

Activities and Results

of the project "Support of Social Enterprises Development and Enhancement of Employment / SoSEDEE",
Implemented in the cross-border area of Greece and Bulgaria

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Content

1. Introduction	5
2. The SoSEDEE project	7
Why	7
What	9
Who	10
3. Assessment on the current situation of Social Entrepreneurship in the Cross-Border Area and main conclusions	11
4. FROM PLANNING TO RESULTS	17
4.1 Educational programme in Social Entrepreneurship	17
4.2 Greenhouse in Gotse Delchev: construction, support for the setting up of the SE	20
4.3 Actoïda in Alexandroupolis: Supporting the establishment of the Social Cooperative Enterprise	23
5. Communication and Dissemination	25
6. The Next Day: Impact and Capitalisation Plan	27





1. Introduction

The economic and social welfare of the cross-border (CB) area is being significantly challenged by high unemployment rates and increasing percentages of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Low levels of productivity and education undermine further the potential of economic development of the CB area and the wellbeing of its population. Within this context, the Municipality of Gotse Delchev, the SOS Children's Villages Greece and the International Hellenic University (IHU), through its Department of Management Science and Technology, decided to support the development of social entrepreneurship and the establishment of social enterprises (SEs) as a new "hybrid" business model that would encourage sustainable inclusive growth through the creation of more and better jobs – especially for the vulnerable and the professionally and financially challenged groups.

The overall objective of the project was to develop a high quality Social Entrepreneurship Certificate (SEC) that would assist current and potential social entrepreneurs to achieve their mission of establishing profitable SEs that would generate a social impact on the local economy and society.

The Municipality of Gotse Delchev supported the establishment and operation of a greenhouse for the cultivation of plants and flowers, which would be used by the new social enterprise (SE) "Color City". The SOS Children's Villages Greece capitalised the training provided by the ECOCAMPS GR-BG project for the establishment of a SE in the field of manufacturing of decorative items from recycled materials.

The newly born SEs received special consultation, mentoring and business and marketing plans in order to access the market.

The main outputs of the project included:



**a knowledge base
on the current
profile of SEs
in the CB area**



**education and
e-learning of current
and potential
social entrepreneurs**



**establishment and
operation of two SEs
in the sector
of green economy**



**creation of eight
new job
opportunities**

More information about the project and the produced reports/deliverables can be found at www.sosedee.eu.





2.The SoSEDEE project

Why

The project idea was born with the aim to support the development of social entrepreneurship and promote the establishment of new SEs in the CB area as a new “hybrid” business model that encourages sustainable inclusive growth through the creation of job opportunities, especially for the vulnerable and the professionally and financially challenged groups.

Social entrepreneurship refers to a type of enterprises that, through business activity, seek solutions to social and economic problems. The CB area faces many such problems, since it is characterised by very low levels of economic growth and development, significantly high levels of long-term unemployment rates and a considerably high percentage of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In addition, the presence of various vulnerable groups, such as minorities, internal migrants, asylum seekers

and foreign persons under subsidiary protection, challenges even more the achievement of social and economic cohesion. Low levels of productivity and education are definitely barriers for the attraction of investments and undermine further the creation of new business and new opportunities, leading to higher level of long-term unemployment and more people at risk of poverty. Furthermore, the Greek economic crisis since 2008, in combination with the global economic crisis in 2009 and the reduced public spending through the implementation of strict measures, created more challenges for the social and economic welfare of the CB area. Within this framework, SEs can contribute not only to the creation of jobs, but also to addressing wider social and economic needs and promoting more cohesive and inclusive societies.

Since 2011, the EU, through the Social Business

Initiative (SBI), has recognised their crucial role in generating positive impact and change in local and national economies. According to the SBI, the social economy sector employs over 11 million people in the EU, accounting for 6% of total employment. Both Greece and Bulgaria were obliged by the EU to introduce a specific investment priority in their NSRF 2014-2020 for SEs. However, despite the above developments, the concept and recognition of the role of SEs has not really developed yet in the CB area. Greece has set up a definition of SEs and social entrepreneurship by Law 4019/2011. In Bulgaria, there is no legal form for SEs and they adopt a variety of legal forms. Although there is a number of SEs in the CB area, it is estimated that only one third of the total number is operating. This is really evident in Greece, since the number of officially registered enterprises has decreased from 900 in 2011 to 704 in 2015. Last but not least, there are no public schemes or actions in place specifically defined to support SEs. Project beneficiaries had identified that a major problem challenging the development of SEs in the CB area is the lack of understanding the principles of social economy, of tailored-made skills and of the capacity to start-up and operate a SE. Therefore, a high quality SEC has been developed to support potential and current social entrepreneurs to achieve their mission of establishing a profitable SE that would create a significant social impact on the local economy and society. To date, there is no certified training

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The social economy sector employs over 11 million people in the EU, accounting for 6% of total employment.”

course in the CB area dedicated to social entrepreneurs. The SEC was developed by the School of Economics and Business, Department of Management Science and Technology of the IHU. The syllabus included 4 weeks of specialised education and online training and one week of experiential training, which was also the first in the CB area. Long-term unemployed people as well as vulnerable and professionally and financially challenged groups supported by the SOS Children's Villages and the Municipality of Gotse Delchev were trained and consulted, in order to start up SEs in the sectors of creating decorative items from recycled materials and the cultivation of plants.

