

## BEGINNING FARMERS EXTENSION-BEFAMEX

The National Agency for EU Programmes and Training Association decided to award a grant to „Gheorghe Țițeica" Association in the Grundtvig Sectorial Programme „Lifelong Learning". BEGINNING FARMERS EXTENSION-BEFAMEX is the project name, the reference number is GRU-10-P-LP-34-DJ-TR and it is an EU funded project worth EUR 20,000.

This project involves six countries: **Turkey**-project coordinator, **Greece, Hungary, Italy, Spain** and **Romania**. The project main objective is the exchange of experience between these countries on agricultural methods and those used by farmers.

The partnership is able to provide education and information for beginner farmers.

Our overall goal is to exchange and compare methodologies and practices in education of young farmers, taking advantage of the exchange of experiences, the exchange of ideas, analysis of various training programmes for farmers, the development of common tools that can be used in training at local, regional, national and European level, through meetings and publications.

One of the reasons of low fertility in agriculture is the lack of consultancy and guidance in rural areas. In order to meet this need in most of the countries, farmers are provided with some Farmer Extension Programmes by the contributions of universities and research centres. Most common tools of Farmer Extension Programmes are;

1. Demonstrations,
2. Meetings,
3. Farmer Classes,
4. Observation Excursions,
5. Conferences,
6. Exhibitions.

We are strongly of the idea that when we strengthen the educational level and role of the farmers in agriculture, we will contribute to their economic development indirectly the growth of the country.

**Partner no. 1:** COORDINATOR Yozgat İl Tarım Müdürlüğü (TURKEY) is the local public authority which is responsible of the agriculture in all the province. Its main objectives are;

- to ensure the agricultural development of the city;
- to obtain the agricultural stock of the province;
- to determine the agricultural potential of the city according to the existing technology;
- to prepare the educational extension programmes;
- to distribute the useful documents, brochures, and handbooks among the farmers and the technical staff;
- to teach farmers the modern agriculture and irrigation systems;
- to prepare plans and implement projects in order to avoid the epidemic illnesses;
- to help farmers set up collaborations and cooperatives;
- to foster public awareness about modern agriculture.

**Partner no. 2:** EFXINI POLI (GREECE) is a Local Authorities Network for social, cultural, tourist, environmental and agricultural development. It has been created in 1995 and consists of 28 Municipalities in 7 regions of Greece. It has implemented at local, regional,

national and European level numerous programmes and projects as Lead Partner or Partner in the fields of: employment, social protection, fight against social exclusion, competitiveness and entrepreneurship, rural development and agriculture, culture, education, sport and youth, gender equality, sustainable, safe and competitive energy, environmental protection, consumers' protection, health prevention, human rights, local, regional, transregional development, tourism, cooperation and networking in the field of Civil Society (among others: LEADER, LIFE, EQUAL, INTERREG, LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOCRATES, GRUNDTVIG). EFXINI POLI has implemented programs in urban and rural areas of Greece for (1) groups at risk of social exclusion (Repatriated Greeks, Persons with special needs, Persons of particular Cultural and Religious groups -Roma, Pomaki-, Offenders, Ex-Offenders, Unemployed up to 45 years, young people, women, migrants, refugees) and (2) the general unemployed population in order to provide on-going adult education and assistance aiming at the update of professional skills and competences and at integration into the labour market of those groups. Efxini Poli is certified for the Provision of Services in Design, Implementation and Project Management of EU and National Co-funded projects in accordance to EN ISO 9001/2000 from TÜV Rheinland Hellas S.A. Furthermore, the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme "Digital Convergence" of the Greek National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) has validated its administrative competency for projects without technical character (Projects Category Type B).

**Partner no. 3:** Szegedi Tudományegyetem Mezőgazdasági Kar (HUNGARY) has a pass of more than 110 years. The first agricultural school providing basic level education was founded in 1896 in the area of the present pilot farm of the Faculty. This school functioned until the end of World War II. It became an agricultural secondary school afterwards, which later in 1961 was turned into a higher educational institute. The Faculty, after several reorganisations has been training agricultural engineers since the September of 1992. At the beginning it belonged to the College of Food-Industry of Szeged, later to the University of Veterinarian Sciences of Budapest, then to the University of Agricultural Sciences of Debrecen from 1987. As a result of the integration process in higher education in Hungary our Faculty became a part of the University of Szeged from 1st January, 2000. The BSc level agricultural engineer and game manager engineer course has full time and correspondent forms. The purpose of the education is to train professionals who are capable of planning, organizing, managing and economically operating farms in any agricultural products, but especially agricultural plants and private enterprises. The full time and correspondence education have 6 + 1 semesters. There is a possibility of specializing in a chosen field:

- agricultural entrepreneurship;
- agricultural environmental protection;
- agrarian economy and logistics;
- management of companion animals.

