

## **Pilot training in Cretan diet and food reuse**

<sup>1</sup>Irene Christoforidi, <sup>2</sup>Amalia Filippaki, <sup>3</sup>Areti Alexopoulou, <sup>1</sup>Ioannis N. Daliakopoulos and  
<sup>4</sup>Antonia Psaroudaki

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Agriculture, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Heraklion, 71410, Greece*

<sup>2</sup>*Coordinator of Education for Sustainability, Regional Administration of Education in Crete, 71305, Heraklion, Greece*

<sup>3</sup>*Ploigos Educational-Developmental Company, Coordinator of the Network for the Support and Protection of the Cretan Diet, Heraklion, 71303, Greece*

<sup>4</sup>*Department of Nutrition and Dietetics Sciences, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Sitia, 72300, Greece*

### **Abstract**

Modern societies are characterized by intense urbanization. More than half of the global population already lives in cities (Madre et al., 2014). The increasing population density exacerbates problems such as waste-disposal, demands of urban environments and limited capacity of ecological management of food waste. The Cretan Diet, which is at the core of the Mediterranean diet (Guasch-Ferré and Willett, 2021), is widely known to be ideal for health preservation (Becerra-Tomás et al., 2020), longevity and reduction of food loss and waste by promoting the reuse of surplus food resources as potential ingredients for complementary meals (pies, omelets, salads, lentilrice etc.) or new gustatory suggestions. The present study is part of the program “Network for the Support and Protection of the Cretan Diet”, designed by Ploigos Educational Company and funded by the Region of Crete. The program had three main pillars: the Cretan Diet, environmental protection and limiting food waste. It was executed as a pilot project, by 15 teachers and 187 students, on 1st Grade of Primary School, in 4 different schools (Chania, Adele, Gazi, Sitia). The Cretan Diet program consisted of three phases: a) teacher training regarding the value of the Cretan Diet, environment protection and food waste (2 hours) b) parental training (2 hours) and c) implementation of the Lesson Plans (16 X 3 hours per week) within the classroom. Evaluation was carried out with questionnaires distributed to teachers and parents. The program seemed to be accepted well by all stakeholders, that is teachers, students as well as parents and guardians. The educational material produced, could become a “tool” for further methodological research and receive national accreditation.in the field of nutrition and environmental education (natural and social). Additionally, it could help lessen the pedagogical gap in the Greek school system regarding the approach to healthy eating patterns. The way forward would be for the program to be included in the national school curriculum and to be scaled up to the higher grades of primary school, as well as to other types of

educational programs for young children and adolescents.

**Keywords:** Cretan diet, Mediterranean diet, Pilot training, food reuse, Primary school, First grade

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