The main targeted groups were the long-term unemployed, the vulnerable and professionally and financially challenged groups, the potential and current social entrepreneurs, the NGOs and the educational institutions. The major beneficiaries were the local communities of the partners and the CB area, young unemployed who want to start their business, current SEs and social entrepreneurs, social services, etc.



What

The overall objective of the project was to promote, with a responsible and integrated manner, social entrepreneurship as a mean to achieve inclusive growth by creating new

opportunities of employment for the most vulnerable and financially challenged groups. In that way, it directly contributed to:



**a socially Inclusive
CB Area**



**promoting social
inclusion, combating
poverty and
discrimination**



**providing support
for SEs**



**expanding social
entrepreneurship
in the CB area**

In particular, the main objective of the project was to provide a high quality SEC that would strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of current SEs, support the creation of new enterprises for the benefit of vulnerable and professionally and financially challenged groups, and increase the employment rates at local and regional level. The aim was to provide to the CB area a responsible and academic training package which would guarantee a good

understanding of the concept and principles of a SE and its legislative framework as well as a good knowledge of managerial and professional skills in order to develop a social business plan, analyse the market potential, access funding and generate social impact. In addition to the training course, specialised support and mentoring was provided to the students who established SEs in their local areas (legal advice, business and marketing plans).

The main outputs of the project are the following:

A synthetic report regarding the status of the social entrepreneurship in the CB area and National Reports (knowledge base on number, size, sector, etc.)

A catalogue with available training courses in Greece and Bulgaria in the field of Social Economy

Provision of a high quality SEC from the IHU

Experiential training for Greek social entrepreneurs

Education and online learning of 100 potential and current social entrepreneurs (75 Greeks & 25 Bulgarians)

Video captured lectures with English subtitles (22 videos in total)

Tailored-made business plans for the creation and pilot operation of one SE in Alexandroupolis and one in Gotse Delchev

Transferable tools with the success factors covering the specific field of each SE

Marketing plan for each SE

Preliminary assessments and evaluation of the pilot operation of each SE (comparison with mainstream enterprises)

Provision of infrastructure, equipment and materials for the new SEs

Regional/local meetings and one joint CB conference

Who

Municipality of Gotse Delchev in Bulgaria

The Municipality of Gotse Delchev is the lead beneficiary of the SoSEDEE project and has joined the Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020, aiming at improving the lives of people living in Bulgaria. In this context, it develops programmes / projects that foster innovation and social entrepreneurship, with priority given to vulnerable groups. The municipality of Gotse Delchev has connections with a number of other municipalities in the region of Bulgaria, universities, associations, social organisations providing support for such groups (e.g. the Union of disabled people in Bulgaria). The Municipality provides social services by developing integrated policies to support kids at risk as well as disadvantaged and elderly people. The municipality has already established one SE named "Social laundry" which is funded by the OP Human Resources 2007-2014, PA 5 "Social inclusion & encouraging SEs" with a total budget of 132 464,42 BGN. The "Social laundry" is situated in the hospital and provides its services to the municipal hospital, kindergarten, house for elderly people, etc.

SOS Children's Villages Greece

SOS Children's Villages Greece was established in 1975 as a non-profit organisation operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. Its headquarters are located in Athens while it operates nationwide offering accommodation and counselling services to 2000 children and related families. The organisation's funding relies on private donations and is co-funded by national or EU projects. In the current project, the activities were implemented in the SOS Children's Village Thrace, in Alexandroupolis, which consists of 6 SOS family houses that accommodate 50 children, a Day Care Centre for children with special needs and a Social Centre for children

and families in need. The main purpose of SOS Children's Villages is to help children who are either orphans or homeless, providing them with a new and permanent home. One of the most important features of the policy followed is that children receive the appropriate education and a sound preparation in order to become independent adults. Moreover, when they reach adulthood, they continue to be supported in a variety of ways, including job search support.

International Hellenic University (IHU), School of Economics and Business, Department of Management Science and Technology

The International Hellenic University was founded in 1976 and is located in Kavala. It consists of 4 Schools that host 9 Departments. The Department of Management Science and Technology, which participates in the implementation of the SoSEDEE project, is affiliated to the School of Economics and Business. Its main purpose is the systematic and continuous effort to renew all levels of knowledge and the introduction of the latest educational and research methods, techniques and processes focusing on creativity, innovation and leadership, as well as their application to enterprises and organisations in the private and public sector. The Department of Economics and Business has rich experience in projects related to research in strategic management, entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility, financial modeling, performance measurement, etc. It has more than 2000 full-time students, 14 full-time academic staff members and about 10 external part-time lecturers.



3. Assessment on the current situation of Social Entrepreneurship in the Cross-Border Area and main conclusions

In the framework of the project's methodology, the elaboration of researches and studies has been designed in order to understand and present the current situation in the CB area. They provide an overview of the profile of the social economy enterprises and their ecosystems in the CB area of the CP INTERREG Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020. The specific objective was to use the outcomes of the study and surveys to develop and provide a high-quality Social Entrepreneurship training package that is adapted to the main characteristics and challenges of the social entrepreneurs and the target groups of the project partners (vulnerable and professionally and financially challenged young people) in the CB area.

