

**TROODOS SPRING SCHOOL 2023**

“Sustainable and inclusive development in the face of the climate crisis:  
Focus on Mediterranean mountain areas”

**“Ecomuseum as a platform of sustainable  
development: the case of Marathasa, Cyprus”**

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# 1) The sustainability problem

- ▶ Isolation and remoteness (problems in accessibility, transport cost and lack of economies of scale)
- ▶ Small market (high production cost)
- ▶ Low productivity
- ▶ Low added-value
- ▶ High percentages of aged people
- ▶ Low percentages of young and female activity
- ▶ High percentage of long-term unemployment

- ▶ Seasonal employment of non qualified personnel
- ▶ Low percentages of competitiveness and innovation
- ▶ Very low expenditure and limited human capital dedicated to Information Society and Research and Development
- ▶ Small population
- ▶ Rural deprivation and demographic problems
- ▶ Migration and illegal migration

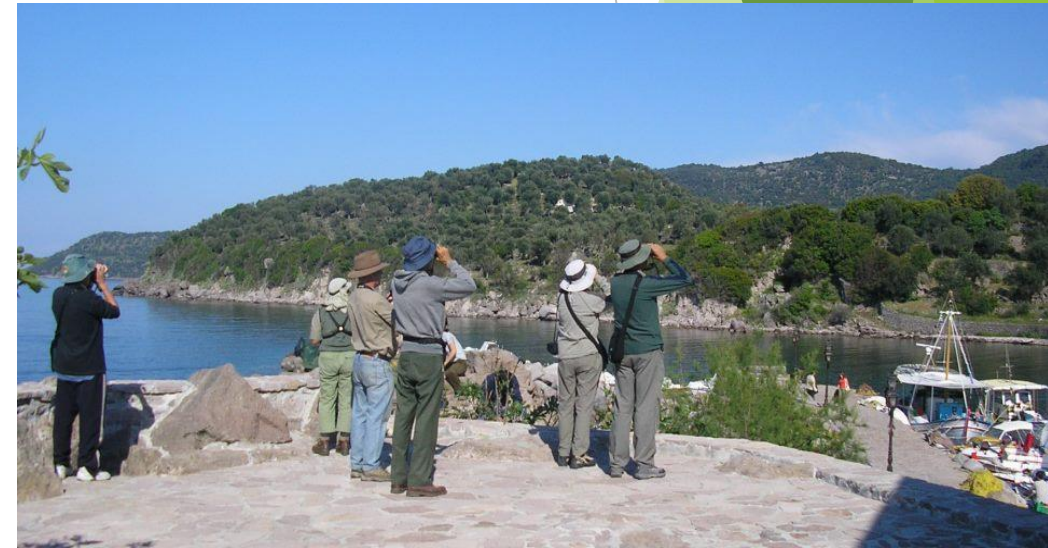


## 2) Basic goals for sustainable development

Official Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), researchers of SD (e.g. Kondyli, 2010), Strategic Planning goals:

1. Employment
2. Quality and quantity of products and services
3. Environmental quality
4. Renewable Energy
5. Protection of biodiversity
6. Landscape
7. Education
8. Public participation (activation of civil society)
9. Information Society
10. Research & Development

(all of them are interrelated)



### 3) The “ecomuseum” as a tool for sustainable development

- ▶ Introduced by the museologists Hugues de Varine and Georges H. Riviere in 1971
- ▶ “ECO” (from the Greek ‘οἶκος’) = natural environment + “MUSEUM” = a place or temple dedicated to the 9 Muses of the Greek Mythology (goddesses of the various arts)
- ▶ Museum of culture, nature and history without walls, associating the exhibits with their wider natural and human environment, conditions and functions
- ▶ Community museum (de Varine, 1996)
- ▶ Holistic approach to the interpretation of cultural landscape since traditional museums are not able to capture the special nature of places ~ 600 ecomuseums in the world, 340 in Europe (Davis, 2011)





### 3) The “ecomuseum” as a tool for sustainable development

- ▶ Ecological, ethnographical, folklore, historical and archaeological heritage, exhibited in certain ways throughout the place (in gardens, roads, neighborhoods, public buildings, cultural centers, etc. )
- ▶ The “living evidence” of an era should not be cut off its environment...otherwise it becomes a dead object
- ▶ Based on structured narrations on selected topics focused on human relations with place and landscape





### 3) The “ecomuseum” as a tool for sustainable development

- ▶ Ecomuseum as a platform of sustainable local development → use of common cultural and natural assets with an emphasis on quality and the promotion of living heritage aiming at the provision of integrated experience
- ▶ Ecomuseum as an operational tool of policy → especially in lagging areas





## 4) Scope and aims of an “ecomuseum”

What is the main scope of an “ecomuseum”?

