

“Heritage and Communications”

“Voice of the Aegean”

Lydia Carras

Heritage:

gives depth to our lives....

.....it is like a family album

Europe’s wealth:

a particularly rich heritage...

and a long recorded history

Our Heritage-Natural and Manmade Architectural and Landscape:

...is our most tangible heritage

.the one that affects everybody’s life

- Rich and poor
- Educated or not
- Young and old

How to protect this manmade and natural heritage?

The answer partly lies in communications

Northern Europe:

acquired early on protective legislation

and an alert and supportive public opinion

Southern Europe:

... due to historic and sociological reasons

is still struggling to achieve protective legislation with a population that has so far had mainly economic priorities

It seems Sunshine does not help!

Greece:

characterised by particularly rich heritage

both natural and manmade

has been victim for years now

to a wrong pattern of development

Exploiting

its heritage to destruction

Tourism:

The most important industry

using heritage,

is often responsible

for its destruction.

Aegean:

Nowhere else

is the case more evident than in the Aegean ...

...this sea with its thousands of islands and its amazing interplay of land and water.

in which man created beauty from the dawn of civilization

...is now at risk.

Construction, legal and illegal, is spreading fast, eating up landscapes, natural resources, agricultural land, habitats....

The price of land has shot up as more and more people are buying, Greeks and non Greeks, wanting to acquire a second home, rooms and hotels spring up like mushrooms, all leading to a vicious circle

Communications:

proved an unexpectedly powerful weapon against these vested interests

The film “Voice of the Aegean” was the result of deep concern for the on going destruction

While it was being shot, people thought it a boring subject.

They were proved wrong...

From day one it struck a chord with public opinion, both in the islands and throughout the country. What was being discussed in limited circles, suddenly people saw on wide screen and it shocked them ...and it moved them.....

Moving the audience has a deeper impact

The film was shown in packed audiences

In theatres, island squares, schools, repeatedly on TV, stolen by bloggers....

Most important a whole Programme called “Sustainable Aegean” was developed by young environmentalists within Greece’s largest NGO, for environment and cultural heritage ELLINIKI ETAIRIA

Sustainable Aegean Programme:

is an awareness raising campaign to ensure the islands of the Aegean a sustainable future involving

- *schools,*
- *NGOs,*
- *entrepreneurs,*
- *local authorities,*
- *active citizens,*
- *academics....*

All being linked through the programme’s site www.egaio.gr

The Programme was inspired by the film and uses it extensively

*The environmental education
programmes
start with a showing of the Voice of the Aegean*

*Followed by an extensive discussion with the pupils
about the major development issues of their island*

*Then the children are ready to photograph what they like on their island
and what they would like to be changed*

*The pupils comment on their photographs
And then select their quotes next to the pictures.*

*The photographs of the pupils are then exhibited
in every island where the Photo Contest has taken place
Awards are given*

*In this event not only the parents
but the whole community gets involved*

*As a result of this whole campaign
new detrimental legislation that would have opened the shores of the Aegean to
massive second home construction has been averted*

*The forces that want to exploit the Aegean without concern for its sustainable future
are still at work*

*The film
as communications tool
proved a powerful opponent*

*“Voice of the Aegean” used popular actors to narrate and one of Greece’s leading
composers (Evanthia Reboutsika) to create the music*

*In its effort to make heritage a popular theme,
Europe must involve all those who inspire the public.
Their word, their commitment will inspire*

*We must, I think, invest in a Pan-European Heritage Day,
and make it instructive, fun, a day thousands of us can join hands across Europe.
The media must be involved from the start*

*In this 21st century, so fraught with dangers, not least with imminent ecological crisis
and climate change*

*Heritage could become a uniting force for Europeans, not only creating new jobs
but a new ideology.*