



MANUAL OF SUCCESS STORIES ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**#PLAY
EUROPE**

INTRODUCTION

The best lesson you can learn is the one received by those who have already experienced it.

This is the key point of this **“Manual of Success Stories on Social Entrepreneurship”**: ten incredible business adventures across Europe that have young social entrepreneurs as protagonists, with the intent of changing their own life and the social environment that surrounded them. Young men and women aged 25-33, coming from eight EU countries, all so different, all so similar.

A stimulating storytelling flow made by same fears, different challenges and ambitious objectives: finding fostering solutions to help disadvantaged people and strengthen communities.

There is **Anna Fiscale**, founder of an eco-brand that employs textile surplus and introduces women in need in the Italian labour market, and **Teresa Scorza** who is giving a concrete improvement opportunity to Niguarda quarter in Milan, giving a job to unemployed people in her biological store.

Albena Boneva was 33 years old when she decided to “bring light” to children with disabilities and **Angela Achitei** had the same age when she founded her social enterprise to integrate disabled people in the national job market.

There is also who focuses on environmental issues as **Michael Loizides**, that studied a way to turn used cooking oil into bio fuel, or **Alberto Alfonso** who decided to make possible the “adoption” of thousands abandoned olive trees.

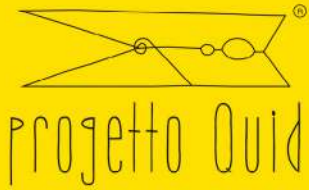
Petar Lazarov moved on to find out a business formula to boost the economy of his country, and **Kristi Zolgo** did the same to regenerate rural areas, trying to change people’s mentality in a sustainable way.

And what about the city as a human space according to **Myrto Papadogeorgou**, or taking care of young people at risk of social exclusion as **Violeta de Los Fayos**?

These are all stories that really make an impact on society in terms of concrete solutions and engaging values in people social mindset. All these stories give a powerful idea of the economical frame and historical heritage that have generated them, expressing clearly the sense of payback and the future horizon of each country.

The Manual structure, graphics and user experience has been developed in order to involve and encourage young aspiring entrepreneurs across Europe in reading these success stories and get inspired by young men and women (mostly women!) who just some years ago were facing troubles to start running a business.

**THE MESSAGE IS SIMPLE: IF THEY SUCCEED, YOU CAN DO IT AS WELL!
GET INSPIRED, BECOME A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR.**



PROGETTO QUID



Country:
Italy



Year of foundation:
2013



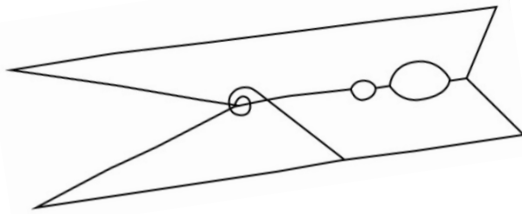
My age when
I launched it:
25 years old

PROGETTO QUID

CHANGING WOMEN'S WORLD, ONE DRESS AT A TIME



#ethicalfashion
#womenforwomen
#progettoQuid



*" You have to fight
and work relentlessly
to succeed. "*

Anna Fiscale

Our challenge was...

Nowadays, the **Italian fashion industry**, an over 88 million-per-year turnover business, is increasingly resorting to malpractice to keep at pace with global fast fashion. According to the OECD 2017 Outlook Report the **Italian labour market is the fifth least inclusive**, discriminating against **women** (48% employment rate), **migrants, disabled** (16% employment rate), **former offenders** and recovering **addicts** (10% employment rate).

Discrimination yields unemployment - financially draining for the State and emotionally for individuals - while also causing the black market to grow.

In this context arises **Progetto Quid**, an eco-fashion brand that **employs textile surplus** of the *Made in Italy* industry to produce limited edition and yet affordable fashion collections, **manufactured by those who would otherwise struggle to enter the Italian labour market**, especially women.

The firm produces **ethical lines for established brands** who have an appetite for sustainability. Quid closed 2017 with a **€ 1.9 million turnover** and with the first global acknowledgement, the **Women for Results UN Momentum for Change Award**, short after winning the **2014 European Social Innovation Competition**.

Our story



My entrepreneurial adventure began when **I started seeing fragility as a starting point to plan for a more inclusive, safer world.**

I ditched a career as a medical student, but **curing the world was not enough, I wanted to change it.** An internship in a women microcredit NGO in India, followed by a joint MA in International Organisations, made me realise that **real change only comes through bottom-up empowerment.**

I founded **Quid**, together with five good friends of mine.

Quid **employed disadvantaged women through other cooperatives**, thus we managed **to keep fixed costs low**, also by **collaborating with Calzedonia Group** – who donated faulty t-shirts, letting us use one of their vacant shop as a pop-up store. This business model allowed us to **test how market would react to our offer.**

During a first period of activity, we understood that t-shirts could not be our core business if we were to grow. **We differentiated our core business:** on the one hand **Progetto Quid** would be an independent fashion brand, on the other it would offer established brands as a supplier of ethical fashion. This strategic decision was expensive in the beginning: we took a leap and applied for grants to hire a designer team and rent our own workshop.

As the production grew, Quid changed its statute from charity to **not-for-profit cooperative** to open more stores and to hire directly our employees.

The next steps will be focused on **improving employees' welfare and on collaborating with other social fashion organisations:** constant growth requires capital, and we are not in the position to fund our strategic investments yet.

What have we reached?

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Lessons learnt & tips for you

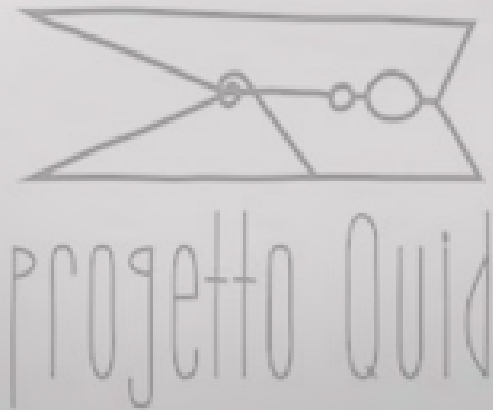


One of the biggest challenges was coming to grips with the business of fashion. I had to learn to trust designers and production managers, a completely different breed as managers and economists.

