

***ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING EXCHANGE INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE
HOSPITALITY SMEs IN THE BALKAN-MEDITERRANEAN REGION***

Subsidy Contract No. BMP1/1.3/2616/2017

Company name: Ikarian Wine Club

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Country/region of operation: Greece/ Region of North Aegean/Ikaria

Sustainability dimension: social, economic, environmental

Description of the enterprise/initiative:

The Ikarian Wine Club was founded by George Karimalis and his wife Eleni when they returned to their native home to dedicate themselves to environmental work on their own land. Their aim is to operate the unit with the minimum possible impact on the environment by using sustainable energy and ecological practices. The property, consisting of the vineyard and the renovated traditional stone houses of the Karimalis family, is located to the Northwest side of the island, in the hill village of Pigi near the port of Evdilos. It includes two restored stone houses, a traditional farmhouse restaurant, a winery and an organic farm.

Social/ community impact:

The Ikarian Wine Club supports the principals of agro-tourism through education and recreation and delivers that to small groups of visitors of the island.

Stakeholders: Guests

Approach applied:

Agro-tourism approach

Innovation applied:

The Ikarian Wine Club is offering daily tours and presentations to "acquaint visitors with the vineyard and the wine". These cover the cultivation of the vineyard. A walk in the vineyard introduces visitors to the varieties of grapes and the dry- stone made terraces with the type of soil of Ikaria, the old and the new production techniques. It is also offering a 6-day course on wine tasting and a 6-day course on cooking.

Sustainability of the business model:

The agro-touristic model promoted by the club can bring many economic and non-economic benefits for farmers, visitors and the community. On the one hand, the visitors can enjoy recreation and leisure agricultural activities, while, on the other hand, the entrepreneurs have the opportunity to increase their income and quality of life, maximize the productivity of farm resources through their recreational use and diversify their business by providing touristic services. In this sense, local natural and cultural heritage - based on agriculture- is preserved and the local community is economically enhanced (increase of local employment and promotion of local businesses, such as restaurants and shops) (Broccardo et al, 2017; Tew & Barbieri, 2012), while, at the same time, education and environmental awareness is promoted (Zoto et al, 2013).

Key success factors: Quality of accommodation, sales of own and/or local agricultural products, excursions and guided tours, learning laboratories, agricultural production activities, such as harvesting vegetables and fruits, complete tourism packages, support and participation of local government, sufficient funds for tourism development, cooperation with local businesses (Broccardo et al, 2017; Komppula, 2014; Tew & Barbieri, 2012).

Challenges and problems: Balancing between the primary agricultural production activities and the agro-touristic activities -as sources of income-, isolation from important tourist attractions, responding to market opportunities, seasonality, small scale character of the business, limited support system for small businesses, need for significant investment beyond the business' capacity, matching the quality of products and services to tourists demands and expectations, having the skills and the resources for effective marketing (Doh et al, 2017; Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Sharpley, 2002).

Year when the enterprise was created: n/a

References (web-site, intent links, video, etc.):

<http://www.ikarianwine.gr/index.htm>

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