

The role of rural tourism in mountain areas as a development agent

The small village of Kalopanayiotis, in the mountains of Cyprus, is a **good example of how rural tourism can be considered as a sustainable way to preserve communities**. Even if in this town we can find some buildings chartered by UNESCO as cultural heritage monuments, this community was facing a growing problem of depopulation.

The main problem was that local economy depended only on tourism, but tourists just stayed the time that took them to visit the popular byzantine church and the nearby museum located in this area and then left.

Nowadays, thanks to a **strategic and integrated cultural plan, this community has better rural infrastructures and tourism facilities that provide a larger offer to visitors** (hotels, bars, restaurants etc.). This initiative has another **benefit to the quality of life of the community** that is the replacement of the accesses to the village that have been renewed. As a result of the mentioned plan, the creation of some other small companies was stimulated and the economy in the area has a noticeable economic growth. This impact brought so many benefits to Kalopanayiotis that depopulation has stopped and young people are now staying in the village.

In a second part of the project the **Lavrentios** residence in the village is expected to be renewed and transformed into a cultural centre. Lavrentios will aim at offering to locals and visitors a place for cultural exhibitions.

This project was funded by the public financing programmes and co-financed by ERDF.

FB: Discover how rural tourism in mountain areas is a development agent

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