

The AGROF-MM ERASMUS+ Educational Project

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Extended Abstract

Agroforestry is a traditional land use system that may represent the answer to many present and future environmental problems. However, many farmers who practice agroforestry do not identify it as agroforestry nor even accept such identification. So far, there has not been an organized training method on agroforestry apart the Agroforestry MM method. The Agroforestry MM, "Agroforesterie – Formation - Méditerranée et Montagne", was a 3-year KA-2 ERASMUS+ educational project that aimed to i. Train between 130 and 150 agricultural professionals in Europe, ii. Improve and develop the education tools to enable agroforestry training to be sustainable, and, iii. Develop a unique agroforestry qualification program in each European country. It was coordinated by AgroSup Dijon, France. Thirteen partners from ten different countries participated in the program by contributing a wide range of knowledge, experiences and ideas. Within the framework of the Agroforestry MM project, European stakeholders were trained based on a general format (Core content) that differentiated based on the location. The trainings contained lectures, examples and a field trip per training.

All participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire on their opinion on the trainings, their knowledge on agroforestry before and after the trainings as well as their opinion on ways to improve future trainings. These questionnaires are important assets derived from the project and should be used as a tool for policy makers to improve environmental education and decisions on environmental protection and management.

As expected, the priorities of the participants differed depending on their educational level and their age. European stakeholders were satisfied by the training

format and stressed the need and willingness for interaction with other farmers and experts.

In concrete, most undergraduate students (L5 and L6), appreciated the trainings for it has given them the opportunity to advance their knowledge on agroforestry. They positively commended the field trips as an opportunity to witness agroforestry in "real life" and as an opportunity to meet people that practice it (farmers and counselors) and possibly discuss with them. Being students, they valued the training tools available to them (PCs, KDB and, other information), even if they would have appreciated more. Overall, they were pleased with their trainers and fellow students.

Farmers comprised an important component and target group of the participants. It is noteworthy the high educational level of the farmers who participated in the trainings. They were mostly living in small cities and were quite aware of agroforestry and its advantages. Those who were practicing agroforestry were willing to continue, mostly silvopastoralism, and were looking for more information and trainings on this subject.

As general conclusions it can be said that the trainings fully succeed accomplishing the initial goals set by the project giving the opportunity to many and diverse stakeholders, throughout the Mediterranean Mountains and Mediterranean areas, to be informed and trained at a high competence level. As a next step it is suggested that more applied trainings can be incorporated into the core content or, at least, to create different ones depending on the knowledge level of the participants. The knowledge acquired by these trainings could be an excellent and useful component in the curricula of studies of all educational levels, adapted, of course, accordingly to each level that is addressed to.

Keywords: education, Mediterranean, mountain, European, stakeholders

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