SEs in most European countries carry out a significant share of activities in the social sphere, combining the generation of income, economic activity and the achievement of a certain social effect. Social entrepreneurship is unique in that it allows the integration of economic and social goals into one. This is the effective way to produce an operational social policy and provide effective support for socially vulnerable groups in the broadest sense.

It is noteworthy that the municipalities in the CB area do not have a rich and diverse network of social services. In order to create sustainable models of social entrepreneurship in this region, it is necessary to pay attention to the conditions,

for the creation of which it is important to have policies at the national level. One of the most important conditions is to continue investing in the development of social policy and services that can address serious risk factors, as well as to allow SEs to upgrade the social impact. It is necessary to develop diverse and sufficient social services to ensure the availability of all kinds of support (currently, services for people with disabilities are prioritised). In addition, there is a need to further stimulate the development of partnerships in these areas through the mechanism of negotiating these services.

Having just social services in the community as a solution to the problem is not enough. Very often the vulnerable groups are supported at the primary level, but are not helped to step out of the circle of social exclusion and dependence and find permanent solutions in employment, education and access to health care. In this sense, the development of an entrepreneurial culture among social service providers will further help to deal more effectively with social problems. Social entrepreneurship could act additionally and could stabilise the effect of social support.

According to the quantitative research in the Greek area, the biggest obstacle for the development of SEs is the obtaining of grant

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It is necessary to develop diverse and sufficient social services to ensure the availability of all kinds of support.”

funding. The next main obstacles are taxation / VAT and the maintenance of cash flows. Another important factor is the availability and / or cost of suitable premises. Significant obstacles faced daily are the lack of understanding / awareness of the existence of SEs among banks and other support organisations and the bad economic climate in Greece. Finally, the lack of a managerial / marketing strategy for the product / service and the lack of access to technical support and advisory services have also been mentioned as obstacles to the development of SEs operators.

According to the quantitative research in the Bulgarian area, the main barrier for the development of SEs is the lack of a marketing plan. The second important barrier is the same with that on the Greek side: taxation. Last but not least, as is the case in Greece, the economic climate does not favour the development of SEs in Bulgaria as well, although this country seems to be more resilient to the global economic crisis.



Main barriers for the development of the Social Economy

Bulgaria

Financial problems: lack of adequate funding to support SEs; lack of resources to start a business – buildings, land, equipment; lack of managerial and marketing experience – a major problem of the NGO sector.

Disadvantages of the project approach: the enterprise exists only while there is funding from the fund; the project's financing pattern suffers from a chronic lack of sustainability.

Slow, cumbersome procedures for project administration – immersing into loans; project funding raises doubts as to the existence of corrupt interests.

Lack of a systematic and targeted policy at the national level.

Lack of normative basis with finding and training appropriate staff.

Aid trap: workers get benefits while unemployed and are not willing to work.

Greece

Lack of awareness and knowledge among the wider public sector (tax offices, social security services, local authorities, schools and universities) about the social economy entities and their treatment according to the legal framework.

Lack of access to finance and of financing tools tailored-made for SEs.

Lack of tailored-made education (either formal or informal) for the sector of social solidarity economy and its role in local development, as well as lack of dedicated educational programmes for the development of SEs and of dedicated skills of the social entrepreneurs (start-up skills, communications skills, decision making skills).

Bureaucracy and lack of understanding of the legal framework.

According to the quality and quantitative surveys conducted in the CB area in 2018, the main barriers are:

- lack of access to finance (loans, etc);
- maintaining cash flow;
- taxation, VAT, business rates;
- availability/ cost of suitable premises;
- lack of understanding/awareness about SEs among banks and support organisations;
- lack of identification / diagnosis of social needs.

**IDEAS
START
HERE**



In order to develop social entrepreneurship at the local level, it is very important to have an environment that will stimulate the cooperation and interaction among regional-local administration, local non-governmental organisations and local business. The recommendations in this regard are:

- incorporating social entrepreneurship as a specific priority and measure in regional and municipal strategies for the development of social services;
- providing a mechanism for assessing the impact of different social instruments;
- designating a Local Officer for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship;
- creating a fund at the municipal level to support initiatives of civic organisations and popularise the model of social entrepreneurship. Besides building the capacity to do the particular "business", it is necessary to provide a resource to start or to support the first stages of implementing an entrepreneurial idea that does not have a high interest rate (as would be provided by the bank). Therefore, programmes aiming to provide a resource, on a competitive basis, for free of at low interest rates, are a serious incentive to start up. The Resource Fund should distribute support on a competitive basis. One way to do this, when it becomes necessary to stimulate the solution of a particular problem, is to announce a competition for ideas for social entrepreneurship and to select and support the best. Support should also be provided for the next stage of the development of the idea and can be expressed not only by mentoring during the development of the enterprise, but also by providing the possibility of a "development" investment. It is advisable to provide financial support in a flexible way (including on an individual basis).



Joint partnerships between SEs entities and the public and private sector could be a key solution for the development of the social economy.”

