

Winning the impossible



University of the Mountains



Mountain Partnership

Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
of the United Nations

The challenge

The challenge to which the Ancient Egyptians did not respond was to sail out in the open sea of the Mediterranean. They had a preference for the predictable waters of the Nile. On the contrary, the Ancient Greek people as braver seamen had a predilection for the distant horizons of the open seas, knowing that they had to improvise in an effort to escape Poseidon's fury.

The University of the Mountains is the 'hull' of a new challenge which aims at bringing a little 'mountain' air to the city, (to the urban areas) as much as the knowledge of these urban areas to the people of those rather isolated and rough mountains.



Experience and theoretical grounding

- The University of the Mountains – member of the United Nations Mountain Partnership, is made up of a dynamic community of researchers, academicians, social partners and civilians of the mountainous circumference, who co-operate, learn and experiment on novelties and originalities having as a dominant goal to ‘marry’ theoretical with the scientific knowledge to the benefit of all.
- The local society constitutes the field of research and practical experience not only of the students and scientists of various expertise of the University of Crete, but also of other internationally recognized Universities of Greece and abroad.



Three pillars of support and action

The University of the Mountains invests in man as much as in the sustainable development with an overall respect to the particularity of every place but also to the extensive redistribution of Education.

The University of Mountains is based on three pillars concerning:

- the investment in the human asset of the local societies in the framework of education, grounding and development of Health, which is often in embryonic state.
- the maintenance of the Cultural Identity and endogenous economic development. Emphasis is placed on natural products, on sustainability, on traditional jobs as well as on cultural identity.
- the developing planning of the rural areas which is achieved through an experiential dynamics by all participants in the University of Mountains (scientists, social partners and dwellers of the area), who are encouraged to exchange experiences. The interest of this dynamics is focused mainly on the young people, encouraging their attempt to deal with business.



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The University of the Mountains in action

- The Sacred Monastery of Vosakos, the birthplace of the University of Mountains, January 18th, 2008
- Declaration and signing of the articles of association of the urban, non-profitable company of the University of Mountains in Omalos, Chania, on the 27th of September 2008
- 12 years of volunteer action
- 5.000 registered volunteers-members of all age – groups, education degrees and professions of which,



The University of the Mountains in action

- 250 volunteer doctors of all specialties of the University Clinics of the University of Crete: Ophthalmology – VEIC, General Medicine, Toxicology, Psychiatry, Otolaryngology, Orthopedics, Gynecology – Obstetrics, Neurosurgery, Cardiology, Radiology, Pediatrics, Surgery, Social and Family Medicine, Dermatology.
- More than 16.000 examined patients
- 3.000 references of patients to the hospitals of Crete for further examination.







Ιατροί των Ορέων στο 1ο Ειδικό Σχολείο Ρεθύμνου, 6 Απριλίου 2012



Ιατροί των Ορέων, Γόρτυνα Ηρακλείου, 28 Ιανουαρίου 2011

Ophthalmological activities

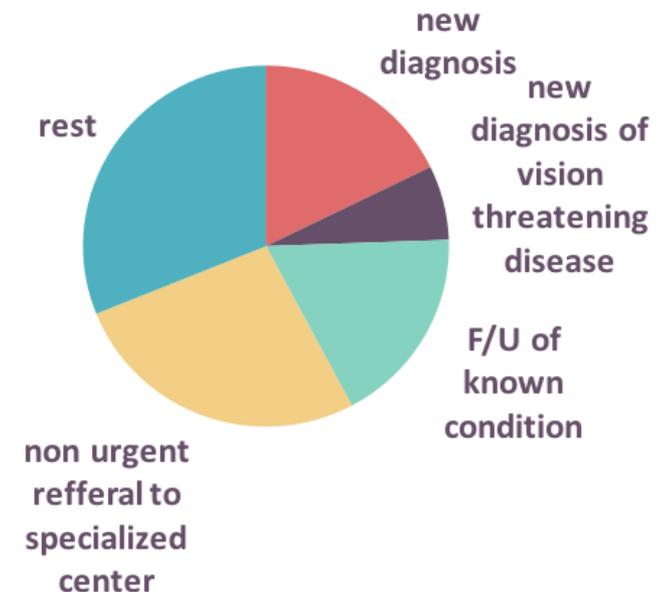
- on average, each expedition day, 60 patients are examined
- in total more than 10.000 patients have been examined
- average age of patients was 63 years
- 10% of patients were more than 80 years old
- 10% of patients had more than 10 years since previous consultation by an ophthalmologist



