



SOCIAL
INCLUSION

Project: Rural development for employment

Project Number: 2019-1-BE01-KA204-050550

Partner: Social Inclusion Association

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Research on best practices of rural development in Greece

Intro

Agritourism is considered to be and is promoted as an important 'tool' for rural development in Europe. In Greece, it was 'officially' introduced through EU subsidies to Greek farmers or women's cooperatives in the 1980s and since then has grown significantly.

The development of agritourism in Greece has encountered a series of drawbacks and contradictions. On the one hand, it has been quite successful in terms of the number of farms that have developed such activities and services. On the other hand, it lacks coherence and strategy at a national level, and remains fragmented at the local level. Meanwhile, it has been claimed that it is more 'tourism' than 'agro' in terms of the most commonly used definitions.

Agritourism is one of these types, referring to activities connected with agriculture. One type of agritourism is agritourism, which is practised by farmers who are primarily employed in agriculture.

Because the agritourism concept is generally connected with the promotion of quality in services and goods, respect for the local heritage and environment, and a local character, its practices may vary from country to country and locality to locality. Nevertheless, some broad targets are connected with agritourism development programmes throughout the EU .

The agritourist product in Greece addresses people with urban life styles who seek experiences of rural culture, rural life styles and 'authenticity' or 'natural' experiences .

Gender equality and agritourism are interrelated in a number of 'women's agritourism cooperatives', namely cooperatives of women in rural areas, which produce local products and/or offer accommodation. So, for this reason we selected 2 very successful cases in this sector.



Case study 1. Agrosweet (Women's Cooperative of Zagora, Pelion, Greece)

Digital Resource: <https://www.agrosweet.gr/>

The Women's Agritourism Cooperative of Zagora, the only Women's Cooperative of Magnesia, of 50 women who wanted to take advantage of their traditions and offer services not just tourism, but work with fun, taste and quality in order the visitors to enjoy their products and be back to Zagora again.

The area of Zagora is rich in fruits, herbs, flowers, plenty of raw material, while the great tradition mainly in the manufacture of sweets, gives the recipes for pure products, quality and of course delicious. Since the end of 2000, the Cooperative has been operating the Guesthouse under the name "Drakopoulou Mansion", an old mansion that turned it into a traditional hostel.

Aims and Objectives:

- To enhance the woman's position in the local society
- To encourage the costumers to buy products from local business and support local market
- To develop the cooperative sector in countryside so as more people will be occupied
- To present good practice of using raw materials
- To promote healthy and nature products to costumers

Description of the Cooperative and activities

The Cooperative produces pastries, jams, liqueurs, pasta and herbs. He maintains a cafe in the central square of Zagora where he offers his products. Another activity of the Cooperative is the provision of catering services in every form of event, while at the same time it has a hostel with five beautiful traditional rooms in a listed restored building.

Today, the Women's Agritourism Cooperative of Zagora has its own store in the main square of the village in Ai Giorgis. In the "coffee shop" the visitor can try a wide variety of sweet spoons, jams, traditional pastries, homemade liqueurs, homemade delicacies that accompany the local tsipouro.

In the same place there is an exhibition with handicrafts, jewellery, embroidery, dried flower compositions, gift baskets and available for sale. In addition to the above items and herbs of the area, creams and other cosmetics made from herbs, local oil and wax.. All products are pure, made exclusively from fruits and herbs of the region, without preservatives and with the taste of traditional Greek cuisine.



The accommodation named “Archontiko” was built in 1906, stands out in Zagora, thanks to its colours and is a visible proof of what a women's cooperative can achieve when its members work methodically and with passion. Its first owner was Daniel Drakopoulos, one of the hundreds of Piolets of the Greek communities, who after getting rich in Smyrna with the coffee trade returned to his hometown and built this mansion to stay with his wife, Katina Kordatou, sister of the historian Giannis Kordatou. The mansion began operating as a hotel called "Aegean" in the 1960s, and since the 1980s it has been owned by the State. Having remained closed for many years, the mansion was left to decay until 1998 when it was taken over by the Zagros Women's Agricultural Cooperative.

The women worked hard for two whole years in order to revitalize the hostel and bring out the beauty of the old house. Also, with the cooperation of the cultural association, excursions and hikes are organized, where the visitor can discover the beauties of the area.

