

Case Studies in Bioeconomy Education, Training and Skills Development

Case study sample: Vamvakies Social
Green Project

West Macedonia, Greece

Q-PLAN

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Vamvakies Social Green Project

1 Abstract

The Vamvakies Social Green Project was designed by Enel Green Power and Wise Greece in collaboration with CluBE (Cluster of Bioeconomy and Environment of Western Macedonia) and the Municipality of Kozani, a city in northern Greece, exclusively for the Prefecture of Kozani and the wider area. It aims to support those interested in empowerment, entrepreneurship and careers in the food industry. The program is based on two pillars: empowering a small group of women to work at the Enel Green Power photovoltaic park in Kozani and providing free training seminars to all Kozani citizens to develop their skills.

2 Target Groups

The idea began with a small group of women at the photovoltaic park in Polymylos, Kozani to plant herbs in the free spaces of the park and under the panels, with the ultimate goal of creating the first series of agricultural products in Europe from a photovoltaic park!

The women are supported by a team of advisors and trainers, to train them to become micro-entrepreneurs, market these original products and earn a substantial income. Furthermore, Wise Greece organizes educational programs for all citizens of Kozani to empower and support their entrepreneurship. The seminars are held online once a month and are supported by a large team of experienced trainers who follow the participants during all stages of their business journey.

3 Case Study Category

Bioeconomy education, training and retraining in entrepreneurial education

4 Training Provider

Enel Green Power and Wise Greece in collaboration with CluBE and the Municipality of Kozani

5 Region

Kozani, West Macedonia, Greece

6 Language

Greek

7 Objectives of the Educational Format

Improve the employability of women and disadvantaged groups

8 Final Objective of the Educational Format

The main objective of the educational format is to empower and support entrepreneurship. Women are trained to work at the Enel Green Power and to become micro-entrepreneurs to generate a sustainable income.

9 Scope and Context of the Educational Format

The participants gain knowledge of the food industry, meet mentors and advisors who can help them at every professional step and are trained on important entrepreneurship topics, such as business plan preparation, production and promotion of products, effective communication, development of a network of customers and partners, digital marketing and many more.

10 Specific Skills and Competencies Addressed

Transversal competencies

11 European Qualification Framework level(s)

Level 7

12 Main Benefit to the Participants

The participants gain new knowledge and have the opportunity to work with experts who can help them at every professional step and train them in topics, such as business plan preparation, production and promotion of products, effective communication and digital marketing.

13 Main Cost Categories Considered

Enel Green Power, a company with renewable energy plans, is committed to a sustainability model that supports local communities and economies through social “green” initiatives. One of these initiatives is the educational program “Vamvakies a Social Green Project” in which Enel Green Power and Wise Greece jointly collaborate with the Bioeconomy & Environment Cluster of Western Macedonia (CLuBE) and the Municipality of Kozani to promote agri-food entrepreneurship.

14 Importance and Impact

A small group of women already work in the photovoltaic park in Polymylos, Kozani, planting herbs in the free spaces of the park and under the panels, with the ultimate goal of creating the first series of agricultural products in Europe from a photovoltaic park. Regarding the project’s impact, more than 250 people (61% women and 39%

men) have participated in the training seminars with 61% being women. Of note, 87% of the participants have reported that they gained valuable knowledge after the seminars on the basics of entrepreneurship, such as business and financial plan development, marketing and communication.

Vamvakies Social Green Project has been awarded for its Innovation and Social Impact with the Bravo Sustainability Award 2022 in the category of Society and Partnerships and with the Gold Hellenic Responsible Business Award 2022 in the category of Decent Work & Economic Development.

15 Relevance (of the Format)

Because many women (especially young mothers) in Greece are unemployed, there is a great need for formats such as these in our region.

16 How can it Inspire BioGov.net? (Why was it designed in this specific way / what are the success factors?)

This innovative educational program, a first in Greece, involves the cultivation of aromatic plants, such as paliouri and mountain tea. It is carried out in a solar park by women and residents of the Municipality of Kozani and helps participants develop their business skills to earn income to support their families. In particular, over 8000 plants were placed in the fields over 32 visits.

With equipment that includes the necessary tools to obtain the best crop yield and holistic training for cultivation practices, certification procedures and essential entrepreneurship tools, the program assists trainees in acquiring all necessary skills to create a sustainable business. This will help change Western Macedonia's production model at a time when this is more necessary than ever.

This project is the beginning of a sustainability model, which is based on initiatives that benefit the residents and ecosystem of these areas. In this way, it ensures the sustainable development of local communities, which is based on trust and the development of an honest dialogue with locals.

17 Data Sources

- **Online resources:** <https://vamvakiesproject.com/>
- **Resource persons:** info@wisegreece.com
- **Other sources, if any:** <https://clube.gr/vamvakies-a-social-green-project-i-idea-pou-egine-praksi/>, <https://www.wisegreece.com/oi-draseis-mas/ekpaideftika-programmata/vamvakies-a-social-green-project/>