Competition is fierce, too, and **funding is scarce** – especially in southern Europe.

There are many social entrepreneurs out there, all of them with amazing ideas – **you have to fight and work relentlessly to succeed** in making a difference. **Passion and determination were also key** – social entrepreneurship and not-for-profit are often regarded as 'second-rate' forms of economy.

My background in Management and Economics has helped me navigate the commercial and financial aspect of setting up a social enterprise. In addition, in the course of my work experience in International Development I developed **great project management skills and interpersonal skills**, which proved crucial in the very early days – when I was mainly multitasking across production, communications, and sales – and are still crucial now that I supervise the general operations.



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**NAMASTÈ
COOPERATIVA
SOCIALE ONLUS**



Country:
 Italy



Year of foundation:
2016



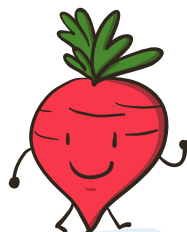
My age when
I launched it:
28 years old

ZEROPERCENTO

THE FIRST BIOLOGICAL SOLIDARITY STORE FOR LABOUR MARKET RE-INSERTION



#bio #food
#milanfoodmarket
#zeropercento #organic
#Niguarda
#LabourReinsertion
#unemployment



*" Whatever is the
problem there is
always one way to
figure it out. "*

Teresa Scorza

Our challenge was...

ZeroPerCento is a solidarity store that sells locally grown organic products.

It aims to represent a **concrete solution for unemployed people** who have not been employed for six months or more.

The concept behind is that long-term jobless people tend to lose their self-confidence and faith in the social context. They start not to believe anymore in their own skills and **their motivation decreases**. Instilling trust and optimism in people out of work is a real challenge, because they lose their own pro-activity due to their condition.

Founded by **Namastè Cooperativa Sociale Onlus**, ZeroPerCento aims to be a point of reference for unemployed people, giving them the possibility to be involved in the cooperative project, providing their professional contribution in managing a neighbourhood store.

Moreover, the store is also a vehicle of **urban regeneration**, making that neighbourhood of Milan - named Niguarda - alive.

We did not use specific data to frame this social issue, but **it was the context that surrounded us and our direct experience that gave us the inspiration to run this business**. In fact, many friends or people we did know were living a situation of unemployment or just an uncertain professional situation and this led us to rethink ourselves and take a new pathway.

Our story



Our store was born in 2017 **and it is managed by jobless people** who have not been employed for six months or more.

The main **target of the store** is represented by Milanese citizens interested in healthy and genuine products from Lombard farms and local agricultural cooperatives.

ZeroPerCento is not just a store but also **a point of reference for job-searching people** and for the Niguarda quarter in general. In fact, in the store are located both a **Counselling Centre**, which aims to support those who are receiving work benefits (but also common citizens), and a **School Crafts** to improve skills and professional competences of the beneficiaries.

In fact, **we organise several free courses on different topics**, which are useful and necessary for labour market re-integration, such as English courses, Italian courses for foreigners, Information technology, Accounting, Bartender, Trade Marketing and Fundraising courses. We also organise meetings for passing a job interview and to learn writing properly an efficient résumé).

About the beneficiaries, 30% of people working in the **ZeroPerCento** store comes from a **disadvantaged situation**. During this paid professional collaboration, we provide the workers with a customised solution in order to find a work place out of the project.

Furthermore, **the social aspect represents a real innovation since the store allows disadvantaged families to buy food spending just the 10% of the total price of products they are buying**. The rest is paid through points allocated by the project satisfying objective criteria (long-lasting unemployment, house-renting, annual income...).

My previous professional experience in associations and social cooperatives helped the project to go on and it allowed me to talk to several stakeholders and promote my project.

In addition, for more than 2 years I have worked with people from different countries, and this international experience makes me realise **how helpful can be my expertise for project's beneficiaries**.

What have we reached?

The range of products offered by the store is increasing compared to July 2017. This allows us to **extend our job opportunities** to a huge number of people that want to join our project.

Since we started up, we have involved **12 beneficiaries** within the store and we have helped **10 needy families**, providing food and helping them in finding a job. We have involved **4 boys from high school that combines job/school**. Finally, we have supported 20 people with our Counselling programme and we gave a meeting point to aged people of Niguarda quarter.

Even though it is something unmeasurable, **I strongly believe that our project provides an added value to the society**, since it impacts on the social life of the entire community.

Furthermore, we have realised that **our people are becoming more and more self-confident** and they are starting to think about their professional future with positivity.



Lessons learnt & tips for you



The starting phase was very difficult, especially the business planning phase and to the development of initial ideas to be self-sustainable in the future. Researching the right place and the fundraising activities have been really complicated, indeed the first presentation of the project received lots of negative feedback.

We have been very tenacious and persistent, even **if it took a long time before we started to see people supporting and believing in our beautiful adventure**.

Only after a hard work, we managed to get a loan by Milan city administration, which allows us to rent the store.

We should keep in mind that **in order to get a result it takes time and you need to start from the bottom**.

We are always ready to **realise projects but sometimes we forget that achieving something meaningful takes time and patience**, often more than what we plan to spend.



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HELPING HAND
FOUNDATION



Country:
 Bulgaria



Year of foundation:
2005



My age when
I launched it:
33 years old

THE HELPING HAND

THE FOUNDATION THAT TAKE CARE OF PARENTLESS KIDS AND FAMILIES BESIDES CHILDREN



#children #childcare
#family #integration

*" We accept as both
our responsibility and
privilege to bring light,
hope and change to
the life of every child,
family and person
who stretch their
hand for help "*

Albena Boneva



Our challenge was...

