



# CREATIVE PRISMA

## Good Practice Study Report Intellectual Output 1



# Content

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
Case Study – France.....	5
Mohamed Ahmed Almoctar .....	5
Nadia Ammour .....	6
Miguel Calisto Morales.....	8
Oumy Kammara.....	9
Ahmad Alharb.....	10
Nia Leroy.....	11
Ghislain Fortin.....	12
Araik Mikaelyan .....	13
Catherine Nfon Epee .....	14
Romain Kayi .....	15
Case Study – Spain.....	17
Rosalía Polo .....	17
Montse Torres .....	19
Paola Perfetti.....	21
Alejandra Becerra.....	23
Catalina Lescano Álvarez .....	25
Tida Coly .....	27
Tilado Bendete.....	29
David Kaplun-Medina .....	31
Mercedes Garcia Rivas .....	32
Silvana Andrea .....	35
Case Study – Italy.....	38
Anna Vlasiuk .....	38
Amina.....	40
Dine Diallo .....	42
Doudou Diouf .....	44
Lidia Apanasenko.....	46



Mia Pailodze .....	47
Mounir Bouzouita.....	51
Shapoor Safari .....	52
Tamar Kiria.....	53
Yan Li.....	56
Case Study - Greece.....	58
Anna.....	58
Arsham.....	59
Hammad .....	60
Beatrice.....	62
Arta .....	63
Victor .....	64
Chen.....	65
Anita .....	67
Isabella.....	68
Maria .....	70
General summary .....	72



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## Introduction

The present report presents the summary of the good practice collection, conducted by the four partners of the CREATIVE PRISMA project in 2019.

The research was conducted by:

- Boréal Innovation (Marseille, France)
- FAMYLIAS (Madrid, Spain)
- CESIE (Palermo, Italy)
- Club for UNESCO of Piraeus and Islands (Piraeus, Greece).

The interviews were conducted from April to November of 2019 and involved around 40 people with migrant background who are either business owners or are currently pursuing careers in fashion and other creative industries.

The interviewees are coming from a wide range of countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela in South America; Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia in Africa; Afghanistan, China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Syria in Asia; Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine in Europe, as well as Canada in North America and Australia.

The following chapters are presenting the good practices, key points of each success story and a message that the interviewees wanted to share with the young entrepreneurs with the migrant background.

## Case Study – France

The research on good practices was conducted by Boréal Innovation in Marseille, France between the 27th of June and the 29th of October.

It involved 5 women and 5 men from Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Cameroun, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, Senegal and Syria. The participants of the study work in following fields: jewellery making, music and singing, clothes making etc.

### Mohamed Ahmed Almoctar

Mohamed Ahmed Almoctar is also known as Hamada. He is a Nigerien jeweller and jewellery seller. He is member of a cooperative of 140 people in Nigeria, among which 40% are jewellers. There he acts as a treasurer, as well as a jeweller. A part of the profit of the cooperative is redistributed among the members and another part is allocated to social projects and local development projects. As an example, they contributed to the creation of a school and bought a donkey to facilitate the water transportation to a small isolated village.

Hamada is a Tuareg and as such has always been familiar with manufacturing of silver jewellery, which is one of the traditional Tuareg crafts. The cooperative of which he is a member used to sell its products (mostly jewellery, but also other artistic and craftsmanship products such as leather products) to tourists visiting Niger. But with the rise of insecurity in the region and thus the decline of tourism, the cooperative decided to start selling their products directly in Europe. Hamada belongs to the people that participate in that commerce.

Since 2006, when he came to Marseille for the first time to sell the products of the cooperative, he comes to France on a regular basis and stays there for two months (or more if he obtains a longer visa) to sell the products before going back to Niger to produce more items.

### Key points:

- Hamada said that he did not use any business plan or commercial strategy.
- His creative process goes back to tradition, where jewellery would be used for barter trade. It became a commercial product with time.

