



Raising Employability of Women
through entrepreneurial Activities
fostering Rural Development

CASE STUDY

AGNIESZKA GROCHAL-GIL,
BARBARA DRAUS (COPARTNER)

Zaczarowane Wzgórze

INTRODUCTION

The farm “Zaczarowane Wzgórze” (“Enchanted Hill”) is an 11 hectare agritourism farm located in the ecological commune Raciechowice in the south part of Malopolska Province. The view from the farm is beautiful thanks to the Island Beskid Mountains green meadows. The farm holds 50 friendly horses of different breeds and sizes and specializes in horseback riding and rally organization, both for beginners and advanced riders. Horse riding takes place under the guidance of experienced instructors.

The farm is run by two women as a civil law partnership. One of the owners deals with horse breeding and the other with tourist services based on the farm (accommodation, gastronomy, education, organization of events).

The farm was built from scratch in the area purchased by women 15 years ago. It was created from a shared passion for horses, for the countryside, for nature and arose from a dream of a job, which after years could be said “I lived as I wanted, I did what I liked.”

The “Enchanted Hill” is a member of Polish National Educational Farms Network.

1. PERSONAL DATA

 **Name:** Agnieszka Grochal-Gil

 **Age range:** 46 +

 **Education:** Master’s degree.

 **Occupation:** Economist.



2. FARM PROFILE

 **Address:**
Czasław 233 | 32-415 Raciechowice.

 **Farm Area in ha:** over 11.

 **Date since when the female entrepreneur owns/rents the farm:** 2005.

N° of workers on the farms:

	FULL TIME	PART-TIME/SEASONAL	WOMEN
Family members	2	8	4
Other than family members	7	8	8

 **Farm description:** The “Enchanted Hill” covers the area of over 6ha of its own and 5ha of rented. There are pastures and grasslands and a vegetable garden for personal consumption. The main agricultural occupation is horse breeding - over 50 horses of different breeds and sizes, i.e. Shetland, Felin ponies, Polish ponies, Małopolska breed, tinkers. All adapted for riding for various groups of riders. There is also a “mini-zoo” with a large number of pets, such as colorful domestic birds, chickens giving eggs, geese that are ideal guards, rabbits, pigs, goats, sheep, and many others.

The landladies have a lot of empathy for the animals. Their horses are often better taken care of than the owners themselves - horses take advantage of all necessary preventive and health treatments. They have their dietician and undergo periodic examinations.

The women managing the farm believe that “Passion leads to quality, quality leads to perfection, excellence to satisfaction and pride”.

 **Website and social networks accounts:**

www.wzgorze.eco.pl/

www.facebook.com/Zaczarowane-Wzg%C3%B3rze-398171116942584/

www.zagodaedukacyjna.pl/index.php?option=com_places&controller=places&task=details&id=79

3. MULTIFUNCTIONALITY / RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

“Enchanted Hill” is a place that works on many levels. It is both a horse farm, with an emphasis on horse riding lessons, natural horse riding, training and courses as well as a residence tourism facility for children, where summer and winter camps and green schools are organised or a destination for day trips connected with education. Teaching is based on the author’s own experiences, tested and adapted to needs over the years. The didactic programs vary depending on the seasons, group size and age of the children. Each group is treated individually and the programs are flexible.

The farm offers accommodation in a new guest house in 3, 4 and 5 person options with private bathrooms. As a part of the residency offer they propose trips to local historic buildings, e.g. the castle in Dobczyce as well as natural heritage monuments. The culinary offer contains local and traditional products, including organic “Raciechowice apples” inscribed on the List of the Traditional Products. They constantly cooperate with surrounding fruit-growers and juice pressing companies and other local food producers (cold cuts, desserts, bread). The cooperation is reflected in the high quality of food they served and its taste.