In addition, municipalities with a financial resource problem could provide state property with low rent or free of charge to help the operation of SEs that produce a tangible social impact. Also, they can support SEs by using or buying services provided by social entrepreneurs for the social services delegated by the municipality. In some cases, the social economy entities could undertake the role of the intermediate management body for the provision of municipal social services.

Last but not least, in order for social entrepreneurship to be effective, the presence of well-functioning and stable civil society organisations is more than necessary, as well as the presence of local businesses that are socially involved in the solution of public issues. In other words, strong, reliable joint partnerships between SEs entities and the public and private sector could be a key solution for the development of the social economy sector which favours sustainable inclusive growth.

In this regard, what would be a good start at the CB local level is the creation of local funds to finance ideas for social entrepreneurship, provision of resources for the multiplication of successful models of SEs through affordable financing and exchange of experience with mainstream businesses, creating the conditions for the competitive production and promotion of SEs products. In each of these interventions, roles and responsibilities should be shared among the three sectors (public, business and non-profit) at the local level, in order to ensure that local expertise is built.

Main recommendations according to national reports

Bulgaria

Resources to support SEs are not spent effectively enough. In addition, the lack of entrepreneurial skills and culture of the representatives of the non-governmental sector, who still provide the main staff resource from social entrepreneurs, requires a new, modern approach to financing new or existing enterprises, in which the provision of funds is not limited to the donor, but is accompanied by long-term support and monitoring of the development of the enterprise.

Mobilisation of available internal and external resources (alternative forms of tourism, attracting young and enterprising Bulgarians from the country and abroad for the cause of social entrepreneurship) can provide much wider opportunities for the sector's development.

Active collaboration with local businesses to promote social entrepreneurship and SEs is also a step in this direction.

In practice, the opportunities of the integrated European market and the developed practices in the leading economies in Europe are a resource that can be used very efficiently.

The optimisation of legislation and the creation of a flexible legal environment are necessary conditions for the sector's development.

As is seen in the European practice, a proven solution for supporting social entrepreneurship is the creation of a civil organisation acting as a body that protects the interests of the social entrepreneurship sector, generates and maintains a database of SEs, lobbies at a political level, promotes social business as an activity for the benefit of society, monitors public procurement and funding schemes.

Greece

Creation of a National Centre of Social and Solidarity Economy that will conduct a research on the sector and will coordinate and communicate all its activities among the ministries and the active institutions/entities of the sector.

Development of a dedicated strategy for the promotion and communication of Social and Solidarity Economy sector and its entities.

Creation of an independent fund for the start-up of a SE in the form of a SE pre-start grant fund that could be ideally accompanied by coaching and mentoring for a small business plan.

Creation of a Social Finance Task Force that will identify the main funding barriers and will develop proposals for possible funding innovations adjusted to the Greek environment, based on the alternative forms of funding (micro-finance, micro-credits, crowdfunding, etc.).

Improvement of accessibility to finance in the main funding programmes of the state and the European Union.

Improvement of accessibility to finance through awareness and cooperation with private / cooperative banks.

Development of dedicated educational programmes for Social and Solidarity Economy, skills development and measurement of social impact with the cooperation of all the relevant bodies (universities, schools, Social and Solidarity Economy actors, etc.).

Development of experiential training with the support of Social and Solidarity Economy networks.

Simplification of the legislative and regulatory framework.

Promotion of the inclusion of social clauses and social value in public procurements.

Tax incentives for those who produce social impact and results.



4. FROM PLANNING TO RESULTS

4.1 Educational programme in Social Entrepreneurship

The social entrepreneurship training package was developed based on the synthetic report of the programme as well as on the academic experience of the university faculty and the external expertise of consultants and experts in social entrepreneurship. The training package covered the unique needs and characteristics of the target groups of the project partners in the CB area of the CP INTERREG Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 cooperation programme.

The objective of the training programme was to provide the most up-to-date knowledge in a simple and understandable way and to help participants (potential or current entrepreneurs) to develop the necessary skills for both more efficient development and management of SEs, with an integrated approach to the subject of

social entrepreneurship. The participants acquired the knowledge they needed in order to create their own SE or to work in SEs by maximising the social impact of their actions according to the contemporary challenges and needs of the business environment. The syllabus of the course was designed to meet the programme's objective and to help participants move their mission forward by learning how to apply knowledge and skills in social entrepreneurship. After this training, participants were able to conceive, plan or further improve their own social ventures and maximise social impact. Successful completion was accompanied by a "Social Entrepreneur" Training Certificate.

The programme included five weeks of education and training activities. The core of the syllabus



consisted of e-learning lectures (four weeks) as well as experiential learning opportunities (one week) through the lens of international case studies and real-case business challenges/projects of companies based in Greece and Bulgarian, on which the participants worked. For the needs of the programme, the advanced e-learning platform (OPEN eCLASS, course management system) of the university was used. The training methods included:

- video lectures, practice exercises, proposed, directed and self-managed study, research activities, followed by feedback given by the responsible professor;
- weekly web discussions and reflection questions about the educational material;
- study of real business challenges through case studies;
- individual or group activities on a social problem or a chance of a social impact that interests the participants – development of a business plan.

