



Raising Employability of Women  
through entrepreneurial Activities  
fostering Rural Development

CASE STUDY

TATJANA ŠTANCAR POPRASK  
Ekološka kmetija Potočnik-Poprask

# INTRODUCTION

The Potočnik Poprask Organic Farm is located in the valley of the lower Pako. It is an average Slovenian farm with 6ha of arable and 8ha of forest, they breed about 10 suckler heads of an indigenous breed of cattle “cika” and have 6 multifunctional activities registered. Mrs. Tatjana Štancar together with her husband manages an organic farm and multifunctional activities: baking bread and pastries in a traditional way, on-farm education, direct selling, non-residential tourism, processing food of plant origin and machinery services. Tatjana was a geography and history teacher in an elementary school for 10 years. Six years ago, she decided to stay on the farm and started to bake and sell bread. She is expanding and upgrading her business and sells her products in 15 stores across Slovenia.

## 1. PERSONAL DATA

 **Name:** Tatjana Štancar Poprask

 **Age range:** 46 +

 **Education:** Tatjana holds a university degree and is a teacher of history and geography. She has also completed an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) for herbalists. She participated in a series of courses organized by KGZ Celje - Agricultural Forestry Institute and LAG - Local Action Group of the Upper Savinja Valley such as: traditional bread baking, dairy processing, fruit and vegetable processing, etc.



 **Occupation:** Tatjana participates in the management of the organic farm and runs multifunctional activities: baking bread and pastries in the traditional way, farm education, marketing of farm produce and homemade products, and tourist activities without accommodation. She is a full time worker.

## 2. FARM PROFILE

 **Address:**

Ekološka kmetija Potočnik Poprask, Skorno 27, 3327 Šmartno ob Paki.

 **Farm Area in ha:** 14 ha: 6 ha arable and 8 ha forest.

 **Date since when the female entrepreneur owns/rents the farm:** In 2003 Tatjana got married on the farm and in 2013 she started with multifunctional activities.

#### Nº of workers on the farms:

	FULL TIME	PART-TIME/SEASONAL	WOMEN
Family members	2	1-Son student	
Other than family members	1		1-student

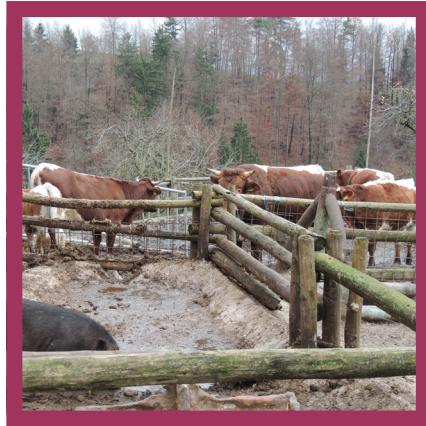
 **Farm description:** The Potočnik Poprask Organic Farm has held an organic certificate for 20 years, it is a mixed, self-sufficient farm. It is located in Skorno village, away from the main road, on a hilly slope. The husband's father inherited the farm from a single woman who his family cared for when she grew old. Tatjana and her husband Aleš are both insured farmers. In Slovenia, farmers are simultaneously covered by three compulsory social insurance (pension and disability insurance, health insurance and parental care insurance). The farm is also located in an LFA (Less Favoured Areas), which is why it receives subsidies from rural development measures. The arable land is mainly grassland for animal feed and cereals such as spelt and buckwheat, the flour of which is used for baking. For the last 2 years, they have reared a suckler herd of the indigenous "cika" breed, which is more suitable for the hilly landscape than the Simmental breed, which gains much more weight. In a smaller barn, they have about 10 head of cattle, they also breed a piglet meat breed - a crossbreed with a Vietnam breed, seasonally breed an indigenous pig breed "krškopoljska", chickens and peacocks. They extract wood chips from the forest for self-use.

 **Website and social networks accounts:** <https://poisci.me/ponudnik/ekoloska-kmetija-potocnik-popraskales-poprask-smartno-ob-paki/>

### 3. MULTIFUNCTIONALITY / RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Tatjana transferred her experiences from school to a farm where she receives school groups to which she imparts knowledge of farm work as part of the cultural heritage of the countryside. She participates in shepherd's days, she organizes sheep shear with neighbors' help, for student's groups. Through farming and multifunctional activities she contributes to the conservation of the countryside and the cultural landscape. In addition to basic agricultural activity, Tatjana recognized that production of baking products make a good living (20 kinds of biscuits, breadcrumbs, bread). She also produces jams and herbal syrups. The farm is also visited by various groups of tourists to whom they offer products from their store. They organize science and technology days for local school students and open days on various topics (buckwheat, tarragon ...) where visitors come from near and far. The farm also maintains an old tall spindle orchard with native varieties of apple, some pears and nuts, the fruits of which are used for marmalades and juices.

 Dear woman farmer! Living and working on a farm is our mission. Your work and your activities are your trump card. You dare to step out of average and turn your work and pleasure into a mission or into entrepreneurship that earns you money and self-confidence. 



## 4. CONSIDERATIONS, TRAINING / COMPETENCES INVOLVED

### General considerations:

Tatjana has been employed as a history and geography teacher at an elementary school for 10 years. In a small farm, she saw the potential to turn her passion for baking into an entrepreneurial opportunity that has built up over the years and earns a solid income. She runs a household and takes care of raising three sons with her husband. She takes part in seasonal work and administrative (accounting) work at the farm, which takes about half her time. Of the additional activities, she devotes most of her time to bakery and producing herbal products. She transfers her teaching experience to school groups that take part in natural science and technical days prepared by Tatjana and are tied to peasant work. Work on the farm is done by her husband and by herself but she also mentors a student who she will hire. The main reasons for the development of multifunctional activities were the desire to stay on the farm and to create jobs, increase income and preserve the countryside. In her opinion differences between men and women in work participation are man rationality and woman emotionality (she reacts and makes decisions quicker). Through the work she has proven herself and established her worth. Tatjana is also socially active, participating in the board of directors of the Tourist Association Šmartno ob Paki and the LAG Supervisory Board of the Upper Savinja and Sale Valley. She strives to add a new product to its offer every year. She insists on product quality and boutique handmade. Her products are homemade bread, different kinds of biscuits, herbal syrups and liqueurs, and marmalades (ingredients are from the farm production as much as it is possible). She controls the semi-finished products and finished products on her own to assert their quality.

In her activity, she also sees an opportunity to recruit women, which would thus affect the conservation of the countryside. In last twenty years women are more determined and became more independent and they can expect more active role in society. The social environment also favors women's entrepreneurship. With the increase of the homemade-local trend, good conditions for employment in rural areas are being created. A business woman must be determined, she must "dare", be persistent (income comes after 2-3 years). On farm cooperation with a partner is very important, especially in financial decisions.

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

She graduated from the University of Geography and History and taught at the elementary school for 10 years. The desire to be independent led her to find a job on a home farm. She passed the NPK - the national vocational qualification of herbalist. She is constantly attending compulsory training courses to receive funding from the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020, Measure 10 – Agri-environment-climate payments. She participates in various workshops and training within EU projects, mainly related to cultural heritage, ethnology, entrepreneurship and professional skills.

During her independent work, she developed the following competencies: manual skills, communication - even on social networks, perseverance, creativity, enterprise.

She would like to gain more knowledge in economics, price calculation, market communication, market presentation, as well as organizing and coordinating different activities - how to streamline work processes.

Tatjana said that an awareness of leisure is very important and that business women also have to spend some quality time with family, neighbors and friends.

## **SWOT analysis:**



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