

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Çöp(m)adam: Women's cooperative manufacturing handbags in Turkey

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Name: Çöp(m)adam

City, country: Ayvalik-Balıkesir, Turkey

Name of entrepreneur/founder:

Description: Çöp(m)adam is a social development project of women who produce handbags and other accessories from packaging waste provided by Unilever, generating regular salaries for previously unemployed women, building women's self esteem, generating employment and demonstrating a creative way to produce items from recycled materials. Products are marketed through websites and campaigns.

Çöp(m)adam is a project that successfully combines many aspects of social life; trying to produce solutions for all stakeholders and focus on main problem areas in Turkey, such as local development, sustainability, entrepreneurship, women's employment/unemployment, empowerment of women; as well as awareness raising on issues related with the protection of environment (recycling, waste management etc.). With all these qualities it is possible to call Çöp(m)adam as "social, green enterprise".

Investment: *Start up capital:* 27,000 €
Rate of return on investment: 4 years
Sources of funding: Sponsored by Unilever Turkey and Sabanci University

Employment generation: Since its inception Çöp(m)adam has provided 400 women with work in 3 workshops, currently there are two workshops where 120 women are working.

Timeline: 2007 - Inception
2008 – Implementation

Feasibility study: Identification of available raw material (recycled packaging from Unilever) and the supply of a talented, underutilized workforce. The contribution of women labor to Turkish economy is not at a desired level and as many work as unpaid family workers, the contribution of Turkish women to the country's economy is undefined. The necessity of improving the quality of life for rural women, as in other developing countries, is the common finding of many studies.

Geo-social-economic setting: In Turkey rural areas have a poor level of education and skills, ineffective institutional structures and farmer organisations to support rural development. There is scattered settlement pattern in some regions, insufficient development and maintenance of physical, social and cultural infrastructure, a high rate of dependence on subsistence agriculture, high rate of hidden unemployment, insufficient diversification of agricultural and non-agricultural income generating activities, low income level and relatively low quality of life for rural populations, with rural to urban migration and ageing of rural population.

Geo-social-economic setting:	It is very well known that the contribution of women labor to Turkish economy is not at a desired level. It is also a fact that as long as they work as unpaid family workers, the contribution of Turkish women to the country's economy would remain undefined or would not be stated statistically adequately. The necessity of improving the life quality of rural women in terms of social and economic aspects, as in all other developing countries also in Turkey, is the common finding of many studies.
Key features:	Rural development, women's employment, empowerment of women, awareness raising of recycling, waste management and the opportunity of creating products from waste.
Overall rational and motivation:	Empower women in Turkey, produce a creative, fun and replicable model in order to bring Turkish women into the workforce and raise awareness with regards to protection of environment and recycling. Establish a model to empower women in Turkey. Create a green economy based on investment into waste management. Present a new, innovative and genuine product to the Turkish market.
Strengths:	Focusing on social and environmental problems in a way that gets people's attention in a positive manner, offering a new type of product, which is a very new field for the market, being attractive for people, business, local governments, media etc.
Challenges and constraints:	Risk of not being sponsored and foreign competition in the future and the fact that the products can't be protected through copy rights, fiscal system's burden on the company, dependence on a single sponsor.
Direct activities and Impacts:	<i>Social:</i> Positive contribution is made to women's empowerment and employment with economic value added to a resource that would otherwise be wasted. <i>Environmental:</i> 30 tonnes of waste converted into products <i>Economic:</i> 5,000 products put onto the market, with more than 80% of the products already sold.
Use of innovative Technologies:	Çöp(m)adam as a whole is an innovative and incorporative (both social and environmental goals) project and has the potential to become a model for others in Turkey and elsewhere to follow as hands-on effective local approach.
Evidence of a holistic approach/world view:	Production of innovative value-added products from waste materials can contribute to social, environmental and economical gains.
Scale of benefits:	The new products contribute to Turkey's economy nationally and on a local scale due to local ownership a positive impact has been made on local shareholders.
Policies, incentives and regulations needed:	One of the key aspects of sustainable lifestyles and green entrepreneurship is finding "local" solutions. Hence, SCP and sustainable lifestyles should be explicitly incorporated to the existing regional development policies and the relevant institutions. This will provide a more clear and favourable supports for local initiatives of green businesses.
Lessons and recommendations:	Building a business and maintaining it is a hard job to do and Innovation can be made in all areas of daily life.

References: www.copmadam.com

30 minutes show on Çöp(m)adam (From 'Changemakers' of Turkey):

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yHIV5PnrtQ>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v246fJqSAfo&feature=related>