**Partner no. 4:** Fondazione Medit Silva (ITALY) was constituted in the year 1997 as a non-profit association. Medit Silva has obtained recognition of its Legal Status from the Marche Regional Authority. Its aims are:

- To promote research and studies related to the Apennine Mountains and the Mediterranean Area Forest, and their natural, flora, socio-cultural, historic and human resources;

- To plan and coordinate initiatives for environmental education and training, even with the direct involvement of schools and institutes;
- To develop and manage initiatives addressed to the enhancement of agricultural, silvicultural and rural resources, of Community Property and Common land;
- To promote the development of natural, flora, socio-cultural, historic and human resources at EU level.

**Partner no. 5:** The project will be executed in the Mountain Community of Catria e Nerone, where the local farming will support the development of the activities foreseen in the project. Medit Silva will also be supported by Training 2000 ([www.training2000.it](http://www.training2000.it)) to carry out the activities setting up e.tools and training for the project.

Fundación Intercoop (SPAIN) is a non profit organisation framed in the rural area and inside one of the biggest agrarian cooperative group in Spain. Its main objective is to implement the social commitment of Intercoop Group in the territory. It mainly focuses on innovation, development, promotion, dissemination, cooperation and learning about:

- Cooperative movement and economy;
- Business excellence (quality, diversification, safety at work, and social responsibility );
- Agro-food environment;
- Rural development;
- Natural, artistically and cultural heritage;
- Cooperation to development;
- Renewable energies;
- New technologies.

These activities are developed directly or by means of cooperation agreements with other national or international entities. Intercoop Foundation signs agreements with public government and private companies in order to better achieve its goals. Intercoop Foundation is legally considered as an NGO. The Foundation is actually constituted by six partners; all of them are related to the environment of agricultural production, agro-food industry, cooperative promotion and rural development.

**Partner no. 6:** Gh. Țițeica Association is a non-profit organization which purpose is to promote economical values as well as traditional ones in the educational system. Also, the association promotes empowerment and development abilities and attitudes for school counselors, students, parents and teachers, based on a relationship which involve respect, confidence and responsibilities, for increasing the chances for personal and professional success, events connected with continuing education. The association purpose:

- Develop school-community relationship;
- The learners' appropriation of nature, the preparation of children for the economic life with its components: agriculture and industry;
- Initialize and/or support school development and improvement projects;
- Respect human person as base and purpose of democratic society;
- Respect The Human Rights as they appear in international treaties;
- Contribute to the development of the Romanian democratic system- economic, social, cultural and spiritual;

- Popularize Romanian cultural values to other European countries;
- Organize symposiums, debates, preparation sessions, summer school;
- Popularize the lifelong education among local inhabitants;
- Carry out studies, researches, surveys, reports, synthesis regarding Human Rights, Children Rights from Romania and European Union;
- Create literary gatherings, cultural clubs and other types of organized culture;
- Developing the dialog between society and local municipality;
- Exchange of experience between NGO.

Structural components: "Culture center " is a structural component of the Association and contributes through its activity to the association policy of promoting Romanian culture among the students. "Civic monitoring center" is a structural component of the Association and contributes through its activity to carry out the Association policy of promoting Human rights and Children rights. " Press center " is a structural component of the Association which contributes to promoting the Association activities. The center has relationship with a multitude of governmental and non governmental institutions, universities and other NGO.

### **Project description:**

Education for beginning farmers has become critically important in recent years. Recent census data in most of the countries in the world indicates that an increasing number of beginning farmers will be needed to replace those who exit farming in the following years. It has been estimated that the need for information and consultancy services intended for the people in rural areas will increase year by year. Along with the limited fertile areas in most countries, the rapidly growing population today is on the verge of food shortage. In order to be able to meet this growing need, beginning farmers, being the food producers of the future, should be well-equipped, qualified and educated about agricultural subjects such as; crop production, livestock management, soil and water conservation, and various other aspects of agriculture. Our partnership has the challenge of providing education and information to these beginning farmers. Our general aim of is to exchange and compare the methodologies and practices in young farmer education by taking advantage of exchanging experience, sharing ideas, analyzing different farmer training programs, developing common instruments that can be used in training courses and disseminated at local, regional, national and European level through meetings and publications.