Ophthalmological activities

- 24% of patients had a new diagnosis
- 7% of patients were diagnosed with a previously unknown vision threatening disease (e.g. glaucoma or wet AMD)
- 17% of patients were offered F/U of known vision threatening disease
- 25% of patients were referred to tertiary hospital for specialized treatment or tests

examination results





The University of the Mountains in action

- Protocols of co-operation with the region of Crete, the Regional Units and the whole of the Municipalities of Crete (24)
- 263 medical, educational and social campaigns in villages of mountainous and remote areas of Crete and of the island of the Southern Aegean, in schools, prisons, orphanages, old people's homes, monasteries etc
- 108 Kafeneion - Coffee shops of the Mountains with more than 4.000 participants
- We have covered more than 28.000 kilometers.



The University of the Mountains in education

- 3800 students participated in educational - mutual teaching actions from
- 350 schools, of remote rural villages and cities, with the participation of
- 800 teachers of elementary and second degree education.
- 15.000 children's books have been distributed free to charitable foundations and schools in all the prefectures of Crete.



Vital interest for the participation to our endeavour from inside the country and from abroad

- Daily requests of participation from all over Crete and Greece: Karpenisi, Karpathos Epirus, Thrace, Western Macedonia, Peloponnesus (Municipality of Gortynia, Ancient Olympia, Epidaurus, Limiras), Kastelorizo
- In progress requests for co-operation with various Greek and foreign foundations (TED, Rolex, Qatar Foundation, the Latsi Foundation, the Bodosaki Foundation, the Niarhos Foundation, the Academy of Athens etc).





In the Kafeneion of the Mountains

At least 4.000 civilians have participated in 108 Kafeneion of the Mountains, where in the presence of local interest groups we have discussed issues which contribute to the reinforcement of the local production as well as to the maintenance of the traditional methods of creation; furthermore the above mentioned issues were also related to the recovery of the per capita income.

A special emphasis has been placed on issues of modern management and ecological conscience:

- Redetermination of Prosperity – Development of the Primary Sector
- The nutritional value of herbs - Oenology
- Apiculture – Development of cattle – breeding – organic husbandry
- Cultivation of forage plants – pasturages and their production
- The Art of Weaving – Penelope Gandhi mission



Penelope Gandhi Mission

the Mission team encourages the people of Crete to take up the thread of the ancient, divine art of Weaving, as an element that connects and reconciles people with themselves, with nature and with other people, not only in Crete but all over the world. The philosophy of the **Penelope Gandhi Mission** is not simply an attempt to revive an abandoned, dying art. Our aim is to re-evaluate the sacred art of Weaving, to highlight its place in every dimension of human existence, and to return it to the modern creative and productive field, while the servants of the weaver's art are still alive to teach its wonderful secrets.



The University of the Mountains represents Greece

The University of the Mountains has been called to represent Greece in the European Union, as one of the three excellent practices which substantiate the opening of supreme Education to non-traditional students in Greece (Opening Higher Education to Adults, HEAD) in Greece.

The other two participants were the Greek Open University and the Plato Academy.



Complete self - financing

All the actions, the missions and the campaigns of the University of Mountains are voluntary and are not financed by any national, communal or private resource; they are supported only by our distinguished members – volunteers based on a unique criterion, that is, solidarity and love...



Finally civilization exists...

...in the 'mixing' of the old and the new, of knowledge with primitiveness, of loneliness with observation.

All of this constitutes the 'wealth' for the University of the Mountains and the challenge for sails in unknown seas...



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Thank you



Knowledge without character,
science without humaneness,
wealth without work,
pleasure without conscience,
transaction without morality,
worship without sacrifice,
politics without principles,
the roots of suffering.

M. Gandhi