

BOTTLING HAPPINESS: HOW ONE NEW MACHINE TRANSFORMED A BUSINESS

Cypri Cola is one of the biggest bottled water factories in the Turkish Cypriot community, employing around 180 people. Through the purchase of new machinery that can both produce and fill the bottle, profits have increased – and the business has recently signed a deal with Coca-Cola.

Cypri Cola, founded in the early 90s, was the first producer of bottled water in the Turkish Cypriot community, and quickly grew into one of the largest. By 2014, however, as the company grew and received higher demand, the system was becoming too inefficient to cope and staff were having to work overtime to keep up with orders.

Cypri Cola's Director, Dr Ahmet Gürtuna, says, "We had to start to work on Saturday for 16 hours and in the summer, Sunday as well because we couldn't cope with the demand [...] it wasn't a pleasant situation."

So the company applied for a grant from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, and began researching the latest blow-moulding machinery.

Cypri Cola received around €600 000, to which they added their own investment, and purchased a Krones PET-blowing machine, which can make new bottles and fill them within seconds. It has more than tripled the company's production capacity of non-alcoholic drinks, from 5 000 to 18 000 bottles per hour.

But time isn't the only thing the machinery is saving. Bottles used to have to be sent to a different part of the factory to be filled – which meant a risk of contamination. Dr Gürtuna explains. "Before, we were carrying the bottle by air commerce [like a pneumatic



Impact

- Increased capacity of the factory, leading to better processes
- A more modern factory, which in turn helped to establish a contract with Coca Cola
- Increased capacity and process awareness even further through interaction with a major multinational

A more energy efficient Cypri Cola

EU Contribution:
Approximately €600 000

Implementation period: 2014-2016

tube]. We had to use a rinser to rinse the bottle with water. This water, you'd throw it away but with this new technology [...] you're saving water."

After modernising the production line, Cypri Cola decided to modernise their whole facility, which has led to a new contract with drinks giant Coca Cola.

But for Dr Gürtuna, the biggest improvements have been to the wellbeing of his workforce. "This is, for me, the most important thing," he says, "because when employees come to work, they are happy, and when they go home they are happy."

STORAGE AND SOLAR POWER: NEW SYSTEMS INCREASE PROFITS FOR FAMILY FARM

The new equipment at Türkay's family farm has been the envy of his neighbours. Not only has he been able to improve marketing of his produce by storing harvested crops in the cold storage unit until the price is right, he's also implemented a solar-powered irrigation system. With a higher volume of produce and lower running costs, the farm's profits have increased.

Like many farms in the Turkish Cypriot community, the Hocanın family farm grows classic Cypriot produce, such as potatoes, onions and pomegranates with irrigation being an important aspect of the farming practise.

Now, thanks to a grant of approximately €98 000 from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, father and son Necati and Türkay have been able to purchase a solar energy system, an irrigation pump, irrigation pipelines and a cold storage unit for the farm... and they're already seeing the benefits.

In the three months since the new energy-efficient systems were installed, water usage has already gone down by almost a third. Fuel costs have decreased by 60% as the solar system reached its full performance – which, in turn, is increasing the farm's profitability.

What's more, the cold storage unit has revolutionised their way of working.



Impact

- Energy costs reduced by 60%
- Profitability increased by 60%
- Reduced greenhouse emissions by 35 tonnes per year

Increase of Competitiveness Through Environmentally Friendly Production

EU Contribution:
Approximately €98 000

Implementation period: 2015-2016

Now, sales can be sustained throughout the year, as Türkay explains: "[We] pick the produce, and sell it when the prices are better. From the harvest time, until the time [we] sold the product, the prices rose twice [...] it's more profitable to keep produce in the cold room and then sell when the market's more favourable".

"It's really improved our relationship with the traders [...] We are very happy."

AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME WITH A DIFFERENCE: TRAINING FOR RESULTS

Hasan Akanay used to have a hard time finding reliable apprentices for his auto repair business, Akanay Garaj. Now, thanks to a programme that trains apprentices and matches them with businesses, he has two committed trainees.

Akanay Garaj is one of many businesses that have benefited from the “Training for Results” programme, developed with help from the European Union’s Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community.

The funding allowed the trainers to study similar programmes abroad, and to purchase vital equipment, including a vehicle for monitoring visits to workplaces. The result is a flexible training programme covering six sectors (hairdressing, barbering, car mechanics, electrics, plumbing and cookery). Students can earn a wage as they learn, and employers gain fully-trained, reliable employees.

Hasan Akanay puts the success down to the communication between workplaces, schools and families that the project encourages. To illustrate, he tells us about one of his students.