**Project objectives and strategy:** The concrete objectives are to.

- gather some information about:
  - a)Farmer Support Programmes;
  - b)Rural Development Programmes in different EU countries;
  - c)Inservice Training Programmes and Educational Seminars provided for the technical staff;
  - d)Farmer Associations & Organizations;
  - e)Farmer Extension Systems in different EU countries;

- equip young farmers with the necessary information and competence related to Agricultural Extension Programme and make them volunteer practitioners of this programme;
- analyze educational needs of farmers and create modern mechanisms and ways to meet their needs;
- contribute to the fertility in agriculture, and as a result, to the income and welfare of the farmers;
- set up a “Leader Young Farmers Team”, who will constitute a model for the other farmers around;
- disseminate the useful information and outputs achieved throughout this partnership to the farmers by Farmer Extension Programme;
- help national and international organizations, education & training centres and chambers of farmers to achieve cooperation and coordination among them;
- train farmers about food production of high quality and in this way to make them more competitive;
- help beginning farmers develop farming culture, acquire the needed knowledge and competences use modern methods of agriculture, and to help them transfer what they have learnt to the other farmers who are out of the educational programme;
- disseminate the technological developments in agriculture and applicable research results to the technical staff and the farmers;
- help young farmers analyze their current and future conditions, and after this analysis to help them find innovative solutions to the possible problems they may encounter.

### Approaches:

Participants will work in pairs and groups and the communication between trainers and trainees will be bidirectional and highly efficient. After they have learnt new methods in farmer education classes, they will take part in a forum that will be dedicated to their problems and solutions to be adopted. The participating institutions will set up a project team and this team will be charged for:

- effective communication with the other teams
- preparing a short presentation about the aims and objectives of the project at local level;
- implementation of the local activities and organizing the requirements;
- improving the knowledge of the actors and the practices mobilized in every partner region, to contribute to a successful integration of the targeted public team will be charged for;
- effective communication with the other teams;
- preparing a short presentation about the aims and objectives of the project at local level;
- implementation of the local activities and organizing the requirements;
- improving the knowledge of the actors and the practices mobilized in every partner region, to contribute to a successful integration of the targeted public.

### European added value:

Lifelong learning programme, no matter which sub-programme it is, brings European added value directly to individual citizens participating in its mobility and in other cooperation actions. European added value is a relatively paramount in the formulation of the objectives and aims of EU programmes and points at its relevance for the EU, its institutions and policies. This means that a project's methodology, aims, effects, prospects and aspirations should apply not only to a specific local or regional context, but to the European arena as a whole.

The European level is adequate for this project as linguistic problems have been taken into account, as the important points in the documents and web sites will be elaborated in the national languages. Cultural diversity issues have been equally well addressed. We will take into consideration that all the major issues of workshops will actually be affected by the differences in cultures of the participating countries. In order to foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education/training systems within this partnership, we are going to;

- support the realization of a European area for LL;
- promote high performance, innovation and a European dimension in education/training systems and practices;
- promote creativity, competitiveness, employability, the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit, language learning and linguistic diversity;
- contribute to increased participation in LL by people of different ages and backgrounds;
- encourage the best use of results, innovative products and processes as well as the exchange of good practice in the field of LLP.

### Impact:

By the end of the project, the learners will have;

- widened their horizons through the contacts with their counterparts from other European countries in similar situations and with similar needs. They will make contact with different educational organizations which also work with farmers from different parts of Europe;
- gained experience of working on the European projects;
- improved their basic ICT skills, working on the internet;
- experienced traveling abroad and participating actively in an international activity;
- increased their self esteem by taking part in the discussions, brainstorming about their problems and their future and by taking part in new different social experiences;
- improved their knowledge about how to make efficient farmers, how to deal with their agricultural problems, what to do and what not to do;

- learnt some useful tips that they can apply while farming;
- increased their social and cultural awareness of EU;
- omitted their prejudices against different cultures, nations and races;
- actively involved in the partnership, which will create enthusiasm and may spread to their families and the local community;
- improved their communication skills in English.

By the end of the project, the staff will have;

- had the opportunity for cultural, social and professional exchanges;
- got in touch with learners and staff from other European countries;
- improved their knowledge about different methodologies, training programs, educational instruments and practices in farmers education;
- learnt more about the pedagogical methods used to teach and train farmers;
- improved their communication skills in English;
- increased their social and cultural awareness of EU.