- To sell his products in France he was helped by a local association that supports craftsmanship by organizing cultural events, markets and fairs. This way he could directly get in contact with the targeted clients: wealthier women appreciating handmade jewellery.
- Now, to get more independent and to sell to a larger target, he would like to learn about social media and online selling platforms.

**Hamada's message:**

*Hamada insisted on the positive impact of the possibility of moving regularly between both countries. This way he establishes a positive relationship with his clients, who know which market or craftsmanship fair to attend in order to find him. They also have his contact cards if they wish to make special orders.*

*It also enables him to spend long periods of time in his home country, close to his family. Moreover, he can't keep working using all the traditional tools and the same raw materials that make his products authentic.*

*Also, he is very proud of the social actions taken by the cooperative and wants to underline the fact that his activity is not only business oriented.*

**Nadia Ammour**

Nadia Ammour is an Algerian woman who, together with her two sisters, created a singing trio called "Tighri Uzar" ("Voice of the Roots") on October 17, 2009. Singing since childhood and being able to communicate in several languages, they perform traditional Kabyle songs.

10 years ago, after her graduation from Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), where she studied human resources and then sociology, Mrs. Ammour made a decision to create her band.

From the very beginning the band members received a lot of help from their manager Fatma, who promoted the band, found the concerts you could've sing at and also organized their first meeting with leading figures in Kabyle music. Less than a month later the bad was invited to participate in a radio tribute to many well-known singers and share the stage with them.

According to the band members, it is rare to find really authentic traditional Kabule songs without additions, the ones that remained exactly as they are sung in villages. This is exactly what the band is offering, with the only difference – the songs are being performed by rather young voices.



Nadia feels like it's very important for her to explain their songs to the public, as they are full of symbolism and hidden meanings. For the past 10 years the band have been participating in festivals, humanitarian solidarity concerts (in order to collect funds for humanitarian aid), singing on small stages (Parisian cafés).

Nevertheless, it is still difficult for them to release their album due to financial reasons. The distance between Nadia and her sisters who live in Paris, as well as family obligations, are not making things any easier.

Currently the band has 15-20 concerts per year.

### Key points:

- The Ammour sisters have gained notoriety over the past 10 years, especially with the help of **YouTube** and **Facebook**.
- The band has a large audience of people of all ages from all over the world. The Ammour sisters explain it by the fact that they are **committed human rights defender and their message is feminist**.
- For the past 2 years this band has been Nadia's main job. However, at this point she cannot make a living out of it. Hence, she has to take jobs of on a **part-time basis**, for example do workshops in singing and percussion.
- Three years ago, the Ammour sisters have set up a common fund in order to finance the album. However, they had to spend it on legal proceedings, when their performance was shown on TV without authorisation. There is no decision in this case yet. Currently, as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the band is approaching, the sisters are looking for **funding** in order to organise a concert.
- Each sister has her **own style**. When they sing together, they use the same song structure and remain faithful to traditional singing. However, they also like to improvise on the stage.
- Nadia says that **working with her sisters is very convenient** for her because they already know each other well and it's easier to manage time with them.
- One year ago, a friend of the band, who has an association in Paris, became the band's percussionist. Thanks to her, the band have spent 8 months concerting through this association.



- Nadia says that her favourite concert took place in August 2016 in a small village, where 24 women sang together on the stage. She called it “a wonderful moment of sharing”.

### Nadia’s message:

*“When you settle in a city, you must find out about all the cultural institutions that exist there and about their ethics and values. Do you have same values? Sometimes your art might not fit somewhere everyone politically and ethically. This is a very important issue. You also need to be trained; it helps with communication, concerts, etc”.*

### Miguel Calisto Morales

Miguel was born in Argentina to Chilean parents and grew up in a modest district in Chile.

Eight years ago, he moved to France with his French wife. Few years later Miguel, together with his wife and sister-in-law, decided to open a creative atelier studio called **Chimichurri**.