Bulgarian participants were using e-class for the whole duration of the programme, while Greek participants joined class activities during the fifth week of the programme (due to proximity). More specifically, weeks 1-4 of the programme included 22 video captured lectures (Greek) as well as supportive educational material (Bulgarian, English, Greek). The fifth week focused on experiential learning and was more relevant to practical application and the real needs of the market. It included not only workshops in which real business plans were developed, but also open discussions with social economy specialists, as well as analysis (diagnosis and proposals) of real case studies. Participants had to complete the assigned studying and be evaluated in the training material.

Week 1

1. Introduction

2. Historical review, development, concepts and definitions, experience, prospects.

- 2.1 The field of Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship
- 2.2 The Role of SEs and the Social Entrepreneur
- 2.3 Types and Legal Forms of SEs
- 2.4 Best practices of Social Entrepreneurship in Greece and abroad

3. Legal forms of SEs

- 3.1 Institutional framework and general characteristics of SEs in Europe
- 3.2 Legal forms, general characteristics and policies for supporting SEs in Bulgaria
- 3.3 Legal forms and general characteristics of SEs in Greece
- 3.4 Start-up procedures, management and policies of supporting SEs in Greece

Weeks 2-3

4. Startup

- 4.1 Business Opportunity Recognition, Develop business models
- 4.2 Market Research
- 4.3 Business Plan Training
- 4.4 SEs Funding

Week 4

5. Development

- 5.1 The Marketing of SEs
- 5.2 Social marketing by using the tools of modern marketing for social change
- 5.3 Sales
- 5.4 Impact measurement and performance of SEs

6. Communication and group management

- 6.1 Communication strategies for SEs
- 6.2 Group Management

Week 5

7. Experiential learning

- 7.1 Experiential learning activities from the perspective of virtual or real business simulations
- 7.2 Open Discussions with Specialists
- 7.3 Special Project: Business Planning Development Lab

The programme included two training cycles.

- The first cycle was held during December 2018 and included **60 registrations of Greek participants, 18 active learners and, upon completion, 18 graduates.**
- The second cycle included 40 registrations (**15 Greek and 25 Bulgarian participants**), **35 active learners and, upon completion, 33 graduates (8 Greeks, 25 Bulgarian).**

According to the evaluation of the training cycles, almost all participants stated that, through this programme, they developed deeper critical thinking and knowledge on social entrepreneurship. Also, the educational material as a whole, the video lectures, the supportive educational material and the experiential learning, scored very high.



4.2 Greenhouse in Gotse Delchev: construction, support for the setting up of the SE

A glass greenhouse for flowers with modern design and equipment was built in the Municipality of Gotse Delchev within the framework of the project and is now operated by the Municipal SE "Color city". The new SE was established by the Decision of the Municipal Council No. 718 of April 24, 2019, as one of the main outputs of the project, providing opportunities for the sheltered employment of persons leaving specialised institutions, as well as for the employment of people with disabilities in the Municipality of Gotse Delchev. It has four employees belonging in vulnerable social groups; they are given the opportunity and support for employment, vocational training and the acquisition of additional social skills.

“

Supports the sustainable and inclusive development of the long-term unemployed, people leaving specialised institutions and people with disabilities.”

This SE's operation is based on the Business Plan, the Marketing Plan and the consultation support received within the project. Through an integrated approach, the SE supports the sustainable and inclusive development of the long-term unemployed, people leaving



specialised institutions and people with disabilities to overcome the social challenges, by building work habits through employment in a SE – specifically, in a greenhouse. Its vision is to upgrade the economic and social status of vulnerable groups in the Municipality of Gotse Delchev, as well as to help create a more beautiful and ecological environment for the residents and visitors of the municipality.

Main objectives of the Municipal SE "Color city":

- To provide sheltered employment opportunities for persons leaving specialised institutions, as well as for the employment of long-term unemployed and disadvantaged people in the Municipality of Gotse Delchev, as an innovative form of social service for creating a supportive environment for active social inclusion.
- To stimulate professional orientation, acquiring new professional skills and building up work habits, as well as to provide vulnerable groups in the

Municipality of Gotse Delchev with equal opportunities in the labor market.

Its main activities are planting seeds and cuttings, cultivating flowers and ornamental foliage in the glass greenhouse and the nursery, and then selling the produced flowers and shrubs to be used for decorating public spaces in Gotse Delchev, such as public squares, alleys, inter-block spaces, playgrounds and sports grounds, courtyards of municipal health and social facilities, etc.

The greenhouse was designed and built of steel and glass, with a well-formed floor of polished granite. The total built-up area of the site is 383 m². In addition to the glass greenhouse, there are 6 covered greenhouses, with an area of 17 m² each, as well as 2 open beds, each with an area of 18 m². Its equipment and facilities are all modern, with automated control of temperature, humidity, irrigation and shading. To achieve optimal conditions for the cultivation and production of flowers and shrubs, all the necessary installations have been built:

Ventilation installation with 14 ventilation frames located on both sides of the ridge.

Shading installation – placed horizontally at the level of the beams. The selected shielding sheets have a high energy saving effect, which significantly reduces the cost of heating at night and in sunless days in winter.

Fogging installation – placed lengthwise above each row under the shielding sheets, serving to suppress the heat in the greenhouse and provide air humidity.

