



PR1 Inspirational package

SYNTHESIS CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND
EDUCATION LIMITED

**Rural Women's Empowerment
through Green Social
Entrepreneurship in CYPRUS**



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WE GREEN

Rural Women's Empowerment through Green Social Entrepreneurship - WE-GREEN

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Introduction

The present research is conducted for the purposes of the European-funded program WE-GREEN – Rural Women’s Empowerment through Green Social Entrepreneurship. The project aims to foster social green entrepreneurship among women in rural communities through local training programs. The needs and challenges findings of this national research along with 3 other national-level research (Romania, Slovenia and Serbia) and EU-level research will form the basis for the development of the training program curricula which will be directed to formal and non-formal educators supporting women in rural areas. For the purpose of this research 5 in-depth interviews were conducted with educators working with women in rural areas and NGO representatives, as well as a focus group discussion with 6 key stakeholders of rural women empowerment associations. Prior to the field research, desk research was conducted in order to gain a deeper insight into the current state of affairs regarding the green and social entrepreneurship status targeting women in rural areas in each respective partner country. The main findings of both desk and field research are presented below.

Rural entrepreneurship

According to the typology of rural-urban areas used at the level of the European Union, the entire territory of Cyprus falls into the category of "intermediate rural areas". Apart from the urban areas of the 4 cities of the Republic of Cyprus, namely Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos, all other areas and their population are considered rural⁸. Rural areas in Cyprus are thinly populated, showing an insignificant increase each year, with 32,6% of the total population residing in rural areas in 2011 to 33,1% in 2021⁹. These are characterized by small towns and villages that offer a range of commercial, retail, social, and other services. Smaller cities, villages, and rural areas in Cyprus face similar challenges in retaining their economically engaged population, as most other European countries. Areas near the UN Buffer Zone, face added disadvantages caused by movement restrictions. The relatively recent road upgrade has improved the connection of these areas to the country's capital Nicosia. Many of the occupations that are available in rural areas unfortunately pay less, like those in the tourism, hospitality, and service sectors. Some of these professions are also occasionally available, due to their seasonal character.

The main fields of rural entrepreneurial activity in Cyprus are agriculture, crop and livestock production and fishery, offering a range of products and services with particular importance to the food and beverage industry. Data issued by Eurostat in 2016 show that by that time, the share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Cyprus' rural areas reached 32,2%. Moreover, the unemployment rate of persons aged 15-64 in rural areas in 2017 touched the percentage of 12,4%, and the share of young people aged 18-24 who are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETS) amounted to 22,7%.

Research on the role of women in rural communities in Cyprus is limited, as well as relevant statistical data that reveal women's contribution to entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. Women have always made a significant contribution to rural life in Cyprus. They are involved in many facets of farming, including the production of dairy and meat products, wine and olive oil, grains, potatoes, fruits, and vegetables, as well as other meals. Women still play a significant role in agricultural communities in Cyprus's rural districts. The creation of organic and traditional goods, the resurgence of handicrafts and traditional embroideries, and the direct sale of their goods are all activities in which women are actively engaged. The woman frequently takes the initiative and establishes a new on-farm enterprise. A study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs shows that Cyprus is among the three countries with the highest share of self-employed women in rural areas. As a result, farm women make a significant contribution to the sustainability of rural economies and family farms¹.

Rural women's entrepreneurship in Cyprus consists of mainly cottage agro-industries, agro-tourism activities, and handicrafts. The majority of women are entirely responsible for the management of non-agricultural enterprises and according to Dr. Chimonidou's paper (2004), such activities encompass

¹<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/64/National-reviews/Cyprus.pdf>

the professionalization of careers in the informal economy². This professionalization of the role of the “housewife” and the proven impact it had in distinguishing the exceptional characteristics of agricultural production in each country and in conserving the tangible and intangible cultural heritage has led to the recent efforts for the institutionalization of the cottage industry³. The Minister of Agriculture in September 2022, announced that a bill is being promoted to regulate the cottage industry in rural areas, which will support small units that carry out their work from home by securing funding and selling their products in the retail market⁴. The institutionalization of the cottage industry will help the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, especially in the sectors of traditional products and handcrafting which are mainly supported by women.

