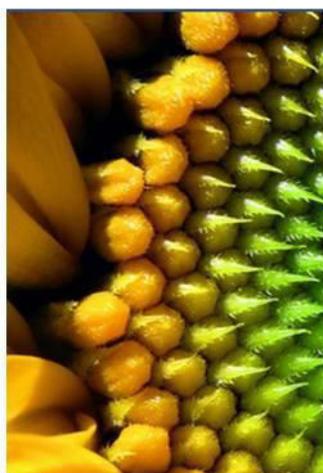
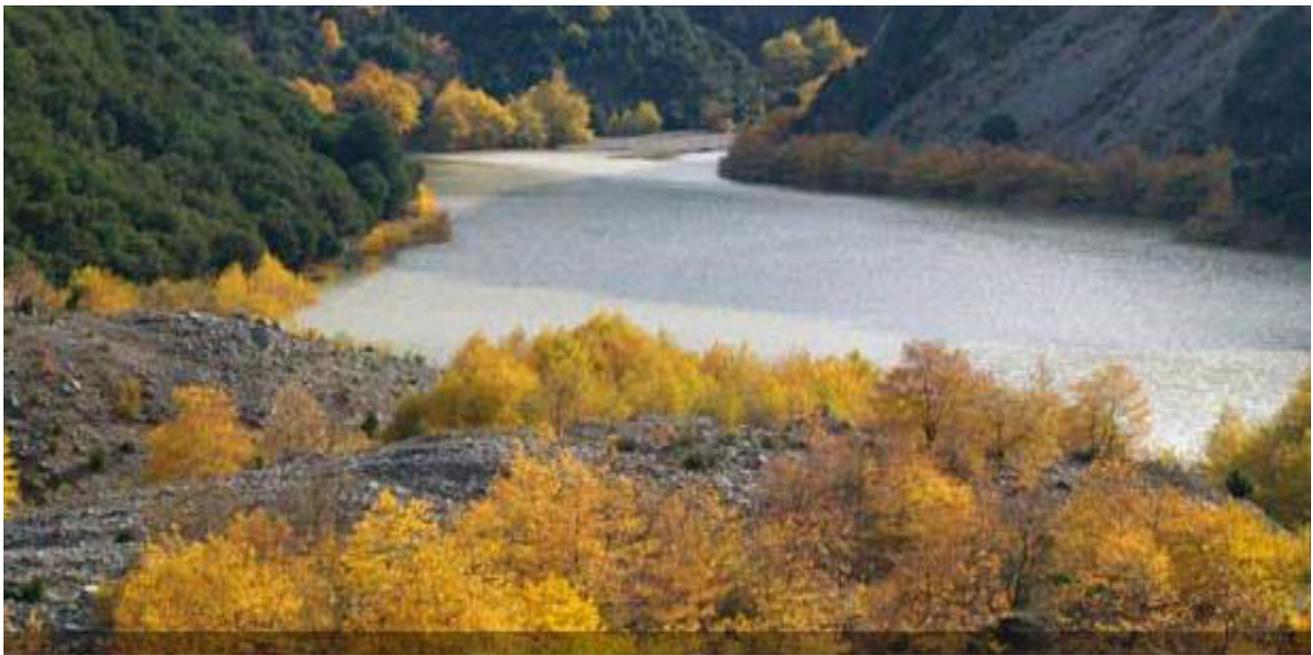


## European Rural Sustainability Gathering 2017

17.-21. May 2017- Karditsa – Greece

### ANNEXES



**EUROPEAN RURAL SUSTAINABILITY GATHERING:**

May 17 - 21 2017, Karditsa, region of Thessaly, GR

in co-operation with Karditsa Development Association (ANKA)

From 17 - 21 May 2017 the "Rural Sustainability Gathering" was held in the region of Karditsa, Greece. The 3-days meeting was full of enriching experiences and lively multinational exchanges with about 75 participants coming from 16 different countries and different backgrounds - from local to national and European activities, ranging from farmers, entrepreneurs, NGOs and development agencies.

Besides discovering the rural reality in the region the main goal of the bi-annual Forum Synergies' event was to discover the potential for future activities.

"We invite you to listen, understand each other, share, dream contribute, enjoy and act to change and improve our societies." With these words of Forum Synergies' Philippe Barret, so began three days of deep engagement by a wide range of actors in the Greek mountains on Thursday 18th May.

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## ANNEXES

### Fact Sheet on Agro-Economy in Greece, by Fouli Papageorgiou, Euracademy

[link](#) for print version of the document

#### Advantages

Greece has to offer many advantages in agriculture: excellent climatic and soil conditions, low pollution in comparison to other European countries, high quality of produce, high potential of added value through packaging, crafting and manufacturing, low cost of moving to organic agriculture, high recognition of Greek products world-wide, many of which are unique in the world markets. However, there are also many challenges that need to be dealt with.

#### Challenges

One of the major challenges agriculture is facing in Greece is the fragmentation of agricultural land, leading to many small holdings that cannot offer the advantages of scale and lead their owners to under-production and inefficiency. Small, fragmented holdings make it impossible to achieve high productivity, forcing the farmers to depend on subsidies, to over-borrow from banks and even to consider selling their plots. During the last 5 years the media have noted the effort of large investment groups from Europe, Russia or Israel to work quietly towards acquiring agricultural land from small landowners, with a view to create large holdings, especially in fertile areas of Central Greece (Viotia or Thessaly)<sup>1</sup>. The only solution to react to the shrinking of the agricultural sector and a potential future sale of land to non-Greek interests is for Greek farmers to join cooperatives or social economy consortia, which would allow modern cultivation practices to be introduced, land productivity to be increased and economies of scale to be practiced to large farmed areas resulting from joining together small holdings.

<sup>1</sup>Papadogiannis G., “Russians and Israelis buy agricultural land”, Agricola, 13-2-2017, pp. 14-15.

#### Annual value of agricultural land

Statistics released from the Ministry of Agriculture a few years back show that in our country, the annual value of agricultural produce per hectare is 1.900 euros. At the same time, other EU countries, like The Netherlands, manage to extract annual value of 16.400 euros per hectare; while Israel extracts value of 13.000 euros per hectare. The main reason for such low productivity, as mentioned above, is the fragmentation of land: in Greece the average holding is 6 hectares, while in the Netherlands and Spain the average is 24 hectares and in France 52 hectares!.

#### Reforming the agricultural sector

Big obstacles for the reform of the agricultural sector are: the poor education of farmers, excessive and often not-needed investments in mechanical equipment, and the absence of guidance and planning from the state, central or local. To these, one should add the mentality of minor effort, the lack of entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurial skills, and the absence of a culture of cooperation amongst farmers. The ageing of the farming population is an additional difficulty in achieving modernization of agricultural production and increase of productivity: the average age of the population in rural areas is 46 years, reaching over 55 years in mountainous areas and in remote islands, while the average for urban areas is 40years<sup>2</sup>.

Although there have been incentives for young farmers in the past 15 years, mostly supported by the EU and to a lesser extent by the government, the return of young people to the land has been slow, although not unnoticeable: especially over the past 5 years, when the economic crisis started to bite hard, a number of young people decided to return to the land of their families in rural areas and take up agriculture - often with a lot of imagination and entrepreneurial spirit. However, given that the unemployment rate among the general population is near the 25% mark<sup>3</sup>, while it reaches 50% in the 15-25 age group and 30% in the 25-34 age group, the “return to the land” by young people is only a thin stream, followed by a lot of skepticism.

<sup>2</sup>ELSTAT (Greek Statistical Service), Sensus of population and residences, 2011

<sup>3</sup>ELSTAT (Greek Statistical Service), Annual/quarterly research of the labour force, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2016

## Multi-occupation of farmers

According to the 2011 census, the primary sector (agriculture, animal farming, fisheries, forests) had a share of 12,6% of the labour force, while the secondary sector (manufacturing industry) had a share of 17,3% and the tertiary sector (services and tourism) had a share of 70%. However, the above figures do not represent accurately the situation in the primary sector, because the majority of farmers have usually another occupation, to complement their income. Multi-occupation of farmers is typical in rural Greece. Since many decades ago, to secure a decent income, most farmers had to complement their income from farming with income from other sources - usually small crafts industry, tourism, or salaried work in an urban centre. In many areas of Greece, especially in the islands and coastal regions, given the dramatic increase of tourism, the complementary income ratio was reversed: tourism became the main income for a rural family while farming provided only complementary income<sup>5</sup>.

This situation has undermined farming, which has taken a secondary role in the economic activity of many farmers, although they are still declared as “farmers” in the census. As a result, large expanses of land are not exploited for agriculture or remain under-exploited, producing usually a limited amount of olive oil for the family. Such areas could be rented to agricultural cooperatives, to bring them to full production, for the mutual benefit - of the cooperative and the owners. At times of acute economic crisis, a strategy of maximum land exploitation for agriculture, especially if it is motivated from a bottom up movement, could provide a large number of jobs in rural areas, as well as regenerating agriculture and strengthening the competitive advantage of Greek products in the European markets.

<sup>5</sup>Papakonstandinidis L., “Relationship between agricultural and agricultural income in the primary sector, 1961-2004”, Research Report, EPEAEK-Archimede, 2006.

## Fact Sheet on the Eco-System Approach, by Vassilis Bellis, Anka

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[link](#) for print version of the document

### Short history

The “Ecosystem of Collaboration” of Karditsa is a result of a long term strategy launched at the same time with the establishment of Development Agency of Karditsa in 1989. The first step was the inclusion of the “incubator” in its activities. The task of the incubator was to host all the innovative collective initiatives or to support the existed ones. In 1994 a promised cooperative was established: the Credit cooperative of Karditsa. It hosted in the incubator for the first two years. Four years later it transformed into the cooperative bank of Karditsa which plays a very crucial role in the economy of the prefecture.

### Support of local initiatives

The incubator has until now offered support to a lot of local initiatives transformed already in organizations of a variety of legal status: Cooperatives, Non for Profit Agencies, associations etc. All these local collective schemes in cooperation with existed ones formed gradually, with the support of Development Agency, a local network that is transformed into the “ecosystem of collaboration”. Its main characteristics are:

- Its members are complementary one each other
- They are conscious that they belong to the ecosystem and know the members of it and their activities
- They try to develop and implement a common strategy (they participate to the planning of their future)
- Each member tries to cooperate in preference with the other members of the ecosystem
- They establish common rules (code of conduct)
- They develop common services aiming to the members’ improvement
- They develop support tools to facilitate the emergence of new collective initiatives

### Services offered by the incubator

**Pre-startup services:** The support of the meetings of candidate members to agree on the crucial points of the statute:

- The vision, the mission, the relationships among the members and the terms of their cooperation etc

The meetings take place in the agency's offices or even in a village where the candidate members live.

The result is not always successful!

Offer of space for the head office.

The hosted cooperative is integrated in the everyday function of the Agency.

A desk, a computer and an ITC connection (telephone, internet) is offered

There is not a separate space.

Some of the agency's executives work also for the hosted organizations

The organizational bodies of the hosted cooperative have their meetings in the common meeting room

Raising of awareness of candidate members, via:

The organization of events all over the prefecture, in villages and cities

Promotion of the initiative through the Media (traditional or Social)

The raising of awareness is organized in two phases: before the establishment (in favor of social entrepreneurs) aiming to the founders attraction, and after the establishment aiming to the enlargement of the social enterprise

Secretarial support

Support to the administrative bodies (governing board, General Assembly)

Invitations management; keeping of minutes etc.

Management of the member's subscription and keeping of the book of members. So, when the Social Enterprise "graduates" from the "incubator" it has fully organized the legal files it is obliged to keep

Information of visitors who are interested for the initiative

Support in the process of business plan elaboration, especially in the phase of the debate - negotiation among the members

Training in soft skills

The goals of the support services

To eliminate or minimize the start up cost. This cost is the main disincentive putting obstacles to participation. Besides, in the case of unemployed people, they are unable to afford it.

To give a boost to the enthusiasm of Collective initiatives. In the most cases they feel helpless

To give a chance to the founders to acquire basic knowledge and skills

To facilitate the participatory decision making, especially in the start up phase

To enable the formation of a leading group competent to plan and implement the business plan of the Collective Initiative

To communicate the initiative to the local society

## Current situation and results

The incubator supports or hosts more than 15 collective schemes:

2 Civic cooperatives

5 Agricultural cooperatives

3 Social cooperatives

3 Networks of family-run businesses (small or micro)

2 NGOs

The local "Ecosystem of Collaboration" includes 36 collective schemes.

