

Women's Agrotourist Cooperatives in Greece: Key Elements for Their Successful Operation

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Abstract

Women's agrotourist cooperatives constitute the most original type of rural tourism in Greece because of its planning, organization and management. This article aims to analyze the women's agrotourist cooperatives, to point out the bottom-up approach that is determinant for their successful operation, identify the factors that motivate Greek farm-women to join such cooperatives and the effects of such a decision on their life. The results indicate that the most successful cooperatives are those that meet one or more of the following conditions: 1) the cooperatives are made up of a core of women with leadership skills; 2) there is an authority that encourages and supports women's ventures; and 3) their establishment is based on the bottom-up approach. The women's cooperatives managed to professionalize their parttime work. They created a source of income for rural women and gave them independence, power of control and self-esteem. Furthermore, the cooperatives resulted in placing the localities, in which they were established, on the Greek map of "alternative tourism".