



REVVA B

CASE STUDIES

Blagovesta Dimitrova Vasileva

1. INTRO

The WILD FARM is in the eastern Rhodope Mountains – the world of Betty and Nicky from the village of Gorno Pole. A secluded ancestral house, at the entrance of the village, has become a home for an incredible young family with 4 children from Madzharovo. They are working as farmers at full-time. That means 10 working hours per day all the year. Now they have a herd more than 500 cows and bulls from local indigenous breeds, horses, bees (domesticated and wild), rabbits, Karakachan sheep and dogs. Take care for a garden with watermelons and melons, and no small vegetable garden with everything that grows in these lands.

<http://bedandbirding-rhodopes.bg/en/en-index.html>

2. PROMOTER PROFILE

- **Name:** Blagovesta Dimitrova Vasileva
- **Age:** 42
- **Gender:** Female
- **Education:** Master's or eq.
- **Marital status:** Married
- **Number of children and children age:** 4 children (20, 18, 8, 7)



3. REUSED/VALORISED BUILDING

- **Address - to be used for the building location map:** Village Gorno pole, Municipality Madzharovo.
- **Reused/Valorised building type:** Residential and Stable building.
- **Reuse/Valorisation purpose:** Living space, hotel operation, storage space, holidays on the farm, gastronomy.

Building description before reuse/valorisation

The buildings were two - an old house and barn, inherited from the grandmother of the husband Nicky. They renovated the building with their resources and under the program for rural areas at 2004. They received 4000 leva subsidy under the approved project. The suppliers are local companies that are in the recommendations of friends and colleagues, and also from

Internet. Repairs that made Betty & Nicky are the following: change the frames of windows and doors, plaster walls, new furniture, renovation of bathrooms, new bathrooms, insulation, new roof.

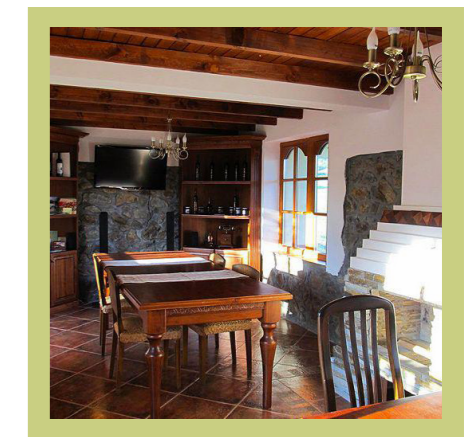
Building Pictures before reuse/valorisation



Building description after reuse/valorisation

Besides the repairing of the old house, the owners added construction of new building with a purpose - a guest house. In the extended renovated version today the farm offers accommodation in 5 apartment-studios, with total bed capacity for 16-20 people. Now there are the renewed living house for the young farmer's family, the renovated barn and the brand new added part to the house for the guests.

Building Pictures after reuse/valorisation



4. FARM DESCRIPTION

- **Address:** Village Gorno pole, Municipality Madzharovo.



- **Farm Area in ha:** 200

Farm description before reuse/valorisation

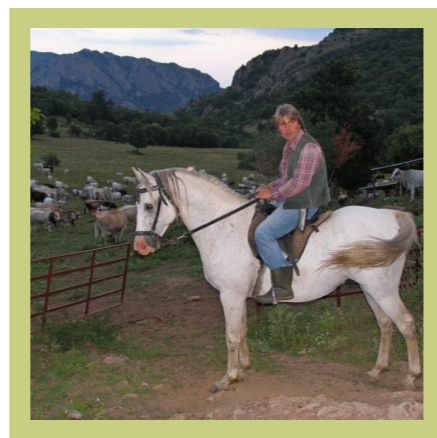
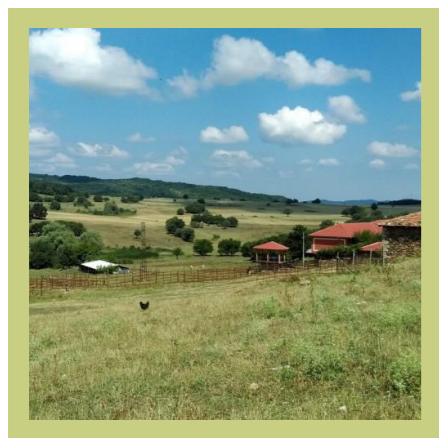
Nicky & Betty began in 1994 with 5-6 goats and sheep. In 1996 sold an apartment in Plovdiv, and with the money bought 16 cows. They started with the repair and restoration of buildings and gradually purchase of land. “Wild Farm” came to reality with the support of the Bulgarian and Dutch Project – the „New Thracian Gold”

Farm description after the reuse/valorisation process:

The young farmers have not just created another complex of guesthouses. They routed the foundations of so-called “Sustainable agriculture”. It is generally familiar way of life in our villages until 50 years ago. In particular for the Eastern Rhodopes was typical “mosaic” kind of landscape achieved by free grazing cattle and horses. The main activities in the farm are field cropping, horticulture, grazing livestock. They develop quality, biological and traditional production, tourism, recreation and education (including product tasting and restoration), and also on-farm sales.