The establishment of local initiatives accelerated during the crisis.

3 innovative investments carried out by new cooperatives are already finished and the productive units are ready to work.

The "supply chain" in 6 fields is reorganized

## Current challenges - Interviews with Greek partners

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### Interview with Vassileios Bellis, GR

conducted by Hannes Lorenzen at the occasion of the ERSG 17-21 May 2017 in Greece (posted on 20-02-2017)

Vassileios Bellis is General Director of the **DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF KARDITSA**, in the region of Thessalia in Greece. He is one of the initiators of a movement of new social enterprises and cooperatives active in the region since many years, including local energy, cooperative banking, rural tourism and many other.

Read the [full interview](#)

### Interview with Yiorgos Psychas, GR

conducted by Hannes Lorenzen at the occasion of the ERSG 17-21 May 2017 in Greece  
posted on 20-02-2017

Yiorgos Psychas is member of a grassroots network in Greece called **lliosporoi** (*sunflower seed*) working towards social, political and ecological transition in rural and urban areas of Greece. He is agronomist and master in landscape architecture, enjoys making ceramics, lives in Athens and soon on the island of Evia - and has engaged in the movement "access to land" on a European level.

Read the [full interview](#)

### Field visits - a chance to explore, to learn and to exchange with local people

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3 groups of field visits were organised in parallel showing different initiatives and thus illustrating the territory and the dynamic of development.

Each field trip included 3 stops offering a visit of a project/ initiative addressing one of the three main fields:

- AG - Agriculture/ cooperatives/ processing
- SO - social/ cultural/ education activities
- EC - local economy/ cooperation/ networking

### GROUP A

#### **EC: Development Agency of Karditsa** ([link1](#), [link2](#))

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**Keywords:** It hosts a CLLD LAG; it operates an incubator; It supports the "Ecosystem of Collaboration"

The Agency established in 1989 by local authorities of the Prefecture of Karditsa (Thessaly Region, Greece). It hosts a CLLD LAG from 1994 until nowadays; it operates an incubator hosting collective schemes and offer support to the "Ecosystem of Collaboration" constituted by cooperatives, NGOs, associations and other collective bodies. During the last years, in cooperation with the Cooperative Bank of Karditsa it offers Business Development Support services to social or private businesses in the frame of Social Financing tools.

Topics addressed:

The local CLLD project; The "Ecosystem Support" ; The Business Development Support in the frame of Local Micro financing system

#### **AG: Agricultural cooperative of Superfoods** ([link1](#), [link2](#))

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**Keywords:** Factory financed by LEADER, processing of "superfoods" (goji berry, blue berry etc) and producing jam

The cooperative established in 2012 by people who decided to shift their activities in agriculture. They cultivate "superfoods" (goji berry, blue berry etc). Now it has 120 members who decided to integrate their activities investing in the processing of their products, organizing the whole supply chain. The construction of their factory (financed by LEADER) is finished and they have started the production of various products like jams or dried berries. The investment has also supported by the cooperative bank of Karditsa

Topics addressed:

Superfood as a niche; Benefits for local economy

#### **SO: Women center** ([link1](#), [link2](#))

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**Key words:** promotes gender issues

It was established in 1992 by Municipality of Karditsa, Development Agency and Women Associations of Karditsa. It is the oldest Women's Supporting Center in Greece and the only one that "belongs" to the Local authorities. It is organizing National, Regional, Local and European projects aiming at promoting

equal opportunities, fighting against discrimination and inequality in working environments, abolishing professional segregation, combining professional and family life, informing and activating citizens in matters of social inequality against women, sensitizing them against violence against women, teenagers, children, spreading practices for the implementation of the above.

Topics addressed:

Situation of women in the region; Goal of the center; Success stories

## GROUP B

### EC: Energy cooperative

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[http://www.anka.gr/portal/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=461&Itemid=62&lang=en](http://www.anka.gr/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=461&Itemid=62&lang=en)

**Keywords:** Civic cooperative, Pellets production unit financed by LEADER, Local Biomass exploitation

It is a civic cooperative aiming at the use of RES of Karditsa. It was established in 2010 and has 350 members. It is hosted in the “incubator” of Development Agency. It is also financed by LEADER program and supported by the Cooperative Bank of Karditsa. Its first target is the rational use of biomass of Karditsa investing in a pellets production unit. The unit is already constructed and its inauguration is expected to be organized soon. The impact of the cooperative to the local economy and especially to the employment in mountain areas, through its cooperation with the forest cooperatives, is expected to be very significant. Among the future plans is the power production, using biomass residues produced by agriculture or other activities.

Topics addressed:

How to start a civic cooperation? Contribution to local/ regional economy; Impact on the employment in mountain areas

### AG: Agricultural Cooperative of Stevia producers

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**Keywords:** Agricultural Cooperative financed by LEADER

It was established in 2012 by a pioneer group of farmers with the support of Development Agency. Nowadays it has 70 members. Their aim is to cultivate stevia (a new cultivation in Greece) and through extraction to produce steviol glycosides. So, in cooperation with the University of Thessaly for the cultivation issues, and with the Technological Institution for the processing issues, they have integrated their pilot investment plan. This project has financed by LEADER and supported by the Cooperative Bank of Karditsa. This extremely innovative and bottom - up initiative will influence positive the local economy and maybe in the future will contribute to the reorganization of the local productive system.

Topics addressed:

Stevia as a niche; Benefits for local economy; Bottom up or top down initiative

### SO: Roma

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Topics to be addressed:

Social integration

## GROUP C

### EC: Cooperative bank of Karditsa

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<http://www.bankofkarditsa.gr/>

**Keywords:** Civic cooperative, Financial services

It is a civic cooperative established in 1994 as a credit cooperative. It was hosted in the Development Agency of Karditsa for the first 2 years and in 1998 received the license from the Bank of Greece to function as a Cooperative Bank. It plays a crucial role in the local economy and - especially during the crisis proved its role as a pillar of the resilience of the local society. It is the healthiest bank in Greece, it is certified as an Ethical Bank and it is a pioneer in Social Financing tools.

Topics to be addressed:

Contribution to local economy; Micro financing Program

### AG: NGO "Oikosfaira"

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<http://www.oikosfaira.gr/>

<https://www.facebook.com/oikosfaira/?fref=ts>

It promotes the organic farming. They organize during the last 16 years the “Eco festival” in Karditsa inviting organic farmers from all over Greece. They also invite speakers from various NGO’s (like Peliti)

**Topics addressed:**

The role of NGOs in the organic sector; Their work with volunteers; Their networking and cooperation with other initiatives.

**SO: Foundation "Alexopoulos"**

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**Keywords:** It offers scholarships

There are three foundations in Karditsa. This one offers scholarships focused on graduate and post graduate education. The Alexopoulos scholarship is suspended for the last two years (possibly because of the crisis). Another foundation (the Alamanis’ one) offers scholarships focused in technical education and training. For the case of Valtadoros’ foundation scholarship, it is practically an ideas’ competition.

**Topics addressed:**

Meeting people who have received scholarships, in order to learn about their experiences/ how they could benefit.

The scholarships are focused on graduate, post graduate education

For the case of Alamanis scholarships, they focus on technical education and training.

For the case of Valtadoros scholarship, it is an ideas’ competition.

The first two are related to the topic of youth/ unemployment.

The Alexopoulos scholarship is suspended for the last two years (possibly because of the crisis)

## Stepping deeper in Greek realities: A Mini Greek Odyssey with ARC2020 | #ERSG17, Article written by Oliver Moore, ARC2020 ([link](#))

ARC2020's Communications Director spend a week on the road in rural Greece recently, with the force of nature that is Pavlos Georgiadis - farmer, food producer, film maker, campaigner, social innovator and Community Manager with the exciting new [GROW Observatory](#). Here's Oliver Moore's snapshot of their trip. #ERSG17

Having first attended the inspiring [European Rural Sustainability Gathering \(#ERSG17\) in Karditsa](#), we were invited by some of the farmers and growers who attended to visit their farms. And so began a trips over two days, where we travelled 1500 KM, visiting five very different but also still connected locations. Each displayed elements of agroecology, in how the people, places, plants, products and more all work together. It was quite a revealing trip. Encountered was both a society in strife and a resilient, dynamic set of responses to this predicament.

The time before and after #ERSG17 was revealing. We saw the extremes of austerity and the depth and breath of resilience in equal measure.

Upon landing, I had a welcome-to-Greece moment as there was a national transport strike. I eventually car pooled from the end of a very long taxi queue with a Somalian woman and a Brazilian man. The heavily advertised flat rate to the city centre didn't apply on strike day, as we were charged a hefty fee. Greece was in the middle of trying to negotiate its [fourth bailout](#), and those most impacted were resisting as best they could. In the city itself, there were riot police and their notably reinforced vehicles everywhere, closing off streets and piling into and out of big armoured dark blue buses. Their clear Perspex shields were massive and worryingly well worn, while their faces told a story of resigned confrontation, like boxers at the twilight of their underpaid careers, contemplating another fight out of necessity.

Every imaginable state service was being sold off, taxes hiked and laws tightened to squeeze the last drops of blood, sweat and tears from the Greek people, to try to garner another bailout the IMF still thinks is ridiculous.

After the #ERSG17, our road trip included visits to many of the most exciting and innovative food engaged locations in Greece. [The Trinity Farm](#) – Greece's first large biodynamic farm; the aromatic herb garden at [Efkarpiia Farm](#); the urban community garden of [PerKa](#), the [Aetheleon](#) oregano farm, and an organic hemp field of [Kannabio Coop](#). In each place, much more was going on than mere production.

Trinity farm is Greece's first large biodynamic farm, specialising in cereals. Biodynamics however demands mixed farming and the recycling of nutrients, while it also encourages the production food products on the farm. Alexandra Tsiadi, a former chemical engineer, may be seen an unlikely candidate for a very cosmological version of organic farming.

However, she took the plunge, having informed herself of some of the excesses of the conventional food system. She also visited biodynamic farm in Germany, where she fell in love with the holistic style of production on the farms. Now, she produces her own flour and a range of other food products. She has planted over 2500 trees on her land as a kind of large hedgerow - something not seen typically in Greece as the fields are typically monocultural and large with trees sparsely planted on farms. The sounds of wildlife are everywhere on this biodiversity haven. Increasingly, she is bringing visitors onto the farm to show people how the farm works.

Biodynamic farms typically integrate animals into the system - in her case sheep. This allows for the production of top quality fertility on the farm.

Next, we traveled onto a very distinct, aesthetically thoughtful herb and herb product farm, Fotini Bliatsou's aromatic herb garden at Efkarpiia Farm. This place, down a dirt track near electricity pylons and a train line, stands in stunning contrast to the quite industrial and dusty landscape that surrounds it. It is literally a work of art - art is everywhere, the buildings spacious and distinctive, the process of herb processing hyper clean, spacious and immaculate. It is a place of living - there are rooms of various styles spread out all over - and unexpectedly so: the house, for example has no standard walls, no real angles, no glass, and lots of space. If Willy Wonka did herbs and not sweets - he do them here. Both Alexandra Tsiadi - who travelled with us - and Fotini Bliatsou are women farmers producing their own high quality certified organic products.

The following morning, the team visited PerKa urban garden, in contested land - that formerly of the army. Seized during the height of the crises, there was in fact an army jeep there ready to greet us at the entrance - there is still tension over ownership, with the police and army trying on four occasions to re-take this public land.

Now however, rather than the army, dozens of local families in Thessaloniki have found a haven, a refuge, a place to share and build community through food and the outdoors.

We heard of how important the urban community garden of PerKa to residents of Thessaloniki, many of whom live in apartments with little access to green spaces. There are nine different community garden spaces spread out over 70 hectares of land. While growing food is important, it's certainly not the only thing that happens here - following the shattering hardship of imposed austerity, local people are picking up the pieces and gluing them back together - in creative, community-orientated and novel ways. Their steadfastness and vision is inspiring.

We travelled on, past the huge irrigated fields, even in the rain, past massive John Deere factories with rusty left over shades out back, past field after field of monocultural flatlands, and again found an oasis. We next encountered the [Aetheleon](#) oregano farm, where Anastasia Vasileiadou and Michael Georgaras produce essential oils from their own herbs, in particular oregano. Anastasia was one of the organisers of #ERSG17, as a member of seed saving and sharing organisation [Peliti](#).