Tables enabling the automatic watering of potted crops, their feeding and application of plant protection products.

Irrigation system supplying water to the racks. Pre-tempered tank water is used for this purpose. An injector mixer for providing food additives is also installed.

Heating system - Heating is provided through horizontally mounted smooth steel pipes, with additional hot air devices.

Ventilation system – Natural ventilation is carried out by opening elements of the facade and roof of the building. Forced ventilation is also provided, mainly used during the winter months.

Gas pipeline installation.

The greenhouse consists of a one-storey building for the cultivation of plants and flowers and an administrative department furnished with the necessary equipment and office furniture. There is a workplace, a shelving unit and a lounge for visitors. Furthermore, two living quarters for the staff and a rest room have been created.

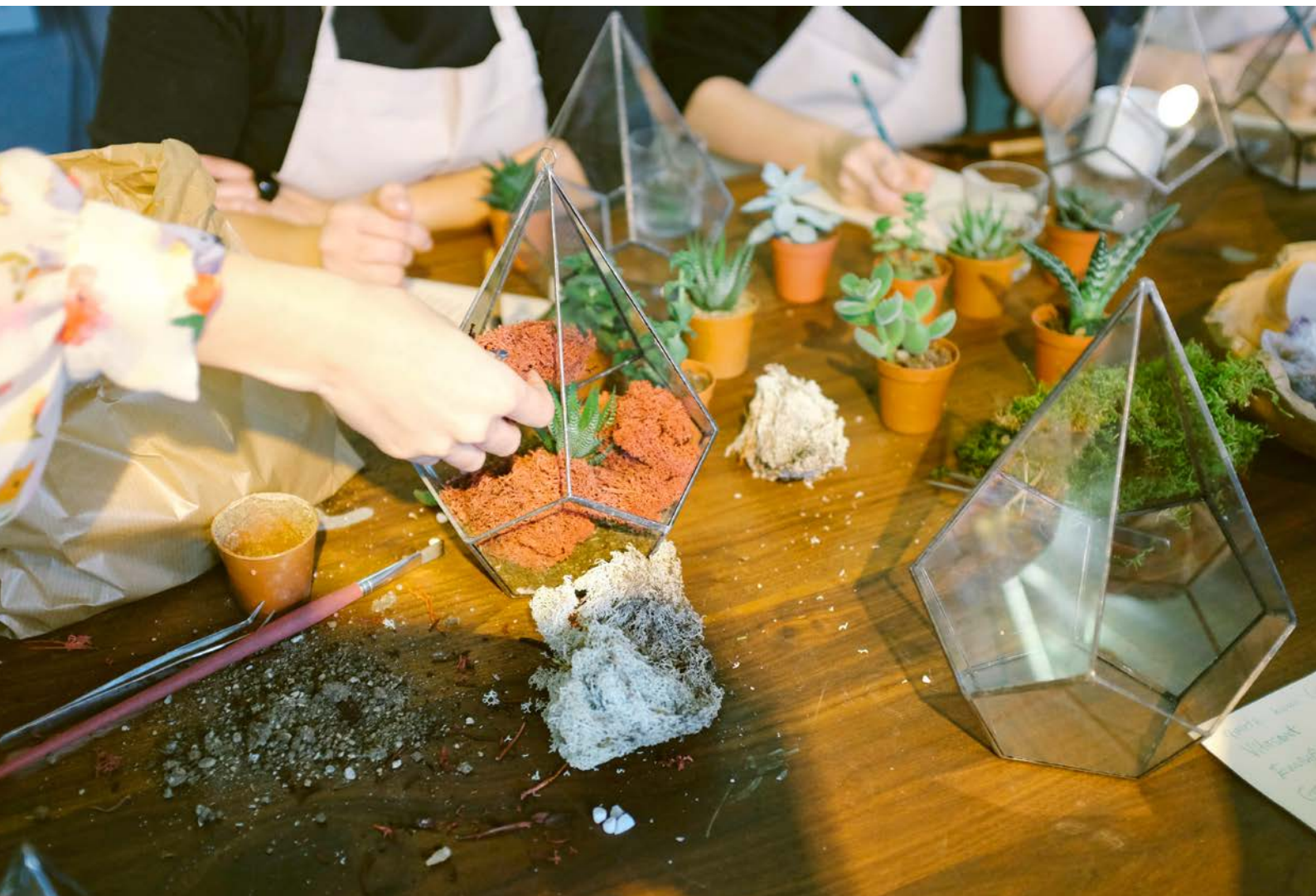
The municipality has provided an agronomist with the necessary knowledge for the cultivation of the various plant species, while the necessary technical equipment and materials were funded by the project during its implementation.

In its vision for future development, the Municipal SE "Color City" will seek the assistance of the municipal councilors in order to create more favorable conditions for the development and support of its activities. It will count on building and developing full partnerships with the Peyo Yavorov Vocational High School of Agricultural Mechanization in Gotse Delchev, the Business Incubator in the city, and various social

partners. Liaison and communication with the target groups -disadvantaged people- will also be active. In partnership with teachers - agronomists familiar with flower growing and vocational training centers, adult training and qualification courses will be available.

