

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Tanaïl Eco-lodge: Multiuse sustainable tourist facility in Lebanon

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Name: Tanaïl Eco-lodge, Arcenciel
City, country: Tanaïl (Central Bekaa), Lebanon
Name of entrepreneur/founder:

Description: A tourist facility with seven traditionally built lodges, a multifunctional space “Khan” used as a restaurant, business facility (for meetings and seminars) and market place for young people, families, corporate guests, and tourists. The facility employs people from marginalized groups (people with disabilities, ex-prisoners, youth in difficulty, unemployed, etc...)

Investment: *Start up capital:* Investment was required to cover construction, equipment, salaries and general costs.
Return on investment: No information provided.
Sources of funding: No information provided.

Stakeholders: Lebanese Youth Hostel Federation, Visitors, tourists, local population, etc.

Employment generation: 8 permanent staff, 20 seasonal staff.

Timeline: 1985 Arcenciel founded as a non for profit organization
1995 recognised as a public utility
2005 construction of lodge began with an average of 3 months per unit
2006 ecolodge operational

Feasibility study: A feasibility study was done initially based on 3 parameters: the attraction of the region for foreign and local tourists, the cost effectiveness of such a project, and the capacity to revive the ancestral technique of building with locally made mud bricks. The study required field research in the region, for similar constructions, contacts, interviews and discussions with men who still possess the technique of mud construction, a pilot project to test and master the technique, as well as measurements based on occupancy rates and seasonal variations of tourism industry in order to decide of the optimal space and operational system.

Geo-social-economic setting: Environmental deterioration and landscape degradation by anarchic urbanization is an increasing problem in Lebanon, in addition the Central Bekaa region has suffered from war, and is still unstable. The eco-lodge positions itself as a neutral encountering space for dialogue promotion, peace building, and respect for the needs of different groups. This eco-lodge encourages the Bekaa populations to rediscover and revitalize this ancestral mode of construction, as well as adopt this construction in many new local tourism initiatives that help fight desertification of the plains and the rural exodus. Moreover, the management of the Ecolodge revives traditional crafts and professions, such as food preparation and entertainment through music and local folklore. Vulnerable groups are employed in the project to promote social inclusion.

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| Key features: | Environment and heritage preservation, cultural exchange, social inclusion, responsible tourism. |
| Overall rational and motivation: | The overall motivation is to promote and participate in sustainable development on local, national and international levels. A socio-economic motivation was to integrate local underprivileged communities in professional and sustainable projects and provide meeting spaces for young people of all regions to break down barriers, offering an educational platform for environmental and social activities and practical activities for students. Adobe buildings cost less than building a concrete house. The environmental motivation is due high demographic pressure leading to anarchic urbanization and local heritage destruction. Constructions are made of renewable materials (mud, straw, wood, soil ...) available in the immediate environment, which allows an economy of transport and energy. |
| Strengths: | Pioneer in sustainable tourism, reputation of Arcenciel as a prominent NGO in development, the need and the demand for alternative lodging facilities, proximity of Arcenciel center and Rainbow Club. |
| Challenges and constraints: | Professionalism and training of staff, incidence of political instability on tourism. |
| Direct activities and Impacts: | <i>Social:</i> Training and capacity building. <i>Environmental:</i> Environmental awareness activities. <i>Economic:</i> Tourism activities and lodgings. |
| Use of innovative Technologies: | Environmental friendly technologies: solar energy, recycling, solar heating, composting... |
| Evidence of a holistic approach/world view: | Part of responsible and alternative tourism wave all around the world. |
| :JHSLVMILUZ | 1.000 Arcenciel volunteers and friends, 10.000 visitors, 5.000 school and university students and 5.000 tourists per year. |
| Policies, incentives and regulations needed: | Organization of alternative tourism sector in Lebanon, promotion and protection of local architecture, organization of youth hostels movement in Lebanon, promotion of youth hostels movements. |
| Lessons and recommendations: | The return to the traditional architecture has revived an unknown, even decried heritage associated with poverty. It has also helped to revive the chain of transmission of the architectural know-how between builders and their descendants. Specific architecture, as well as social changes, new standards of comfort, and empowerment of women should be considered to introduce changes which would adapt this habitat to the conditions of modern life. |
| References: | www.arcenciel.org |