

# Cooperation stories

## from the MED PROGRAMME

### Moving back to the country...

Young people often want to leave their home villages to experience life in the big cities, but once they decide to go back 'home', they wonder what these lands can offer.

To this question, Dimitrios Georgiadis found an answer in 2009. He graduated in physics at the Aristote University of Thessaloniki, but was raised in the Sintiki municipality. After his graduation he moved back to his home town and created the first private school of the region offering academic support for secondary pupils.

Anasthasios Perdio also wanted to move back to the town he was born in, but at the same time he wanted to keep working as a journalist. In 2009 he managed to make both wishes come true: he moved back to his home town Larnaca in Cyprus where he funded the first alternative newspaper of the region, 'Larnaca's Alternative Voice'.



These two stories have one name in common: *PHILOXENIA*. This is the name given to a project co-financed by the European Territorial Cooperation MED Programme, referring to the concept of 'hospitality' in Greek language. The project gathers six different partners, all representing remote rural areas of the Mediterranean area and pursuing the same ambition: the fight against demographic decline in their territories by supporting the realisation of efficient micro-activities.

In three years, 90 companies could have been set up thanks to an administrative, technical and financial support based on a common transnational model and designed by partners spread all over the Mediterranean area - but all facing the same problem.

With the design of these small companies, people were motivated to move back to their homeland or to stay within these remote areas and to actively contribute to revitalize these territories by creating new structures which would have probably never been developed without this help, such as a private interactive language school in the small town of Abbasanta (Sardinia, 2800 inhabitants) or a photovoltaic system installation company in Irakleia (Macedonia, 3600 inhabitants).

Developing such a welcoming climate and models to attract new populations in the rural area is an overall challenge within the Mediterranean area that needs to be addressed in a common way. This is why four project partners have committed themselves to continue their work and to disseminate the experiences gathered within this project and related activities within the framework of a new European project called 'GRISI PLUS'. This project developed by 14 partners, is getting ready to foster economic development in rural area within a European strategy.

**More about the project on [www.philoxeniamed.tpa-kepi.gr](http://www.philoxeniamed.tpa-kepi.gr)**



**More about the MED Programme on [www.programmemed.eu](http://www.programmemed.eu)**



Programme cofinancé par le Fonds Européen de Développement Régional

Programme cofinanced by the European Regional Development Fund