

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

Subsidy Contract No. BMP1/1.3/2616/2017

Company name: Topolnitsa Archeological Park

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Source: <http://www.chavdar.eu/gallery/1>

Country/region of operation: Chavdar village, Central Bulgaria

Sustainability dimension: social, heritage-based tourist destination

Description of the enterprise/initiative:

The Park includes a museum of Neolithic culture featuring boards, photos and objects and equipped with a guided tour. There is also an exhibition exploring the history of the village of Chavdar. There are replicas of Neolithic dwellings made in a way to best represent the houses inhabited by the people who lived in the valley of Topolnitsa River 7000 years ago - clay, straw and wood - this is the basic construction of the houses. In each house there was a furnace, quern (stones for grinding grain), and wheat storages. This enables tourists to have an authentic experience of the ancient culture. They are welcome to stay the night in them. Another point of attraction is the pottery workshop from the Stone Age. Close to the archaeological park stands St. Petka Chapel built in 2008. This point offers a breath-taking view to Topolnitsa Park and the village of Chavdar. It is also the meeting point for various local festivals and events that keep up the culture and traditions of the region of Srednogorie. The complex also includes a tavern with traditional Bulgarian food and a picnic area equipped with a BBQ and wooden bowers.

Social/community impact sought:

The visitors of the Topolnitsa Archeological Park have the opportunity to experience life as it was thousands of years ago- not only to see the place, but also to stay during the night

sleeping in prehistorical-like houses built of interwoven poles plastered with clay. The social impact sought is linked to knowledge and respect of the history of the ancestors and their life.

Stakeholders: Visitors of all age interested in archaeology and prehistoric life

Approach applied:

The discovery of the Neolithic village is made by chance when the plot was being prepared for planting an orchard garden back in 1967. The archaeological excavations which were carried out between 1968 and 1980 found that the area was populated even 7000 years ago. Digs revealed remains of Neolithic dwellings, and came across unique painted ceramic pieces and vessels from the Neolith. Many years have passed until the Municipality used EU financing and in 2012 managed to open Topolnitsa Archeological Park for visitors.

Innovation applied:

The innovation lies in the opportunity for visitors not only to visit the site but also to spend the night in the Neolithic village.

Social impact and business results achieved:

Topolnitsa Archeological Park enjoys a large number of visitors from both the country and abroad. In order to make the visitors spend more time around, there is also a traditional restaurant, self-catering area and a children playground. Moreover, because of the Park, the village of Chavdar and the region also receive popularity and welcomes tourists.

Financial situation / sustainability of the business model:

Topolnitsa Archeological Park is officially opened in 2012 with EU funding.

Key success factors: Chavdar village is in the leading positions in Bulgaria for project implemented with EU assistance which in addition to the big enterprises in the region explains the fact that unlike the other villages in the country, almost nobody leaves Chavdar village. On the contrary, the Mayor gladly shares that a lot of young couples are moving into the picturesque village.

Challenges and problems: Topolnitsa Archeological Park consists of seven houses built in the way that people are believed to have lived 7200 years ago. There is a great interest, which is a prerequisite for building a larger complex in the area of St. Petka. The challenge is the area to be turned into a tourist center and new job opportunities to be created. There is enough work in the area now, due to the large mining companies in the region, but after 2021-2022 these companies will stop working. Therefore, with the implementation of this project and the sites that will be constructed in the future - eco-paths and chalets - it will be

possible the jobs of the residents to be secured and more tourists to be attracted in the village.

Year when the enterprise was created: 2012

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUUS4e6tbsQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlrgRcwX8u4>