

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Sakhrah Women's Cooperative: Profit-sharing agriculture and crafts in Jordan

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Project Name: Sakhrah Women's Cooperative and Female Farmer's Union.

City, country: Jordan

Name of entrepreneur/ founder: Zeinab al Momany

Description: A profit-sharing cooperative for farming and traditional handicrafts whose members are involved in the cultivation and packaging of cereals, manufacture of dairy products, textiles and crafts. Members are given access to training, child care, education grants and microfinance as well as an equal distribution of profits at the end of the year.

Investment: Initiative began with small productive projects, then offering revolving loans for members to set up their own initiatives. Today each member contributes to the cooperative in the beginning of the year. The funds raised are invested into the various projects, and from the diversified sources of income, the profits of the cooperative are distributed equally between all its members at the end of the year. International aid agencies and awards have also funded specific projects. Income distribution: the school 30%, Member's fees 15%, projects 35%, social entrepreneur fellowships 10%, awards 10 %.

Stakeholders: Members, civil society groups.

Employment generation: 32 full time staff

Timeline:

- 2002: Established a nursery , a kindergarten and a school (zain)
- 2003: Established a Sakhrah Women's Cooperative. 4 projects executed
- 2004: Cleaning and packing of cereals
- 2004: Poverty alleviation through community development project GTZ funded
- 2004: Raise the standard of living for the people in Sakhra project GEF funded
- 2005: A small factory for yogurt making.
- 2006: Obtained king Abdullah award for excellence in free work and entrepreneurs
- 2007: Established a union contains farmer women from all rural communities in Jordan
- 2008: Social Entrepreneurship Schwab foundation
- 2009: Ashoka Fellowship
- 2009: Arab World Social Innovators –Synergos.
- 2010: Aline Planning Awards
- 2010: Capacity building and economic empowerment for rural women and girls

Feasibility study: Studies were carried out for the Nursery and school and for all externally financed projects (GEF, GTZ and SUFW projects)

Geo-social-economic setting: Women (particularly rural women) have limited access to education and employment, are responsible for all childcare and domestic responsibilities and powerless in social decision making processes. By liberating women and creating structures, such as the Female Farmer's Union Zienab believes she is creating a better opportunity for women, men and the region as a whole.

Key features:	Sustainable agriculture / Employment generation / Local manufacturing / Poverty alleviation / Women empowerment.
Overall rationale and motivation:	Overcoming women's social, economic, and institutional or legal constraints, lack of opportunities and limited participation in the decision-making process. Reduced access to education, traditional gender –ideology, conservative social norms and values more pronounced in rural areas where women's position is limited to the domestic sphere. Although active in agriculture women receive far lower wages, are not consulted on financial issues (loans, credits, management etc) and in Arab countries have the lowest global employment rate of women in non-agricultural sectors at 28 percent.
Strengths:	Leadership and determination of Zeinab.
Challenges and constraints:	Exploitation of women in agriculture work, lack of projects, high rate of poverty and unemployment in rural communities, lack of awareness between women, lack of support network, lack of confidence and conviction among men toward women's work. Agricultural development policy, behaviour of rural society towards women, lack of a permanent body to monitor women farmers legal, social and economic situation in agriculture, inability of rural women to own land, violence, polygamy, illiteracy. Internal weakness is the lack of experience of management of projects, computer skills, languages, communication.
Direct activities and impacts:	<i>Social:</i> Female Farmers Union established with 450 members, law reformed so rental rights to land is sufficient to join a union, increase of women farmers in the union from 1% to 8%. More access to participation, education, conferences and website set up for female farmers etc. <i>Environmental:</i> Traditional sustainable agriculture techniques used. <i>Economic:</i> 721 women in active economic roles with raised standard of living, 800 revolving loans, and 7 cooperatives.
Use of innovative technologies:	Facebook, SMS and email, Linkedin, bilingual interactive website creating networks of female farmers across the Arab world to replicate the initiative in other countries, media campaign being launched highlighting success stories and experience exchange modules, support from Queen Rania.
Evidence of a holistic approach/world view:	Strategy based on 3 axes to combat poverty from a social, economic and institutional dimension. Cooperative structure chosen to be able to distribute income equally, social, cultural and economic development. Also raising awareness about family planning, awareness workshops and empowerment activities on rights to inherited land etc. Partnerships with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and dreams of establishing an Arab Women Farmers' Union.
Policies, incentives and regulations needed:	Belief that women alone can demand their full rights, legal adjustments to enable them to be part of Unions.
Lessons and recommendations:	Increase job opportunities by establishing many and diverse projects.
Key references:	www.alineplanning.org/awards www.schwabfound.org/sf/SocialEntrepreneurs/Profiles/index.htm?sname=205943&sorganization=0&sarea=0&ssector=0&stype=0 www.ashoka.org/fellow/5669 www.synergos.org/bios/zeinabalmomany.htm HTTP://JORDAN.USOID.GOV/PHOTOSTORYDETAIL.CFM?ID=43 www.flickr.com/photos/ifap/3965792448/