When it comes to agriculture, which forms the main sector of employment of rural areas’ population, gender demographics of farmers in Cyprus rely on the 2010 Agriculture Census according to which, less than 30% of holders that had agriculture as a sole occupation were women⁵. The Statistical Services of Cyprus published new data in 2016 following research on agriculture and livestock holdings in Cyprus, based on which the number of women holders has decreased compared to 2010, to 24,5%⁶. The Census of Agriculture 2020, with comparative tables between the 2010 census along with the necessary metadata will be available by the end of 2022, hence outside the time frame of the present research output. The 2010 Census also reveals that the involvement of women in farm field work is closely related to the size of the farm. The bigger the size the greater the participation in farm operations, like harvesting, whereas the younger the age of women the less their willingness to undertake fieldwork⁷. Younger women in family agriculture business show more willingness to get involved in administrative or management tasks.

2 Chimonidou, D., (2004), Gender Dimension and Agricultural Development in Cyprus In : Hamdy A. (ed.), Sagardoy J.A. (ed.), El Kady M. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Bogliotti C. (ed.).

³ <https://news.ccci.org.cy/%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%89%CE%B8%CE%B5%CE%AF%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%83%CF%87%CE%AD%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BF-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%84%CE%B5/>

⁴ <https://www.brief.com.cy/oikonomia/kypros/kadis-nomoshedio-tha-rythmizei-tin-oikotehnia-se-oreines-periohe>

⁵ [File:Figure Sole Holders by Gender CY 2003 and 2010.PNG - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶ [Αποτελέσματα Έρευνας: Έρευνα Διάρθρωσης Γεωργικών και Κτηνοτροφικών Εκμεταλλεύσεων \(cystat.gov.cy\)](#)

⁷ Chimonidou D. in Hamdy A. (ed.), Sagardoy J.A. (ed.), El Kady M. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Bogliotti C. (ed.). Training of trainers in INtegration of Gender Dimension in water management in the Mediterranean region. INGEDI project

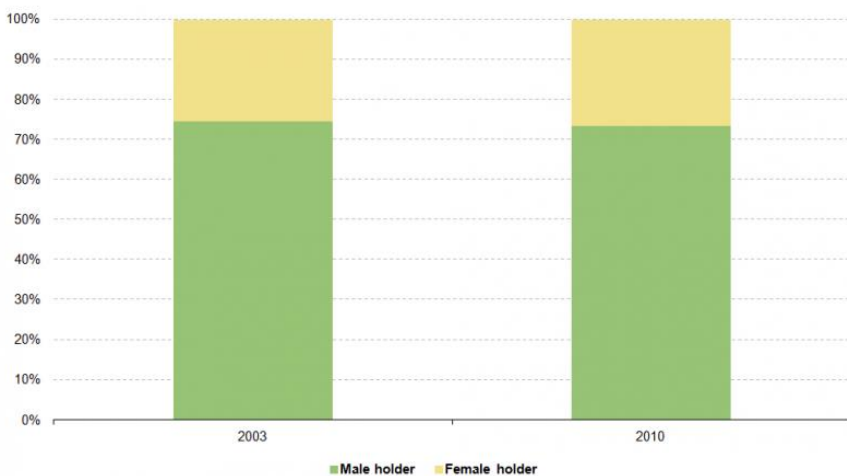


Figure 1, Sole Holders by Gender CY 2003 and 2010, Eurostat FSS, 2003 and 2010⁸

⁸ Agricultural Census in Cyprus, (2017): https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Agricultural_census_in_Cyprus&oldid=347641

Policies dedicated to rural women empowerment

At the moment, there are no policies in place dedicated to rural women's economic and social empowerment. The dimension of gender in the agricultural and related sectors is dealt with in the general framework of gender equality policy without any mention of rural women in particular. This further highlights the need to address the concerns of women in rural areas that stand as impediments to their economic and social development.