Institutionalised care for **children with special needs and disabilities** was unfortunately an attribute of Bulgarian social system, like most of the eastern countries that followed a socialist regime.

This system has proved to be inefficient in meeting the needs of both the children themselves and their families. The Child Care System Reform on de-institutionalisation was framed through many changes, and as a result there has been a significant decrease (over 80%) in the number of children placed in institutional care and the number of family support services provided within the communities proliferated (National Network for Children, 2017).

Helping Hand Foundation was created in 2005 within this framework, by a group of young volunteers who realised that pro-bono assistance work in the institutions for abandoned children produced only temporary results.

This brought them to establish a **Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration of Children** with the support of the Dobrich Municipality. The Foundation has been one of the forerunners and a model that inspires many volunteers and community leaders in north-eastern Bulgaria.

Initially, the activities were financed with the support of the EU and other national donors, but nowadays the foundation provides **a portfolio of educational and training programmes**.

Our story



Our vision is that all children in Bulgaria - regardless of their ethnicity, race, behaviour, physical and mental capabilities - must grow up loved, accepted and valued by their families and society as they are.

Accordingly, we work to **raise the wellbeing of children and families by investing in the physical, emotional and personal development of adolescents** and by mobilizing the family and society for active participation in these processes. Developing the abilities to learn and to cope with future challenges are utmost priorities.

In 2005, we as three young volunteers started our work in the Home for Parentless Children in Dobrich.

In 2008, we gradually realised that **the most important thing for parentless children is to be accepted in the society.**

Thus, in 2009 the pilot project "**Decent Living for the Children of Dobrich**" gave rise to a Family-type Placement Centre and a Community Support Centre which are part of the foundation's network.

The focus of our activity became wider and we decided to **include also families besides children**, because the life stories of those people under institutional care, revealed that the main beneficiaries were families where parents were extremely poor, sick or just did not understand their responsibilities.

The Helping Hand Foundation nowadays has valorised all its **counselling, integrative and educational experience** in providing trainings and learning activities for a wide target in the Dobrich Community.

What have we reached?

The main achievement is that Helping Hand Foundation manages to **sustain and enlarge its activities in times of economic downturn and in a rural and trans-border region** where the social status of the population and general entrepreneurial activity is not widespread.

In the beginning, the majority of the activities were implemented with volunteer efforts and project-based funding. However, through active networking, consultation and support mobilisation, the foundation has managed to create a **variegated service portfolio and integrate people with different needs and potentials.**

As of now, a complete community service package is developed and the Foundation is commissioned to provide social services on behalf of Dobrich Municipality.

In addition, **many local campaigns and social events are organised to support people who are not direct beneficiaries** of the state social programmes.

Currently, we are managing a network of local social institutions and we act as a social-activity hub through:

- Family-type Placement Centre for homeless adults.
- Community Support Centre for children aged 0-18 and their families.
- Kindergarten "Hope" that integrated children aged 4-6 from ethnic minority groups and prepares them for enrolment in schools.
- Youth Volunteer Centre, where over 30 young people from Dobrich high schools partake and support children and families with special needs.



Lessons learnt & tips for you

The success and sustainability factors of the Helping Hand Foundation come from the **enthusiasm of our team, our willingness to help, our motivation to learn and experiment with new approaches and activities, creativity and persistence combined with integrity and devotion.**

The lessons learnt from our experience in working for the well-being of the community are embedded in Helping Hand's working principles:

- We work to **improve children's lives**, and our approach is based on the individual needs of each one;
- We are convinced that **parents are the most important people in every child's life**;
- **Our team is constantly learning** to find answers, new ideas and ways to work successfully;
- We provide a **dynamic, friendly and supportive atmosphere for each member of our team**;
- We take care of the **professional growth of each of us**;
- We value the **trust of each partner and donor**;
- We are committed to **transparency and accountability to all our donors and partners.**



 **Фондация Ръка за помощ**
Свободен да промениш света около теб




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KP MACEDONIA-
EXPORT DOO



#Branding #Marketing
#Sales #Export
#Innovation #Start-up
#Entrepreneurship #So-
cialEntrepreneurship



Country:
 Macedonia



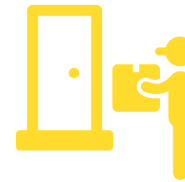
Year of foundation:
2006



My age when
I launched it:
28 years old

MACEDONIA EXPORT

HOW INFLUENCE THE WHOLE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY



Our challenge was...

Macedonia is a small country in the western Balkans and is in the category of the underdeveloped countries (GDP per capita \$5.264).

The poverty rate is 30% and **the level of unemployment is almost 31% and it affects more than half of the young people under the age of 29**, indeed part of them just leave the country. The transition from the socialist to the capitalist economic model of work was (and still is) **difficult and challenging** for the leading authorities, and also for all the people living in the country.

In 2006 **Petar Lazarov** and **Kalin Babusku** opened **MACEDONIA-EXPORT** as a reaction to this situation. The main idea and goal of the company was to **fill in the gap or function as a bridge from the old, rigid economical system** and the new market trends and fast moving global, marketing oriented economy.

The company is a one-of-a-kind company **that offers services in the field of BRAND & BUSINESS Development (Marketing & Branding, Sales and Export, Strategic planning)**, as well as services in developing and building the capacities of the teams of the companies, organizations and institutions, based on the social entrepreneurship principles.

The main goal of the company was to fill in the gap from the old system, developing brands that will stand close to the largest international brands and **influence overall brand image of the country**.

*" Knowledge today is
the most important
weapon to survive
in this cruel and
ruthless world. "*

Petar Lazarov

Our story



During the first years we experienced a wide, defocused strategy since we did not know the market, the demand, the supply, mainly spending and leaving on our personal savings.

In 2010 we launched the first brand **MAMAs - Traditional Homemade Recipes**, a mutual project between Macedonia-Export and Trgoproduct (Fresh fruits and vegetables processing factory). A unique partnership model, focused on the **production of the best quality** products, on **brand development** and on export market.

