

# Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



## T.E.R.R.E Liban: Ecotourism, recycling and youth participation in Lebanon

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<b>Project Name:</b>	T.E.R.R.E Liban
<b>City, country:</b>	Baabda, Lebanon (with project offices in three other regions)
<b>Name of entrepreneur/ founder:</b>	Paul Abi Rached

**Description:** Non for profit organization whose aim is raise awareness about the environment and promote more sustainable lifestyles, using music as a way of connecting directly with young people.

**Investment:** *Startup capital:* None – all work initially done voluntarily.  
*Rate of return on investment:* Not applicable as the organization is non for profit.  
*Sources of funding:* Forest ecotourism services (57%), recycled material collection (21%), sale of products made from recycled materials (16%), contributions from local councils (4%), membership contributions (2%). The organization currently has an annual budget of 200.000USD. ¾ of funding is from public organizations.

**Employment generation:** 5 professionals full time, 1 professional part time, 9 non professional workers full time, 30 part time forestry jobs.

**Timeline:** 1995 Paul and one other teacher began with a recycling project in Lebanese schools  
 2002 registered the NGO Terre Liban  
 2002 2006 – period of external funding from European Commission  
 2010 ¾ client base is from public sector, although the private sector is also involved, the organization aims to be 100% self sufficient through the sale of products and other services in 2 years and not depend on grants.

**Feasibility study:** No feasibility study was carried out at the start, Paul and colleagues ran initiatives for 3 years before founding a non for profit organization to gain public support before setting up an NGO. This was to ensure local trust and avoid scepticism that the project was simply a mechanism to secure funding.

**Geo-social-economic setting:** During the war in Lebanon much of the natural environment was destroyed and in the post war “boom” period much unsustainable construction took place, with a notable input of foreign investment in the construction sector after 9/11.

**Key features:** Creativity, transparency, working on the ground addressing concrete problems, and targeting the whole population, not focusing on one particular sector.

**Overall rationale and motivation:** The overall motivation is to change attitudes and actions that affect the environment in Lebanon. The initial environmental driver for the project was the threat of a motorway construction on a forest outside the capital city. Stopping incineration projects and construction projects in natural environments has also been a key driver for the lobbying and campaign work of the organization. Bird protection and climate change are also key motivations for action.

<b>Overall rationale and motivation:</b>	The main social driver is to promote “eco-citizens” so that individuals take responsibility for their actions that affect their local and global environment. The economic driver has been to stop the uncontrolled economic development (particularly construction projects with foreign investment) that has accelerated development since the post war period.
<b>Strengths:</b>	The fact that Paul is a well known singer, which has been key to the NGOs success in getting people on board, particularly younger generations. The singing workshops have had great success in motivating young people and have been recognized internationally.
<b>Challenges and constraints:</b>	Start up capital and ongoing financing is a major organizational challenge and an ongoing barrier is the governments “bulldozer” approach to development, based around unsustainable construction and tourism projects which does not take the environment into consideration.
<b>Direct activities and impacts:</b>	<i>Social:</i> 100.000 eco-citizens have signed the Lebanese eco-citizen charter and some. The project ran for 7 years before founding an NGO to ensure public trust in the results and initiatives and avoid possible cynicism for setting up a non for profit organization. Support from the local community has been essential during the whole process and the organization aims to operate with maximum transparency. Environmental education resources have been introduced into the school curriculum. <i>Environmental:</i> 19 environmental campaigns have been carried out. <i>Economic:</i> Within 2 years the project aims to be entirely self funding through the sale of sustainable products and services, currently the annual budget is 1m€.
<b>Use of innovative technologies:</b>	Facebook, SMS and email are the main communication systems used.
<b>Evidence of a holistic approach/world view:</b>	No single issue is treated in isolation, the organization aims for insightful creative thinking that challenges assumptions and promotes systemic change operating under the philosophy “Think global, act local.”
<b>Scale of benefits:</b>	100.000 ecocitizens have signed the ecocitizens charter, 19 environmental campaigns have been carried out (coastal clean-up, forest protection, motorway lobby etc), 100 songs published (some of which have been introduced into the school curriculum) and a musical toolkit to promote Lebanese eco-citizenship has been produced. 300 eco-action teams have been established in different municipalities to educate people on forest fire protection and other practical actions. 260,000kg of paper has been recycled, after numerous campaigns a motorway project in a zone of natural forest was stopped and areas of local forest have been restored.
<b>Policies, incentives and regulations needed:</b>	Paul considers that innovation cannot be bred, it is something innate in certain individuals; however support and training would be useful for entrepreneurs and small businesses once they have been identified.
<b>Lessons and recommendations:</b>	Have a dream! But keep to realistic targets in the day to day. Maintain good relations with the local community and those directly involved and use creative techniques (music) to engage young people
<b>References:</b>	<a href="http://www.paulabirached.com">www.paulabirached.com</a> <a href="http://www.terreliban.org">www.terreliban.org</a> <a href="http://www.myspace.com/paulabirached">www.myspace.com/paulabirached</a>