To function as a platform of activation, organization and promotion of local assets.





# 4) Scope and aims of an “ecomuseum”

What is the main set of aims of an “ecomuseum”?

1. Improvement of life quality and strengthening of the sense of community
2. Protection/ Preservation of common heritage assets and sustainable management.
3. Empowerment of local capital





## 4) Scope and aims of an “ecomuseum”

### Aims of an ecomuseum

#### 1. Improvement of life quality and strengthening of the sense of community

- ▶ Local empowerment and activation of ‘civil society’
- ▶ Management and planning ‘by the local community for the local community’ = bottom-up approach (i.e. local people decide what aspects of their ‘place’ are important to them and address the values attaching to landscapes)
- ▶ Based on a social contract - shared responsibilities
- ▶ Co-operation among local actors, administrative bodies, scientists, NGOs, citizens, etc.
- ▶ Decisions made after general stakeholders’ meeting





## 4) Scope and aims of an “ecomuseum”

### Aims of an ecomuseum

#### 2. Protection/ Preservation of common heritage assets and sustainable management.

- ▶ Re-approach the local development model...
- ▶ Revival of local ethics, customs, traditions and celebrations
- ▶ Help locals to construct their own sense of identity through the relation of nature and culture
- ▶ Increase sensitization and awareness in environmental, cultural and landscape issues and develop an environmental/ landscape conscience
- ▶ Protection, management and planning of landscape



## 4) Scope and aims of an “ecomuseum”

### Aims of an ecomuseum

#### 3. Empowerment of local capital

- ▶ Local capital = cultural, natural, social, human
- ▶ Rejuvenation and support of a variety of traditional professions such as stonemasons, tailors, needleworkers, soapmakers, carpenters, charcoal makers, packsaddlers, tinkers, basket makers, cutlers, etc
- ▶ Development of new products, services and ideas
- ▶ Promotion of local products and cuisine
- ▶ Promotion of alternative sources of tourism, such as agro-tourism, ecotourism, cultural, gastronomic and science tourism, etc





## 5) Distribution of ecomuseums in the world

Country	Number of ecomuseums	Under development	Operational	Closed
France	87	-	87	-
Italy	86	15	69	2
Spain	41	5	36	-
Poland	22	7	15	-
Brazil	16	4	12	-
Portugal	13	4	9	-
Canada	13	2	11	-
Sweden	12	-	12	-
China	10	1	9	-
Japan	9	-	9	-
Belgium	4	-	4	-
Czech Rep.	4	1	3	-
Denmark	4	-	4	-
Switzerland	4	-	4	-
Argentina	4	-	4	-
Costa Rica	4	1	3	-
Great Britain	3	2	1	-
Germany	2	-	2	-
Norway	2	-	2	-
Australia	2	-	2	-
Vietnam	2	1	1	-
Finland	1	-	1	-
Greece	1	-	1	-
Netherlands	1	1	-	-
Slovakia	1	-	1	-
Turkey	1	1	-	-
India	1	-	1	-
Mexico	1	-	1	-
Senegal	1	-	1	-
USA	1	-	1	-
Venezuela	1	-	1	-

- Most of them in **Mediterranean countries**: France, Italy, Spain
- 54% of French ecomuseums are managed by the state and 46% operate within private associations
- Sources of income: EU programs, projects, admission fees, shop sales, funding from organizations, clusters, schools' fieldtrips, etc.
- 2000's & onwards: 400 ecomuseums in the world, almost 350 in Europe (Borrelli & Davis, 2012)
- 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Ecomuseums, Community Museums and Living Communities Ecomuseums 2012", September 19-21, 2012, Seixal, Portugal
- Many good examples of sustainable development (even if they do not use the title 'ecomuseum', the philosophy is the same): Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Portugal, G. Britain, etc (Davis, 2011)
- e.g. **Seixal Ecomuseum, Portugal** = 10 members of staff, 18 people work in projects, varied program of exhibitions, lectures, guided walks and educational activities, 20.000 visitors in 2009