In 2013 they founded also **TIP OF THE WEEK®** the first interactive book for personal and professional development written by **successful businessmen and women coming from Macedonia**. It contains practical and educational, including social entrepreneurship tips on how to improve, make a change and become more successful on various fields in your everyday life and work.

Over time, **these two businesses are going to grow** and to cover an international landscape.

The impact that these brands will have on the market will be **beneficiary for all the people leaving in Macedonia**, in terms of developing the image of the country and improve the perception of the international consumers.

What have we reached?

The main goals achieved are related to the promotion of a **sustainable image of the country** improving the brand image of the companies as well. Through our action, we helped many companies to improve their business and export, motivating many young professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs.

The results of 12 years' work on the market:

- Improvement of country image by providing sustainable brand image through the products we promote internationally.
- Many companies have improved their business and export activities.
- Motivation of many young professionals and future entrepreneurs.
- Great knowledge, skills and experience gained.
- Development of a large network of associates.

In the specific, **MAMA's** increased the whole canned food category, extended the consumption period and exported to more than 40 countries in 4 continents. It is **one of the most loved brand from Macedonia**.

TIP OF THE WEEK sold 20.000 copies in 5 countries, is translated in 3 languages, 600 companies bought the book for their employees.

Furthermore, we developed a totally **new social entrepreneurship approach** in presenting and promoting these type of information to the readers, indeed it is the first book (brand) from Macedonia, in the section of popular psychology, promoted regionally and internationally.



Lessons learnt & tips for you



Patience, hard work, constant change and innovation are the most valuable factors for success, and they justify the fact that **impossible is nothing. Difficulties are everything**, all the time, especially if you come from this part of the world. As social entrepreneurs, we drive social innovation and transformation in various fields including education and enterprise development.


The constant fight with the challenges has made us stronger, more competent, knowledgeable, experienced and gave us freedom in the creation process of expressing ourselves.

We overcame the challenges by staying on the path, by focusing on goals.

It is important to look at **social entrepreneurship as a multifunctional system** that requires holistic approach, in terms of skills required to be successful. This is applicable for every professional, every individual that likes to develop and improve his/her professional or personal development.

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General Manager
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Export

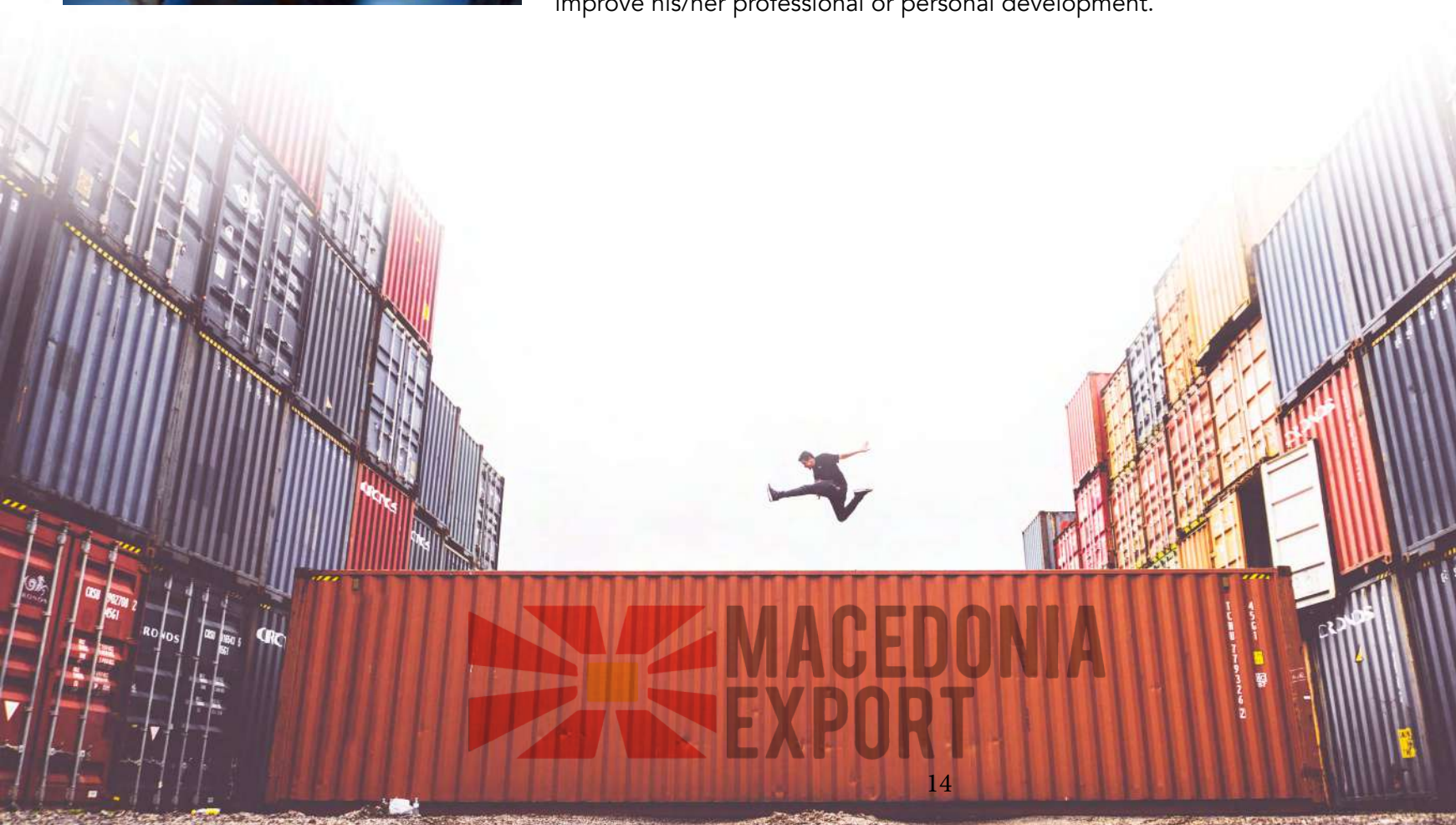
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**AKTI PROJECT
AND RESEARCH
CENTER**



Country:
 **Cyprus**



Year of foundation:
2000



**My age when
I launched it:**
33 years old



**#Tiganokinisi #AKTI
#usedcookingoil
#Biodiesel #education
#sustainableschools**



***"UCO is the medium
to enforce schools
to achieve the
sustainable school
principle."***

Michael I. Loizides

'TIGANOKINISI'

TURNING USED COOKING OIL INTO FUEL



Our challenge was...

