

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

Rodoula Gkole

Clothing Shop

Industry: Commerce and Retailing

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.

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

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

The identification

Rodoula is the beating heart of ‘AQUA Verde’ – a shop that evolves and specializes around female clothing and accessories – and is located in the city center of Patras for more than 15 years, well known for its good quality and sense of style.

She is a 40 year-old mother of 2 boys in the age of adolescence, and she runs the shop in cooperation with her husband, who primarily and still acts as her mentor, keeping in mind that he operates for more than 30 years in the field of international clothing imports and critical review upon the imported brands in order to secure their success in the greek market.

We asked her to join our research and become one of our Business women mentors for the ones who still insist on keeping their dynamics and silent capacity unrevealed.

She walked us through her professional life which is in parallel orbit and mutually inspired by her personal life.

Rodoula has been living in Patras her whole life and made her social interactions and relations fully in connection to the city. She was a very little girl when she realized that she had a talent in identifying the nice clothes and separating the ones she prefers than buying ready-made collections of clothes.

When she met her husband – 20 years ago- she recognized in his personality the person who could support her in making her vision come true. He was coming from the field of clothing in general, known for his expertise as well, and he was

an open minded businessman travelling all over Europe to bring the latest fashion trends pieces.

She was ready to make her own place, been motivated by this advantage: She has met a person who could be her reliable mentor and ready to transfer experience by respecting her personal approach.

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](#).

It is very important to mention the context of the city: An urban in its approach environment, with influences from Europe as a lot of new product arrive via Port and in a way cultivate the fashion attitude of the citizens. For more than a century, Patras used to be an Industrial Center in Textile – something that also offered possibilities to clothing experts – from seamstresses to several workshops - which made the city full of fashion makers and creators.

The city also keeps a big competition in clothing sector due to many shops operating in the field and such a way makes it difficult to keep an enterprise if not well socialized, and not having good skills in marketing – at least.

The beginning

She made her decision 15 years ago while being at the same time a young mother with strong sense of responsibility. The support of her husband was important to overcome difficulties and time deficits. She was mostly concentrated to make

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

‘Aqua Verde’ a point of reference for the women who want to be well dressed and feel confident with their final decisions.

The name of the shop was influence by one in Italy and she wanted to bring this attitude adapted to the greek reality.

And then it was the crisis that changed the situation: Difficult to support the idea of promoting expensive brands. Only thing that remains is the willingness to promote cheaper and well selected (less known or totally unknown brands) or just nice and quality clothes.

The future

No possible to predict.

They keep the strong experience, the flexibility in decisions that allows them to make plans adaptable to new situations.

Problems

- The unstable situation of greek economy doesn't allow easy driven imports and collaboration with other countries: The providers demand pre payments - something non affordable for family running enterprises even bigger ones.
- The rates of unemployment have reduced the shopping habits of the women.
- The continuing close of the shops in the area create a negative climate and eliminate positivity.

ERASMUS+ Programme 2015 – KA2 Adult Education Project n°: 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015937

Document name: Workshop Summary

Partner: DAFNI KEK

Author: Vassiliki Tsekoura

Strengths

- Family cohesion
- Long time experience and solutions ready to be enforced.
- Passion for the specific area of industry.





Erasmus+



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



Reviewed by: Anastasia Giannakopoulou

Code: 20160119_MU_O1_DAFNI KEK_1

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.