Interestingly, Anastasia and Michael do compost trials and use sensors, in partnership with the National Agricultural Research Foundation and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Three different composting styles are trialed over seven plots, totaling 21 trials, to establish which works best on their own land.

This farm brings together the best in agroecological methods with cutting edge partnerships with researchers, using appropriate technology. Simple practices like companion planting to attract away insects from the herbs were visibly working on the site. As was the case with all of the farms, products come from the land too, maximising the earned output for the farmers. In this case, a range of essential oils but also flower water and dried herbs are produced. ([Aetheleon on facebook](#))

Our final stop on this mini Greek Odyssey was at the first commercial hemp plantation in Greece. Here, Kannabio have planted the first hectares of legal, commercial hemp (cannabis), following 60 years of prohibition. This will be used for a range of medical and food products, to be produced by the Kannabio cooperative and collective.

We saw sesame made into tahini growing alongside the fledgling hemp crop.

In all of the places we visited over these two days, we saw real innovation- social and economic. We saw growers and farmers coming up with new ideas, new crops, new products, new organisational structures, we saw engagement with ideas and technologies, we saw a resilient people.

As we entered the final phase of the drive, back towards Athens, Mount Olympus appeared from among the bright, cotton wool clouds - and its suitably massive and magnificent - seemingly imperious and impervious. It was all stark vivid white blue shapes, folding and sloping unto and into each other. It's so imposing, it seems to move location, closer in different ways, as if your eyes are adjusting focus.

As we got closer, more dimensionality appeared again, and green tree-deep hills form its base. Deeper dimensionality develops again as hollows, perspectives, spaces between the mountain shapes emerge, still the streaks of snow sheen on peaks in the bright warm sun.

And closer we get, its above us now, we enter a new, very long EU funded tunnel and we are through her in a few abrupt minutes. She's behind us now. Fading away fast into the distance. Yet another toll arrives suddenly in front of us. No free lunches on the road in Greece.

And yet, I get the feeling, having spent a week there, at the #ERSG17 and visiting the inspiring farmers and growers who invited us to their places afterwards, that there are seeds of hope - and of system change - in the ground in Greece right now. Let's help them grow, flourish and blossom.

## PARTICIPANTS - PORTFOLIO

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The 3-days meeting was full of enriching experiences and lively multinational exchanges with about 75 participants coming from 16 different countries and different backgrounds - from local to national and European activities, ranging from farmers, entrepreneurs, NGOs and development agencies. Read here more about the participants' backgrounds and their expectations for the meeting:

### ALBANIA

#### Agro CAKALLI, Agricultural Federation of Elbasan

##### Background:

The Agricultural Federation of Elbasan F.B.E. is a Consortium of Associations and Producers founded in Shirgjan and registered by the Tribunal of Elbasan with sentence no. 01, on 12/03/2007. The Consortium was founded by a development project financed by the Cooperazione Italiana and implemented by CEFA. The President of the Agricultural Federation of Elbasan is Mr. Agron Cakalli.

The Federation operates in the field of Agriculture with the main objective to produce and merchandise the olive oil produced in its fabric. The perspective is to merchandize all the agricultural products produced by the members of the Consortium. F.B.E. helps its members in cultivating and processing the olives and then in merchandising the olive oil, which now is a legally registered label (Extra Virgin Olive Oil "VALMI").

The main objectives of F.B.E. are: favoring and encouraging the production of qualitative and typical agro-food products in the region of Elbasan and facilitating the management of the agricultural products of its members for improving their quality and fulfilling the market requests.

Since its foundation, the Federation has grown its professional capacities and the number of its members. What is more important, now there is a qualitative extra virgin olive oil in the market, which has its own registered label. The members of the association have been actively involved in professional upgrading sessions and promotion activities organized by local, national and international organizations, such as CEFA, VIS Albania, Slow Food International and Albanian Olive Producers Association.

Level of engagement: local, regional, national

What I would like to take home:

I hope I will meet other olive oil producers from Greece and share some experiences with them. Also, I would like to get more information and update knowledge about the successful management and functioning of a cooperative/consortium.

#### Armando HYSAL, Consortium "Fryma e Kelmendit" (Kelmendi Spirit)

Position: Administrator

##### Background:

The Consortium "Fryma e Kelmendit" (Kelemendi spirit) is a juridical person registered in National Centre of registration with Identification Number L37614701F, on 14/02/2013, with headquarters in the Village of Tamara, Administrative Unit of Kelmend, Malesia e Madhe. The Consortium includes 15 members from the villages of Kelmend who are producers of traditional dairy products and processed fruits and vegetables, collectors of wild and medicinal herbs, owners of guest-houses, etc. The President of the Consortium is Ms. Drita Tanazi.

The main object of the Consortium is promoting the territory and development of tourism through the promotion of the typical agro-alimentary and artisan products, offering and improving the touristic service, preserving the environment and organizing cultural events. More concretely, the activities of the Consortium include the following:

- Collaborates with other organizations through projects and programmes for insertion of the improved technology;
- Organizes activities related to production and merchandising of members' products and accommodation services;
- Ensures a sustainable and rational management of the territory for the development of the activities and achievement of objectives;
- Engages and encourages its members for improving the quality of their products and services;
- Organizes initiatives and activities that aim raising the awareness of the civil society on the environment protection.

Level of engagement:

What I would like to take home:

The gathering will help me to understand the actual situation of the rural development and cooperatives in Europe. I guess the field visits will be very helpful too. I hope also in finding possible partners and collaborators for projects in rural development.

**Irene TOSTI, Foundation The Women at Work Initiative - TWAWI**

Position: Executive Director

Background:

Beside "Natural Alba" ltd., a company dealing with Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, we have founded also the Foundation "The Women at Work Initiative" - TWAWI - which supports rural women and biodiversity initiatives.

We currently manage an organic farm of 10 ha that we plan to extend to 30 ha within a couple of years. We grow our organic crops according to medium/long term contract farming agreements and export them to the EU.

Also, we collect conventional MAPs all over Albania and export them to the EU, Switzerland and China.

In June 2016, we signed a PPP-contract with GIZ for the establishment of an eco-zone on the Cape of Rodon peninsula (where we run the organic farm) with focus on rural agriculture, as well as the preservation of local biodiversity.

As a result of it, we are significantly increasing our agricultural activities and recently purchased a new processing line.

Level of engagement:

What I would like to take home:

I consider it as a very important gathering to take part to. I see it in a long perspective and I hope to take back home the very best impressions of a different reality regarding to the development of agriculture and rural areas in general.

**Katia ZENE, VIS Albania**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100005911455665> and  
<https://www.facebook.com/VISnordAlb/?fref=nf&pnref=story>

Position: Coordinator

Background:

We are an NGO that for years now is implementing projects for the sustainable rural development, including here the work with farmers associations and cooperatives. We are coordinators of Slow Food movement in Albania and at the same time, founding members of Albanian Network for Rural development.

Level of engagement: local, regional, national

My contribution to the Market place:

The work of VIS Albania for a sustainable rural development

What I would like to take home:

We think that the workshop that you are organizing in Karditsa 17-21 May will be an excellent opportunity for us to exchange some experience and initiate possible partnerships. It would be very helpful for us in our work for promoting good models of sustainable rural development, local food chains and hygienic rules, etc.

**AUSTRIA**

**Simone MATOUCH, Forum Synergies**

<http://www.forum-synergies.eu/>

Position: member of the coordination team

Background:

Starting as a natural scientist in the field of botany and nature conservation I became a herb farmer in the place I live in (Lesachtal, Carinthia). Apart from cultivating, harvesting and processing herbs I deal

with traditional knowledge with regard to herbal medicine, the threat we face today of losing that knowledge and how we can contribute to a safeguard of that common heritage we have.

Apart from that I am part of the Forum Synergies coordination team since 2007

Level on engagement: local, European

My contribution to the market place:

moderator

## BELARUS

**Aleg SIVAGRAKAU, Sustainable Development Center**

[https://www.facebook.com/SustainableDevelopmentCentre/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/SustainableDevelopmentCentre/?ref=page_internal)

Position: Deputy Chairman

Background:

Our NGO "Sustainable Development Centre" supports local and regional rural initiatives in Belarus. We provide consultancy in the field of development and implementation of local and regional sustainable development strategies, development of local NGOs, realization of different projects and programs (social, environmental and economic). We also work with students in universities and with school teachers promoting sustainable development concept and principles.

Level of engagement: local, regional, national, European

My contribution to the market place:

Presentation on the Belarusian experience in the field of sustainable rural development with such elements as: strategic approach (for now about 30 local sustainable development strategies are under execution) , role of NGOs and other non-governmental initiatives (for example, new cooperatives), partnership (of NGOs with local authorities), problems and success stories, ideas for international cooperation (twinning of villages and towns).

What I would like to take home:

New experience in the field of rural development, new contacts for the future cooperation, and new ideas for projects, scientific research and articles. Plus new impressions on the new country, photos and notes from visits to be published in media and Internet. For the better future of my country rural communities.

## BELGIUM

**Oliver EMMES, Forum Synergies**

<http://www.forum-synergies.eu/>

Position: board member, treasurer

Background:

In my paid job, I was working on agriculture, rural development and food issues at EU level for many years, lately following closely the EU rural development regulation. I am interested to see how the tools offered by the EU level are used in the various regions, how synergies can be created between different aspects and measures of rural development.

In my private life, I am an active member of Forum Synergies since its early days.

Level of engagement: local, regional, national, European

What I would like to take home:

New contacts, strong moments, insight in work of the local development agencies and their eco-system approach. I would also like to learn from our Greek partners on how to tackle the crisis and keep a positive spirit in difficult times

I also want to learn new ways to build bridges between people and create synergies between different actors all over Europe. The spirit of cooperation that persists long after the actual meetings helps me to defend the European spirit in times of eurosceptic narratives

**Hannes LORENZEN, Forum Synergies**

<http://www.forum-synergies.eu/>

Position: Co-president

**Background:**

I am working in the European Parliament as adviser on agriculture, rural development, food, agro-ecology and many other related issues. I am also engaged in a number of civil society networks such as Forum Synergies, the Agricultural and Rural Convention ARC2020, the PREPARE network, and the European Rural Parliament.

**Level of engagement:** Local and European. I am engaged in a local rural development association on my home island Pellworm and on the European level as mentioned above. On an international level I am working with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade policy (IATP)

**My contribution to the market place:**

moderation

**What I would like to take home:**

I would like to understand the potential of the eco-system approach as practiced in Greece and the role of local agencies to mobilise the local people's influence on economic and social development. I would like to take home an encouragement that people in Karditsa and Greece have found a path out of the difficulties of a crisis which has made their lives very difficult. And I would like to tell that encouraging story to people in the European Institutions so that they change their rather limited view on Greece.

Furthermore I would like to contribute to the strengthening of a new and fresh European idea among people working in rural regions and projects and to share our methods and experience in doing this.

**BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA**

**Miodrag MATAVULJ, Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

<http://www.cerd.ba>, [www.ruralnamreza.ba](http://www.ruralnamreza.ba)

**Position:** Member of the Management Board

**Background:**

My local organisation, Centre for Economic and Rural Development (CERD) is local development agency covering North-West part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. CERD supports rural stakeholders in various fields from agricultural production techniques advice and quality and branding support to marketing and short-chain supplies. We educate rural people on how to improve their work in agriculture but also about principles of LEADER and community mobilisation. CERD and Rural Development Network in BiH are representing rural people in their advocacy for improved rural policies.

**Level of engagement:** regional, national, European

**My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:**

how Rural Development Network in BiH is created and some examples of work of my organisation CERD which is local development agency covering North-West Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**What I would like to take home:**

New ideas and experience from various part of Europe and friendship from different rural actors across Europe. I believe that this forum could help in developing new partnership in improving sustainability aspect of rural Europe.

**Ivica SIVRIC, Network for rural development in BiH ; Regional development agency of Herzegovina**

<http://ruralnamreza.ba/http://www.redah.ba/index.php/hr/>

**Position:** member of SB , Head of Centre for rural development and agriculture

**Background:**

Regional development agencies are the key institutions that plan, organise and implement the process of regional economic development. They are one of the most important factors in the process of launching and coordinating the regional development strategies, which is the prerequisite for allocation of the European Union funds within the region. REDAH is a non-government, nonprofit and independent regional development agency for Herzegovina founded by the regional economic development entities for the purpose of promoting, coordinating, planning and implementing development activities in the region. The work of REDAH is based on partnership between public, private and non-government sector, which is considered as the key for success.