Used cooking oil (UCO) is an excellent feedstock for advanced biofuel production, since its conversion and use in transportation does not only help meet energy efficiency targets without affecting land use, but it also contributes to the protection of the environment through the diversion of a hazardous waste from landfills and watercourses.

It is estimated that over **200 tons per year** of used cooking oil are produced in the households of Cyprus. They are disposed either in the sewage system or in the storm drain system, or poured directly on the ground or even put in bottles with mixed garbage. This creates a **huge problem of pollution** to the island.

Cyprus has also one of EU's highest amounts of municipal waste generated as well as one of the **lowest renewable energy** generation performances.

There is therefore a clear need of finding a **solution-oriented approach to address the issue of UCO as a potential source of renewable energy by transforming it to biodiesel** and also a need to **increase environmental awareness, social involvement and education towards the circular economy principles**.

AKTI came up with a holistic solution that propagates knowledge, **raises awareness on renewable energy from advanced and sustainable biofuel production** and provides an alternative route for UCO that benefits schools and the environment.

Our story



In 2012, the **NGO AKTI Project and Research Centre** with the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, decided to focus on the problem of domestic used cooking oils, with implementation of a **social project addressed to kids and unemployed youth**.

The project named '**Tiganokinisi**' (literally meaning 'pan movement' in Greek), **has education at its core**. The programme was initially pilot tested in 10 schools in Cyprus and in 2018 more than 360 out of 500 schools take part of it.

Schools express interest to install a collection barrel in their premises and their students bring UCO from home.

We collect and sell the UCO to conversion factories to be transformed into biofuel.

The **profits are distributed back to schools**, to be invested in environmentally friendly practices and green infrastructure.

Part of the income goes to fund the environmental education activities that are offered through the Tiganokinisi project.

A mobile information and education centre, the "caravan", was created in which the experimental process for the conversion of cooking oil into biodiesel takes place. The caravan travels to schools and public events for on-site conversion demonstrations. **A group of experts is always on-board to guide the participants and provide them with scientific education and information.**

In this way, **green and sustainable chemistry becomes familiar to the public** and is related to a better quality of life.

What have we reached?

Our main achievements:

- Promote/build greener, sustainable schools:** the profits from the sale of the UCO are proportionally distributed back to schools to be invested in environmentally friendly practices and green infrastructure.
- Continuous education in the classroom:** Tiganokinisi has been included in the analytical programme of the Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education. A teacher's guide has been prepared which allows teachers to use the project as an educational tool in their classroom.
- Active participation of the local society:** local authorities and businesses are engaged as they donate their UCO (or part of their UCO) as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes to schools.
- The open school approach:** the school becomes the point of reference of the local society, where citizens can be educated about environmental and sustainable practices that can adopt in their everyday lives.



- **Involving youngsters:** youngsters act as agents of change in society and are able to transfer their environmentally conscious habits to their families and friends.
- **Encourage social entrepreneurship:** the programme itself has a strong social character that stimulates social entrepreneurship and encourage innovative solutions to societal challenges to school students of all levels.
- **Non Formal learning and Technological innovation:** students are encouraged to experiment, develop their own digital or physical applications/products/processes, and test their ideas. It is common to see huge potential to start-up ideas from the kids getting involved in the project.

Lessons learnt & tips for you



Implementing **'Tiganokinisi'** has been so educative for people involved and an ongoing yet fulfilling challenge.

It was very hard to convince school teachers and parent's councils that the process of **collecting used cooking oil is not at all harmful** in any way for school students. However, after informational presentations and hands on experience all the doubts were clarified and the program was endorsed by the Ministry of Education.

One other major challenge faced was **the route optimisation to succeed cost effective collection**. This was mainly achieved by **developing a communication process with school and business**.

Creativity, imagination and scientific know-how have been proven necessary skills to develop interesting educational experiments. **Communication skills** and **public outreach** are also very important.

However, the success of the programme is due to the dedicating and determined team behind the idea, driven by the social potential impact of Tiganokinisi that could **improve the educational mind-set of Cyprus**.



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DINAMUR
Centro de Iniciativas
Juveniles de la
Región de Murcia



Country:
 Spain



Year of foundation:
2010



My age when
I launched it:
29 years old

DINAMUR

LEISURE, CULTURE AND ART FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF EXCLUSION



#education
#youngpeople
#empowerment
#socialinclusion



Our challenge was...

Youth unemployment in Spain reached a new high of **56.1%** at the end of 2013. The number of young Spaniards belonging to what has become known as the lost generation was up 2% since June 2013. Despite the governments claimed that the worst had passed and that employment reforms would have encouraged firms to hire, it will be a **long time before any upturn in the economy and before an increase in employment.**

With close to six million Spaniards out of work, unemployment was so entrenched that there was no political reaction to the latest data.

Meanwhile, Spaniards and recent immigrants are **deserting the country in search of work**, with **500,000 leaving in 2012**, 60,000 of them Spanish nationals, most of them to Latin America and other EU countries.

*" Trying to make
others happy it also
depends on our own
happiness "*

Violeta de los Fayos

Our story



The **Youth Initiatives Centre of the Region Of Murcia** (DINAMUR) is a **youth organization founded by educators and social workers (mostly women)**, that operates with the local community in public, private centres, schools and universities but also at international level.

Our main purpose is **providing tools to children and adolescents to support the development of their own projects and initiatives**, bearing in mind matters such as **social inclusion**, environmental and **sustainable aspects**.