After travelling around Europe and selling their products on the street for 6 months, Miguel and his wife decided to settle down in France.

Without any specific training, they started sewing, drawing, crafting and recycling. They create their products, exhibit them and then sell them in their workshop.

Miguel has always been a fan of DIY, woodworking and raw materials in general. His experience grew together with his level of experience.

### Key points:

- The Chimichurri workshop is also a **cultural space**. Miguel is not only a craftsman but also a musician. Hence, there are many events taking place in the workshop, such as concerts and even dinners (through Chimichurri’s sister organisation, that was created along the way).
- The name "chimichurri" comes from the eponymous sauce and refers to the mixture of flavours and ingredients that compose it. **Miguel’s workshop is also a mixture of textures and culture**; hence he feels like the name is very accurate.
- The use of **recycling and upcycling** made it possible for Miguel to create his business without any significant investments. He feels like back in Chile this would’ve been impossible for him.





## **Miguel's message:**

*"You have to dare to start without thinking too much, because you have nothing to lose! Marseille is an open city, populated by different communities and cultures. People here are very open-minded. You have to talk about your idea, spread the positive image and those who will be interested in what you have to offer will help you. You have to be persistent and believe in your project!"*

## **Oumy Kammara**

Oumy Kammara was born and raised in Senegal. After a couple of sabbatical year in the neighbouring countries (Niger, Chad), she moved to France in order to finish her high school degree in Rouen.

After her graduation Oumy have studied in a few university programmes before choosing interior design and getting her university degree in it. In the meantime, she also took a French citizenship as her grandfather worked in the French administration before decolonization.

After graduation she started working at the decoration store chain called Habitat in Marseille. She spent 7 years working there as a decorator and scenographer in one of their stores.

However, at one point, when Habitat started selling calabash (crafts from sub-Saharan Africa), Oumy decided that it was a right time for her to start her own business.

Hence, in 2013 she opened her African crafts store in Marseille, using her experience has a decorator.

## **Key points:**

- At the beginning Oumy received help and guidance from Abdoulaye Traore, who is an advisor in an incubator.
- Then, she applied for an EU grant in order to open her shop and won it.
- Due to sanitary issues in the building, where her shop was located, she had to close it at some point.
- For a few years after that Oumy had to sell her products online for a couple of years.
- Later, she managed to hold a successful local crowdfunding campaign and open a new store.

- Oumy stated that it is very difficult for her to manage everything on her own, especially Internet and social media. She feels like her customers are very responsive to Instagram post for instance, especially the younger generation. However, keeping up the online presence requires time and effort.
- In Oumy's opinion, online presence, local presence and word of mouth are the keys to success for a store and a business like hers.
- She aspires to open a professional school in Dakar in order to boost the level of local artists' technical skills. She believes that in order to become a successful entrepreneur, everyone needs to have a good knowledge of business' technical aspects.
- She also wants to create a festival of Senegalese culture in Marseille in the future.

**Oumy's message:**

*Oumy is really proud of her story and her achievements between France and Senegal. Being an ambassador of African arts and crafts in France is her business mission, as well as presenting the best of Africa in term of production.*

*She really enjoys telling stories and explaining the meaning of her products. She uses her skills as a decorator in order to present each of the projects beautifully.*

**Ahmad Alharb**

Ahmad is a refugee from Syria, who came to France in 2013. He finished his journey in Marseille where he decided to settle.

Being a skilled tailor with 13 years of experience, Ahmad wanted to build his own business and open a shop or an atelier. In his own words, he learned to make clothes "on the job", by trial and error.

In May 2019 his dream became a reality, when he opened "Le Petit Couturier "(The Little Tailor) close to Marseille city centre.

**Key points:**

- Ahmad received his residence permit in 2015, after living in France for 2 years.
- He was coached by an advisor from BGE Accès Conseil - a business incubator located in Marseille.