**Vision:** Herzegovina will become a developed and competitive economic region within the European Union.

**Mission:** REDAH mission is to be the catalyst that will structure and provide comprehensive support to the regional economic development of Herzegovina region as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Level of engagement: local, regional, national, European

My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:

Presentation of network for rural development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, activities, plans etc. As well as experience of local and regional development in Herzegovina

What I would like to take home:

New knowledge, experience, ideas, possibilities and contacts

## FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

**Anela STAVRESKA-PANAJOTOVA, CNVP- Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation**

<http://www.cnvp-eu.org>

Position: Forestry Advisor

Background:

CNVP - Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation is a Netherlands based international non-profit organization. The work primarily is in Western Balkans, and especially Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. CNVP implements extensive programmes in forestry and rural development, and through them we established great experiences in joint business development with local partners and networks in the wider region. A network of offices and teams in the Balkans enables wide connections and quality work. CNVP has a team of about 30 people.

CNVP is dedicated to people in rural areas and their development through sustainable management of natural resources and forests.

CNVP mission is: Improving livelihoods of rural people through providing quality services in forestry, rural development, environment and biomass for renewable energy to increase the capacity of local actors to achieve their sustainable development.

CNVP is currently implementing a project in Macedonia "National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens"

Level on engagement: regional national

What I would like to take home:

Knowledge, partnerships, exchange of ideas and view points, networking.

## FRANCE

**Mathias BARRET, Brindi Media**

[www.bindimedia.fr](http://www.bindimedia.fr)

Background:

Journalist/ cameraman

Level on engagement:

What I would like to take home:

Good pictures and interviews

**Philippe BARRET, Forum Synergies**

[www.forum-synergies.eu](http://www.forum-synergies.eu)

Position: co-president

Background:

co-founder and co-president of Forum Synergies

Level on engagement: local, national, European, non European countries

**André BLOUET, INRA**

Position: researcher (retired)

Background:

Refondation of the local food systems via the small business sector

Level on engagement: local, regional

**Bernard COPPEL, GEYSER**

[www.](#)

Position: member

Background:

I'm involved for 25 years in an organic farm project and in parallel I've been working with GEYSER on environmental projects between 1991 and 2005. Now I get more involved in a local and larger project dealing with reappropriation of food and energy produced by local communities.

Level on engagement: local

What I would like to take home:

A larger view of south local economies and the way to exchange and work together. I've been visiting Thessaly region when I was student and have worked at the centre of agriculture and animal breeding in Giannitsa during summer 1978.

## GERMANY

**Titus BAHNER, Kulturland eG**

[www.kulturland-eg.de](http://www.kulturland-eg.de)

Background:

Kulturland cooperative buys organic farmland with share capital of consumers and rents it to community connected farms on a long term basis. Founded in 2013 we currently have acquired 60 ha of land for 7 farms. Kulturland has initially emerged from a Forum Synergies workshop and is member of the European Platform on Access to Land.

Level on engagement: regional, national, European

My contribution to the market place:

organizing access to land for community connected organic farms in D

What I would like to take home:

contacts and celebration

**Lewe LORENZEN, Free lance cameraman**

[www.lp-productions.de](http://www.lp-productions.de)

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**Britta ROLLE, Casa verde**

[www.casaverde-immobilien.de](http://www.casaverde-immobilien.de)

Background:

In the earlier years of Forum Synergies, I represented the Bio-Farm/Estate "Gut Wulksfelde", located at the outskirts of Hamburg. This farm is state-owned, originally meant to secure food supply to the cities growing population in times of hunger.

In 1989, the farm, together with 2 others of the same size (250 hectares each), were leased to a bunch of young, private entrepreneurs to convert them into organic farming. At that time all 3 farms were completely run down, the buildings rotten, and needed a basic fresh up. Since then, the private groups who took over, have build up step by step flourishing and organic agriculture, and a well maintained farm. The number of persons employed rose considerably, e.g. in Wulksfelde from 2 to 140 !including the farmers, vegetable gardeners, the bakery, delivery service and the farmshop. There is also a lot of public information work being done, guided tours around the farm, excursions & workshops for adults and for children of different age, and big events like "potato market" in autumn, which attract some thousand visitors.

After celebrating their 25th anniversary, I think this project has proven to be "sustainable development in a (formerly) rural area" at its best.

To make it more interesting, the 3 farms were run under different concepts, which might be interesting to investigate now.

Level on engagement: local, regional, European

My contribution to the market place:

moderator

What I would like to take home:

a better knowledge of environmental movements and activities in Greece.

Exchange of knowledge and networking with interested partners.

## GREECE

Siamidou ANATOLI, Development Agency of Thessaloniki S.A.

[www.aneth.gr](http://www.aneth.gr)

Background:

The Aim of my Company is to contribute towards an integrated development of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki and the broader region of Central Macedonia through mobilizing indigenous developmental potential.

Within this framework, the following are the Company's fundamental priorities and action axes:

- Developmental Planning of rural areas of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki and the broader region of Central Macedonia
- Promotion and management of integrated programmes for the development of the area
- Undertaking initiatives concerning issues of conservation and management of the natural environment and cultural heritage
- Supporting Local Authority Agencies and decentralized state administration in their developmental role
- Providing information and technical support to agencies and residents of rural areas

Level on engagement: regional

What I would like to take home:

I would like to exchange of know-how with participants from other countries about sustainable practices in sustainable rural development and to learn about civil society activities, sustainable farming, economic activities and networking in other countries

Sotiria BAKALAKOU, Municipality of Karditsa

[www.achaiasa.gr](http://www.achaiasa.gr)

Background:

Position: Executive Municipal Councillor, responsible for Social Economy and Local Development Entrepreneurship and Social Economy in Karditsa

Karditsa has a tradition in Social Economy. The cooperatives, the most dynamic organizations of the Local Economy have changed the appearance of the villages especially after the second-world war and the civil war that followed. The introduction of knowledge and the innovation in the ravaged country were organized with the help of them. In doing so, the sufficiency in the cereal that was defined as a national target, was achieved very fast in less than 10 years.

When the first malfunctions of the cooperatives arose, the local authority, along with the municipality of Karditsa (the biggest unit of the administrative area) acted in concert and gradually made a series of decisions that played an important role in the forming of a new strategic development.

First of all they came to a decision in founding the Development Community Anaptixiaki Karditsas (AN.KA.AE) in 1989 whose role is to support the local authority by introducing knowledge and innovation in the local system of production and also play the role of "incubator" in every new venture. The administrative committee functions as "civil headquarters" of planning in which all the members of the "local public-private partnership: The Local Self Government, the cooperatives and the chamber, participate. The president of the Development community is Mr Fotis Alexakos, the Mayor of Karditsa, representing the Municipality Unit which is the biggest shareholder of the company.

Later on, the undertaking of some ventures of large scale was decided. The first venture was to plan and support the development of alternative tourism in the mountainous area particularly in Plastira Lake. Collective schemes of new forms: such as the women's cooperatives and the local quality covenant were supported by AN.KA.AE and were hosted in its facilities. At the same time complementary programmes such as: the Leader, the Life etc., were planned and implemented, resulting in making a relatively unknown part of Greece into one of the first tourist destinations of the country.

The second biggest venture was the collective utilization of a local resource. That was the one of "saving". In 1994, the foundation of a credit cooperative was decided, and was requested to be organized in such a way so that the problems that had already started arising in the "old style"

cooperatives could be prevented. Four years later, the credit cooperative was developed into the cooperative bank of Karditsa with 7500 members. It is worth to mention that it plays an important role in the support of the local entrepreneurship as much in the private as the cooperative.

The third venture was the organization of small weak family enterprises into networks aiming at creating synergy among them and also undertaking outreach. The effort organized in 2006 by the former Local Authorities of the Prefecture and the incumbent Mayor of Karditsa Mr Fotis Alexakos in cooperation with the chamber and the technical support of AN.KA.AE . As a result three networks relating to the food and beverage industry, the building materials industry and the tourist one were created. Through the networks, the enterprises, many of which for the first time had the chance to take part in exhibitions, aiming at being promoted. They also organized high quality local production promotion with the objective to maintain the cultural identity of the agricultural environment and the promotion of the area in general. As a result the penetration of products into the market was extended, encouraging young people to create enterprises or cooperate in order to create productive cooperatives.

In 2009, with the crisis, cooperatives of “new style” with strong regional character of the industry were created. These cooperatives activate in sectors of the industry such as energy (recycling biomass) processed stevia, superfoods, pulses, snails, wine and brandies, tomato, milk cereals, the traditional production of local products and the provision of services.

The typical characteristic of the cooperatives of “new style” and the other collective schemes (network enterprises, societies or professional unions) that operate in the administrative area of Karditsa, is that they cooperate regardless of their age, their size or the sector where they belong. This has resulted in an excellent network regarding to relations of cooperation between the collaborative schemes and the Local Authorities (local self government, chamber, AN.KA.AE)

The group of the administrative institutions that cooperate and the relationships that are developed among them compose the local “ecosystem of cooperation and entrepreneurship”. Its existence is dependent on the development of common services such as: the education, the support of start-up companies, the common promotion of products, the development of contemporary financial instruments, (microfinance, contractual agriculture, procurement contracts, investment facilities etc.)

The existence and the effective use of the “ecosystem of cooperation and entrepreneurship” promotes the creation of new companies and collective schemes accelerating the affluence and development. It has become the subject of study as a” system of introduction and management of the innovation” and as an organized system of Social Economy. A lot of the productivity units that were built during the crisis, are considered to be unique in the country (superfoods, energy-efficiency cooperatives) or even in Europe (stevia extraction units)

Moreover, the common services, that are developed for the (ecosystem) by AN.KA.AE. such as: the education, technical assistance, the host of start up collective schemes, the host and support of local initiatives as: Karditsa restart, contact group of young etc. or the cooperative bank (microfinance, establishment of support funds of the Social Economy etc) have an innovative character and appear for the first time in the country of Greece. Priority of the municipality of Karditsa and the local associations is the passing on of the model of the “ecosystem and entrepreneurship”.

Level on engagement: local

**Vasileios BELLIS, Development Agency of Karditsa**

[www.anka.gr](http://www.anka.gr)

Background:

Position: General Director

Development Agency of Karditsa (AN.KA SA) established in 1989 by local authorities (Municipalities and cooperatives) in order to coordinate and support the local development process (planning and implementation of innovative initiatives and activities).

It implements projects and programs like LEADER/CLLD, LIFE, INTERREG, H2020 etc.

It has organised the support of collective schemes through the "incubator" offering hosting and other services.

The network of local collective schemes is working like a "local ecosystem" developing common services (training, support services for new-established, financial tools etc)

Level on engagement: local

My contribution to the Market Place:

Presentation of the "Ecosystem of collaboration" of Karditsa

What I would like to take home:

Good practices from relative local initiatives

**Fiotini BLIATSOU, Eukarpia Farm**

[www.](#)

Position: owner

Background:

I have established Eukarpia Farm which specialises in growing and processing bio/organic aromatic plants.

Level on engagement: local

What I would like to take home:

Establish connections and meet people with the same interests and passion. See ways to communicate sustainability methods and practises better

**Giorgos BOUKISTIANOS, Earth Spiral Social Cooperative**

[www.spiragis.gr](http://www.spiragis.gr)

Background:

Position: Member

We started at 2012 as a group of people willing to move to the country side of Greece and work with the environment. From January 2013 we created a social cooperative supporting farmers and breeders to work with a natural and sustainable way. We promote the use of Effective Microorganismes and a natural clay in the fields and stables.

Level on engagement: regional

What I would like to take home:

To connect with other interesting people from all around Europe, to learn more about sustainable rural development, to contribute as much as I can

**Panayotis BOUTOPOULOS, Achaia Development Agency S.A.**

[www.achaiasa.gr](http://www.achaiasa.gr)

Background:

Position: Executive

The Local Development Agency ACHAIA S.A. was created in 1998 by organizations of Local Administration of Achaia region, intending to develop the agricultural sector of the region, especially by means of management & implementation of European Programmes (e.g: Community Initiative LEADERII, LEADER+, LEADER 2007-13 etc).