Our organisation has a great experience in participating in the **Youth in Action EU programme**, but it also organises training courses and socio-cultural activities.

Our methodology is based on **non-formal education**, to improve the creativity and **intercultural perspective** of youngsters.

Children and adolescents who have been called “digital natives” should see their opportunities increased thanks to **access to information** in an interconnected world.

What have we reached?

DINAMUR has an innovative character in terms of the transversality of the actions.

DinamizArte, for example, is a **social action programme** whose aim is to stimulate communication in all its aspects. As well as the **empowerment of children and young people** living in Murcia, it pursues the achievement of the following objectives:

- Improve the communication competences of the participants through several activities, such as theatre.
- **Encourage the development of personal, social and professional skills of young people at risk of social exclusion** through ethical and conscious image processing, **working on their self-concept and improving their emotional intelligence**.
- **Promote the employability and entrepreneurial spirit of the participants**, supporting the creation and advising young people on their projects.
- **Promote social integration and youth participation**, contributing to increase the quality of human capital and local development through young people in the region of Murcia in intercultural communities.
- **Eagerness for visibility and subsequent sustainability**, giving rise to the exhibition of material developed by young people.



Lessons learnt & tips for you



In the last years, we have seen how, at least in Murcia, many **young people began to emigrate** searching for a job.

I had always been interested in the field of non-formal education as a tool for social transformation, so, together with a social worker and another teacher, we founded DINAMUR in order to **help young people to concretise their initiatives**.


I started working giving courses to the unemployed. In my classroom there were people, even members of the same family, of all profiles and ages and all unemployed, regardless of their values and qualities. **Many times, I came back to my apartment crying. I had a great sense of guilt, heightened by the envy and distrust of some friends. Finding job opportunities for young people became my obsession and started visiting offices, sending mails and taking calls.**

I established a collaboration agreement with the University of Murcia. I managed to involve some colleagues, who were also studying, to give workshops in the youth and cultural centres. Then we decided to launch **DinamizArte**, our programme of communicative dynamism and youth empowerment through audiovisual realization.

Our project was implemented in different districts of Murcia but it does not pay bills. I do not regret anything. Even **when there is no real recognition, people have to carry out actions beyond our needs**, trying to make others happy it also depends on our own happiness.



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CITY OF ERRORS



#civiceducation
#crossmediastorytelling
#activecitizens
#partofthesolution
#civicvirtue

CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH VISUAL STORYTELLING



Our challenge was...

By 2050, **70% of the population will be urban**: if the future of our cities is left solely in the hands of governments, local authorities and municipalities it is almost certain that the majority of this 70% of the population, will soon be living in urban slums rather than sustainable cities. **The only ones who can change this trend are citizens themselves.**

Yet as civic virtue is not an inherent attribute, most citizens of these urban centres tend to act selfishly, or as what ancient Athenians called "idiots": private citizens characterized by self-centeredness and concerned almost exclusively with private affairs. In Athenian democracy, idiocy was the natural state of ignorance into which all persons were born and its opposite, **citizenship**, was "implanted" through formalised education.

Centuries later, the lack of civic education combined with the lack of trust, has turned many ancient cities into "idiot-opias" and **in need of some civic visionaries who demonstrate that everyday small actions can have great long-term impact.**

Since these people exist, they need ways to be heard, to connect and to exchange experiences in a simple, engaging and potentially viral manner.



*"When you love your
city, the city loves
you back."*

Myrto Papadogeorgou

Our story



To address the issue, **City of Errors**, initially a grassroots initiative put together by a group of professionals working in the audio-visual sector, created a **platform with documentaries, interviews** and a cross-media game that focused on active citizens and the solutions they bring to the problems of the city of Athens. Problems like **isolation, pollution, ignorance, indifference, lack of solidarity and rudeness**. The platform was mainly made of videos. In particular:



Life in a City Full of Errors: a short-documentary web series featuring the problems of the city as seen by those who try to face, react to and/or solve them.



The Fix Tank: a series of 8 interviews to active citizens involved in different types of grassroots actions.



The City of Errors App: a smartphone app that lets users upload, categorize, geolocate and share photo stories of their actions to fix the small errors of their broken city, from their device onto our online City of **Errors platform**.

City of Errors is a platform based solely on **visual storytelling and make use of both its artistic and social potential**.

Our videos aimed to offer not only a different point of view, but **also host ideas, examples and lessons of citizens' impact on their city**. We believe that it is much more effective to show rather than tell stories on change. **City of Errors ask people to show others how they generate solutions to the problems**.

Thus, in 2014 it became a social enterprise, founded by **Myrto Papadogeorgou & Nikolas Konstantinou**, with the aim to **develop audio-visual projects that promote civic engagement**.

What have we reached?

The team actively working with us, which started as an idea of one person, came to include **20 professionals** who dedicated their time to the project for more than 2 years.

The reason behind this success is due to the fact that many **Greek cities are becoming overwhelmingly inhumane**, mainly because of **the lack of civic education in our education system**.

Our project achieved global outreach and **it was praised for its originality and decisiveness** by organisations from all over the world, while parts of it were adopted by the Municipality of Athens to create the platform www.synathina.gr.



Lessons learnt & tips for you



The main challenge faced by this **project** was that it was **created during times of profound financial crisis** in a country that is extremely backward in issues concerning the fields of urban sustainability, social innovation and civic education. In addition, **social entrepreneurship was almost inexistent** at the time with absolutely no support for social entrepreneurs. For this reasons, this very **innovative project looks incomprehensible to most possible funders** and too critical to be supported by the local authorities.

However, **the project was made possible thanks to the hard work of volunteers**. Thus, it came to be used by many local government platforms, error-reporting apps and citizen groups: **the most important aspect for the creation of sustainable cities** is not the government, **it is us**.

The simple citizen, who stop for a moment in our busy lives and make a small change.