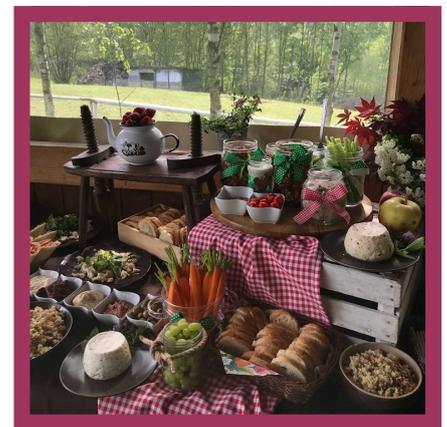
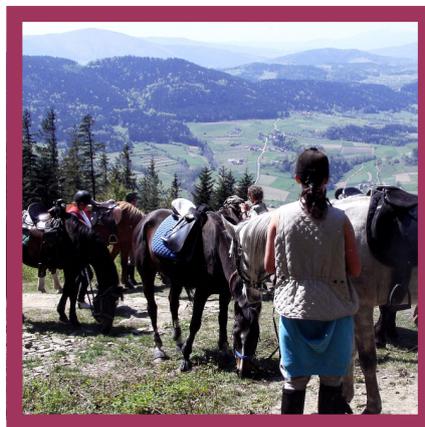
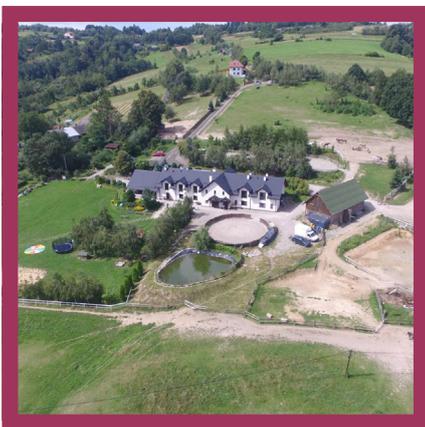
There are also various events organized at “Enchanted Hill” like family, company, and thematic meetings. For example, this winter season there is a series of travel evenings offered (among others Georgian, Argentine), where in addition to a slide show you can listen to music and try cuisine from a given region.

Such a wide range of activities guarantees that the center is active throughout the year, regardless of the season and weather.

“ It is always worth fulfilling your dreams. You need to have a vision, you have to be determined. You have to surround yourself with positive people. And you have to be aware that life is short to lose it in boring work. You have to want and if you want you can. It is worth making dreams come true.

Be authentic - always base on your strengths, because then you are real, you feel strong, your work is pleasant and nothing will surprise you.

”



4. CONSIDERATIONS, TRAINING / COMPETENCES INVOLVED

General considerations:

The main motive behind launching the “Zaczarowane Wzgórze” company was passion - the passion of one of the owners for horses and the passion of the other to receive guests and a shared passion for nature. They created everything from scratch with their own effort without any help. They only used the loan, which they still pay back. “The aid measures are bureaucratic and our ideas cannot wait for long procedures.” In the owners’ opinion, finances are very important but they are not the most important thing, money is just a means. Sometimes there is more dependency on creativity in the use of the area, own skills, infecting guests with your own passion, surrounded by your own joy and warmth.

Everything they communicate and teach is real and comes from the heart. They are happy to create new classes in the spirit of nature and fulfill the mission of infecting new generations with love for nature. “In our rooms there is no TV, no computers, cell phones at the beginning of the camp land in a box and sleep all day so that they do not disturb ... and it is possible to

survive without a phone. We teach that you must have eyes and ears open to what surrounds us.” The greatest joy for farm operators is that guests return to the “Enchanted Hill “, bringing their families, friends and acquaintances.

At the beginning, the owners did all the work themselves. As a result, they are now aware of what work different positions require. This helps them recruit employees.

Everyone who undertakes a similar challenge should have a vision of the enterprise, awareness of hard work and determination in achieving the goal. “You need to have high self-esteem - only inner conviction, self-confidence allows you to survive hard times.” Family support is also extremely important. Owners can count fully on their partners, parents and children.

“Multifunctionality means the possibility of employing / engaging people with different interests, skills, different professions and the opportunity to earn income at different times of the year - if the season for horse riding is bad then maybe it is a better season for events. It also has marketing significance - because it gives recognition to various markets and this affects the increase in the number of recipients.”

Training/Competences (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes) especially relevant for the process:

The owners’ of the “Zaczarowane Wzgórze” are aware of the need for development due to changing market conditions and expectations. They continually invest in the company and, as far as possible, their own and staff’s competences.

Recently, they have acquired the qualifications of personal trainers “Open by Horse” and they have introduced training on personal and professional development using horses by Horse Assisted Education method as a new farm activity.

Women bring passion, a joy of life, a positive attitude, and the ability to turn failure into positive things. They have to plan so that they have enough time for family, work and for themselves - they do not waste time. They have the ability to recover quickly. They are creative. They actively search, watch, and train willingly. They are persistent. They don’t let it go - they are demanding for themselves and others.

Training needed for women:

- Organization of working time
- Company and people management
- Training in media, advertising and marketing
- Industry training in the field in which they want to operate (“You need to be an expert in a given field to feel strong.”)

SWOT analysis:

STRENGTHS

S

Well prosperous business with a clear social profile.
Owners' involvement and creativity.
Picturesque location and an affordable distance from city Cracow.

WEAKNESSES

W

Hard work.
Full time commitment.

OPPORTUNITIES

O

Large interest in the offer.
Cooperation with local farms and companies in term of supply in local food products as well as of employment of the staff.
Giving employment to qualified staff of pedagogues, naturalists, animators, riding instructors.

THREATS

T

Changeable market conditions.
Still new clients requirements.
Much bureaucracy in fundraising.

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