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Les défis de développement pour les villes et les régions dans une Europe en mutation

## **Self- Government, Sustainable Development and Quality of Life - the example of Anavra Magnisias - Local and Regional Development**

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### **Référence à la session / reference to the session**

(relevant sessions B8, C3)

### **Résumé / Summary**

This article through the case study of Anavra Magnesia, deals with the issue of Sustainable Development as a choice of direction and implementation of local government, with intent achieve a local and regional sustainable development. Subjects of this study comprise the evolution of the settlement in time and its role in the region, taking into account the transition from the previous state to the current, and the design and prioritization, including the intervention process and the different communication policy model in place up unto the development and multiplier benefits that result from that initiative.

The findings enrich the problem of the current range of responsibilities and capabilities of local government today while providing examples from Greece and internationally which confirm that cooperation between the local authority and the local community in the development of local comparative advantages of nature results in the majority of cases to local and regional development, competitiveness, prosperity and improved quality of life.

The city of Anavra through the development of a strategic plan and organization have prioritized a series of initiatives and projects which has made them a best practice rural settlement pattern for others to replicate. The city has become the first settlement of Greece which covers completely its energy needs from renewable energy sources. Alongside the standard of living of the inhabitants which is one of the highest in Greece with no unemployment, it is one of the few mountainous rural villages in Greece where the population is increasing.

The last few years the success story of Anavra has become well known in Europe for two reasons: a) the first reason for the growth Achieved. For ten years it was one of the first among all local authorities in Greece and

in third place within southern European countries (Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece). b) The second reason is for the success it achieved with clean energy and in creating an eco-friendly work environment for its population (wind-energy parks, environmental-cultural park, permanent animal sanctuary, etc.)

Anavra was a rundown village with prescribed the path to decline and depopulation and became a model for sustainable development and prosperity of the inhabitants, with the highest per capita income in Greece. The development was achieved by exploiting the comparative advantages and the focus on sustainable development, which led to a positive reversal of the negative impacts which resulted in an inverse of the magnitude of the success and reputation, making the development model and example to follow both within and to replicate also outside of Greece. Halting the negative path and the beginning of this great progress began after 1990, when the then new Municipal Authority focused on sustainable development and of exploiting their known local comparative advantages, which were the main direction of the initiatives and the design of the four four-year total terms of the Mayor of Anavra (1990 and 1994-1998-2002-2006-2010) .

The above, as well as basic infrastructure projects implemented in the basis of studies and monitoring, which were voluntarily non-remunerated offering of the mayor's husband's time and experience as a collaborator of the overall project – which solved a challenge of settlement development. The transformation of Anavra's prosperity and development results had a multifaceted positive social, economic, demographic, environmental and developmental character. But while the law "Kapodistrias" (1998), for uniting the municipalities of Greece, excluded the village of Anavra as being remote from urban centers with homogeneity, the village with its geological terrain, population, employment and inhabitants, through the Law "Kallikratis" (2011) the community as it stood was abolished and incorporated as part of the city of Almirou. This development makes it more difficult to manage Anavra, as compared with the past. Today the residents, despite the general economic crisis, yet enjoy an excellent quality of life and high incomes, thanks to the design and the investments that had been made previously. Young people after studying in the major urban centers in Greece or abroad are returning to Anavra to operate professional businesses and invest there, in their place of origin.

Key Words: Sustainable Development, Quality of Life, Success Story, Village of Anavra, Greece.

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