

# The Prefecture of Preveza.

Study Tour Members

[Ela Strzelecka](#), [Henrik Mynster](#), [Zbigniew Wisniewski](#), [Cliff Bell](#), [Jerzy K. Szlendak](#), [Marta Malecka-Dobrogowska](#), [Agnes Nemenyi](#), [Andras Vissi](#)

Lying in the south west area of Epirus covering an area of 1036 km<sup>2</sup> and having a population of 59356 (1991 census). The area is mostly rural, of significant importance to the area is agriculture and tourism. The area of Epirus has a GDP of less than 70% of the national average.



The capital of the Prefecture is Preveza and has a population of 19,605 it is situated in the most southerly area of the Prefecture. Preveza is first mentioned in the Chronicle of the Moreas in 1292, the name Preveza can be translated from the Slavian language to Passage indicating its importance as a port, in the past.

Approximately 26% of the Prefecture live in Preveza. According to the 1991 statistics 91% of the inhabitants of the prefecture live in Preveza or its neighbouring settings, the remaining 9% in remote areas. The Statistics show that 3% of men and 1.6% of women have studied at degree level, the levels attaining a basic education are 32.4% of men and 27.1% of women. A concerning statistic shows that 11.2% of women have no education and can neither read or write, this level drops to 1.5% in men.

## Economy.

According to NOSS the unemployment rate in the Prefecture of Preveza is 9.31%, it has proved impossible to gain access to the figures of unemployment for the town of Preveza itself. Looking at the information recorded in the "Profile of Preveza" it is estimated that unemployment is 7.4%, although this looks a favorable position it represents approximately 4482 people in employment. In the region of Preveza the figures available record that 332 families have no form of earned income.

Further analysis shows the majority of income is derived from the primary and secondary sectors, some 69.2%. The predominant economic activities are agriculture, animal production and fish production.

## Preveza Study Tour

### Tele-observation of water quality and Information Centre in Amvrakikos.

An excellent example of how ICT can be implemented to solve an ecological problem. The area visited is a site of significant scientific interest and as such is protected under the RAMSAR convention. The area is known collectively as Amvrakikos Gulf, the protected area consists of four lagoons, Rodia, Tsoukalio, Lagarou and Averis and two rivers, Arachthos and Leuros.

#### Problem

Some time in the past, the water from the rivers which fed the lagoons was diverted from flowing to the lagoons, this led to serious ecological problems. The lagoons started to suffer and could no longer support the rich natural flora and fauna found there.

#### Solution

Through funding from the European Union **Life Program**, a monitoring station was set up to monitor the quality of the water in the lagoons, now when conditions demand water can be channeled back into the lagoons, to replenish and condition the water in the lagoons. As well as monitoring and maintaining the water quality, the centre is also a very important information centre. There is a fiber optic link that allows the center and visitors to observe an area some 3km from the centre, without disturbing either the animals, birds or the sensitive ecological surroundings.



#### Issues

Although ICT has been used to solve a specific problem, it would seem that full consideration of the use of this technology has not been fully explored.

An example of this is that when it is necessary to divert water from the rivers to the lagoons then a person has to travel to the gates that control the water flow to open the gates, this is an ideal control that could be automated with ICT, simply by linking the operation of the gates to the monitoring and recording information system. Further developments could be the networking of the information collected to universities nationally and EU wide, this is a RAMSAR site therefore by default of international importance. This information is of international importance and is therefore a valuable resource to all educationalists. There are possibilities to further use the technology already in place to increase

#### Conclusion

A good example of the use of ICT in a rural area, although not fully exploited. There is a question of sustainability for this project as the funding from the Life Program ends in September 2003. It is expected that funding will be forthcoming from other sources of funding although nothing is in place at present.

## Women's Agricultural Co-operative, Thesprotiko.

Very little ICT is employed in this project. This enterprise was conceived by a local woman wanting to develop a small business with other local women to give their families a small additional income and to increase their social network. A co-operative was set up by a group of local women, with the aid of European funding through the Leader+ program for purchase equipment, to produce and sell local food.

### Problems

The members of the co-operative did not identify problems which causing them any real concerns, instead they asked what suggestions we would make to improve their business (income of members of co-operative)



### Issues

The market for the goods is somewhat limited to visitors to the café, although their goods are sold to retailers though out the Epirus region. The co-operative has an Internet presence although there is no computer in the organization. The web site is operated and maintained by a company in Ioannina, any orders being placed over the internet are then phoned though to Thesprotiko and processed.

### Conclusions

There are obvious extensions to the use of ITC in this specific business. It would be possible to widen the exposure of the goods produced by the co-operative considerably if they developed e-commerce. The women of the co-operative were contented with their current economic activity, they did not want production to increase drastically. The women did want to increase their ability to increase their drawings from the organization but not significantly. They were quite indifferent to the possibilities of ICT use in their business. None of the women of the co-operative felt comfortable with the use or application of ICT and were not interested in learning.

It would appear that the culture of this organization and the community in general was very traditional, the women were not looking to become the main providers for the family, on several occasions it was stated that the woman of the co-operative also had families to look after, they did not want their business to interfere with their family life.