“Before he came here, the mother was telling [me] he’s not reliable, he goes to work for a day and then three days he’s absent. [Two months] after he started to work here through the programme, the mother called and said, ‘Thank you very much because my son is now very motivated to come to work.’”



Impact

- Apprentices effectively matched with local businesses
- 325 young apprentices aged 15-18 and 75 adults have completed their training in the past 5 years
- Continuous improvement of the training programme, resulting in an increased enrolment with currently 400 apprentices in 29 sectors and 165 adults in about 20 sectors

Project: Training for Results

EU Contribution:
Approximately €170 000

Implementation period: 2016-2017

According to Hasan, the benefit of sourcing apprentices through the programme is very clear. “Now I’m teaching them,” he says, “but in two years’ time I know they will be my employees.”

BUILDING A PROFESSION: THE TURKISH CYPRIOT CHAMBER OF ARCHITECTS

For all architects, staying up to date with the latest techniques, laws and regulations is a vital part of the profession. When the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Architects established a Continuing Professional Development programme and qualification system for architects, they found it didn’t just benefit their members and students – it helped the Chamber build better relationships too.

Thanks to funding from the European Union’s Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, the Chamber has developed 25 training courses which will keep architects up to date with building regulations, and eventually offer accreditation for architectural graduates.

The team used the grant to make study visits to professional architecture institutes in the UK and Italy, and to develop a series of courses. Topics are based on international principles, but adapted for local issues such as the preservation of cultural heritage.

By October 2017, 215 practicing architects had started or completed new courses as part of the programme. The Chamber hopes that adopting EU standards and best practices will make the architecture and related sectors in the Turkish Cypriot community more competitive.

The development of the new programme has helped the Chamber to build a rapport with its members too – as the team explain: “Young people, mostly, they were looking to our Chamber for authoritative advice.



Impact

- Increased competitiveness of the architecture sector in the Turkish Cypriot community
- Alignment to EU standards and best practices by developing a suite of 25 training courses
- 215 participants had taken the courses by October 2017

Project: Establishing a Continuing Professional Development Programme and Qualification System for Architects

EU Contribution:
Approximately €113 000

Implementation period: 2016-2017

But now they understand that the Chamber of Architects is something more than that. They come here, they can share their problems with us. So this also gives us good feedback; [...] we take their opinions [of the programme], what they think about it. And so for the next year, we are sure we are going to do better.”

ADDRESSING THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: THE "UNSPOKEN" PROJECT

In the Turkish Cypriot community, the acknowledgement of LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) persons and their rights is still something of a taboo subject. But, an awareness campaign called "Unspoken" is really getting people talking.

For many people in the Turkish Cypriot community, the subject of LGBTI rights is "the elephant in the room". That's why the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC), in collaboration with the Queer Cyprus Association and the Thomson Foundation, created Unspoken, an EU-funded project - with an elephant campaign logo - aiming at improving levels of media coverage and public debate around the subject.

The decriminalisation of homosexuality in Cyprus was only fully implemented in the Greek Cypriot community about 15 years ago. In the Turkish Cypriot community, an amendment to the legal text was made in 2014 to decriminalise same-sex sexual activity, following seven years of work by the Queer Cyprus Association (originally "Initiative Against Homophobia").

As Hazal Yorga from the Queer Cyprus Association explains, any kind of social change is a 'tough sell' in Cyprus, due to the country's recent political history. "Cypriots have been accustomed to live with the 'Cyprus problem' overshadowing every other problem, especially social issues," she says. "It was never 'the time' for human rights, as they were perceived as simple issues not worth spending time or effort on, compared to the biggest problem of all."



Billboard campaign to encourage discussion around LGBTI rights

Impact

- A highly visible behavioural change campaign that sparked discussion in the Turkish Cypriot community
- 3 billboard campaigns and 2 public service announcements delivered
- Training delivered to multipliers to change attitudes

Unspoken: Creating Dialogue on LGBTI Rights in the Turkish Cypriot Community

EU Contribution:
Approximately €300 000

Implementation period: 2015-2017



Impact

Funding from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community enabled the Queer Cyprus Association, together with media organisations CCMC and the Thomson Foundation, to research and develop the Unspoken project. As well as working closely with the media to improve the levels and the quality of coverage, and improve representation of LGBTI persons in the media, the Unspoken team created a series of tailor-made seminars for professionals, and a wide-reaching media campaign that included TV and billboard ads.

To improve media coverage, Unspoken monitored four media outlets over two years, and conducted a series of workshops with journalists. This led directly to the

Reaction

Although the seminars have been gradually raising awareness, the TV ads and billboards have had a more immediate impact - not all of it positive.