(Davis, 2011)

# 6) Greek ecomuseums

## Old thematic museums (1990's)

- ▶ Neolithic lakeside settlement of Dispilio, Kastoria
- ▶ Old Marble Quarries in Dionysos, Attiki
- ▶ Open-Air Water Power Museum in Dimitsana (Peloponnese)
- ▶ Open-air Water Museum is located in the city of Edessa, Central Macedonia



## New

- ▶ Ecomuseum “Kouritia Odos” (northwest of Mount Ida in Crete), 2008
- ▶ Rhodes Ecomuseum, 2012
- ▶ Aaos/Vjosa River Ecomuseum, 2014 (working)
- ▶ Zagori ecomuseum, 2014 (working)
- ▶ Ecomuseum of peri-urban region of Patra, 2015
- ▶ Ioannina ecomuseum, 2015
- ▶ Eleusina ecomuseum (under construction)



(JOY-WELCULT: “Job, Young and knowLEdge in Landscape-Culture”, Co-funded by the EU and by national funds of Greece and Italy, European Regional Development Fund)



## 7) The case of Marathasa: introduction

- ▶ Characterized as the less attractive, with a low performing economy,
- ▶ Limited tourism activity
- ▶ Insufficient **infrastructure** and provided public services
- ▶ Failure to protect the **local development resources** (biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscape)
- ▶ Lack of comprehensive **action strategy** for environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being
- ▶ **INTERREG V-A Greece-Cyprus 2014-2020 ~ “ECO-MUSE” Project**

Development of a **new territorial mountain economy** and development of rural installation/ counterurbanization prospects.



## 8) The case of Marathasa: Ecomuseum action plan

### Tasks in project's work packages:

1. Research and record/identification of natural and cultural assets and their interrelations
2. Investigating the international experience and good practices
3. Planning and organization of thematic routes
4. Training/ activation of entrepreneurs, artists, craftsmen and local actors towards the aims, needs and benefits of the ecomuseum
5. Information and communication: production of maps and guides and technological applications
6. Networking-cooperation of clusters of entrepreneurs
7. Organization and coordination of exhibitions and thematic parks
8. Publicity action plan, promotion and networking with other ecomuseums and institutions



# 9) The case of Marathasa: Thematic routes and structured narrations

## i. Paths with a View and a Vision

Monasteries, Holy Temples, Chapels, vegetation, hospitality, panoramic views, Byzantine and Post-Byzantine heritage and history (Prodromos-Lemithou-Kaminaria-Paleomilos-Treis Elies)





## 9) The case of Marathasa: Thematic routes and structured narrations

### ii. The art of farming and the nutritious culture

Agricultural products, production places, traditional techniques (Treis Elies) ~ emphasis on cherries and apples



Cherries and apples in myth, art, gastronomy, health, science, literature, etc.

Nutrition and health claims

“A health claim is any statement about a relationship between food and health”





## 9) The case of Marathasa: Thematic routes and structured narrations

### iii. Mountainous villages, memories, and traditional arts

Journeys to the art of woodcarving, pottery, stonemasonry, metallurgy and weaving (Lemithou)

Centre of Cultural Education and Information on  
Traditional Arts

Participation in various arts and crafts' workshops (painting,  
pottery, wood carving, silversmith, goldplating, sewing, etc)

Meeting with the Emigrant Association



## 9) The case of Marathasa: Thematic routes and structured narrations

### iv. The mountain paths of the Forest and Life in Nature

#### The wild mountainous landscape (Prodromos)

- Visit at the Centre of the Ecomuseum
- Walking and Bicycle Routes
- Environmental education, Forest School, picnics, games, etc.
- Meetings with local societies, emigrant associations.