Top Highlights

Agrosweet has the following main purposes:

- To provide a healthy substitute to consumers;
- To contribute to the well-being of rural communities;
- To provide information on traditional recipes with raw materials and ingredients
- To contribute to the economic development of rural area of Pelion, Greece
- To support women cooperatives to promote their products;

Local, regional and national impact

The main factors that urged women to create such enterprises were related to their personal needs. Their main need was to guarantee an income, essential for strengthening their self-confidence and acknowledging their role in the rural community, in which they lived and worked. This need stems from the fact that, in their vast majority, women of Zagora, who merely helped in the family farm, did not receive any form of income and, consequently, depended financially on the head of the family. This fact also determined their status in the Zagora community, which they tried to change by becoming members in a cooperative.

Women chose to work as a group because they were accustomed to working together with their relatives or neighbours and because they could tackle their problems more effectively. Besides, participating in a cooperative implied a lower degree of responsibility, a smaller capital and, therefore, a lower economic and personal risk compared to a private business.

So taking into consideration the above facts we can observe that first of all there is a personal impact on each member of the cooperative this has a positive action on their independence, self-esteem, self-confidence and to improve their social status in the local community.



As for the impact on local community is to offer good quality products and promote the use of raw materials and the use of nature ingredients. Also, to export Greek products in EU and enhance the National market with Greek products and of course to increase the income from these activities.

Conclusion

Agrosweet cooperative with 50 women working in the sector has managed it very well and successfully to promote the products with high quality ingredients and materials. Their income of the cooperative has been raised as local community supports the work of the cooperative a lot. Also, their successful business work attracts interested workers from cities and who have expressed interest to move in rural areas in order to be part of the cooperative and work on expanding more the business.

Case study 2. Archo Oil

Digital Resource: <http://www.oliveoils.gr/olive-oil.php?lang=en>

Intro

Archondakis is for several decades a household name in olive oil, both in the domestic and the international market. This is the outcome of our dedication and love for the product, as well as the hard work and responsibility in running this family business.

Exporting olive oil continuously since the late 60's, we have come a long way and are proud to reach notable milestones such as:

- Six international export awards
- The Golden Hermes National Award, awarded from the Greek State to companies that excel in their sector
- Over 50% market share in the export of packaged Greek olive oil in the mid 80's, recording up to 1100 tons in a single month.
- **ARCHO** brand awarded as the best Extra Virgin olive oil in Australian supermarkets, in a competition held by the Australian Olive Oil Association in 1992.

For the Archondakis family, it is both duty and commitment to keep up the tradition in olive oil which spans 4 generations and dates back to 1893 and there is mission to establish **ARCHO** olive oil as the consumer's first choice in the category of authentic, quality products.

Aims and Objectives:

- Production of Olive oil and offer a good quality of products to all consumers
- Enhance the local markets and promote the Greek products all over the world
- Promote entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship
- Maintain the local job posts and support economy (employment)
- Promote export of Greek products



Historical Background

Archo Oils have been founded in 1960's in the mainland of Crete in Greece. The family owns thousands of square meters of land with olive trees of different types. The family started the business locally in Chania and for many years have been the number one brand in the whole Crete on oil consumption. In Early 2000 when the business took over by 2 sons of the family the business expanded in other markets of Greece like Athens, Thessaloniki and later on around Greece. Another activity of the business is the export of the oil in other continents like Australia and US. During the recent crisis of Greece, the business faced serious financial issues which were overcome through hard work and support of banks in order to survive the high demands of markets.

Top Highlights

- To promote Greek oil production
- To support the Greek tradition and nature
- To support local employment
- Offer best quality of oil products to consumers

Local, regional national and International impact

Locally Archo Oils has affected the market in their region as they hold the 80% of the Oil consumption in Crete on the time being as well as Nationally 30% among the other enterprises of Oil in Greece. Archo oils, support locally as well Greek workers by offer work placements in stable form and promoting job opportunities. Lastly, the entrepreneurship promotes Greek products in international level and supports the economy.

Conclusions

Archo oil successfully connects the local market and employment in a very good way all those years and sustains a significant role in the production of oil the rural area of Crete in Greece. The family, offers good quality products from oil to consumers based on traditional recipes and good quality.

Both case studies that are described in this document are successful in their fields as they promote very good quality of Greek products in the markets and also they support employment locally. It's worth additionally to mention that both of them they have developed the cooperative sector in their countryside in order more people won't need to move to bigger cities for employment.