“Wild Farm” is the first farm which has the bio-certificate for animals.

Farm pictures



5. REUSE/VALORISATION PROCESS

The young owners reused/valorised 2 buildings with entire surface of 290m². The previous situation of the buildings was used. All this process takes for them about 10 months. They received kind of aid/counselling like legal, technical and marketing/business counselling. The main problems that the farmers faced during the process were financing, business planning and technical problems. The buildings been reused/valorised for living and for business purposes,

and they think that the investment has been profitable. For them it is a successful process, because the old building became bigger, comfortable and appropriated for their family and for accommodation of visitors and tourists.

Threats/Challenges

Betty & Nicky had many problems mostly by administrative character. They solved them with a lot of headaches and loans. Everything took one year and was organized under the PRD / Program for Rural Development / of MAF / Ministry of Agriculture and Food /.

The risks are related to the continued operation of the farm and guesthouse, what organization to create in order to have good results of the activity. The invested funds were from loans and from approved project under the Program for Rural Development, and the repayment of the loans had to happen with the operating incomes of the farm and welcoming guests with accommodation and feeding. For this purpose were needed trainings, exchange of experience with other similar farms, etc.

Main Training/Skills/Competences

Blagovesta Vasileva is a Chemist, a teacher of chemistry and biology, environmentalist by vocation and a tour guide, having a long-time experience with the “Eastern Rhodopes” Nature Preservation Centre in the town of Madjarovo.

Nikolay Vasilev is an Engineer in Zoology, (Nikolay won the prestigious award - Engineer-Zoologist, Entrepreneur of the Year 2012).

To develop well towards diversification of activities and multifunctionality of the farm, it is necessary for them as owners to have the necessary training and level of education. In this dynamic world in which everything is developing rapidly, they are of the opinion that a farmer must know everything and constantly have to educate and develop. Participation in seminars, meetings and study visits are an opportunity to develop skills that make them successful in their work as farmers, offering additional services such as accommodation, gastronomy, production and processing of organic products and more.

Promoter advice

Yes, it is useful. The ability to share their experience and to know good practices of farmers from other countries and regions who deal with similar of their activities is of exceptional importance for the young owners. Such information exchange is the best way to increase their knowledge and skills for the development of multifunctional activities on the farm. The farmers have participated in seminars, informational meetings and more. In the farm were



held info-tours to display of good practice, and their guests were teachers and trainers, working for the development of the rural economy.

6. CONSIDERATIONS, SKILLS/COMPETENCES INVOLVED IN THE REUSE/VALORISATION PROCESS AND QUERIES/QUESTIONS

General considerations

They both are people who have blended in their souls the purity of nature and the energy, and industriousness of their ancestors. They share and transmit all this with a lot of pride and smiles as to their children, as well as to their numerous visitors from around the world.

Betty is an exceptional cook, a master of folklore dances and an inexhaustible source of positive energy.

Nicky is a farmer by vocation, a real cowboy, unconditionally devoted to his love of animals and nature, whose everyday stories are the worthwhile continuation of the movie "Call of the Wild".

Their philosophy is of the valued rationalized care, and not just possessing the animals, of which have economic benefit.

Skills/Competences especially relevant for the reuse/valorisation process

- In the reconstruction of old buildings and adding new, the young owners had to develop their organizational skills and to acquire skills for planning, goal setting and monitoring of project implementation.
- Applying new methods of work on the farm, they used innovative methods of communication - Internet, Facebook and others social media.
- A fundamental principle in the work of Betty & Nicky is the conservation of biodiversity, conservation and environmental protection, and production of local products by the methods of organic farming.

Queries/Questions

- How to calculate the investment? How to make a successful business plan for reuse, what are the factors conducive to the development of economic activities and new ini-

tiatives in content in the old buildings?

- How to assess the prospects of an old building? What criteria, what requirements to meet?
- By what criteria to evaluate external factors (nature, environment, topography etc.) and internal attitudes (intention to develop specific activities, needs of land for development of the farm or other type of economic activity) to determine a building as promising and suitable for renovation for reuse?
- How to make an initial (non-professional) analysis of the condition of a building?



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Supported by
the Erasmus+ programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Project n°: 2015-1-BE01-KA202-013183