Level on engagement: regional

My contribution to the Market Place:

Organisation of the supply chain of the legumes (pulses)

**Artemios CHATZIATHANASSIOU, Managing Authority of RDP 2014 -2020**

[www.agrotikianptyxi.gr](http://www.agrotikianptyxi.gr)

Position: member of the Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014 -2020

Background:

(personal presentation)

Project manager of ALTENER projects regarding the implementation of bioenergy synergies, networks and stakeholder cooperation among Member States (1998 - 2002)

Official of agro-environmental schemes in areas of specific protection regime (Ramsar, 1971), period: 2002 - 2010

Supervisor of "local strategies" (LEADER/CLLD), period: 2012 by now

Level on engagement: local, national, regional & European

What I would like to take home:

Exchange of knowledge, experience and contacts

**Chryssanti DAFOPOULOU, Co-operative enterprise Ippokrateia Diaviosi**

[www.hypnotherapythessaloniki.gr](http://www.hypnotherapythessaloniki.gr)

Background:

Position: Vice President

Our ENTERPSE HAS 3 SCOPES

- 1) CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY & NLP (NEUROLINGUAL PROGRAMMING)
- 2) THE NUTRITION & MENTALITY OF THE HIPPOCRATIC DIET AS A WAY OF LIFE
- 3) CREATIVE HYPNOTHERAPY THROUGH MASK MAKING FOR THE SOUL

Level on engagement: European

What I would like to take home:

I WOULD LIKE TO CONNECT WITH INTERESTING PEOPLE AND DISCUSS INNOVATIVE PROJECTS AND IDEAS FOR CO-OPERATION.

**Evangelos DAFOPOULOU, Co-operative enterprise "MIGDONIA"**

Position: Secretary

Background:

Migdonia Co-operative enterprise was established in 2012. We created a series of products based on herbs to relieve health problems mainly from skin and hair. Today we produce handmade soaps with olive oil, liquor and herbs oils, honey salves, beeswax, olive oil and herbs essential oils of herbs. Our main activities are:

Cultivation processing and trading of aromatic pharmaceutical plants of Greece

Handmade herb creations

Herbal remedies for minor ailments

Organic herbs

Level on engagement: national, European

What I would like to take home:

I would like to get to know and connect with people and organisations and discuss future collaborations for innovative projects

**Giorgos DOUMOS, Northern Greece Organic Farmers**

<http://giorgosdoumos.blogspot.gr/>

Position: member

Level on engagement: local, regional

**Pavlos GEORGIADIS, GROW Observatory**

[www.growobservatory.org](http://www.growobservatory.org)

Position: Community Manager

Background:

Our vision is to support the emergence of a movement of citizens generating, sharing and using information on growing and the land. This leads to more sustainable land use practices, better soil and land governance and policy, and a unique data repository for science. Through this, people gain a voice on local issues and tailored advice on which new crops to plant, when to water, sow and harvest. In turn, their insight will underpin better informed decision-making and policy objectives, while improving soil, land use, climate change adaptation and our overall sustainability.

Level on engagement: European

My contribution to the Market Place:

The GROW Observatory is focusing on saving our soils and adapting to climate change. By helping people understand and improve both soil and food growing practices, by contributing soil moisture data over a large geographical scale - and overall by helping empower people to work on these topics collaboratively - we aim to aid climate science, impact on policy, and make a difference in our own actions. This means we can help respond to the crucial sustainability challenges the planet faces.

What I would like to take home:

Networking and partnership for large-scale engagement in the GROW Observatory, as well as understanding on community requirements for making GROW relevant to these communities.

**Jenny GKIOUGKI, AGROECOPOLIS**

<http://>

Position: Director

Background:

We are the newly founded Hellenic network for Agroecology Food Sovereignty and Access to Land . Formal representatives for the country of Greece for the European Food Sovereignty Movement and for the Nyeleni Forum; the European CSA movement and members or the URGENCI kernel and the European CSA Research Group.

We are members of the Mediterranean Network for Local-Based Solidarity Partnerships and the endeavour to create a European network for agroecological training centres.

Agroecopolis is a very young, grassroots non-profit, non-governmental organisation. It is the Hellenic Network for Agroecology, Food Sovereignty and Access To Land. It is the product of many years of collaboration between a variety of formal and informal groups, collectives and individuals working in these broad areas.

We operate with a core team of three people (one farmer, one consumer, one accountant), various working groups, and a multitude of volunteers. We pay salaries on a 'per project basis' as we are a grassroots and do not have steady funding sources (yet).

We actively promote different models of connecting consumers and producers -like Community Supported Agriculture (CSA),

we provide links with the social solidarity economy movement and alternative currencies, and we work on issues of inclusion for sensitive social groups, migrants and displaced people through the idea of food production, distribution and consumption.

We act as a hub for networking, experience sharing, training, facilitation and provision of resources for groups (formal or not) that work on similar fields to ours.

We promote participatory action research, we lobby for the change of policies on local, national and international levels, and the creation of food policy councils.

We help existing initiatives and start-ups by providing counselling and training on ethical solidarity economy and human relations issues (like conflict resolution and active listening).

We support and work for autonomy, self-sustainability and teaching farmers how to be independent in the growing practices based on the principles of agroecology, permaculture, biodynamics, regenerative agriculture and natural farming.

We work for safeguarding our commons and Greek agricultural land through practices of communal ownership and usage.

We promote ethical consumption and a change of consumer habits especially with regards to our food.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:

We are the newly founded Hellenic network for Agroecology Food Sovereignty and Access to Land .

We are the focal point for Greece for the European Food Sovereignty Movement and for the Nyeleni Forum.

We are the representative for the European CSA movement and members or the URGENCI kernel and the European CSA Research Group.

We have collaborated with some collectives in Karditsa before, and we would like to present our ideas for the future of our organisation and of the European movements.

What I would like to take home:

Networking and concrete ideas for collaboration on national and european level.

**Alexandros GOUSIARIS, Gousiaris products**

<http://www.gousiaris.gr/>

Position: owner

Level on engagement: local

**Vasso KANELLOUPOULO, Peliti**

[www.peliti.gr](http://www.peliti.gr)

Position: Volunteer (International affairs and legal issues)

**Background:**

The alternative community "Peliti" (in brief "Peliti") was established in 1995 by Panagiotis Sainatoudis. The main goals of "Peliti" are: - The collection, conservation and distribution of local varieties, the exchange of goods and services without the mediation of money, the establishment of an alternative community.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

**Michailangelos KONSTANTOPOULOS, Efimerida Ton Syntakton**

[www.peliti.gr](http://www.peliti.gr)

Position: journalist

**Background:**

I'm a journalist at Efimerida ton Syntakton which is the largest cooperative media in Greece. Every week we have two pages on social and solitary economy and I would like to write stories about the conference, some of its participants and other initiatives in the field of social and solitary economy and sustainable development. I believe that media play an important role in promoting this field of the economy.

Level on engagement: national

What I would like to take home:

It would be a very interesting experience to meet people from all around Greece and Europe involved into sustainable development and social entrepreneurship.

**George KONTAXIS, Energy Cooperative**

www.

Position: treasurer

**Background:**

Energy Cooperative intends to contribute to the reasonable and sustainable use of biomass in Karditsa for energy purposes.

Level on engagement: local

What I would like to take home:

The experiences of the cooperation with the other participants

**Vasileios KOURKOUNAS, Municipality of Karditsa**

Position:

Level on engagement: local

**Vaios KOUTIS, Trikala Development Agency KENAKAP S.A.**

[www.kenakap.gr](http://www.kenakap.gr)

**Background:**

Position: Director

The Trikala Development Agency (KENAKAP S.A.) was founded in 1992 on the occasion of the CIP LEADER I and the local program in Kalampaka & Pyli. The Institution conditioned by the provisions of the PD 410/95, as well as the provisions of L. 2190/1920 about Anonymous Societies, as this was modified and is in effect with the L. 2339/95 and is an intermunicipal developmental agency of popular base. The Municipalities of Kalambaka and Pyli were the founders of the agency. After 15 years of operation and the several increases of the initial capital, today the stock capital amount to 293.400,00 €. Except the two initial founders of the KENAKAP S.A., shareholders are the Prefecture Authority of Trikala, the Union of Local Authorities of Trikala, 3 Agricultural Cooperation's, the Chamber of Commerce and all the other Municipalities and Communities of the Prefecture (23). It is Public Equivalent Body which is supervised by the Local Authorities and aims its initiatives at the upkeep and promotion of the economic and cultural development of the wider area of Trikala, by carrying out its activities according to the planning and development instruments of the Local Authorities. Furthermore, KENAKAP S.A. can also carry out the activity of support to the local economic development in other areas, such as the animation and support to the rural development, environmental territories, valorization and promotion of the local products, advanced tertiary services, education and professional development.

KENAKAP S.A., dealing with the local development of the wider area, is aiming at:

- The modernization of the agricultural exploitations and livestock installations, with the support of innovative concepts
- Improving infrastructure for technical support & services to the agricultural sector.

- Exploiting the disposable natural resources
- Promoting local products to the Greek and international market, by improving their competitiveness (package quality etc) & certifying brands.
- Promoting human potential, involved in the above production sectors
- Increasing protection and exploitation of the residential and architectural wealth of the buildings of the area. Emphasis is given to reserving and restoring the traditional buildings
- Organizing protection and evaluation of the areas of special natural beauty.
- Promoting cultural inheritance, cultural growth and social development.
- Protecting the environment and enhancing environmental awareness.
- Activating the citizens.

Level on engagement: local, regional

What I would like to take home:

- Exchange of experience and knowledge.
- Best Practices.
- Synergies

**Dimitrios MALKAS, Legumes Farmer's Cooperative**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010033059093&fref=ts>

Background:

Position: President

Our cooperative established in 2014 and it is a member of the "Ecosystem" of Karditsa.

Level on engagement: local

My contribution to the Market Place:

Organisation of the supply chain of the legumes (pulses)

What I would like to take home:

Common experiences

**Konstantinos MAVRIAS, Cinergies Coop**

<https://www.cinergies.coop/>

Position: President of governing body

Background:

Cinergies is a Greek social cooperative (5 co-funding active members) whose purpose is to create and support alternative narratives to foster equitable and sustainable pathways.

The cooperative specialises in transmedia documentary production, and explores new mediums to cover events, share important stories integrating audio/video/photography.

To innovate in terms of production and distribution - and enable broad dissemination - Cinergies is currently developing an

interactive transmedia documentary platform 'Heterotopies' to meaningfully engage the audience - now a contributor - in a playful,

dynamic, and transformational environment.

The project was initiated two years before the legal creation of the cooperative as a result of the team's passion and interest for sustainability initiatives.

In addition to 'Heterotopies', the cooperative aims to concretely enable know-how and capacity-building services tackling the

prominent visibility defect of social economy and sustainability initiatives.

In the first six month of its official operation, Cinergies produced the documentary "A Social Ecosystem" on the growth and

networked integration of cooperatives in rural Greece (Karditsa), produced content for three sustainability-related workshops, has helped with outreach for crowd funding campaigns, notably a p2p microfinance network, and established partnerships with social actors in Europe..

Level on engagement: regional, national, European

My contribution to the Market Place:

As co-founder of Cinergies I had long-term involvements with sustainability and social-economy movements in Greece and abroad,

which provided us with a unique chance to gather insights regarding the challenges and opportunities that these initiatives face, and how to best support them.

What I would like to take home:

To sensitise the general public, Cinergies is seeking to partner local and international actors to narrate and facilitate strategic planning and long-term social-ecological transformations,

Cinergies aims at taking part in the development of rural social economy ecosystems in Greece in order to strengthen and actively participate in the co-production of knowledge and capacity in social networks needed to bring about and address sustainability challenges.

This forum is a great opportunity to exchange and build on the experiences of the participators and explore new stories that could be disseminated at the general public.

**Demetris MYLONAS, Euracademy Association**

[www.euracademy.org](http://www.euracademy.org)

Position: Project Manager

Background:

Euracademy Association is a non-profit European membership organisation established in 2004, with headquarters in Athens, Greece. Euracademy's vision is to promote capacity building in rural areas through lifelong learning and transfer of good practice and cooperation between different actors of rural development in the EU. The Association has members from over 20 European countries including universities, research institutions, academics, policy makers, social partners, local development managers and others. The Association has conducted a multiplicity of activities, including regular face-to-face learning in 15 annual summer academies, e-learning courses, publication of over 16 books, networking, research, project work, and has organised numerous conferences. Euracademy has also designed the curriculum of a Masters degree course for "Animators of Rural Development" to be delivered online, jointly by seven universities-members of Euracademy.

Level on engagement: national, European

What I would like to take home:

Knowledge on good practices and initiatives around Europe in the field of sustainable rural development in a period of economic crisis.

Contacts for future transnational cooperation.

