

ERASMUS+ Programme 2015 – KA2 Adult Education Project n°: 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015937
Document name: Workshop Summary
Partner: DAFNI KEK
Author: Vassiliki Tsekoura

Employment and Women on the 21st century in Europe: From Household economy to SME economy (Small and Medium enterprises) – MUPYME Project

Interviewing Entrepreneurial Women

Anastasia Kardara

Handmade Clothing “Pastel”

Industry: Fashion Design & Distribution

Introductory Message

Entrepreneurship in its nature is not only a creative but a communicative action, too. Keeping this in mind, the DAFNI KEK staff within the MUPYME project were in search of those women entrepreneurs not only speak but COMMUNICATING effectively their vision behind their decision to become entrepreneurs – considering also that this decision keeps them active in several roles in parallel, the role of mother, of wife or partner.

Besides the focus objective of the task of interviewing “to bring light to the routes and lives as are perceived by the entrepreneurs themselves” in order to learn and get inspired by them, we were in serious consideration what exactly role model of entrepreneur we wanted to promote –especially considering the time of crisis and the various deficits the target group of housewives are facing daily.

Keeping in mind the profile of the housewives (age, location, educational background, personal and social status) we decided to reach to those entrepreneurs who are not far from the selected housewives’ cultural and educational background, or even in age terms.



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After the prior research in our context of reference (Achaia Prefecture, mainly in Patras area) and taking into account the dominant job industries of the city, we came in contact with the first 5 of the about 15 women entrepreneurs found.

The Identification

With great pleasure and strong feeling of her mentoring and inspiration ability, we present Mrs Anastasia Kardara, a 35 years old business woman in the Industry of Fashion and Clothes Marketing. Anastasia Kardara is a young fashion designer who developed her own business after experiencing unemployment. Her background was coming from the Sales of Clothing in favor of International Brands. We met her at her working place which is the laboratory and the shop of her own brand creations.

Location

Patras, Capital of Western Greece. Points of reference: the Main industry is Services. Due to connection directly via Port with rest of Europe, the citizens are influenced by all trends and despite the economic crisis the fashion market is very competitive and pluralistic. Dubbed as Greece's *Gate to the West*, Patras is a commercial hub, while its busy port is a nodal point for trade and communication with Italy and the rest of [Western Europe](#).

The once omnipresent [textile industry](#) of the city is now almost defunct after the shut-down of the huge factory of [Peiraiki-Patraiki](#) (Πειραιϊκή-Πατραϊκή), followed by numerous smaller textile industries. This had an important impact on the city's economy and resulted in high levels of unemployment in the 1990s. The remains of the facilities, still cover hundreds of acres in the south side of the city. Nowadays, Patras companies focus in dress production, the most important among them being [DUR](#).



The interview

The interview was conducted by Ms Angeliki Giannakopoulou, and was videotaped – for the most part.

Anastasia had been working for many years in sales and women's clothing, something that she liked very much and taught her a great deal about textiles, design and women's clothing in general. When she was forced to unemployment due to the economic crisis, she found herself unprepared. She felt like her whole life changed. And that is where she came up with the idea of taking to her advantage the experience that she had gained all these years and not only. With the support of her husband and her sister and after a lot of searching concerning the current trends, the idea started to form. She had to face many challenges, such as:

- **Feasibility:** In an environment where many garment shops shut down, where you have to compete with multinational companies, when the average income is getting lower and lower, *how do you make the decision ...*
- **Target group:** To whom do you address your product and why (need for – shortage of).

The presence of mass multinational merchandise in the fashion area has created a conformist way of being, where the competition is actually concerning all of these clothes that are factory made in mass quantities and not always with the highest quality material. There is need for clothes with personality that are connected with the needs of the people to differentiate themselves from the others.

The one that is travelling, the tourist, the personality, the personalization

A whole narrative open in time Continuing

- **The concept:** Anastasia's work has two different approaches. The first one is the more youthful, pastel colored clothing with interesting elements such as t-shirts with tattoo inspired stamps. The

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second one has a strong “greek” element (as she characterizes it), makes use of the colors blue and white and is marked by unique ideograms, modern textiles, ecological approach and a narrative...

1. The beginning

The business started two years ago and in December of 2015 made its first public presence in the city with the opening of the boutique. The motivation: her passion for garments and the current fashion trends, combined with the love she has to understand the needs of people, led her to create her own brand and consequently in making a warm and welcoming place.

- a. Firstly the idea had to take shape.
- b. Textiles, providers, sketches.

2. The consolidation

The concept has been clarified while the appropriate partners have been found, textile providers with quality material, all these people that are an equally important aspect of the brand name.

- The first pieces of the collection have been made
- The strategic plan of the new collections has been formatted through the concept of IDEOGRAM.
- *"We start making contacts firstly in local and national level and hopefully in the future in international level "*

Proposals

1. Clear idea – Concept
2. Quality
3. Personality - Differentiation
4. Target group
5. Persistence and patience
6. Change – Continuous Learning
7. Friendly entrepreneurial environment
8. Partnerships for the promotion of the products

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The future

- a) Difficulty in overcoming integration obstacles and establishing a name in the market
- b) Small steps
- c) Knowledge of competition
- d) Keeping high quality
- e) Maintenance cost
- f) Extroversion
- g) National strategy for brand promotion



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