

3rd Study Trip

In The Region of Karditsa

Vasilakos' Farm and OikoSphera

Description: Vasilakos' Farm is a unique model of **social farming** activity founded by Sokratis Vasilakos himself, with the aim to provide an **ecological** way to cultivate and share agricultural and natural-based practices. The farm model is:

Social based: «free» land sharing and free participation

Ecological: organic agriculture for environmental purposes

Educational: seminars on organic farming and health practices

- ▶ 1974: Establishment of the farm by Mr. Vasilakos as a business activity
- ▶ 1992: Switch to organic farming
- ▶ 1994: Eco-Label Certification
- ▶ 2012: Oikosphera, an NGO for sustainable way of living



Vasilako's Farm and OikoSphera

PROS

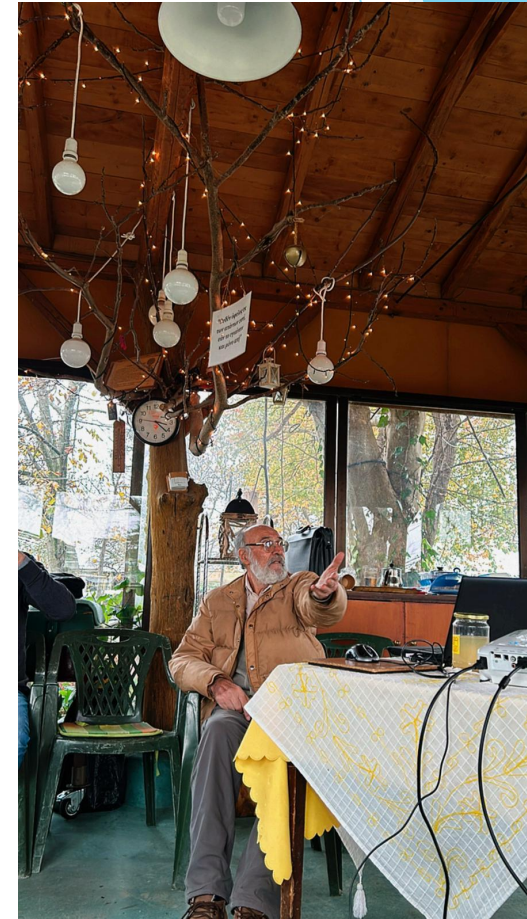
1. SOCIAL PRACTICIES

1.1 Land Sharing

Citizens can cultivate land (water, tools, equipment included) in a cheap way under Mr. Vasilakos' guidance (50 €/year for 50 sm, 90€/year for 100sm) This represents a great opportunity for people that don't own land to cultivate crops and to experience the natural-farming life.

1.2 Stakeholder engagement

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: Widespreading of knowledge and awareness on green farming to citizens and kids (**GOOD PRACTICES**). The social farming is an open space for groups to practice and experience green transition startegies.



Vasilakos' Farm and OikoSphera

PROS

2. LOW ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Organic farming avoids the usage of pesticides and chemical nutrients. In order to respect the ecological equilibrium he use micro-organisms (biostimulants) for growing plants

3. HEALT BENEFITS

Mr Vasilakos is (recently) a graduate of *Nutritional Science* and through his lifestyle he gives an example of sustainable way of living with plant based diet. He's a good guide for visitors.



Επισκέψιμο Αγρόκτημα Βασιλάκου. Βιολογικές Καλλιέργειες

Vasilakos' Farm and OikoSphera

CONS

- Mr. Vasilakos is a good farm leader but he doesn't play the role of the **green activator**. He is acting more like a guide. Most of his neighbours, though, are still practicing non-organic farming.
- **Top-down approach**: The farming practices are based exclusively in Mr. Vasiliakos' perspectives. The social process of engagement is not bi-lateral.
- **Gender Gap**: Mrs Vasilakos was never took part in the conversation, mostly involving with us during tea and pie serving
- **Technological gap**: Lack of use of social media.



Κίνηση για το περιβάλλον, τον άνθρωπο και την ποιότητα ζωής

Οικόσφαιρα

Καρδίτσα - 2012

Energy Community of Karditsa - ESEK SYN PE

Description: The Energy Community of Karditsa is a free association of citizens where people can participate as shareholder member (citizens, firms, associations, municipality) and benefit from the shared biomass transformed into pellet by the facility. With different incentives mechanisms, members can have their own pellet to use for domestic heating.

PROCESS: It is a circular bio-economy mechanism to use residuals (agricultural waste, residual biomass, coffee waste...) giving new life to waste in order to satisfy heating needs. The selected biomass is first dried and then mixed and compressed into pellets sticks. Finally, pellets are packaged in 50 Kg bags and used by energy community members.



Energy Community of Karditsa - ESEK SYN PE

PROS

SOCIAL BENEFITS: The Energy Community represents a way to share benefit to the community in an inclusive way to tackle **energy poverty**. It also represents a **cooperative** tool to inform people about the feasibility of green transition strategies.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS: Using residual biomass represents a way to close the **wood-waste-energy cycle** with a **low GHG emission** (if compared to traditional fuels for heating). Re-use approach is well promoted.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS: Cheaper pellets for members. Citizens can **save money** (discount up to 50%) from traditional pellet!



Energy Community of Karditza - ESEK

SYN PE

CONS

Burning biomass is not a sustainable energy use. Indeed, the process is not carbon negative: carbon dioxide produced is the same that plant stocked in their wood during life. It's just **carbon neutral** but it can represent a bottom-up step forward to the green energy transition pathway.



Kindergarten in Kaliffoni and Blues Bar in Karditsa

- ▶ *Description:* Kindergarten in Kalliffoni represents the first pilot application of the Energy Community of Karditsa. Shifting from a traditional oil boiler to a **biomass-pellet**, the heating system (pipe, valve) remains the same. Nowadays, the boiler can be activated via app by remote (i.e. before students arrival) and it represents a smart way to a digital-smart green transition where also technology can play a crucial role on efficiency and energy saving.
- ▶ *KEY POINT:* Even though in the first contact the school director was not so interested, in the end she accepts the implementation! It represents a **virtuous example** for others to join the community and a success of **persistence**, where the economical benefit of ESEK was enhanced by the recent energy crisis.



Kindergarten in Kaliffoni and Blues Bar in Karditsa

- ▶ Blues Bar represents the first shop that gives coffee residuals in order to produce coffee pellet from coffee waste. It is a member of the energy community.



CONCLUSION

- Some approach should be more inclusive with a bottom-up participation
- Digital gap and gender ones should be considered
- Involvement doesn't mean necessary participation
- Energy Community has to be renewable
- Language is important to create a common vision
- All these strategies represent a pioneering way that can pave the way to the green transition, but it's necessary to rethink the whole education system in order to increase people's participation on transition.

Thank you!



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