First hand experience of local initiatives in the Karditsa region.

**Georgios PAPADIMITRIOU, Cooperative Bank of Karditsa Energy Cooperative Body of Karditsa**

Position: member

Background:

The main concern of the Cooperative Bank is to maintain its associates satisfied by adapting products and services in order to cover with the best most personalized way their business and personal needs, with speed, friendliness and transparency adding in this manner value to the local community. The purpose of the Energy Cooperative Body of Karditsa is to organize: 1) the production, management, processing and distribution of biomass and biofuels, 2) the production and distribution of energy that can result from any form of Renewable Energy Source (RES). All the above are sought to be achieved in an environmental friendly manner that adds value to the local community.

Level or engagement: local, regional

My contribution to the Market Place:

Energy Cooperative Body of Karditsa

What I would like to take home:

During this three-day gathering I hope to learn more about sustainable practices in sustainable rural development and civil society activities by exchanging ideas and engaging into discussions with other participants. The gathering will also be a great opportunity for networking and potentially further development of synergies at a European level. Of particular interest will be synergies concerning (renewable) energy production and management.

**Fouli PAPAGEORGIU, Euracademy Association**[www.euracademy.org](http://www.euracademy.org)

Position: President

**Background:**

Euracademy Association is a non-profit European membership organisation established in 2004, with headquarters in Athens, Greece. Euracademy's vision is to promote capacity building in rural areas through lifelong learning and transfer of good practice and cooperation between different actors of rural development in the EU. The Association has members from over 20 European countries including universities, research institutions, academics, policy makers, social partners, local development managers and others. The Association has conducted a multiplicity of activities, including regular face-to-face learning in 15 annual summer academies, e-learning courses, publication of over 16 books, networking, research, project work, and has organised numerous conferences. Euracademy has also designed the curriculum of a Masters degree course for "Animators of Rural Development" to be delivered online, jointly by seven universities-members of Euracademy.

Level on engagement: European

**My contribution to the Market Place:**

The Euracademy Summer Academies will be presented as a tool for capacity building in rural communities. The focus can be placed on the 15th Summer Academy entitled "Social Economy and Sustainable Rural Development", that took place in Mouzaki, Karditsa on July 2016 and explored the social economy potential for sustainable development in rural Europe.

**What I would like to take home:**

Knowledge on good practices and initiatives around Europe in the field of sustainable rural development in a period of economic crisis.

Contacts for future transnational cooperation.

First hand experience of local initiatives in the Karditsa region.

**Maria PITIAKOUDI, Zathay Social Cooperative**<https://el-gr.facebook.com/koinsepzathay/>

Position: Coordinator

**Background:**

Zathay is a social cooperative, its form is a Koinsep (ΚΟΙΝΣΕΠ). It runs two season shops inside a camping area and through them promotes local products and the local identity. Participates in Sustainability projects like the Sustainable Samothraki (SUSAKI project) by assisting researchers in research, event organizations, summer schools and translation. Participates as partners in Youth Exchange projects like [www.ewoca.org](http://www.ewoca.org). Organizes well being seminars, art and crafts festivals, sustainability workshops, clean ups. It also supports arts and entertainment. Most importantly supports the local economy and jobs creation: The staff are locals; 60% of the profit is invested in new jobs and contributes to combating economic migration away from the island.

Level on engagement: local, European

**What I would like to take home:**

Meet and connect with cooperatives from all over Europe and Greece,

expand the cooperation network and create possible partnerships in projects or promote goals and products of other cooperatives, learn and exchange knowledge, information, know hows, strengthen the connection and the network between social schemes, explore the interesting area of Karditsa and its various initiatives.

**Maria PARTALIDOU, Department of Agricultural Economics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**<http://rural-lab.agro.auth.gr/>

Position: Ass Professor on rural sociology

**Background:**

Sustainable rural development is one of our main field of expertise on the Laboratory of Rural Sociology and Agricultural Extensions in the School of Agriculture (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Greece) . We have a number of ongoing research on social economy especially in mountainous disadvantageous areas in Greece and have also a number of MSc and PhD students that i supervise on grassroots initiatives in regards to urban agriculture and synergies between the rural and the urban . We have a close cooperation with local actors (Local Action Groups of LEADER Initiative), social organizations (NGOs) and

policy makers (National Rural Network- Managing authority at the Ministry of Agriculture) as well as other European networks in regards to a number of pressing issues such as collective initiatives in the rural, food loss/waste alongside the agrofood chain, social exclusion and access to farmland, re-establishing the lost connection between the rural and the urban and new ways of rural networking with the use of ICTs and sharing collective platforms.

Level on engagement: national

My contribution to the Market Place:

I can provide results of past or ongoing research on the basis of material that i can bring with me and participate on open discussions by providing my experience especially from the case studies we have been researching and in regards to what drives networking in rural areas, the role of social capital building and social learning.

What I would like to take home:

The meeting is a perfect opportunity to share ideas and visions between practitioners and local actors and define ways to establish a fruitful communication between research-theory and actual work done on the field. I see this as a great opportunity amidst an inconsistent environment to create a network based on shared goals and knowledge co-creation.

Looking forward to being part of the Workshop

**Yiorgos PSYCHAS, Iliosporoi Network**

[www.iliosporoi.net](http://www.iliosporoi.net)

Position: member

Level on engagement: European

My contribution to the Market Place:

Access to land in Greece

Iliosporoi network activities and objectives

**Vassilis RAGIAS, Anko SA**

[www.anka.gr](http://www.anka.gr)

Position: Business consultant

Level on engagement: local

**Chrysavgi SENGI, Development Agency of Karditsa**

[www.anka.gr](http://www.anka.gr)

Background:

Position: Head of Planning and Studies Department

Development Agency of Karditsa ANKA S.A. is a company with 20 years experience in implementing EU programs, as leader partner, with special focus on communication with stakeholders and dissemination activities. Over the years ANKA had the opportunity to work and develop ideas, projects and long term collaborations with academic institutions in a variety of subjects.

The innovative characteristic of the Agency is a diagnostic approach on the potentialities and key advantages of the area that can be used and developed within the area, providing innovative solutions to key stakeholders for further development and exploitation of all resources.

The regional development activities that ANKA sa has supported among others is also the initiation, support and creation of cooperative and collective structures and bodies such as:

- a) The food & beverages businesses Network
- b) The construction related businesses Network
- c) Women's cooperatives
- d) Energy cooperative and other collective bodies & structures
- e) Agricultural Cooperatives
- f) Social Cooperative Enterprises

The "Collaboration Incubator" of the Development Agency of Karditsa offers:

- Technical support in the initial phase of the cooperation establishment
- Hosting of the cooperative for 1-4 years, until the beginning of investment plan
- Additional services (secretary, bookkeeping, training, etc)
- Investigation of Financial Support Schemes

The background and the experience of key executives of ANKA is wide and experienced in management, planning, organizing and implementing local, regional national & international projects.

Level on engagement: local

What I would like to take home:

I would like to take home from the gathering good practices and different approaches on technical support and funding of social enterprises in other countries.

**Ioannis SIAKAVELLAS, OASE SA - Development Agency of Sterea Hellada**

[www.oase.com.gr](http://www.oase.com.gr)

Position: -

Background:

Planning and management of Development Programmes and Projects.

Consulting and technical support services to government agencies, private enterprises and to the Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development.

Level on engagement: local, regional

**Chrisoula SKORDITI, Northern Greece Organic Farmers**

<https://www.biologikesagores.gr/>

Position: President

Background:

Northern Greece Organic Farmers Association (EABBE) was established in 1981 and organizes the farmers markets for organic products in Northern Greece. It has 100+ members from all over Greece, strictly farmers. It works constantly for the promotion of the organic products and the organic movement as well as the improvement of the national legislation regarding the local and organic markets and products. The Association is a member of IFOAM.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

My contribution to the Market Place:

Northern Greece Organic Farmers Association organizes the farmers markets for organic products in Northern Greece. The organic farmers' markets are self - managed and strongly support local small scale economy. 80% over the varieties cultivated by Association members are traditional local varieties. The ability to keep our own seeds and organic farming, provide the conditions for viable and sustainable farms.

What I would like to take home:

New ideas, suggestions to consider, meet people/ organizations with whom we share common interests and goals, in order to form cooperations and alliances. Small scale producers need cooperations and alliances to confront the strong interests of multinational corporations.

**Popi SOURMAIDOU, Ergani Center**

[www.anka.gr](http://www.anka.gr)

Background:

Position: Managing Director

The Ergani Centre was established in 1991 as a partnership of local authorities and organizations of Thessaloniki. In 2001 it acquired NGO status (Non-governmental Organization) and it became an independent, non-profit entity. The Centre promotes female employability and entrepreneurship and supports women, young people and members of social vulnerable groups who wish to enter the labour market, to develop professional skills or to create their own business or cooperatives. We support more than 60 cooperatives, half of them in rural areas.

Level on engagement: regional

What I would like to take home:

I would like to take home from the gathering good practices and different approaches on technical support and funding of social enterprises in other countries.

**Georgios THEODORIDIS, Bios Coop**

[www.bioscoop.gr](http://www.bioscoop.gr)

Position: President

**Background:**

In December 2014 in Thessaloniki, Greece, we have collectively formed with great care, professionalism and the help of volunteers the 1st Social Consumer Cooperative Grocery in Thessaloniki, Greece called "Bios Coop". It is a very cosy place that stocks Greek and cooperative products, most of which come from our region and are produced in ways that do not harm humans or the environment. Bios Coop operates normal grocery hours and has specially trained staff. Our members are also available for service and information. On the shelves you will find almost all the products you need for your home, that is, a full "basket"!

**High quality, affordable products**

The quality of the products in our Grocery is ensured as we carefully select those that do not contain prohibited chemical additives, genetically modified, expired and other inappropriate and unsafe substances dangerous to our health and the environment.

To achieve affordable prices for consumers yet fair to producers we bypass intermediaries and work directly with the "Greek Food Coop" (a cooperative company set up by agricultural cooperatives and grocers from all over Greece) which supplies us with products produced by agricultural cooperatives and small production units, allowing us to dedicate space on the shelves to high quality and local products. This enables us to offer (a) affordable prices to consumers, (b) a fairer deal to producers and (c) a more environmentally friendly approach to the production-distribution-consumption cycle.

**We cover our needs! Not speculate!**

The continuing decline in disposable incomes coupled with the rise in the price of commodities which are of uncertain quality (due to unrestrained profit seeking), make Bios Coop a necessary and timely project, worthy of our support.

The goal of Bios Coop is not to make profits for its members but to cover the basic nutritional needs of its clients and members during these challenging times we are facing. Prices are the same for members and non-members, and any surplus at the end of each fiscal year will be returned to members and the local community, as defined in the Articles of Cooperative and shaped by decisions of the General Assembly. Most of the surplus will remain in the accounts of members in order to be reinvested back into the cooperative.

We strengthen our purchasing power. We make products from the farm directly available to our shelves. We provide high quality products, affordable for consumers yet fair for producers. We do not make a profit. We return any surplus made to the people who helped produce it.

"Bios Coop": A Cooperative always open to new members!

Bios Coop is open to anyone who wants to become a member, no one is excluded. To register as a member of the Social Consumer Cooperative of Thessaloniki "Bios Coop" you need to:

- 1) Accept the Articles of Cooperative
- 2) Complete the registration form
- 3) Pay once the member's share of the cooperative which is €150

Together we can!

Come and visit our store to see for yourselves how we operate and get a flavour of the foods on our shelves. We would love to receive any feedback, tips or ideas you may have, as we opt for the best selections as long as they are aligned with our mission. You can find out more in store, ask your questions, shop and taste our products. And if you are up for it, please come and join us in our mission to take control of our food and place quality ahead of profits, by helping us support consumers as well as local producers in an environmentally friendly way.

We invite you to collaborate with us in an environment, where the Direct Democracy is applied aiming the Social Solidarity Economy.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national

What I would like to take home:

- Experience
- Contacts
- Best Practices

Glykeria THYMIAKOU, Trikala Development Agency KENAKAP S.A.