## 9) The case of Marathasa: Thematic routes and structured narrations

### v. Music, dance, festivals and cultural heritage (Lemithou)

- *Parakentro - Musical & folklore activities*



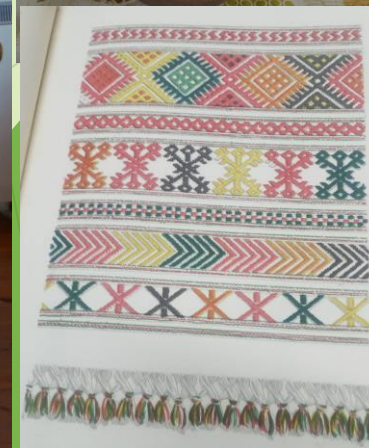


# 10) Products of the Ecomuseum

- ▶ fruits (cherries, apples, grapes, apricots, pears, plums, walnuts, etc)
- ▶ vegetables
- ▶ jams, jellies and marmalades
- ▶ rosewater
- ▶ zivania
- ▶ traditional doughnuts
- ▶ oregano
- ▶ wine “Koumandaria”
- ▶ honey
- ▶ lemon balm
- ▶ lavender
- ▶ aromatic plants



**PLUS:** products of basketry, silversmith, painting, hagiography, embroidery, ceramics, pottery, wood carving, weaving





## 11) The case of Marathasa: Permanent Exhibitions and suggested actions



- Farmers' Markets: A new co-operative marketing strategy without intermediaries
- Local arts and crafts' exhibition



- Festival of Apples and Cherries
- Development of the Ecomuseums' Seed Bank
- Participatory Guarantee Systems: products and services of high cultural and social value
- Multifunctional farms

## 11) The case of Marathasa: Permanent Exhibitions and suggested actions

### More suggested actions...

- ▶ Exhibitions/ seminars **in situ** and encouragement of **active participation**: in farmers' olive groves (e.g. harvesting, pruning, processing), in craftsmen workshops (e.g. pottery, saddlemaking), in women's co-operative kitchens, in artists' ateliers (e.g. painting), in village squares (e.g. folk dancing), neighborhoods (e.g. weaving, sewing), etc.
- ▶ Information kiosks: **souvenirs made from locals** (planning new products) could be disposed.
- ▶ Seminars of ecology, zoology, botanology, history, geography, etc.
- ▶ **Reading literature**, local stories and fairytales in selected environments
- ▶ Children's art competitions
- ▶ **'Adopt your tree'** campaigns (e.g. [www.adoptyourolivetree.com](http://www.adoptyourolivetree.com) - "liquid gold from Greece delivered to your table").
- ▶ Construction of **landscape parks** (works of local artists with local, natural and ecological materials)
- ▶ Establishing of an Ecomuseum Common Fund?

(and many more...)