The main policy tool for rural development in Cyprus is the ***Rural Development Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture***⁹, funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The Programme is a call to face the various challenges that rural areas come across in Cyprus by setting relevant priorities and measures, aiming at creating a positive environment that will allow men and women to expand their activities and competitiveness. Most relevant to the scope of the present research are the following:

Priority 1: Knowledge Transfer & Innovation - Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas

- Very low participation rate of farmers in training programmes due to lack of interest
- The level of education and training of agricultural workers is considered very low in terms of general and technical knowledge and entrepreneurial knowledge
- The culture of lifelong learning is absent
- Lack of research and innovation promotion mechanisms
- The current training programmes of the Agricultural Applications Sector focus on practical agricultural production and do not address or provide training programmes on processing, packaging, product placement, and entrepreneurship, while the corresponding training infrastructure in the private sector is deficient.

Priority 2: Competitiveness - Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forest

- Lack of entrepreneurship-focused Research and Innovation structures which further widens the gap between technological development and Cypriot producers
- Low expertise in specific production methods
- Distance from local markets and a considerable distance from European and international markets
- Lack of participation in product quality schemes that could add value and increase competitiveness.

Priority 5: Resource efficiency & climate - Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors

⁹ Rural Development Programme: [IAA 2014-2020 Final.pdf \(paa.gov.cy\)](#)

- Energy consumption in agriculture and food processing has been growing at a very high rate over the last decade.
- Limited environmental awareness among those involved in agriculture, especially in relation to the rational use of the limited water resources.
- Limited interest in the installation of renewable energy sources (RES) systems

Priority 6: Social inclusion & local development - Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

- Depopulation and adverse age composition and ageing of the agricultural population with low levels of training and limited potential for business initiatives, in particular in mountain areas.
- Inadequate road network in mountainous areas resulting in depopulation and abandonment of large agricultural areas.
- There is lack in the usage of e-governance, particularly in mountainous and rural areas, as well as in the use of e-commerce and ICT for educational purposes.

Within the framework of the Rural Development Programme, women have utilized the following programmes¹⁰:

- 1) The" Business start-up aid for young farmers, where 7,5% of approved applications came from women.
- 2) Support for investments in agricultural holdings, where 188 applications were approved, and 24 were submitted by women.
- 3) Vocational training and skills acquisition actions, with 300 women participating.
- 4) Short-term farm and forest management exchanges and farm and forest visits, with 31 female participants out of 258.

Other national strategies that support the wider sector of agriculture and agro-industries by carrying the development of rural areas are *the National Strategy for the Development of the Troodos Mountain Communities* and the Strategy for the Revival of Rural and Mountain areas. The second strategy is complementary to the first and regards the expansion and inclusion of communities in the Paphos, Larnaca and Limassol districts. The strategies contain policies and actions in these Communities, which aim to reverse the wave of urbanization and regenerate the rural/mountain areas by making them attractive places for permanent living and economic activity for young families, investors and entrepreneurs.

As mentioned above and of particular importance to women who make up the biggest percentage of workers in the cottage agro-industries, is the approval of the bill for the institutionalization of the cottage business. As women in rural communities are foremost responsible for carrying out family duties, they have created small businesses in product manufacturing, in particular traditional products and handcrafts

¹⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/64/Nationalreviews/Cyprus.pdf>

in their homes. Such institutionalization of the cottage industry will most importantly certify their production units, secure funding, and give them incentives to sell their products in the retail market¹¹.

The Deputy Ministry of Tourism has issued various incentives and subsidies that relate to the revitalization and enrichment of rural areas in the past years. Amongst them, the most beneficial schemes for women in rural areas are the *Subsidy scheme for visitable handicraft and enogastronomy workshops*¹², the *Incentive Scheme for the revival of countryside, mountainous and remote areas through the creation of authentic experiences to enrich the tourism product*¹³ and the *Subsidy Scheme for the upgrade of traditional hosting venues and traditional products “Taste Cyprus”*. The former has proven much beneficial for women in the handicraft industry by giving them the chance to host workshops in rural villages, teach their art, and display and sell their creations. For the scope of this research, women who are beneficiaries of the said scheme were interviewed. They revealed that although the workshops were indeed beneficial for them in terms of networking and reaching people with their art, in economic terms the benefits were not at all substantial. People who attended the workshops funded by the Deputy Ministry of Tourism were very keen on learning the different handicraft techniques but more reluctant to purchase the products on display made by these women.