By the end of the project, participating institutions;

- will have the opportunity to implement new methods and educational tools in farmers education;
- will create concrete possibilities for transnational exchange and cooperation;
- can establish cooperation for future European projects and mobility;
- will have learnt about the culture of international partnership and work;
- will have the common goal of ensuring a memorable and productive experience for visiting learners and teachers, whilst pooling objective reports on the strengths and weaknesses of the experiences;
- such a learning partnership will provide good publicity to the participating institutions, which will help them to interest other similar institutions to create new partnerships at European level.

### **Relevance towards the objectives of the progame:**

This partnership consists of 6 different institutions from 6 different countries. The participating countries are from different geographical and institutional European contexts. The countries are members of the European Union, except Turkey who is a candidate country. The participants want to take part in this project as they all directly or indirectly provide adult education for farmers. They all want to contribute to the achievement of a competitive and knowledge-based society in Europe.

The project has a clear European dimension as it identifies problems that are similar or almost similar in all the countries involved. All participating institutions special training & education for farmers and naturally they have “beginning farmers” with little or no knowledge about effective farming. The institutions, belonging to different European

countries, exchange, share expertise, methods, techniques to be used throughout the project. The institutions want to participate in order to gain more experience and expertise in the fields already mentioned and to learn about the practical context in each country.

The participating institutions have a lot of things to learn one from another. As we live on the same continent, as the European Union has extended a lot recently, the citizens and institutions in our countries interact, cooperate, get to know each other, they bring with them not only their social and cultural background but also their problems and difficulties. It is our duty as institutions with responsibilities in the field of education to find together new ways to cope with the problems that people encounter. In sum, this partnership will respond to a real need of the beginning farmers.

### **Cooperation and communication:**

Two years of time is so long a period to keep the project alive and effective that there may be lack of communication and cooperation among the participants in this period. However; in order to achieve an effective partnership in terms of management, process and evaluation, each participating organisation will set up a project team with a team leader. These team leaders will form the steering group for the project. The communication and cooperation between all the participating institutions will be mainly provided by these team leaders.

The coordinating institution will be responsible for the main coordination of the project. We are going to hold project meetings in each country within two years in the attendance of at least one person from each country. This number is changeable according to the number of the participating organisations. We are also going to have online meetings monthly via Internet on the dates to be determined at the first project meeting.

All participating units are going to send performance and evaluation reports to the coordinator every month and the task of the coordinator is to distribute all reports to all participants and make them aware of the performance of the project. And the reports will be gathered electronically via a project website – in the form of a blog. Partners have decided on one common language for communication and for dialogue among the partners, which is English language.

The effective cooperation and communication between the participating institutions will be organised by means of face-to-face meetings, on-line conferences between international meetings, common practical activities and research, e-mail, forum, telephone and fax when necessary. Thus, we will share our opinions and exchange information on professional, practical methodological approaches. We will work together on various materials and publications that are useful in our activity.

After the legal duration of the partnership has ended, the institutions will continue the cooperation via the website of the partnership. We are going to search for new partnership



opportunities. The project webpage will still be active for more than five years after the partnership has legally ended in the eye of the national agencies.

### **Participants involvement:**

This partnership involves both the learners' and professionals' active involvement. We are going to try to obtain as broad participation of learners and educational staff as possible. Each participating organization will prepare a project implementation team involving both the learners and the staff. After the introductory meeting has been held in one of the countries, the staff and the learners will work together to prepare a detailed report about the present condition of farmers in their own countries. The report will include detailed information about;

- the educational level of the farmers in general;
- the most important problems that they encounter;
- the needs of farmers;
- what the beginning farmers know about effective farming;
- what kind of methods and techniques are used in beginning farmer education & training;
- what the educational curriculum includes.

Both the learners and the staff will actively work in the preparation of the reports, they will send them to the coordinator and the task of the coordinator is to distribute these reports among all partners. The project teams, with an active involvement, will compare their report with the ones of their counterparts from different countries and will create a new comparison report.

The learners will participate in the brain storming activities, workshops and writing process of reports directly. We believe that the participation of learners will provide information to the teams in determining the needs of target groups more accurately. They will actively participate in planning, implementation and evaluation processes. They will contribute to the preparation of evaluation reports. They will have language and ICT classes in order to improve themselves.

The learners will actively be involved in all the activities. They will be asked their opinions and thoughts about the content of the lessons. Besides, their training needs will be taken into consideration not only from the point of view of the specialist but also of the people who are directly confronted with serious problems. The trainees will directly be involved by means of the interactive activities. They will express their opinions about the training by means of questionnaires, direct opinions and by filling in a chart showing their degree of (dis)satisfaction regarding the topics presented and the trainers' activity.