[www.kenakap.gr](http://www.kenakap.gr)

Position: Project Manager

**Background:**

The Trikala Development Agency (KENAKAP S.A.) was founded in 1992 on the occasion of the CIP LEADER I and the local program in Kalampaka & Pyli. The Institution conditioned by the provisions of the PD 410/95, as well as the provisions of L. 2190/1920 about Anonymous Societies, as this was modified and is in effect with the L. 2339/95 and is an intermunicipal developmental agency of popular base. The Municipalities of Kalambaka and Pyli were the founders of the agency. After 15 years of operation and the several increases of the initial capital, today the stock capital amount to 293.400,00 €. Except the two initial founders of the KENAKAP S.A., shareholders are the Prefecture Authority of Trikala, the Union of Local Authorities of Trikala, 3 Agricultural Cooperation's, the Chamber of Commerce and all the other Municipalities and Communities of the Prefecture (23). It is Public Equivalent Body which is supervised by the Local Authorities and aims its initiatives at the upkeep and promotion of the economic and cultural development of the wider area of Trikala, by carrying out its activities according to the planning and development instruments of the Local Authorities. Furthermore, KENAKAP S.A. can also carry out the activity of support to the local economic development in other areas, such as the animation and support to the rural development, environmental territories, valorization and promotion of the local products, advanced tertiary services, education and professional development.

**Human Resources and Infrastructure**

KENAKAP S.A. maintains head offices of 250 m<sup>2</sup> in Kalambaka and branches in Pyli and in Farkadona, for the improvement coordination of its activities and the dissemination of the results to the local societies as well.

The infrastructure that allocates KENAKAP S.A., covers completely the needs of the agency. The offices allocate all the essential equipment for their operation (, PCs, Notebooks, printers, telephone centre, fax, copies, etc).

Today the executive and administrative potential of KENAKAP S.A., is constituted by 15 people. The Trikala Development Agency, within the framework of its activities, established and operates Centre of Tourist Services, which has as aim the information of visitors of native lands and from abroad.

**Role and fundamental frame of activities**

KENAKAP S.A., dealing with the local development of the wider area, is aiming at:

- The modernization of the agricultural exploitations and livestock installations, with the support of innovative concepts
- Improving infrastructure for technical support & services to the agricultural sector.
- Exploiting the disposable natural resources
- Promoting local products to the Greek and international market, by improving their competitiveness (package quality etc) & certifying brands.
- Promoting human potential, involved in the above production sectors
- Increasing protection and exploitation of the residential and architectural wealth of the buildings of the area. Emphasis is given to reserving and restoring the traditional buildings.
- Organizing protection and evaluation of the areas of special natural beauty.
- Promoting cultural inheritance, cultural growth and social development.
- Protecting the environment and enhancing environmental awareness.
- Activating the citizens.

**Basic frame of operations**

The result of the preceding analysis is that the general operation categories of KENAKAP S.A. is:

- Information & Dissemination
- Technical Assistance
- Vocational Training & Education
- Implementation of national and EU programs
- Support services
- Participation in other National and European Networks.
- KENAKAP S.A. is founding member of "Greek Network LEADER" that coordinates Greek teams LEADER. It is one from the 5 members of Coordination Committee of Network.
- KENAKAP S.A. is member of HELLADA (Greek Union of Developmental Companies), who is member of European Organism EURADA.
- KENAKAP S.A. is member of European Network EGLEI that promotes the growth of human potential for the local development.
- KENAKAP S.A. is member of European Network ORA (Opportunities for Rural Advancement) that it aims at the distribution of modern forms of telecommunication and the benefit of services via modern

technologies. In this frames the ORA promotes the creation of networks of telematics in the rural regions of European ' Union.

Level on engagement: local, regional

What I would like to take home:

- Exchange of experience and knowledge.
- Best Practices.
- Synergies

Lamprini TRIANTOU, Anko SA

[www.anka.gr](http://www.anka.gr)

Position: Executive

Background:

The Development Agency of Karditsa , in short AN.KA, is a Development Agency of Local Authorities S.A. Company, represents a necessary tool at the disposal of the Prefecture of Karditsa and the wider area. The leaders of local authorities set it up on 1989. Since then, AN.KA has accumulated great expertise in various fields, which has been proved valuable in any development effort of our area. The Company's main objective is to help develop, manage, maintain, protect and make the best use of natural resources, introduce innovation and entrepreneurship in the productive system; introduce and increase the use of renewable energy sources; support and develop new collective structures, contribute in social development and the general development of Karditsa and other areas in Greece, if requested. This service is organized and delivered in a scientific way.

The Company is engaged in:

- 1) Technical support to Local Authorities (OTA), Associations of Municipalities and Communities, development associations, companies governed by local authorities and other legal entities established or consisted by these bodies.
- 2) Technical support to cooperative organizations located in Karditsa Prefecture and businesses and other legal entities established or consisted by these bodies.
- 3) Technical support to SMEs awareness, information events and organizing such events, encouraging the operation and expansion of sustainable units, adapting these units to new technology requirements and generally to the new situation of the European Economic Area, promotion of business, economic and sustainable development in general of Local Authorities (A and B grade).
- 4) Technical support to local development programmes on behalf of Local Authorities; encouragement of local productive initiatives and support by any appropriate means to local development in general.
- 5) Undertaking by Municipal bodies of research, studies, training and other programmes relating to Local Authorities, cooperative organizations of producers and local development.
- 6) Coordination of development programmes of organizations engaged in planning and technical support in order to implement programmes financed by both national and EU funds.
- 7) Planning and implementation of programmes to prevent and combat social exclusion, racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination.
- 8) Planning and implementation of rural development programmes in the mountainous or plain areas, programmes on protection and enhancement of the human and natural environment, as well as any programme that promotes the comparative advantages of the of the company's shareholders intervention area.
- 9) Development of environmental protection activities.
- 10) Implementation of relevant policies within the inter-municipal or wider geographic area.
- 11) Implementation of co-financed technical projects, social actions, services and supplies.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

What I would like to take home:

At first I would like to offer my services as an interpreter and support the forum.

Secondly, enlarge my knowledge on the subjects of the forum, exchange know-how and be inspired for new project ideas and collaborations.

Alexandra TSIADI, Trinity Farm

[www.thetrinityfarm.gr](http://www.thetrinityfarm.gr)

Position: Owner

**Background:**

The 3rd generation of a farming family, we are the 1st Greek Demeter certified biodynamic farm for annual crops. Promoting wellness awareness and healthy living is one of our key operational considerations. Nutrition with healthy biodynamic food is an important aspect to this approach, as does stress release provided by contact with nature, the farm animals and light farm work involvement. Combining this with open air activities that may include, and not exhausted to, walks, exercise and/or yoga, seminars on all wellness aspects will be our contribution to the awakening of people of all ages towards a better life. Particular emphasis we place on young people and especially the children; to this extent we have created a small experimental garden for children to enjoy and learn.

We have had visitors, including French volunteers, students from Greece and abroad, tourist groups for farm tours and lunch with our biodynamic products. Our most recent activity is our Farm Open Days.

Level on engagement: European

My contribution to the Market Place:

Present our experience as the 1st Greek biodynamic Demeter certified farm for annual crops. We grow cereals, pulses and vegetables and manage a small herd of sheep. From our cereals we produce flour and some types of pasta. Our products are appreciated by both consumers and the gastronomy press and have on occasions been included in the top Greek products. We are opening our farm to the public (local visitors, tourists, students, etc). For more [www.thetrinityfarm.gr](http://www.thetrinityfarm.gr)

What I would like to take home:

Meet people with similar concerns

Exchange of ideas and experiences

Learn more about best practices in Europe

Synergies

**Evanthia TSIVOPOULOU, Municipality of Karditsa**

Background:

Helping with translation

**AnastasiaVASILEIADOU, Peliti**

Position: Volunteer (Legal issues)

**Nikos VRANTIS, GROW Observatory**

[www.growobservatory.org](http://www.growobservatory.org)

Position: online editor

Background:

Our vision is to support the emergence of a movement of citizens generating, sharing and using information on growing and the land. This leads to more sustainable land use practices, better soil and land governance and policy, and a unique data repository for science. Through this, people gain a voice on local issues and tailored advice on which new crops to plant, when to water, sow and harvest. In turn, their insight will underpin better informed decision-making and policy objectives, while improving soil, land use, climate change adaptation and our overall sustainability.

Level on engagement: European

My contribution to the Market Place:

The GROW Observatory is focusing on saving our soils and adapting to climate change. By helping people understand and improve both soil and food growing practices, by contributing soil moisture data over a large geographical scale - and overall by helping empower people to work on these topics collaboratively - we aim to aid climate science, impact on policy, and make a difference in our own actions. This means we can help respond to the crucial sustainability challenges the planet faces.

What I would like to take home:

Networking, contacts, interesting stories of growers and grassroots food communities from across Europe.

**IRELAND****Oliver MOORE, ARC2020**[www.arc2020.eu](http://www.arc2020.eu)

Position: Communications Director

Background:

We work on communications and policy for rural, agri-food sustainability issues and initiatives..

Level on engagement: European

What I would like to take home:

Better connectivity with relevant organisations and a large impact among relevant others via the media outreach strategy

**Eimhin SHORTT, The Growery**

Position: Founder

Background:

We work on communications and policy for rural, agri-food sustainability issues and initiatives..

Level on engagement: local, regional, national

My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:

A perspective from an Irish community setting, putting a local operation together at small-scale while connecting partners for a larger, more impact full approach. Food in Ireland, it's history of and present failings.

What I would like to take home:

Better connectivity with relevant organisations and a large impact among relevant others via the media outreach strategy

**KOSOVO****Naser KRASNIQI, Food and Veterinary Agency**[www.auv-ks.net](http://www.auv-ks.net)

Position: Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Background:

Food control plant and animal health

Level on engagement: national

What I would like to take home:

Best practices I will implement by my authority to the state holders in local producers connection without regional offices

**Thaçi LAMIR, Food and Veterinary Agency**[www.auv-ks.net](http://www.auv-ks.net)

Position: Public relations officer

Background:

I graduated in Civil Society and Local Development, now I am working as an information officer at the Food and Veterinary Agency. Work with different groups with consumers, farmers, food producer processing media,

Our authority controls food and animal health

Level on engagement: local, national

What I would like to take home:

Most of the problems that Greece has are also present in my country. All the ideas that are yielding results there can also work in my country. Development, migration employment are the problems in my country, into the local and national level

## LATVIA

**Aris ADLER, Latvian Rural Forum**

Position: Member of the Council

Background:

The mission of LRF is to promote balanced development of Latvian rural territories in order to create it as a place where contented people live, able to meet their economical and social needs in the place of their residence.

Latvian Rural Forum (LRF) is established in 22.12. 2004. and registered in 27.05. 2005. LRF unites rural nongovernmental organizations for definite purposes:

- Promote sustainable development of Latvian rural territories;
- Strengthen civil society in rural territories, promoting local initiatives and cooperation;
- Represent interests of rural population on national and international level;
  - Cooperate with government, municipalities, NGOs, business persons and other institutions;

Level on engagement: national, European

My contribution to the Market Place:

Development of economic concepts in Latvian reality (Such concepts as Bioeconomy, Circular economy, Blue Growth, Green Growth)

Development of local communities in Black Sea countries

What I would like to take home:

From this workshop, I want to learn about best practises and how the Greek society is engaged in the development of this field, the way how they have overcome crises they have faced in the past.

Hope that this workshop will give me more ideas on how to motivate more people to work in the rural sustainable development.

**Anita SELICKA, Latvian Rural Forum**

Position: Executive Director

Background:

The mission of LRF is to promote balanced development of Latvian rural territories in order to Latvian Rural forum is national level organization that unites 70 member organizations.

The mission of Latvian Rural Forum (LRF) is to promote balanced development of rural territories in order to create it as a place where contented people live, able to meet their economic and social needs in the place of their residence. LRF works to bring and develop innovative ideas for the rural development in the communities.

The main LRF activities are:

- Development of NGO cooperation network;
- Explanatory and educational activities for activating local initiatives;
- Strengthening LRF position in the dialog between politicians and organizations.

Level on engagement: national, European

My contribution to the Market Place:

Villages on move - physical activities as the key to the community spirit and finding the solutions for sustainable future through individual wellbeing.

What I would like to take home:

Examples, stories, contacts and vision of the experience of other participants and hosts in Greece to spread to Latvian Local Action Groups and participants of European Rural Youth Parliament during the case studies and workshops that will be organized.

## NETHERLANDS

**Sylvia KAY, Transnational Institute (TNI)**

<http://www.tni.nl>

Position Researcher

**Background:**

TNI's mission is to strengthen international social movements with rigorous research, reliable information, sound analysis and constructive proposals that advance progressive, democratic policy change and common solutions to global problems. In so doing, TNI acts as a unique nexus between social movements, engaged scholars and policy makers.