Moreover, the interviewees stressed the fact that there is indeed an initiative from the Cyprus government to bolster entrepreneurial activity in rural areas, as shown by the various incentives and subsidies now in place, yet in reality, such support programs are of limited potential to beneficiaries considering the lack of available financial resources (beyond funding). Furthermore, the current inflation in Europe and the rising prices of raw materials along with energy, water and production costs contribute further to the discouragement of entrepreneurial activity in rural areas.

¹¹ <https://www.brief.com.cy/oikonomia/kypros/kadis-nomoshedio-tha-rythmizei-tin-oikotehnia-se-oreines-periohe>

¹² <https://www.tourism.gov.cy/tourism/tourism.nsf/All/113F85CFC0E0394BC22586D1002EA1A1?OpenDocument>

¹³ <https://www.fundingprogrammesportal.gov.cy/en/call/incentive-scheme-for-the-revival-of-countryside-mountainous-and-remote-areas-through-the-creation-of-authentic-experiences-to-enrich-the-tourism-product-2022-call/>

Policies dedicated to social and green entrepreneurship

Status of social entrepreneurship in Cyprus

The term social entrepreneurship is relatively recent in Cyprus as it was realized in December 2020 when the “Law for the development and maintenance of a Registry for Social Enterprises¹⁴” was implemented. The purpose of the said legal instrument is to regulate the registration of businesses in the social economy in a Social Enterprises Registry and to set the criteria and obligations that a legal or natural person must meet once registered. Almost 2 years have passed since the Parliament passed the Bill into law and the relevant regulations that should accompany the Law are still pending¹⁵. As a result, there are still no enterprises currently registered in the Registry, and the potential of the Law for the encouragement and establishment of social enterprises in the country remains unknown.

The National Action Plan (NAP) for the Development of the Social Enterprise Ecosystem was prepared by Cyprus in January 2018 and contains policies and incentives for launching or growing social enterprises in the country. Accordingly, it offers grants, loans, access to expertise and infrastructure, as well as public procurement for social enterprises. The budget is anticipated at EUR 3.1 million. The NAP supports policies like funding for new and existing social enterprises up to EUR 25,000, support from incubators, a label and certification system for social enterprises, an e-portal that provides information on how to start a new social enterprise, funding options, and training opportunities, as well as mentoring. However, the majority of respondents who participated in the field research were unfamiliar with these policies or they did not recognize that certain businesses in the agriculture-related sectors fall under the umbrella of social entrepreneurship. Moreover, the NAP does not have standing until the regulations that accompany the Law are set in place since as mentioned above, there are still no enterprises that hold the legal title of “social” enterprises in the country. Further support to social enterprises has been provided through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)/ESF. Through this funding mechanism support has been provided for the development of social enterprises in Cyprus between 2014 and 2020, despite the fact that the government of Cyprus does not offer publicly funded support programmes for the growth of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship.

Status of green entrepreneurship in Cyprus

Contributing to the European Commission’s ambitious climate neutrality target for 2050, Cyprus, as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRP), has allocated over 440 million euros for green growth and transition to green economy¹⁶. Substantial focus is given to the upskilling of employees working in green economy professions or sectors, or to unemployed people wishing to pursue careers in

¹⁴ http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2020_1_207.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.nomoplatform.cy/bills/oi-peri-koinonikon-epicheiriseon-kanonismoi-toy-2022/>