Two public service announcements aired on three TV channels, and there were three rounds of billboard campaigns across the whole of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Each of the campaigns were carefully designed to prompt discussion, rather than to shock. "We didn't necessarily want [the first billboard poster] to be provocative or offensive - which it isn't, it just says, 'I'm gay,' which is a pretty standard sentence if you think about it," explains Hazal.

production of an LGBTI media toolkit, which has been well-received. The toolkit contains useful tips like how to cover story ideas, and the right terminology to use.

The Unspoken project seminars target sectors such as media, education, law and health, to share information and start discussions with professionals. To do this, Hazal explains, each seminar has been tailored for its attendees, which include journalists and teachers.

The idea is to raise awareness with a range of influential people, and create a multiplier effect that has the potential to open up discussion across the whole community.

But the reaction was instantaneous. "Some of them were vandalised immediately [...] Some of them were taken down immediately, some of them were ripped."

Whilst this was a surprise and, in many ways, depressing for the team, it sparked huge media coverage and conversation across Cyprus. Now, the team can see the positive side. "I think it turned out for the best. [...] a lot of people were sharing, on social media and in their columns in the newspaper how great the engagement was, and if some people are reacting badly, so be it.

We're talking about it now, aren't we?"

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFER MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

One way of bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU is to make it much easier for people to study and learn abroad. That's why the European Union's Scholarship Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community was set up, more than a decade ago.

Each year, more than 100 Turkish Cypriots attend undergraduate or postgraduate courses, short term courses or internships in other EU Member States, through the EU Scholarship Programme, offering a wide range of opportunities.

"I really feel so lucky that I found this chance," says Ahmet Akarsu, who received a scholarship to study in the UK in 2017. "I believe that I have improved myself not only in my field [computer engineering], but also in many other aspects including my English proficiency, communication, problem-solving and organisation skills. This was certainly a great experience and a milestone in my life."

As well as spreading the word through seminars and media advertisements, the EU Scholarship Programme has a 'Study in Europe Day' where universities from EU Member States come to promote their courses. And this year, language courses have been opened up for new types of applicants.

Indeed, the Programme brings many benefits to Turkish Cypriots. As another beneficiary points out: "I really enjoyed the time [abroad] and I would like to mention that studying in European countries gives confidence and you gain a lot of experience..."

Previous alumni are encouraged to stay in touch and are invited to share their success at events. The presence of an active alumni network doesn't just help others who might be thinking of applying, it also showcases the diverse range of opportunities on offer and the positive impact that the EU Scholarship Programme is having on the lives of Turkish Cypriots.



A Turkish Cypriot student learns about study opportunities in Sweden on Europe Day
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Impact

- More than 100 scholarships are issued each year
- Turkish Cypriot students, teachers and other professionals can spend up to a year at a university in another EU Member State, including in the Republic of Cyprus
- Diverse opportunities are extended to students and professionals who might not otherwise be able to finance their studies in other EU Member States
- Scholarships have been given to more than 1 300 students and professionals since 2007
- Growing interest with around 450 applications received in 2016 to more than 650 in 2018

European Union Scholarship Programme

EU Contribution:
Approximately €16 million

Implementation period: 2007-present

NOT JUST PRESERVING BUT IMPROVING

When Hakan Arsal's father started pickling vegetables at home in 1979, he probably didn't predict quite how well it would turn out. Now his son runs the thriving Arsal Gida factory, whose latest equipment purchase has allowed them to increase production, capacity, hygiene and efficiency - and meet EU standards.

The Arsal Gida factory purchases and processes local produce to make pickles, jams and other traditional Cypriot products. But high production costs, a limited production capacity, and manual production methods were all making it more difficult for the company to remain competitive.

Now, thanks to funding from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, Hakan has been able to purchase and install a range of new equipment. Four new machines have modernised and automated the production processes, increasing food hygiene standards and improving overall quality and efficiency. Capacity has increased by more than 30%.

The new slicing and dicing machine has allowed the company to increase its product range, whilst continuing to make the traditional pickles so important to the business. Hakan explained, "[traditional vegetables] are gathered from the mountains by really low-income earning families, so [...] it's really important that we keep producing these specific pickles because it's an important source of income for them."



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Impact

- Factory capacity increased by more than 30%
- More hygienic production processes
- Production up to EU standards

Arsal Gida

EU Contribution:
Approximately €95 000

Implementation period: 2014-2016

The filled jar washing machine has not only increased efficiency, by automating a previously manual process, but it's significantly improved hygiene levels. Importantly, this means the company can now make products that meet EU standards.

Hakan is thrilled with the improvements the EU funding has allowed him to make. He said, "Without the grants, we were going to be able to come to this position in five years but with the grants, we made it in half [the] time."