CITY of
ERRORS
PRODUCTIONS

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UTIL DECO

UTIL DECO

HOW TO CREATE A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE



#disability
#jobsfordisabledpeople
#socialintegration #work
#integrationsocialenter-
prise



*"What we do daily,
defines our future!"*

Angela Achitei

Our challenge was...

In 2017, Romania registered about **800.000 people with disabilities** and an employability rate among disabled people of around 18%, according to the statistics of the National Authority for Disabled People in Romania.

This was a problem also in 2008 when, willing to come up with real and sustainable solutions, **Angela Achitei** founded **Util Deco**, a **work integration social enterprise**, which now is one of the largest social enterprise in Romania. Util Deco's mission is to **include people with disabilities and from vulnerable groups into the labour market, offering a full package of socio-professional integration services.**

Integrating people was possible by using a process of insertion that includes a multitude of activities targeted to identify the most appropriate work activity for each employee. These activities are tests of skills and abilities, vocational and psychological counselling, training courses and workshops for work qualification, tracking employee's career paths and adaptation to the working environment, internships, job coaching etc.

Util Deco provides several **B2B services** and in 2016, it **developed two online platforms: WiseTravel** for travel services and **UtilDeco Charity Cash & Carry** - an e-commerce platform with more than 20000 products.

Over time, Util Deco has created more than **100 jobs in three counties** in Romania (Iasi, Constanta and Mures).

Our story



The **social business model** plus the reluctance of society and business environment regarding the capacity to deliver **qualitative products and services by disabled or vulnerable people**, was one of the main challenges that Util Deco faced.

In order to enter on the business market, Util Deco approached a strategy that focuses primarily on the quality of the products and services offered.

Today, Util Deco is recognised to have some of the **highest quality standards** and it has expertise in protective equipment using modern technology.

In addition to the integration of disabled people into the labour market, Util Deco contributes to society by investing 100% of its profits in other social projects: [ADV Youth Club Romania](#), [JobDirect](#) – a placement agency on the free labour market, and other projects such as “Partnership for Inclusion”.

Over time, Util Deco had been able to obtain funding from European Union or bank loans to develop its activity. One of the greatest achievements in terms of investments was the **construction of a storage warehouse that complies with European standards of work, with facilities for disabled people**.

The vision and the strategy of Util Deco are due to the social entrepreneur Angela Achitei. Util Deco benefits from her social work experience of over 15 years in the management of non-profit entities.

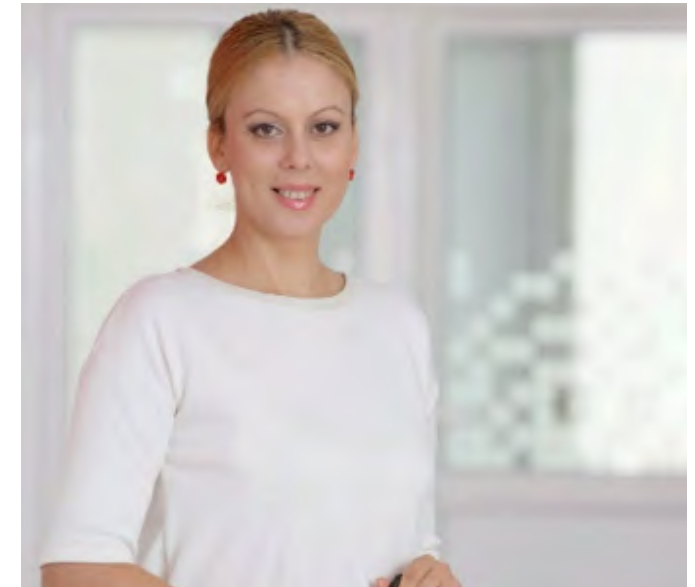
What have we reached?

In the last 10 years, Util Deco has provided free community services and has **invested in social innovation by creating jobs**, making acquisitions and investments, contributing directly to the state budget through taxes and fees.

Over time, **Util Deco has created more than 100 jobs, of which minimum 40% for disabled people** and for people from vulnerable groups. In addition, it has been appreciated in numerous events, thanks to the social entrepreneur Angela Achitei.

In 2011, she received the **Certificate of Merit** from the Romania’s Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. In 2015 she was awarded with the “**Business with social impact**” prize and in 2017 she received the “**Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2016**”.

The **European Commission** also published Util Deco on its own website in 2013, as a **good practice** and representative model for Romania regarding the protected employment of disabled people.



Lessons learnt & tips for you



One of the biggest challenges for Util Deco was the **lack of confidence in this social business model** that focuses on **disabled people** and people from vulnerable groups.

On this, Angela Achitei stated that: "Even if we are talking about a social business, we have found that, unfortunately, we sell the social story only 5%. The price, the need for the product or the service, the relationship with the customer, the promptitude are important. This finding has led us to think about the business strategy in the way we can meet the core needs of our customers, the social value of the product being just a bonus or appreciation of the well-invested money".

For Util Deco the biggest challenge is to maintain the job, this is why it invests on qualification courses and other services of integration, which have proved successful by the positive impact on increasing the abilities and competences of the disabled people.

It takes a lot of courage, passion and even a dash of unconsciousness to overcome the many challenges that arise, to cope with the frequent legislative, economic, social and political changes, requires **continuous learning**, research and being surrounded by specialists.

utildeco
întreprindere socială ADV România

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MTÜ
Taaskastutuskoda



Country:
 Estonia



Year of foundation:
2012



My age when
I launched it:
29 years old

TAASKASUTUSKODA STORY

COMMUNITY, IDEAS, CIRCUMSTANCES AND UNSUNG ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS



#recycling
#sustainablelifestyle
#upcycling
#ruralcommunity



Our challenge was...

Rural areas often fall victim to urbanisation. The social life there either dwindles or moves away. But could it be possible, **to help to rekindle rural areas through social entrepreneurship**, educational programmes and supporting active community?