¹⁶ [http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/all/B37B4D3AC1DB73B6C22586DA00421E05/\\$file/Cyprus%20RRP%20For%20Upload%20052021.pdf?openelement](http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/all/B37B4D3AC1DB73B6C22586DA00421E05/$file/Cyprus%20RRP%20For%20Upload%20052021.pdf?openelement)

green economy professions, through participation in training programs implemented in VET centers. When it comes to agriculture and related industries, the NRP includes educational programs for farmers and livestock breeders, with particular emphasis on young first-time farmers. The purpose of these vocational trainings is the development of skills necessary for farmers in fields relevant to green intervention and the transition to a green economy. Additionally, vocational training programs will be targeted at young professionals and students in order to encourage them to pursue studies in agriculture-related topics¹⁷ as well as scholarships to Cypriots, secondary school graduates, who are eager to pursue studies in agriculture-related degrees in Cypriot Universities.

Further promotion to green entrepreneurship comes from the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and the Cyprus International Institute of Management (CIIM). Both institutions signed an MOU last February that seals a framework for joint cooperation, with the aim of creating an Observatory that promotes green entrepreneurship actions and enhances the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to exploit sustainable development practices and opportunities. Apart from national policies to encourage the green transition of enterprises, there are numerous NGOs and civil society organizations that implement European-funded projects that aim in upskilling entrepreneurs and develop their green competencies.

Green entrepreneurship in Cyprus' rural areas mainly takes the form of organic farming. Organic agriculture is an ecological production management method where biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity are all promoted. It is based on management techniques that restore, maintain, or improve ecological balance as well as support the limited use of off-farm inputs. Organic agriculture can be termed an international trend in recent years that is followed by ecological product processing and results in organic food. In Cyprus, this new trend is rising in the last decade, with more and more farms turning their production systems into organic ones (1.4% of farms).

Local competitive advantages and institutional & climatic challenges

When it comes to local competitive advantages for green social enterprises, apart from actions covered by the policies and initiatives mentioned above, there are currently no local competitive advantages in place based on the desk research carried. Moreover, the field research shows that even if such local competitive advantages were in place for green social entrepreneurs, there are institutional challenges related to the information mechanisms set in place by governmental bodies which are significantly insufficient in spreading the word and providing substantial help to entrepreneurs. What is more, access to such information or support instruments is even harder in rural areas.

Further challenges in fostering green entrepreneurship in the rural areas of Cyprus, apart from insufficient communication between different stakeholders, are climatic challenges. Cyprus is an island with low rainfall and very high temperatures that result in increased periods of drought. The climate puts great pressure on the island's sacred natural resources like water, agricultural land, forests, and soils and subsequently, threatens the ecosystem biodiversity. Along with water supply, soil pollution is also a major concern in Cyprus, taking for example the underground aquifers which are classified as "less than good" status. When it comes to energy consumption, Cyprus relies heavily on imported fuel. This calls for

¹⁷ National Recovery and Resilience Plan 3.8.7.

immediate adoption of innovative technologies and the use of renewable energy sources installed in farms and agri-food businesses.

Climate challenges are addressed in depth in the Rural Development Programme under Priority 5: Resource efficiency & climate – Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors. Among others, the limited environmental awareness of agriculture stakeholders, especially when it comes to rational use of water resources, as well as the limited interest that exists in the installation of renewable energy sources systems are areas that need to be addressed through educational programs. These challenges can be seen as opportunities that call for alternative routes of production and manufacturing, opportunities that respect the sacred resources of the island through “greener” solutions.

Specific needs of rural women and challenges they face

Rural women today still face serious challenges in entering or remaining in the labor market. The reasons are many and are related first to the general conditions prevailing in rural areas such as the fact that the primary sector is not attractive and is constantly shrinking and there is insufficient development of the secondary and tertiary sectors. What is more, the lack of entrepreneurial initiatives in rural areas is caused due to the lack of social infrastructure which makes it challenging for young families to reside and develop businesses in these areas. Educational needs are hard to fulfill since there are not enough nurseries, schools, and opportunities for extracurricular activities for children. Entertainment needs are also hard to meet especially for the younger generations and the transport conditions (public transport, road networks, fuel costs) are not encouraging for people that are eager to move to rural areas yet they want to be in touch with the city. The government of Cyprus has issued sponsorship plans for housing in rural areas, providing advantages to people that want to make a life there, yet these are not sufficiently taken advantage of since their social, educational, and employment needs are hard to meet.