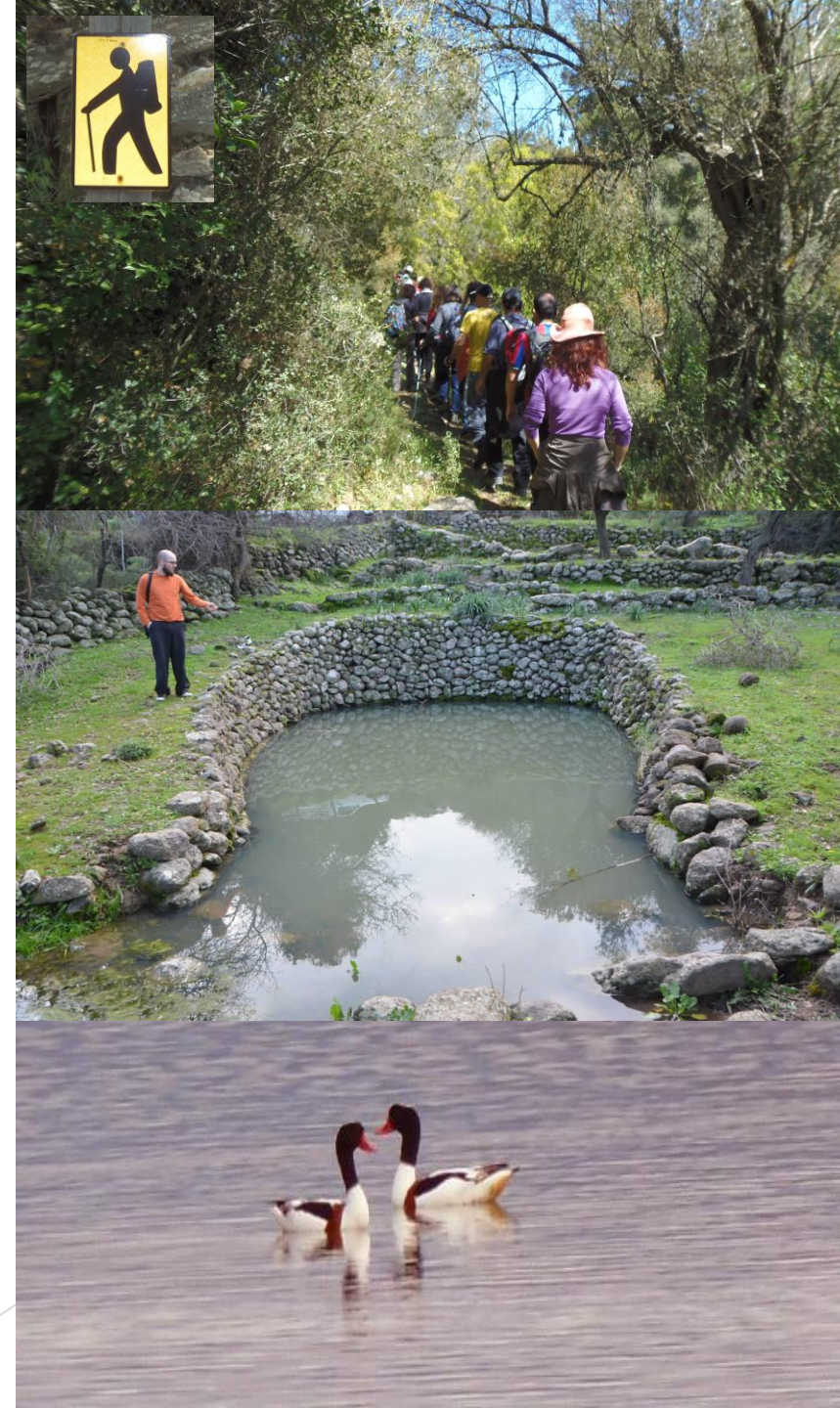


## 12) Management Body of the Ecomuseum

1. Representative of producers/ processors
2. Representative of agrotouristic rooms to rent/ hotels
3. Representative of restaurants/ taverns / cafeneions
4. Representative of NGOs (e.g. Eco Village)
5. Representatives of Diaspora Societies
6. Representatives of Local Administration (Local/Community Presidents)
7. Representatives of Development Companies
8. Representative of Public Administration (i.e. Environment and Tourism Sectors)
9. Representative of Education and Lifelong Learning (Ministry of Education and State Secretariat for Culture)

# 13) Conclusions

- ▶ Need for better management of local resources: indigenous seeds, agricultural products, raw materials, waste, ecosystems, energy, landscape, history, culture.
- ▶ Islands' natural disadvantages could turn into comparative advantages if **marketed** accordingly (evoking 'authenticity', 'romanticism', 'tradition', 'simplicity', 'quality', 'adventure', etc)
- ▶ Ecomuseum is not about building new infrastructure... it's about using the assets you already have by networking, co-operating and sharing the same vision.
- ▶ Need for bottom-up approaches and activation of civil society
- ▶ Sustainable development = **agriculture—arts and crafts & small family businesses—alternative forms of tourism**
- ▶ Investment on locality, quality and innovation





# 13) Conclusions

- ▶ **Prospects:** ecotourism, geotourism, diving tourism, thermal tourism, cultural tourism, science tourism, gastronomy tourism, religious tourism, sport/active tourism
- ▶ Insularity does not favour quantity, exports, economies of scale, but consumption in the place of production.
- ▶ In Greece, a ‘reverse mobility towards the countryside’ creates the preconditions for sustainable development (Kasimis and Zografakis, 2014).
- ▶ The concept of “ecomuseum” is directly related with the concept of “landscape” and such practices could help in the implementation of European Landscape Convention (Greek Law 3827/2010).
- ▶ Ecomuseum as a platform of **sustainable development**