- Thanks to coaching, Ahmad was able to receive a 3000-euro loan in order to start his business.
- He invested this loan into renting the space for his store, renovating it and creating an attractive storefront that is appealing to his customer.
- Ahmad also undertook a week-long training on business management in the local Trade Chamber.

### **Ahmad's message:**

*Ahmad stated that it is quite difficult for him to have a regular customer base, even though he offers a high-quality product.*

### **Nia Leroy**

Nia is Indonesian woman from Jakarta, Java island. She moved to France in 2007 when she married a French photographer. Now she is a mother of twins and a business owner in Marseille.

Nia graduated trade from Indonesian Polytechnic Institute with a degree in commerce. Before coming to France, she worked in sales for about 10 years.

In France she worked as a waitress for a couple of year, until one of her friends gave her an idea to start selling Indonesian coffee in France. Nia decided to bring this idea into fruition, as Indonesia is the 3rd producer of coffee in the world, even though the highest quality coffee is normally not exported abroad.

She began studying again, this time participating in training offered by a Marseille-based women association called "Potential" dedicated to female entrepreneurship.

Once she felt confident about commencing her company called "Escapade" (it can be translated as "getaway", "travel" or "trip"), she and her friend proceeded with importing and selling high quality coffee.

Nowadays, she works on her business by herself and experiences difficulties understanding the French market.

### **Key points:**

- Nia doesn't have any troubles with French legal status since she has the residence permit.

- She speaks good French, but still doesn't feel really confident in it, for example, while speaking on the phone.
- She dedicated a lot of time to learning legal procedures and business legalisation in France.
- She also had to learn a lot about negotiations, especially living in Marseille.
- She experienced racism "because of the accent".
- When her kids were born, she couldn't dedicate as much time to her business as she did before.

**Nia's message:**

*Nia says that she is really interested in the Creative PRISMA project. She feels like the training for entrepreneurs with migrant background can be very interesting and useful for her, especially if there will be an option to be trained in other languages.*

**Ghislain Fortin**

Ghislain Fortin is Canadian from Quebec province. He graduated in administrative data processing from Quebec University and moved to France for work in 1997.

So, his first job experience was already in France where he started working as informatics consultant for several financial companies (such as AXA, Société Générale and BNP). During this period, due to the issues regarding his residence permit, he applied for the French citizenship and got a rejection at first.

However, when he obtained a longer contract, he tried to become a citizen again and this time his request was granted. Both he and his wife, who moved with him from Canada, became French citizens.

**Key points:**

- After few years of working as a consultant, he took a leave in order to continue his education and do a Bachelor in app design for IOS at the Marseille Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- After this leave he couldn't get another work position inside his former company and got fired.



- This became the motivation behind the creation of his own business. With the help of his wife and his brother (in marketing and design), Ghislain proceeded with the creation of two apps. One was focused on photo design and another - on personalized birthday cards.
- In Marseille, he received a training at “BGE Accés Conseil” - a counselling agency for business creation.
- Nowadays, he is ready to launch his own business in the next few months.

### **Ghislain’s message:**

*For Ghislain it was a family process, as he, his wife and his brother divided the tasks between the three of them in order to facilitate the efficiency. They are really keen on implementing what has been taught in the new training, especially on the topics of business development and design, as they previously they didn’t have time to focus on design it was always missing something.*

### **Araik Mikaelyan**

Araik is 49 years old. He was born and raised in Armenia and moved to France in 2004 because of his family (his wife and children have French citizenship).

Araik graduated from a Russian university with a Master’s degree in finance. However, when he moved to France, his degree wasn’t recognised there. Hence, he started working as a carpenter in construction until the building company he was working for closed during the economic crisis.

At this point in his life Araik decided to create his own business and start to look for training.

His shop is working for 10 years now, but he is always stressed about keeping his customers.