Another factor that poses a substantial challenge for women is gender. Gender stereotypes are often more prevalent in rural communities. There is a lack of respect towards women that needs to be addressed, a disbelief in their abilities to be economically productive, and discouragement from their close family environment. Especially for mothers, it becomes even more challenging to persuade their spouses/families that they can be effective both in their responsibilities at home and that they can hold a business on their own. At last, the lack of education and women empowerment initiatives prevent rural women from coming out of isolation and taking entrepreneurial initiatives.

Rural women needs in developing social and green businesses

The interviews and focus group conducted for the purposes of this research has revealed that all participants were in an agreement as to the needs of rural women in developing their businesses. The major element that the primary data revealed is that the majority of these needs which are not influenced by the aforementioned social and geographical difficulties can be addressed through educational programs. Rural women with entrepreneurial initiatives should receive training on the following:

- Sustainable production techniques
- Ecological construction
- Business plan development

- Business management and functional literacy
- Digital literacy
- How to access funding
- Opportunities provided through European programs
- Knowledge of marketing
- Attractive packaging
- Best practices on green social enterprises

Skills and Competencies of formal and non-formal educators

Before setting out the skills and competencies of formal and non-formal educators dealing with rural women entrepreneurs, it is worth mentioning that no one among the field research participants was informed on current capacity-building training programs for rural women entrepreneurs. As stated, the only programs that exist directly targeted to this specific group are implemented under private initiatives for the purposes of research analysis.

There are specific skills and competencies of formal and non-formal educators working with women in rural areas that need to be enhanced and fostered. First, such skills need to be “green” in the sense that educators are fostering a green culture among these women. To do so, educators need to have an adequate understanding of the green economy/sustainable economy, and its specific key definitions and principles. They need to thoroughly understand green entrepreneurship, and components such as ecology, and be able to provide a plethora of ecological practices such as redesigning of existing business processes and renewable energy systems, which is very important in the context of Cyprus. Educators need to be well-informed on national policies and schemes on green and social entrepreneurship that could be of use to these women and offer the necessary guidance and instructions on how to take advantage of any potential subsidies or competitive advantages.

Apart from green skills, educators need to be capable of providing entrepreneurial upskilling for these women, both in terms of soft skills necessary for success as well as technical business management knowledge. Examples given can be personal enterprising skills and attitudes required for a successful green entrepreneur through interpersonal strength/weaknesses analysis, ways in which they can identify and pitch a new business opportunity, how to turn an idea into reality, how to lead and manage a team and how to balance their social/green mission with profitable activities.

Training program curricula recommendations

Taking into consideration the absence of training programs for women in rural areas on the topic of entrepreneurship in general, field research has shown that what is most important for the target is the cultivation of basic business development and management skills, followed by green-related skills and at last, interpersonal or soft skills. Accordingly, a training program curriculum applicable in the context of Cyprus, should give substantial focus on entrepreneurial skills such as:

- Business plan development
- Business value proposition
- Marketing strategy
- Time planning and goal setting
- Financial basics
- Legal and ethical considerations

Regarding green-related skills, a training program curriculum should include the following:

- Understanding of the green economy and its interrelation with social economy
- Green marketing

- Design of green products and services
- Eco-friendly manufacturing
- Promotion of sustainable thinking
- Renewable energy sources
- Legal and ethical considerations

The advancement of interpersonal or soft skills for entrepreneurs is particularly essential. The training program curriculum should give emphasis on the following skills:

- Problem solving/adaptability
- Communication/public speaking
- Critical thinking
- Time management
- Ethical leadership

Best practices related with green social entrepreneurship for women in rural areas

