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ABSTRACTS**

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A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR WOMEN IN UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS OF CROATIA

Aim of the paper is to describe how in reality the triple-helix model of socio-economic development works through the example of a regional project for women in rural areas of Eastern and Central Slavonia its concept design, unique bottom-up approach, and foreseen outcomes and results.

The main problem indentified is departure of young people and whole families from Croatia into EU countries and passivity of women in rural areas, particularly in the Slavonia region. The concept design desires to stimulate further development of entrepreneurial ventures led by women in specific areas such as agricultural production, agro tourism, handicrafts and souvenirs.

The first challenge was how to attract women to participate in the project covering huge area of seven counties and targeted number of 50 project beneficiaries in total, and get the cooperation with local and regional stakeholders.

Women entrepreneurial profiles were defined of those dealing with agricultural production of fruit and vegetables, cheese, wine, oil, honey, those dealing with agro tourism in any form, and those women entrepreneurs dealing with handicrafts and souvenirs. In a word, women devoted to preserve the cultural, historic, and gastronomic heritage of homeland, but their market is very small and extremely local.

The project goal is to affirm women economic prosperity and increase value added to their products and services. A personal empowering woman contributes to the family and economic recovery of Slavonia and ultimately the entire country.

Methodology used in this paper is a Case Study based on design and concept of the Regional Project „Women Perspective“, being under the implementation in seven Croatian counties by the leading Association for Entrepreneurship development.

Results to be described in the full paper are the socio-economic contribution of 50 women entrepreneurs' beneficiaries from underdeveloped regions to the overall economic development of Croatia.

Key words: Women Entrepreneurs, Social Entrepreneurship, Triple-Helix model, Rural Development, Bottom-up approach.