

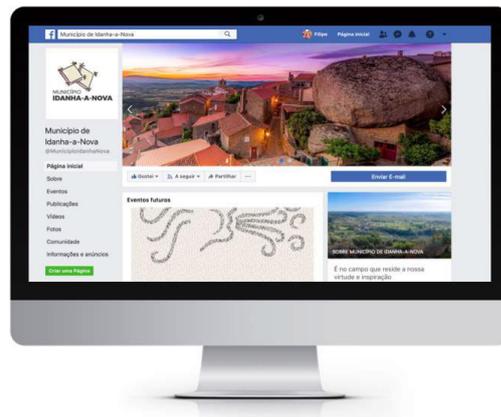


Restart in Idanha

entered by Bloom Consulting

Idanha-a-Nova is a rural municipality in central-interior Portugal. Idanha has been faced with a problem that the majority of the interior Portuguese territories can identify with: an exodus from rural areas to the big cities. In four decades, Idanha lost about 70% of its population, dropping from more than 35,000 residents to about 8,000. Along with this huge demographic problem, Idanha and the rural world faced a not inconsiderable set of negative perceptions about rurality and country life. In Portugal, professions linked to rurality were still seen as negative and dated. The team came up with a strategy to attract talent looking for a new lifestyle, living in a rural area surrounded by nature in order to counteract the increasing trend of young professionals moving to big cities. The long term strategy was to improve the conditions of those who live or work in Idanha and re-attract those who, at some point, were forced to leave. The team wanted to change perceptions about rurality and rural life and positioning Idanha as a rural-innovative destination – a place of opportunity.

The strategy was "Recomeçar em Idanha-a-Nova" - A fresh start in Idanha-a-Nova. Re-starting may represent the creation of a new company linked to the rural world, the relocation of a business, a simple transition from the city to the countryside, or the foundation of a better life for a family. A clear vision was established: to make Idanha-a-Nova the heart of quality of life, rural knowledge and rural innovation and to create all the conditions that allow people to return to the rural world, but a different rurality: a prosperous, modern and innovative one. The pillars of the strategy incorporated support for the new population, helping them to focus on their new lifestyle & also promoting Idanha, showing Portugal and the rest of the world the ideas, behind all of the work, dedication, and innovation. The strategy is being implemented and incorporates training projects with higher education and senior, middle and primary



school students of Idanha-a-Nova to show the people of Idanha (including the newcomers), the real value of rurality and how it is a true asset.

Since the kick-off of the strategy, the demographic curve has stabilized. To ensure the continued success, Idanha is creating the first Rural Embassy in the world, where people of Idanha living outside the city can play a decisive role in the promotion of local quality products, while developing ideas for talent attraction. Tourism and gastronomy promotion activities are also present in this programme, which also has a holiday camp and a tour programme to a new life, in which people are invited to experience Idanha before moving.

In addition to the turn-around in perception & the positive testimonies of those who moved to Idanha, there are additional tangible results: 321 new jobs have been created directly by "Recomeçar" related programmes and 348 new business projects are already active or in the process of implementation. 29M€ of investment by private companies is expected in Idanha in 2018. There are 50,000 followers on Facebook in 2018 when there were approximately 2,000 in 2014. Most importantly, migratory balance is about to reach a positive level for the first time since the 1950's. ●