Name of the practice	Women Association of Rural Larnaca
Website	http://warl.eu/page.php?id=183&lng=
Country	Cyprus
Region	Larnaca
Rural or urban area	Rural
Start Date	2004
Sector of activity concerned	Rural women social and economic empowerment
Description – please describe the social business: its aim(s), how is it structured/management, target group/beneficiaries, etc. – please describe the green dimension of the social business	The Larnaca Rural Women's Association is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in October 2004 by a small group of 22 women and today it counts more than 400 women members from 19 communities of Larnaca's mountain and semi-mountainous areas. It is located in a restored building with educational rooms, an event hall, and an occasional showroom where Local Traditional Products from different producers are sold. The location of the association is strategic, as it gives the visitor the chance to explore agrotourism and alternative activities, to know the local traditional culture and connect with nature. The Association is in close collaboration with various institutions, such as local communities, the Department of Agriculture and the Tourism Development and Promotion Agency of Larnaca.
Services and products – please describe the services and/or products provided	The Association has a multifaceted action and extends its involvement at local, national, and European levels by undertaking initiatives and creating opportunities for cooperation with EU organizations that share a common vision and goals. Among these goals, is the empowerment of women, the promotion of equal opportunities for all genders, the creation of more employment positions with better terms of employment, and the promotion of a healthy combination of family and professional life for women.

	<p>The main aim of the female-run association is to promote entrepreneurship among its members and to seek and find new labor markets to support rural women's occupations. A different facet involves the preservation of Cypriot traditions and traditional authentic products through events, workshops, exhibitions, festivals, and seminars. Moreover, the association organizes field trips for rural women entrepreneurs as opportunities for networking, education and entertainment.</p>
Green skills needed	
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Good Practice (500 words max)	<p>The association shows how women can create synergies and empower one another. The fact that their services expand beyond the economic empowerment of women residing in rural communities to their social empowerment and re-motivation is a great model for transference and adaptation in other local contexts.</p>
How this Good Practice could be used/ transferred (500 words max)	<p>This practice can be an example of how women can get together and create associations and synergies to empower one another while promoting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of their communities.</p>

Name of the practice	Idaliades
Website	https://www.facebook.com/idaliades/
Country	Cyprus
Region	Larnaca
Rural or urban area	Rural
Start Date	2015
Sector of activity concerned	Rural women social and economic empowerment
Description – please describe the social business: its aim(s), how is it structured/management, target group/beneficiaries, etc.	<p>Idaliades is a women's association funded solely by senior women residing in the area of Dali, a village in the city of Larnaca. The association started with approximately 7-8 members and today is an open space for entertainment, collaboration and creation of any rural woman who seeks to find a dynamic</p>

<p>– please describe the green dimension of the social business</p>	<p>community of empowerment. The services and products that these women create are sustainable, mainly done with upcycling techniques. Moreover, they create traditional food and beverage products, using only fresh produce from small local producers.</p>
<p>Services and products</p> <p>– please describe the services and/or products provided</p>	<p>These women get together and create traditional products, mainly handicrafts but also food and beverage products. They have an open cultural events space where they exhibit and sell their creations and organize various traditional dance/music/theater performances. Recently they have received funding from the Deputy Ministry of Tourism under the Subsidy scheme for visitable handicraft and enogastronomy workshops. Apart from their entrepreneurial initiatives, these women have managed to create a safe space for all rural women who wish to get out of isolation and be a part of a supportive community of empowerment. The Idaliades group has organized many volunteering initiatives in the past, among others being the preparation of traditional food for children and families that either cannot afford it or do not have a close family member that could prepare these meals.</p>
<p>Green skills needed</p>	
<p>Trends and Potential Benefits from this Good Practice (500 words max)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation, preservation, and creation of cultural heritage products while using sustainable techniques. - Creation of a community that uplifts and empowers women, urging them to come out of isolation and enhance their skills. - Volunteering practices: a main objective of the association is giving back to their community. This is done through free workshops and food distribution.
<p>How this Good Practice could be used/ transferred (500 words max)</p>	<p>The association is an excellent example of rural senior women who took initiative and managed to create a group that supports the community, other women and is respectful to the environment.</p>



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