What is more, how many people have unwanted items in life that are perfectly usable and somebody else might want or need? Yet, individuals do not know what to do with these items and they tend to throw them away without a second thought. **Thus, there is an excessive waste that need not be there.**

Sustainability often begins from awareness and interest: but who is there to support that interest and provide a convenient outlet?

*"Clever solutions
need an eager mind
to think 'I can do
this' and they can"*

Kristi Zolgo

Our story



Taaskasutuskoda is a small enterprise in Mooste, born with the idea to **change people's mentality in a sustainable way** and to find new happy owners to previously unwanted items.

It began in 2012, when **Kristi Zolgo** had an idea to do something in the nearby Mooste, manor complex that had become a hub of activity in the rural area.

Kristi Zolgo and **Piret Parmi**, two young moms, combined their efforts, rented some rooms and began asking their friends and family if they had any **unwanted items in their life**.

They both had no previous experience of running a store or a charity, but with some **ingenuity, problem solving** and the use of **social media outlets**, they managed to boost their visibility.

Taaskasutuskoda aims to introduce sustainable options around us, to **educate and train people on sustainability** and environmental issues.

However, Piret and Kristi knew that their little shop and processing rooms were not enough to sustain their new activities in terms of financial sustainability.

Thus, Piret, with no previous knowledge of web design started building a website and an **online store**.

What have we reached?

Clever solutions need an eager mind to think **"I can do this"** and then you can do it.

Those solutions scary at first, rise visibility generate business and generally make life more comfortable for the end consumer.

All good things come out of brilliant ideas and brilliant ideas need to grow.

Nowadays, Taaskasutuskoda has several outlets for their activities and a lightbulb moment came when we realised **community participation** and involvement being the keywords. Thus, the **traditional twice a year flea market began**.

What makes Taaskasutuskoda so special is that we have created a **system of admission points in waste stations**: people can choose to give the items a new life through these admission points, instead of throwing them away. It meant complex coordination with the waste service provider and local governments. Luckily, the majority of people involved in the project shared our vision. It is the **changes in people's mentality** when it comes to upcycling, recycling and reusing that is most endearing about it all.

In few years, upcycling and recycling have grown a lot in Estonia.



Lessons learnt & tips for you



Even though life of a socially responsible organisation is very busy, **it is not what you can use for your main income**. For both of us Taaskasutuskoda is just one of our activities and source of income.

It is inevitable in Estonia, where the market is relatively small and exponential growth is not possible.


Yet, **social entrepreneurship** in Estonia relies on **zealous multitasking enthusiasts that liven a small rural community with their activities, projects and events**.



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Apadrinaunolivo.org

APADRINAUNOLIVO.ORG



#adoptanolivetree
#recuperateoilgroves
#againstruralexodus



*"Work hard and
Believe, Believe,
Believe!"*

Alberto Alfonso



Country:
 Spain



Year of foundation:
2014



My age when
I launched it:
27 years old

APADRINAUNOLIVO.ORG

HOW TO GENERATE A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY IN A TOWN WITH 100.000 ABANDONED OLIVE TREES



Our challenge was...

Nowadays, several people work in villages at **risk of disappearing**, struggling with establishing population due to the scarcity of labour opportunities. Throughout the years, this has generated the **massive abandonment of crops** implying the loss of tradition and culture.

Moreover, the gap between cities and town has enlarged with time. Thus, we have acted tackling that gap allowing people in the city to **support towns through the consumption of responsible brands** that allows generating sustainable development and labour in rural areas.

Taking into account our key challenges we would like to provide aid in more than **4.000 villages** that are almost abandoned in Spain, creating also an **alternative model of consumption** that is environmentally and socially profitable.




Lastly, we would also face challenges in the **sustainability** of the project.

Our story



Apadrinaunolivo.org was born in 2014 and the cofounders are: **Alberto Alfonso, Adrián Martín, Pablo Garcia and Jose Alfredo Martin.**

The idea was born when we discovered that a small village, Oliete had **100.000 neglected centenary olive trees**, which they used to generate a **sustainable rural economy** putting in value those resources. **The project has three main pillars of implementation:**

-  **Adoption:** it enables people in the cities to **'adopt' a centenary and neglected olive tree** for an annual fee of 50€. Then, **the sponsor will receive two liters of extra virgin olive oil** from the recuperated olive grove and the possibility of visiting their olive tree in organised trips.
-  **Olive Oil:** the **'golden liquid' is commercialised**. The first olive oil in the world obtained from **recuperated olive groves**, sold under **'Rural Friendly'** and sustainable brand named **'Mi Olivo'**.
-  **Enterprises:** **several multinationals have decided to contribute in a win-win situation to this cause**, providing materials or incorporating the business into their **Social Corporate Responsibility** strategy.

Whilst, Apadrinaunolivo organises private visits and team building activities for them.

What have we reached?

We have **2.500 people sponsoring olive trees** (50€ per year) and we have recuperated **9.000 olive trees** and their biodiversity.

We have sold over **15.000 bottles of olive oil** under our brand **'Mi Olivo'**.

We have empowered **120 farmers** producing oil in our olive mill, transforming the life of **7 families working full-time** in the town while employing **5 mentally disabled people part-time** during the most intensive months of the harvest.

We have raised awareness on **the problem rural exodus** entails through media coverage and we have **won 15 prizes** such as Fundación La Caixa or F.Daniel y Nina Caraso.

We have created **the first olive mill in the world** that is social, solidary and sustainable and a new market category that is **'Rural Friendly'**.



Lessons learnt & tips for you



Work hard and Believe, Believe, Believe!

There is still a lot of work to be done in Oliete and lot of work to be done with our olive oil brand in terms of marketing positioning.

However, we do not want to lose the opportunity of **expanding our action** and commercialising other products as long as it implies the development of other areas.

The way we generated our **'social model'** can be easily replicated **in abandoned rural areas in the world**. Furthermore, the **educational programme** we launched for **children in primary school** led us to understand that this is one of the main concerns for us to **raise awareness about rural problems** and possible solutions.

Apadrinaunolivo.org



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