Measuring the social impact in the community as a result of the work and development of this SE is a real challenge, because its contribution is not only in numbers (how many members of vulnerable groups are employed in it, how much production is created and what revenue is being raised), but also in creating positive change: better quality of life and wellbeing as a result of protected employment, social inclusion and integration, limiting social exclusion, greater life satisfaction, and others.

Contact the Municipal SE "Color City" at trahanarova@abv.bg and +359885339002, Director – Emiliya Trahanarova.





4.3 ΑΚΤΟΪΔΑ in Alexandroupolis: Supporting the establishment of the Social Cooperative Enterprise

“Actoída” is an innovative community-based Social Cooperative Enterprise based in Alexandroupolis, operating since November 2019. Its story begins a year before that, when five members of the interdisciplinary team of the SOS Children's Village Thrace participated in the Social Entrepreneurship Educational Programme of the SoSEDEE project, which they completed

and then initiated their own SE. After a free concession, it is based at the facilities of SOS Children's Village Thrace, Aristino, Alexandroupolis.

The activities of the “Actoída” aim at meeting the needs of the local community, including:

Manufacture of handmade useful and decorative products through the development and preservation of traditional techniques and arts. Natural raw materials are used for the production of gifts, invitations and chocolates, with respect to ecology and the environment.

Provision of social services to children, elderly and people with disabilities and chronic diseases, with various activities, such as the organisation of workshops for artistic creation and employment, but also with educational programmes – seminars of artistic, cultural and scientific interest.

Organisation of cultural and artistic events with the aim of promoting the independent cultural creation of people with difficulty in accessing the labor market.

Counseling services for the psychosocial rehabilitation of the elderly and of people with disabilities and chronic diseases.

Implementation of workshops for psychomotor rehabilitation therapy, the creation of a play area and music workshops both for people with disabilities and for children of normal development, as well as the creation of a café for the coexistence of socially vulnerable groups and members of the local community.

The above activities aim at providing social services of general interest and sustainable development. In particular, they contribute to social and economic equality, promote gender equality, fairness and solidarity trade, protect and develop common goods and, finally, promote intergenerational and multicultural reconciliation. The team of “Actoída”, inspired by the vision and needs of the local community, implements the above activities combining social actions and cooperative spirit.

“Actoída” was created with the support of the SoSEDEE project, and is one of the two SEs that were developed within the project, receiving consulting support and guidance. The support that “Actoída” receives is coordinated by the partner in charge within project, the SOS Children's Villages, and includes:

- Developing a business plan tailored to its specific needs.
- Developing a marketing plan for market access.
- Counselling and guidance as well as support in the process of its formal establishment.
- Networking with local public and private partners to enter the market.
- Provision of the necessary equipment such as computers and printers, and of materials such as recycled and natural materials, etc.

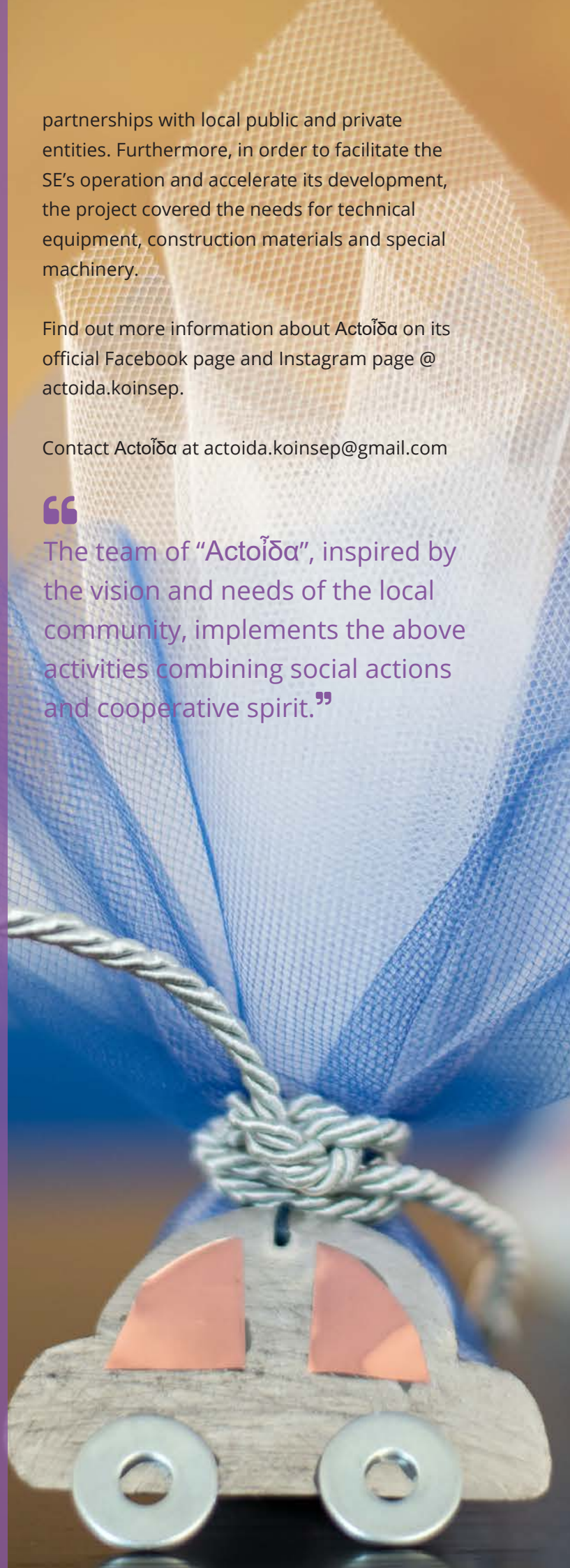
“Actoída” establishment was supported by the development of a Business Plan and a Marketing Plan that described the SE’s vision, mission and goals, as well as the products, services and business activities it carries out. A SWOT analysis and an analysis of the external environment were prepared, which outlined the potential threats and opportunities regarding the SE’s operations. Also, it received specialised support and mentoring to access the market and develop

