disciplines, especially between companies from the primary sector and companies from the knowledge-based economy: R&D, design and technology.



## Origins

This initiative started in the second half of 2013, after a series of technical conferences aimed for business owners and entrepreneurs, social organisations, and associations related to R&D&I, design and ICTs. Monthly, on a Friday, from September to November 2013, “Estruming” hosted in Pontevedra working sessions aimed to collectives that work in, or, for the rural with a modern and global approach.



“Estrume” is the organic compost that fertilises and nourishes soil in a natural way. Continuing the metaphor, “Estruming Days” is the compost for open and restless minds that want their business ideas to grow using resources found in rural areas.

Conferences start with the presentation of two referential projects related to the day's topic and continue with a series of creative and group dynamics in which all assistants participate, activating co-producing processes and exchanging experiences among professionals in diverse economic fields (livestock, hotel and catering, marketing techniques and publicity, journalism and tourism, industrial and product design, agriculture and wine making, innovation and investigation, renewable energies and environmental management, forestry industry, technical engineering, or ICTs).

## Agents



The project is coordinated by a multidisciplinary team: Desirée Vidal, from “Anias Xestión Sociocultural” (Anias Sociocultural Management); África Rodríguez, from “Espazo Arroelo Coworking Pontevedra” (Pontevedra's Arroelo Coworking Space); Raquel Pedrouso, “Coach Executivo” (Executive Coach); Diego Parajó, from “Xeneme Proxectos Sociais” (Xeneme Social Projects); e José Bravo, from “Comunidade de Montes do Salgueiral” (Saigueiral Communal Forest).

It was launched and promoted by Pontevedra City Council, with the aim to energize entrepreneurship in the Council's rural areas.

Eventually, they participated in different economic initiative conferences throughout Galicia. Some instances are: “Carabuñas”, which produces elderberry jam and liquor; “Bodega Viña da Cal” a winery; “Lagar de Ribela”, which produces ecological Galician cyder; “Granxa de Avicultura Tradicional Galos Maceiros” a poultry farm, “Casa Alongos”, which produces coffee and herbs liquor, “As Ninochas”, which produces craft confectionery products; “Centro de Formación e Experimentación Agroforestal de Guísamo”; “Cestería Contemporánea”; “Tenda virtual de produto ecolóxico e artesan Saborplace”; “Horta Agrelo”; “Casa da Xesta”; and “Luffa Esponxas”, among others.

## Rural-urban Identity



When José, President of the village Saigueiral's Communal Forests, a rural village outside the urban centre of Pontevedra, proposed “Estrume” in a team’s meeting – which consisted of a multidisciplinary group of genuinely urban young professionals – as a key word to explain what their aim was: to link together and to make visible human and creative capital of entrepreneurs and business owners who were energizing rural areas and their resources innovatively. By proposing “Estrume”, José was speaking about a differential value, as well as about the value of near and own resources to generate wealth and growth in a sustainable and respectful way to our selves, to our patrimony, and to what we are.

Estruming Days speaks about everyday life in Galician cities and villages; about the daily journey to get to the working place from the village to the city and vice-versa; about daily prepared meals with products from our garden or products from the sea; about Designation of Origin wine from different Galician areas that we enjoy in the evening; about sports and leisure activities done in our natural surroundings; about the disconnecting activities that we comment in social networks in our holidays in a rural tourism house; about craft-working which is recovered and used innovatively and design products; about tools and technological means which make livestock farming more productive; about communicational networking which allow us to be in touch and informed at the same time that we move from one place to another.





## Participation Process

The project is energized by people belonging to different associations and business entities. These entities possess professional experience in energizing participative processes.

Meetings encouraged getting together, exchanging, and identifying of possible global or two-way collaborations among similar or complementary initiatives. An example of a global collaboration which emerged in these meetings was a proposal to create a label which showcased the differential value of their projects.

One element which identifies the differential value of its projects is their interest on craft and ecological production, as well as on an environmental consciousness, which means to search for producers of the area and short marketing circuits. Another element which identifies its differential value is the characteristic urban-rural nature, being its protagonists people who move around these two worlds.

### Administration's Role

Pontevedra City Council is the entity that provides resources which are needed for the initiative. It has an important role as encounter facilitator. Its aim is to energize entrepreneurship in its rural areas.

### Technician's Role

The ones who carry out the initiative's organisation are experience professionals in social energizing. They also provide additional knowledge related to rural research, marketing, and new technologies. This is done directly or by inviting to conferences other experts.

### Citizenship's Role

It is prominent the participation of economic initiatives in the knowledge exchange. In addition to them, conferences were attended by people with a business idea, or an idea in a process of maturation. These people could seek for models and to share doubts.

## Women's Role



Although many initiatives are led by women, it can be observed a professional segmentation. Craft-work, services, and small farming are mainly carried out by women, while engineering work, or work related to new technologies are mainly carried out by men.

## Territorial Agents and Outside Agents

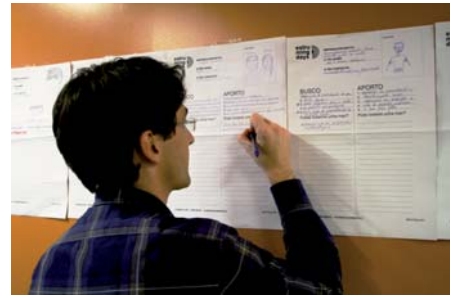
The profile of attendants to encounters and activities are, although not always people classified as neo-rural, people who move between rural and urban culture. In fact, Estruming Days seeks to conciliate both identities, as it considers this hybrid a general sign of identity in Galicia.

Participants approach the rural world seeking for a kinder space than the city to live and to develop new projects, which enjoy a strongly ecological base.

The most common profile are people between 30 and 45 years of age, many of them have children, and possess a university degree or technological knowledge. In addition, they stamp value to their initiatives: a differential quality, an innovative production or service design...



## Impacts



## Intelligent Territory

Estruming Days aims to link new techniques and knowledge to rural initiatives. New technologies, design, marketing, or re-conceptualisation of services are, to a considerably extent, its working goals. The methodology used is through collaborative work, encounters and a sampling of experiences.

## Inclusive Territory

To encourage entrepreneurship in rural areas, as means of employability, is its final goal. This approach to rural areas is done by seeing them as a space for opportunity to provide with a differential touch to initiatives, as well as people's quality of life.

## Sustainable Territory

Ecological dimension and, generally, social responsibility are common denominators of initiatives linked to Estruming Days.