## ntrepreneurship



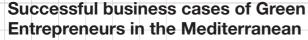














## Plants of Hope: Women's cooperative selling natural products in Morocco

Project Name: City, country:	Plants of Hope; Association for Sustainable Development (ASSID)  Middle Atlas Mountains Community, Morocco
Entrepreneur/ founder:	Zrira Saadia
Key features:	Employment generation / Local manufacturing / Poverty alleviation / Women empowerment / Natural resources conservation / Valorisation of local products.
Investment:	Start up capital: None Return on investment: Not applicable. Sources of funding: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Rural communities Synergos, The National Initiative for Human Development (NIHD), The Ministry o National Education National and international NGOs, Social Development Agency (ADS)
Stakeholders:	The Islamic Development Bank (LABID), Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries Moroccan Network of Socio-economic Solidarity (REMESS), Association AMAPPE Solidaridad Internacional – Andalucía, Spain.

Employment generation: 2 full time employees, 9 part time, 2 volunteers, 300 jobs for rural women.

Timeline:

2004 - ASSID was created

2005: Pilot rabbit rearing in the province of El Hajeb, funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries

2006: Project for raising goats in the province of El Hajeb, funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries

2008-2009: Project for promotion of medicinal and aromatic plants by rural women in the region of Oulmès: funded by the State Secretariat of Rural Development and the NHRIs of the Province of Khemisset

2008-2010: Literacy Project and exploitation of medicinal and aromatic plants by rural women in the region of Oulmès, funded Solidaridad Internacional, Spain

2009-2011: Project for promotion of medicinal and aromatic plants by rural women in the region of Oulmès: funded by Synergos

Feasibility study:

The feasibility study was conducted with the help of technical services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries who support the association ASSID in the close monitoring of the activities of project.

Rural women have a lot of indigenous knowledge and practical know-how acquired through life with aromatic and medicinal plants in their natural environment and small-scale production. However, their qualifications are not identified or developed and several species have become endangered due to population pressure, overgrazing and uncontrolled exploitation owing to deficits in awareness and lack of appropriate regulation. Women, who are the primary resource managers of aromatic and medicinal plants, do not benefit from them as much as the intermediaries do. The project has come to change this situation by allowing the integration of women in the operations of these special plants.
Creativity, transparency, work on the ground solving real problems, and targeting the entire population, rather than a particular sector. Participatory approach involving the whole community, diversification of income for women by adopting a value chain of medicinal and aromatic plants.
Poverty alleviation through employment generation and environmental protection. The goal of protecting the environment in Morocco in general and medicinal and aromatic plants in particular. Environmental protection particularly for medicinal and aromatic plants. Enable local people to organize into cooperatives and improve living conditions. Create jobs for rural women.
Supervision of Dr. Saadia ZRIRA, an expert in the field of medicinal and aromatic plants; responsiveness and membership of women in the project; support of various project partners.
The limited funding to develop integrated projects that would help the advancement of rural women and the fact that rural women sometimes have difficulty in marketing their products.
Social: revenues of 300 rural women improved, they are trained in various skills and their literacy rate is improved.  Environment: More than 20 wild species are protected through sustainable harvesting methods and over 5 species are protected.  Economic: income of rural women improved through the sale of various products from rare plants on local, regional, national and international.
Extraction of essential oils and juice in a still stainless steel apparatus that meets international quality standards; drying herbs in a solar dryer.
"Think globally, act locally"
10 similar projects initiated throughout Morocco. Project has been widely visited by several NGOs and filmed by TV station and considered a succes. 10 women's cooperatives are active in the use of medicinal and aromatic plants.
The Moroccan government gives great attention to women's empowerment and environmental protection.
Many things can be done if one believes in them; the results of the project could be very interesting if we adopt a participatory approach involving all partners; capacity building is very important to the success of the project.  Similar projects can be implemented if local people join in the project, the project area is rich in medicinal and aromatic plants and Good project management is maintained.

References: www.assid-maroc.org - www.synergos.org/bios/saadiazrira

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