## **Information Society program in the Municipality of Preveza**

The current position regarding the implementation of ICT within the public office is as follows, 96% of the employees have use of a computer, in addition both the Mayor and Chairman have access to a computer. Out of 52 computers 27 are networked. The administration of the following tasks are carried out using the ICT in place, electronic protocol, archives, Registries, Licenses and Authorizations, Property of Municipality, Economic management, Traffic fines and Payment of employees, this can be seen as the traditional model of introducing ICT into an organization.

The municipality has a “strategic plan” to further implement ITC into its’ day to day management and operation (Annex 1). The first step of this plan, the creation of information centre for citizen services, has been implemented.

### **Problems**

The successful implementation of the whole plan within a three year period. Sustainability for the info centre for citizen services, this is a two year pilot project the intention being that if it proves successful the budget for its’ continuation will be found from either local regional or national budgets.

### **Issues**

The lack of strategic implementation plan. There seems to be a lack of basic information available to the Municipality, they do not know what the budget is for the implementation of their plan. There is no time scale for the development of each step, although the whole plan is expected to be implemented by 2006. It was felt that the plans to implement the Municipality’s plans were somewhat ambitious.

It was identified during the visit, by a statement made that the present mayor was interested and keen to see this plan implemented. If this office changed there could be the possibility that the importance of the implementation of the plan could change. The favored method of development plan is top down, there is no plan to access the community’s needs or for the Municipality to manage their expectations.

### **Conclusions**

There is a need to develop a strategic plan for the introduction of new technology. This should address cultural perceptions, collecting information on what is expected and managing those expectations, training for its use, and a schedule for its implementation. Consideration should always be given to the sustainability of any project before starting its implementation.

## **Olive Oil Packaging Plant, Mitika Industrial area (BIPE)**

The packaging plant is run as part of a co-operative, its creation was aided with funds from European Leader II grant funding. They use ICT for the day to day running of their business, for such activities of holding customer records, invoicing, recording payments stock control etc.

### **Problem**

There was no real problems identified in this business, opportunities were identified to enable the business to become more efficient through the use of ITC and to increase its exposure to a larger market.

### **Issues**

It appears that an impression prevails in the rural areas that rural development cannot be connected to anything that happens in an industrial park. There are opportunities to improve the efficiency and market exposure of the organization through the use of ICT. This would be a higher level implementation of more sophisticated computer hardware and software, and would necessitate a full cost benefit analysis to discover whether it would really benefit the organization

### **Conclusion**

ITC for ITC sake is not an option. ITC is a tool that may or may not be appropriate it is not the panacea for all ills, remember if it's not broken do not try and fix it.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coastal Region</li> <li>- Fertile plain (land use over the Greek/regional average-with irrigation)</li> <li>- Cultural Heritage</li> <li>- Infrastructure</li> <li>- Geographical Location</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unreliable basic infrastructure (water, electricity, ICT network)</li> <li>- Low ICT skills</li> <li>- Traditional style of thinking (mentality)</li> <li>- Low ambitions for better future</li> <li>- Economy is based on agriculture and processing agricultural products</li> <li>- Majority employees engaged in primary sector</li> <li>- Geographical location -</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourism – active tourism, extremes sports (sky diving, rafting, paragliding)</li> <li>- New style of life (settlement from the urban area)</li> <li>- EU supported development programs</li> <li>- Young educated people (they could implement ICT)</li> <li>- Short Tourism season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emigration of young people from this area</li> <li>- High rate of unemployment</li> <li>- Sustain, not improve</li> <li>- Centralized structure of management/decision making</li> <li>- Short tourism season</li> </ul>

# VISION

**Our vision is a holistic one, concerning the main economic areas within the region, i.e. Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, and Public Services.**

**Through the use of ICT to create new forms of managing networks and organizations, encouraging a common understanding of the importance of its' implementation. Extending the Tourism Season and widening/increasing markets for local products, thereby increasing the desirability to remain in the area.**

## Policies

- Education of primary
- Leader training
- Identification of Prime movers (business, public, voluntary and general community)
- Creating consciousness and agreement
- Co-operation with other Partners
- Identification and use of best practice from other areas regions within the EU.
- Through the use of ICT create an information data base to inform and develop an effective marketing plan for the area.
- Increase networking between related market sectors.
- Creating a coherent strategic network between stakeholders

## Stakeholders

The following groups have been identified as stakeholders:

Farmers, Entrepreneurs, Local and regional governmental officers and officials, Associations and co-operatives, ICT providers and trainers, ICT experts, Scientists, Providers of public services and members of the general community.

## Scenario

The pessimistic scenario would see the status quo maintained, the municipality's plans for the implementation of their ambitious objectives fail, and the region left behind as far as ICT is concerned.

A realistic scenario would see the municipality succeed in implementing their plans to introduce ICT. The region developing the basic infrastructure to allow the future use of ICT tools to develop the region encouraging both investment from the private sector, with help from European structural funds and from regional government. The existing markets would be strengthened, the tourism season successfully extended and new economic activities are attracted to the region. The new prosperity of the area encourages existing people to stay and new people to move to the area.