partnerships with local public and private entities. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the SE’s operation and accelerate its development, the project covered the needs for technical equipment, construction materials and special machinery.

Find out more information about Actoída on its official Facebook page and Instagram page @actoida.koinsep.

Contact Actoída at actoida.koinsep@gmail.com

“
The team of “Actoída”, inspired by the vision and needs of the local community, implements the above activities combining social actions and cooperative spirit.”





5. Communication and Dissemination

The main goal of the communication and dissemination activities was the effective promotion of the project and the effective engagement of local

stakeholders by informing all stakeholders and encouraging them to participate in the project, contributing to its dissemination and success.

Communication Objectives:

Inform the general public and stakeholders about the project.

Attract target groups.

Raise public awareness regarding the project and the expected results and progress within defined target groups, making good use of effective communication tools.

Mobilise media and stakeholders to ensure the maximum positive engagement and stakeholders' participation.

Disseminate fundamental knowledge, methodologies and technologies developed during the project.

Receive feedback from different stakeholders, which is useful for possible adaptations and the planning of future projects.

Exchange experiences with projects and teams working in the same field in order to unite their efforts and maximise potential opportunities.

Strengthen the positive view of the project and the EU to the general public in order to promote an encouraging environment for forthcoming similar or related projects.

Direct target groups (key project stakeholders):

1. Long-term unemployed as well as professionally and financially weak groups from the Municipality of Gotse Delchev and the structures of SOS Children's Villages Greece.
2. Vulnerable social groups or high-risk groups: disabled, unemployed, Roma, single parent families, abused women, trafficking victims, refugees, migrants, repatriated individuals, and people affected by natural disasters.
3. Existing and potential social entrepreneurs who are interested in broadening their scientific background and improving their professional and personal skills.
4. Social entrepreneurship consultants and business executives working in social economy services, who wish to enrich their knowledge and skills on the subject.
5. Business executives who have an active role in Corporate Social Responsibility actions.

Communication tools included:

1. Design, development and maintenance of the trilingual website of the project: www.sosedee.eu
2. Development of social media channels
3. Press Releases and Newsletters
4. Creation of three (3) videos to promote the educational programme, social entrepreneurship and project's results
5. Brochures and booklets
6. Graphic design and promotional material: presentation template, letterhead, invitations, roll ups, press kit, gadgets, etc.
7. Events
8. Creation of digital photo album / Portable exhibition

SoSEDEE's dialogue with stakeholders and local societies

Informing and involving stakeholders was the most important part of the communication actions, as it served a dual purpose: informing the public about the project and attracting beneficiaries, as well as connecting the programme and the

SEs with the local community. Street actions, press conferences and meetings were held in order to inform high level stakeholders about the project activities, to receive their comments and proposals and increase their engagement in all levels.

Press conferences

- In November 2018 and in May 2019, SOS Children's Villages held press conferences for the promotion of the educational programme in the region of Kavala and Alexandroupolis.
- In June 2020, the Municipality of Gotse Delchev held a press conference for the official opening of the greenhouse built under the project.

- Gotse Delchev Municipality organised an outdoor event in the city park to promote the Municipal SE and its activities regarding green economy.

Meetings with stakeholders

- Four meetings with local and regional stakeholders in the CB area were held in Gotse Delchev, Kavala and Alexandroupolis, to promote the educational programme, to establish permanent support structures and to create a network for ongoing support.

Street Actions

- SOS Children's Villages implemented two street actions in Kavala and Alexandroupolis before the beginning of each training cycle in November 2018 and May 2019, aiming to inform the local community about the educational programme and the certification.



6. The Next Day: Impact and Capitalisation Plan

The establishment and operation of SEs is proven to be very important for the local economies and employment, under prerequisites such as confidence on the objectives, common values and principles, trust among members, readiness for continuous improvement and changes, networking and well trained members and employees. Through the appropriate consultation, people would recognise key elements such as existence of common values and principles; furthermore, prior to any attempt to cooperate professionally with each other, advanced training on social entrepreneurship and business development are priority elements. SoSEDEE project developed a series of tools, among which the Syllabus on social entrepreneurship, which are also tested in

two cycles of training, including experiential training. The establishment of structures which would support the whole process of the creation of SEs and would cooperate with knowledge bodies for the training of the potential entrepreneurs, would significantly contribute to the sustainability of the new ventures and their long-lasting impact in the local societies.



www.sosedee.eu



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