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Press Release

Social Innovation in Mountainous Areas

Empowering Mountain Communities: Fair and Solidarity Tourism Workshop

The culmination of a transformative workshop on Fair and Solidarity Tourism marked the closing ceremony on Sunday in the picturesque mountain village of Demati Zagori. This significant event was held in the framework of the INCULTUM project and the pilot of Aaos The Shared River in collaboration with [Impact Hub Athens](#).

The workshop unfolded over three Sundays, with the first two sessions hosted at the [Metsovion Interdisciplinary Research Center](#) (M.I.R.C.) of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA). These initial sessions delved into the principles of Fair Tourism and Voluntary Tourism, solutions that are implemented in the greek pilot and are exploring how these concepts can contribute to the sustainable development of mountainous regions.

Notably, this workshop brought together cultural associations, local stakeholders, and representatives from neighbouring regions, all with a keen focus on Solidarity and Voluntary Tourism. Participants were deeply interested in adopting pilot solutions and strategies discussed during the workshop to implement in their own contexts. The collaborative nature of the workshop facilitated knowledge exchange and the exploration of innovative approaches to address the challenges faced by mountain communities.

During the workshop, participants were introduced to and trained on the new website set up by The High Mountains in the context of INCULTUM. Additionally, sessions on cooperative branding and marketing of community-based experiences equipped attendees with practical tools to effectively showcase and promote their unique offerings.

The climax of the workshop unfolded on the last Sunday with a field trip to the headquarters of [“The High Mountains” SCE](#) in Demati Zagori. Participants had the opportunity to witness firsthand the challenges and opportunities faced by mountain communities. This immersive experience allowed them to apply the knowledge gained in the previous sessions, bridging theory and practice.

Throughout the workshop, critical questions were explored, including: How can we create authentic experiences that showcase our local culture? How do we facilitate conditions for volunteers to contribute to mountain communities? What infrastructure is needed to welcome and accommodate visitors sustainably? These questions were discussed with a shared commitment to fostering a different way of life in villages, one that celebrates and preserves local heritage.

The model of Fair and Solidarity Tourism emerged as a powerful counterbalance to the flattening effects of mass tourism. By highlighting the history, culture, and real-life experiences of a place, this approach not only enriches the visitor's understanding but also strengthens local communities. The collaboration between The High Mountains SCE and Impact Hub Athens, within the INCULTUM framework, marks the beginning of a



transformative journey aimed at revitalizing and empowering mountain communities in North and South Pindus.

As the Fair and Solidarity Tourism workshop concludes, participants leave armed with not just knowledge but also a sense of optimism and the tools necessary to contribute to the realization of a sustainable and vibrant future for mountain communities.

