

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

The settled areas in the Carinthian part of the Salzburg Lungau & Carinthian Nockberge UNESCO Biosphere Reserve are located in the valley areas on the outer borders of the park without direct connections to each other and without a central location. In the absence of this central location, there are no suitable premises or venues for the biosphere reserve's consultation hours, information sessions, discussion evenings or cultural events.

Virtualising communication can create completely new possibilities here. In our contribution we present and discuss whether and to what extent these possibilities can actually be used or where the obstacles and difficulties arise. We refer to the experiences and observations from the Covid crisis, as well as an experimental virtual workshop that was conducted as part of an FWF project. Some of the biosphere reserve's offerings could indeed be successfully virtualised. As everywhere, the technical possibilities have simplified conference participation, coordination discussions and working meetings within and outside the region and reduced the effort required for exchange. Existing formats, such as the learning and research platform Science Linknockberge, were also able to increase participation and reach of events.

The willingness to actively participate in virtual events has increased significantly. In some cases, target groups that are otherwise difficult to reach (e.g. young families, senior citizens) may have been activated. Overall, however, digital formats have not established themselves. Has the biosphere reserve not been able to take advantage of this opportunity, or are central activities and offers of a biosphere reserve basically not virtualisable? It can be assumed that digital voting, virtual excursions, gamification or multi-media communication will be opened up with extended technical possibilities. Biosphere reserves as model regions for sustainable development as well as for education for sustainable development will in any case have to increasingly deal with these possibilities.