

When Psychology Meets Ecology: Cognitive Flexibility for Quarry Rehabilitation

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Abstract : Ecological projects are often faced with reluctance from local communities hosting the project, especially when this project involves variation from preset ideas or classical practices. This paper aims at appreciating the contribution of environmental psychology through cognitive flexibility exercises to improve the acceptability of local communities in adopting more ecological rehabilitation scenarios. The study is based on a quarry site located in Bekaa- Lebanon. Four groups were considered with different levels of involvement, as follows: Group 1 is Training (T) – 50 hours of on-site training over 8 months, Group 2 is Awareness (A) – 2 hours of awareness raising session, Group 3 is Flexibility (F) – 2 hours of flexibility exercises and Group 4 is the Control (C). The results show that individuals in Group 3 (F) who followed flexibility sessions accept comparably the ecological rehabilitation option over the more classical one. This is also the case for the people in Group 1 (T) who followed a more time-demanding “on-site training”. Another experience was conducted on a second quarry site combining flexibility with awareness-raising. This research confirms that it is possible to reduce resistance to change thanks to a limited in-time intervention using cognitive flexibility. This methodological approach could be transferable to other environmental problems involving local communities and changes in preset perceptions.

Keywords : acceptability, ecological restoration, environmental psychology, Lebanon, local communities, resistance to change

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