Title of the Story: Cleaning effort as volunteer work

Destination Name: Forquilhinha - Santa Catarina

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Submitter name: Thais Figueredo

Email address: turismo@forquilhinha.sc.gov.br

Position: Head of the Tourism Division

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☐ Localizing the destination supply chain
☐ Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
☐ Culture & Communities
☒ Environment & Climate
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☐ Tourism Reset & Recovery
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Issues faced
On January 1, 2021, a new administration started working in the Municipality of Forquilhinha. It has encountered many challenges, even more so amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Public spaces in the city such as squares and parks had been closed for almost a year, due to decrees to avoid spreading coronavirus. Due to this closure, the removal of maintenance and cleaning professionals was needed; with reduced staff, the streets, and public spaces were not given the necessary care. Upon taking over the management, and realizing the great bureaucratic difficulties for immediately hiring a company to carry out the necessary maintenance, the municipal mayor motivated his team to start working in the form of a Voluntary Task Force for cleaning. The challenges encountered were enormous, the public spaces were outdated, with precarious structures, garbage, unpruned trees, and unmaintained grass. But, at the call of the municipal leader, there was the involvement of employees of the City Hall and people from civil society who participated voluntarily on the behalf of the city.

Methods, steps and applied tools
Since the beginning of this new administration, City Hall employees and people from the civil society have been encouraged by the call of the municipal leader to voluntarily participate in cleaning efforts in the city. The action began to be publicized in various communication vehicles such as television, radio, newspapers, websites, social media, and messaging applications. This volunteering cleaning action began to be divulged in several vehicles, which led to it gaining prominence in the state media. In partnership with the workers of the Infrastructure Secretariat, who identified the places where the task forces would be most needed and urgent, the action began to take shape during the weekdays in cleaning up the central area of the city. With the need to expand to other neighborhoods in the city, a WhatsApp group was created to help organize the participation of the crew of volunteer workers made of employees from different departments of the City Hall and community members. All cleaning joint efforts take place on Saturday mornings and have approximately 80 people involved, who are divided into teams, according to the mapping of the places where the volunteer cleaning needs to be carried out.

The voluntary work aforementioned started in February in the downtown area and expanded to other neighborhoods, and it is being carried out since then. The Saturday’s cleaning efforts took place on March 20th, April 10th, May 15th, and July 17th. In June the joint effort had to be called off due to the increase of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the region. While volunteering, the teams used machines such as backhoes, mowers, wheelbarrows, brooms, blowers, among other equipment made available by the City Hall aiming to give assistance in cleaning, which helped the volunteers to achieve good results.
Key Success Factors

The joint efforts were an excellent initiative of the Municipal Government which had a great mobilization of dissemination in media and social networks which resulted in total support from residents and City Hall employees. With this demonstration of zeal for public spaces coming from municipal managers, especially the mayor and vice president, empathy was created in the community which made the population gradually join the movement. This way, they feel an integral part of the process of maintenance, guarding, and cleaning of public spaces. Thus, it brings forward the understanding of belonging and responsibility for what is in fact owned by the population.

Lessons learned

The initial challenge was the mobilization and conscious awareness of volunteers, whether residents or City Hall workers, of the importance of taking care of our city. The marketing strategy with special articles in the media and the mayor's calls on social networks motivated people to participate in the action. Nevertheless to mention that in addition to the challenge of taking people out of their comfort zone, the pandemic also posed a risk to the health of volunteers, for the simple fact of leaving their houses. However, already in the first cleaning work, the adhesion to it was very good, more than 50 people participated and made this action significant. If everyone does their part, our city will become a better place to live. After the strategic advertising actions aforesaid, it was possible to maintain a significant number of people to make this action really work. Making public spaces clean, organized, and in conditions for use by the population was, and is, a constant challenge for the management. Notwithstanding, with persistence, little by little, much has been achieved. It has been only six months of government and several cleaning efforts were already carried out, overcoming the distrust on the part of the population that it would, after all, only be actions of a political nature and marketing.
Results, achievements and recognitions

This voluntary joint action that was never seen before in this municipality reached different neighborhoods in the city, named: Saturno, Vila Lourdes, Santa Libera, Ouro Negro, Sanga do Café, New York, Cidade Alta, Morro Comprido, among others. This initiative shows significant impacts on the cleaning of the community centers, squares, headquarters, sports fields, and main access roads, which made the residents begin to preserve their communities more. The volunteer work was approved by the population as shows the survey carried out by the Catarinense Institute of Survey (IPC), commissioned by the City Hall, which shows that 58% of the surveyed population support the initiative. On social networks, the population manifests positive comments after each cleaning joint effort. It is rewarding to see that the work performed by more than 80 to 90 volunteers per action, is being valued and that the city is being transformed by small actions, but with great added value.

Additional references

The 1st joint effort:  https://www.facebook.com/100010834749298/videos/1361235590914253/
Images and videos of the joint efforts: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hmVxfsH4TJ5vY-Q87tc1mmRGfACCKyJ?usp=sharing https://globoplay.globo.com/v/9250583/