Level on engagement: international

My contribution to the Market Place:

Hands on the Land for Food Sovereignty is a collective campaign by 16 partners, including peasants and social movements, development and environmental NGOs, Human Rights organisations and research activists. Our aim is to raise awareness on issues related to the use and governance of land, water and other natural resources and its effects on the realization of the right to food and food sovereignty. Through evidence-based research and material, public events and meetings, trainings, education and advocacy work, the campaign engages EU citizens, media, journalists, NGO practitioners, social activists, educators, students, politicians, policy and decision makers to take action for food sovereignty.

What I would like to take home:

Exchange and inspiration with other European actors working on sustainable rural development. Am particularly interested in meeting Greek organisations working on access to land, food sovereignty, agroecology etc. as TNI is scoping the possibility of undertaking a research mission on the impact of austerity policies on the Right to Food in Greece.

**POLAND**

Ela STRZELECKA, Lodz University of Technology

Position: adiunkt (Lecture+scientist)

Background:

local development, civic dialog, strategic management.

Level on engagement:

What I would like to take home:

results of interviews with experts, case studies, results of discussions

**ROMANIA**

Monika PAKOT, NVO Center for development

<http://www.civitas.ro>

Position: Programme Director

Background:

Created in 1992, Civitas Foundation for Civil Society is an organization which is guided by several principles such as involvement, participation and community development. The organisation strongly believes in the power of initiative in the community and in its capacity to bring about change in people's life. This is the reason why Civitas Foundation supports rural and regional development by strengthening the civil society, public and private sectors.

Level on engagement: regional

My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:

The Transylvanian Herb Garden Project

What I would like to take home:

I am looking for good innovative examples in sustainable rural development, focusing on medicinal and aromatic plants and social economy.

I am also looking for partner organisations in order to develop common projects.

**SERBIA**

Radica GLIGORIC, NVO Center for development

<http://>

Position: Project manager

**Background:**

The mission of our organization is the sustainable development of rural areas through the verification of the Intangible Cultural heritage basic activities: education and sustainable development projects, initiatives to improve the positive regulations, civic participation at the local and national level. Special topics: the issue of gender and youth. Established in 2009. Volunteers are facilitators for rural and sustainable development according to the EU methodology (LEADER), Members of the National Convention to join the EU; area of competition.

Level on engagement: regional

My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:

The importance of intangible cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable development: mapping, cross-sectoral and regional cooperation, strategic initiatives

What I would like to take home:

New projects and new partnerships with the common theme of the intangible cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable rural development

**Aleksandar GVOZDIC, Mission of People of Good Will**

Position: Project manager

**Background:**

Mission is to take active participation in development of civil society, promotion of civil and cultural values through work with youth, improving quality of education and development of environmental awareness including rural areas. The organization works since January 2001 and registered according to UNMIK administrations since July of the same year. Last year NGO Mission of People Zvecan was registered under the Kosovo's law.

**Ongoing project:**

Project name: " Foster care service programme and Communication for development framework" , supported by UNICEF. Project duration: August 2016 to September 2017

Overall objective: the improvement of foster care services in Northern Kosovo in order to contribute in protecting the rights of children without adequate parental care in a safe and supportive environment and achievement of their rights to religious, ethnic and cultural identity.

Project name: "Local Environmental Action Plan's (LEAPs) financed by USAID, implementing by REC Prishtina and partner NGO Mission of People Zvecan. Project duration: 2015-2017

Project Goal and Objectives: The goal of this project is to promote better life quality for citizens especially for the poor and the marginalized groups; initiate economic activities with implementation of environmental projects that would lead towards improvement of sustainable living conditions in the North of Kosovo. This goal shall be achieved by breaking the "loop" of resource depletion/ environmental degradation - failing economy - enhanced poverty by developing LEAPs in four municipalities.

The following project objectives directly correspond to the goal of the Project

Employed personnel: The organization employs 5 persons permanently; one as executive director, one as project manager, and two as assistant manager and one as administrator. Three more persons are employed on occasional bases. They work on preparation of project proposals, and in activities to promote and represent the organization. During project implementation, number of employees grows in accordance with demands of the project. In addition to employed personnel, a group of volunteers, developed during some projects, is significantly contributing to organizational goals. In realization of our projects, Mission works with 10 - 15 volunteers, mostly young people. Equipment and material resources: Mission has an office (with office equipment), four computers with printers, notebook computer, projector and a digital camera, and vehicle. Other relevant resources: The organization is significantly using a well developed network of partner organizations in Kosovo, as well as in the whole region (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Italy and Germany). Organization have very good contacts with Local authorities in northern municipalities and schools, for operating in the southern part of Kosovo we work with partners NGOs. Mission is a member of Forum of Non-Government Organizations of Northern Kosovo.

Level on engagement: local, regional

What I would like to take home:

I'd like to feel spirit of place, introduce new people, learn about their experiences, share my experience, maybe something use for our community...

**Nikola JOVANOVIC, Forestry and related sector cluster**

[www.nksumarstva.org](http://www.nksumarstva.org)

Position: Junior programme coordinator

**Background:**

National Forestry and Related Sectors Cluster is non profit organisation established in 2011. The area of activities is everything in and around the forests. In the beginning the focus was on forest protection, especially forest fire protection.

Now there is additional focus on rural development where forestry can contribute to diversification of activities and income sources. One of the areas of interest is agroforestry.

Level on engagement: national

**My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:**

In the framework of rural sustainability and organic farming there is niche of agroforestry. Agroforestry systems can be advantageous over conventional agricultural, and forest production methods. They can offer increased productivity, economic benefits, and more diversity in the ecological goods and services provided.

Biodiversity in agroforestry systems is typically higher than in conventional agricultural systems. With two or more interacting plant species in a given land area, it creates a more complex habitat that can support a wider variety of birds, insects, and other animals.

This is also suitable area for social entrepreneurship and cooperatives.

Additionally, one of the possibilities arising is production of industrial hemp that have good market perspective.

As a junior program coordinator I take every chance to prepare and present different subject related to rural development.

**What I would like to take home:**

For me, as a junior program coordinator it is very important to gain as much as possible experience in different areas, especially through the contact with people from other countries.

I am also personally interested in production of industrial hemp which is becoming increasingly demanded for different purposes, including alternative energie, fiber, pulp, seed and oil.

This is area where there is still demand bigger than supply, so it could be an area of cooperative production with relative lower risk for entering the market. In the same time it is important to develop as soon as possible the market significant level of production.

**Sinisa JOVANOVIC, Forestry and related sector cluster**

[www.nksumarstva.org](http://www.nksumarstva.org)

Position: President of managing board

**Background:**

National Forestry and Related Sectors Cluster is non profit organisation established in 2011. The area of activities is everything in and around the forests. In the beginning the focus was on forest protection, especially forest fire protection.

Now there is additional focus on rural development where forestry can contribute to diversification of activities and income sources. One of the areas of interest is agroforestry.

Level on engagement: national

**My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:**

In the framework of rural sustainability and organic farming there is niche of agroforestry. Agroforestry systems can be advantageous over conventional agricultural, and forest production methods. They can offer increased productivity, economic benefits, and more diversity in the ecological goods and services provided.

Biodiversity in agroforestry systems is typically higher than in conventional agricultural systems. With two or more interacting plant species in a given land area, it creates a more complex habitat that can support a wider variety of birds, insects, and other animals.

This is also suitable area for social entrepreneurship and cooperatives.

**What I would like to take home:**

Experience which would be useful for implementation in Serbia. Rural development is confronted with serious problems, especially rural depopulation and heavy competition in food production from over the

world. Additionally, the investment capacity of the small farms is very limited. Social entrepreneurship could offer significant boost to rural development, especially inclusion of young people.

#### **Dragan ROGANOVIĆ, SRB, Ibar Development Organisation**

<http://www.ida.org.rs/>

Position: President

Background:

Ibar Development Association was founded in 2001. From the start IDA is active in rural development and rural communities support. The main activities are: rural development support, local economic development support, environment protection, sustainable energy development, informal education, inter-sector cooperation support.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

What I would like to take home:

New experience, new ideas and learning about different approaches.

#### **Milan VULOVIC, Zlatno runo**

Position: President

Background:

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Level on engagement: local, regional, national

What I would like to take home:

## **SLOVAKIA**

#### **Miloš HOMOLA, Ekotrend Slovakia**

<http://www.captalks.eu>

Position: board member

Background:

EKOTREND - Association of organic farming is a non-profit organization with nationwide coverage, which brings together 160 members - producers, processors, manufacturers, professionals and those interested in organic farming and sustainable living. Support for farmers and ensuring their awareness of legislation, but new and traditional methods of cultivation and management as well as education.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

My contribution to the market place:

platform for sharing knowledge from CAP international events

What I would like to take home:

more information about sustainable forestry

## **SPAIN**

#### **Marina GUEDON, Forum Synergies**

<http://www.forum-synergies.eu/>

Position: member of coordination team

Background:

Forum Synergies is a network of European citizens. We support people and organisations who are engaging for a more sustainable, more democratic and creative rural life. We connect and valorize rural experiences to develop more sustainable European countrysides and more sustainable European policies

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

My contribution to the market place:

moderation

What I would like to take home:

Locally I belong to a consumer group and food sovereignty platform in Valencia Region Spain - So I am interested in seeing how grassroots movements but also more "official" organisations have been facing the crisis, what are the lessons learnt and how the topics of interest and/ or ways of cooperation have

evolved. In general, what's going on in rural places in Greece ? (in Spain, depopulation is still a big challenge).

As a FS worker, I am seeking for ideas for future actions of Forum Synergies but also to follow inspiring European people with local good practices and experiences. I am also interested in promoting and knowing more on civic dialogue (environmental participation and territorial dialogue )... And of course, to have news from people met in past gatherings on their activities and discover newcomers 'ones.

## UKRAINE

Andriy HALYAS, ARD "Kamula"

<https://www.facebook.com/andriy.halyas>

Position: Head of the board

Background:

Main activity of our organization is

- actions for sustainable development of rural communities in Western Ukraine;
- development of family farms and agricultural cooperatives through fruits and berries production and selling;
- conducting of trainings and seminars for rural communities members on such topics as best agricultural production practices, financial awareness, marketing and cooperation with final consumer of agricultural goods, social initiatives development etc.
- organization successfully implemented UNDP grant on changing of windows and doors in village's school and kindergarten.

Level on engagement: regional

My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:

I work in the field of rural families, agricultural cooperatives and rural communities development.

In particular our team is engaged in development of berries production by family farms who can earn money for living through strawberries, raspberries and other berries production on their land plots.

Since berries production is quite labour-consuming all family is engaged in production process and it influence quite positively on decreasing of villagers immigration abroad looking for job.

Cooperatives plays role of service providers. Family farms buy high quality inputs, seedlings, receive soil tillage services through cooperatives. And very important role of coops is to organize selling of produced goods to fresh market and to processing.

We conduct numbers of trainings for rural communities on fruits and berries production practices as well as on cooperatives development.

What I would like to take home:

Knowledge and experience on new rural development ideas and practices which also could be implemented in my region.

To get new contacts and partnerships with whom we can organize some join projects and/ or events.

Rostyslav KOS, NGO "Assosiation Karpatske kolo"

Position: Executive director

Background:

NGO "Association Karpatske kolo" was registered in May 2011.

Our main activities: supporting and strengthening local initiatives, protection and promotion of cultural heritage which will help to enrich quality of life of the rural communities, supporting networking and communication on national and international level.

We prepared project proposal "Water for village Obolonya" for Swiss-Ukrainian Project "DESPRO". Project already started.

Our NGO produced 2 big photo albums about cultural heritage of region.

We consult small farmers and help them in branding of their products for market.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national

What I would like to take home:

I would like to find some new interesting local initiatives which can be implemented in my region also.

## UNITED KINGDOM/ SCOTTLAND

Vanessa HALHEAD, Transition Black Isle

[www.transitionblackisle.org.uk](http://www.transitionblackisle.org.uk)

Position: Director

Background:

TBI was founded on the issues of climate change and peak oil, but its activities are concerned with making the community more resilient, so that it can prosper whatever the price of energy and food, and irrespective of turmoil in global financial markets. Our projects have included: local food, community markets, energy, transport, environment.

Level on engagement: local, regional, national, European

My contribution to the Market of Initiatives:

I would be willing to give a presentation if necessary on the work of TBI

What I would like to take home:

Connections, ideas, inspiration