

CASE STUDY TITLE: THESGI

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THEME: WRITE DOWN ONE OF OUR 4 THEMES:, SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Case study (350 - 500 words in total divided in the following elements)

Case study description:

It was founded in 2013 in Larissa, Greece and it consists of 75 members (agricultural entrepreneurs) that have over 28000 m² of arable land. Its purpose is to promote the cooperation among its members in order to achieve economic, social and cultural development. Moreover, the cooperative wishes to promote the production of its members.

The original actions of the cooperative were to collect and distribute the products that were produced by the members. However, the scope and activities of the cooperative expanded to include the buying and distribution of products by farmers that are not part of the cooperative, selling agricultural services and material, resources etc.

The cooperative was established with the purpose of providing more power to the local, small entrepreneurs and assist them in gaining advantages that would otherwise be difficult for just one businessperson/farmer to achieve by themselves. In addition, the management of the organization understood that sustainability instead of a limit could be seen as an opportunity and as a result the organization incorporated sustainability practices in the business model.

As a cooperative, the organization attempts to maximize profits to its members by selling their products in markets both in Greece and abroad. Cooperatives are one of the oldest and most common forms of agricultural entrepreneurship in Greece, however what separates ThesGi from other cooperatives is their focus on sustainable agricultural practices, the continuous education of its members and the selling of products of high quality. As a result, the effects of the organization in the environment and society are:

- Promotion of sustainable agricultural practices
- Production, selling of agricultural products at a local level thus reducing the effects of pollution due to transportation
- Focus on local communities and micro-producers increases the living standards of poorer regions

The success of ThesGi could be attributed to several factors such as:

- The structure of the organization, with clear departments each of which plays a significant role in the overall success
- The focus of the organization on local communities of rural entrepreneurs and its expansion to surrounding areas
- The work of the organization in all aspects of agricultural production (supplies, products, services)
- The marketing to the local communities

As a cooperative, the metrics that are being used to assess the success or failure of the organization are: (1) the maximization of profits of the members by selling their agricultural products to customers (2) the constant evolution of the knowledge of its members and the continuous modernization of all agricultural/production techniques.

The revenues of the cooperative come in the form of a percentage of the revenues gained by its members and the main costs are related to personnel and funds that become available to its members for new machinery, agricultural production expenses, research and development etc.



Closure, with focus questions arising from the case / problem:

Despite the success of the cooperative up to now, there are several factors that could limit its success:

Firstly, like all agricultural entrepreneurs they are limited by the global environment especially with the increasing cost of energy and supplies. These two aspects are especially important because they are out of the (decision) control of the cooperative, but could seriously impede their business model. Moreover, scaling up has proven difficult so far, since the organization is limited mainly to the geographical area of Thessaly. In addition, Research and Development and the use of Technology (Information Systems etc.) are rather limited especially due to the high cost of technological innovation in Greece. Finally, the inherent political and financial instability in Greece that might limit the organization's success.

STAKEHOLDERS: (1) THESGI (2) LOCAL AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

ETHICAL ISSUES (**POSITIVE**, NEGATIVE) IN RELATION TO THE SCENARIO: (1) ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES (2) LIMITED IMPACT TO OTHER REGIONS (3) SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES-EFFECT: IN GENERAL THE EFFECT OF THE COOPERATIVE CAN BE CONSTITUTED AS POSITIVE SINCE IT HAS HELPED SMALL AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS TO INCORPORATE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN THEIR PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES WITHOUT IMPEDING ON THEIR REVENUES

GREEN SKILLS ADDRESSED: (KEEP RELEVANT ONES FROM THE LIST) DESIGN SKILLS, LEADERSHIP SKILLS, MANAGEMENT SKILLS, CITY PLANNING SKILLS, LANDSCAPING SKILLS, ENERGY SKILLS, FINANCIAL SKILLS, PROCUREMENT SKILLS, WASTE MANAGEMENT SKILLS, COMMUNICATION SKILLS

SDGS ADDRESSED: GOAL 2: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