### **Key points:**

- Araik took a 6-months-long training in shoemaking and as locksmith payed by the local government in a national VET agency.
- Afterwards he received 4000 euro grant to open his shop in Marseille.
- He also received coaching in business creation from the same VET agency.
- As Araik is afraid of losing his customers, he keeps studying at home in the evenings in order to be updated on the new technologies.
- Araik is also specialized in leather works and manufacturing of leather clothing.



- Araik knows everyone in the Armenian community of Marseille and receives a lot of work from them, “even too much sometimes”.
- He would like to go back to study but considers himself too old and has some regrets regarding this.

### **Araik’s message:**

*He is glad that his business is well respected in Marseille, even if he cannot relax at all - the market changes too fast. He, however, feels like he is well prepared by his first degree in finance, because “numbers are always numbers”.*

### Catherine Nfon Epee

Catherine is from Douala, Cameroun.

She went to school until she turned 18 years old, but did not graduate officially.

In 2002 she got married and moved to France with her husband who was living in Marseille. They have 4 children together.

During the first 8 years she was helping her husband in his building company - writing cost estimations, bills, dealing with checks.

At the same time, she worked as a maid in a hotel.

Catherine used to sew for many years, even though she didn’t have a professional background. In 2014-2015 she had an opportunity to study for a year and graduated with a National Vocational Qualification in sewing.

Therefore, she thought about opening an atelier with the help of BGE Accès Conseil.

### **Key points:**

- BGE Accès Conseil helped her to create a business plan for her enterprise.
- Catherine didn’t manage to get a business loan because she didn’t have enough people who could vouch for her. However, she is really grateful for the help provided by - BGE Accès Conseil.
- Her studio will open in December 2019 in Marseille city centre.



- She is planning to do clothing alterations in order to make money and support the atelier works. However, her next goal is to produce linens and bed sheets from African fabrics to order.
- She still doesn't have a French citizenship, but she has a residence card.

### **Catherine's message:**

*Catherine feels like it is very important to develop your skills, especially by learning from other successful business-owners and by familiarising yourself with good practices. She stated that trainings in fashion and in managements are equally important for success.*

### **Romain Kayi**

Romain Kayi is from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is 55 years old now and has eight sons and daughters. He moved to France in April 2013 after escaping from Congolese prison where he spent 2 years as a political prisoner. He was persecuted after serving as a real estate officer at the presidential office in Congo. His wife was already living in France since 2009.

Romain is a Catholic and upon his arrival was helped by the Catholic relief service in "Château Rouge" district in Paris.

Because of his advanced age, French authorities allowed him to manage his immigration procedures by himself. He received his residence permits in 2014, after 1,5 years in France.

### **Key points:**

- Romain started working as a forklift operator before attending a business course at the Chamber of Commerce and Industries'.
- These first experiences helped him to build up a network for the creation of his own business.
- After the training with BGE Accès Conseil, Romain started its own company called SITAK.
- He is currently selling African works of art, jewellery in bronze and copper, stones and therapeutic crystals of malachite.
- He also organises fairs in galleries or partner stores quite frequently.



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**Romain's message:**

*Romain considers that these four mantras are essential for his wellbeing: Will, Courage, Patience and Perseverance. He also wanted to share a fable by Jean de La Fontaine with those who is aspiring to build a new life for themselves:*

**THE HUSBANDMAN AND HIS SONS**

Work hard, nor trouble spare, nor toil,

Labour's more plentiful than soil.

A wealthy farmer, feeling death draw nigh,

Called round his children, and, no witness by,

“Beware,” he said, “Of selling the estate

Our fathers left us, purchased with their sweat;

For hidden treasure's there.

The spot I know not; but with zeal and care

You'll find it out, and make it yours at last.

Plough up the ground as soon as autumn's past,

And dig and delve—nor grudge the daily pain;

And when you've toiled, return and toil again.”

He died. — The sons turned up the field;

Incessant was their toil, and when the year

Was ended, large the produce it did yield,

Though ne'er a hidden treasure did appear.

Wise was the father, ere he died, to show

That labour is the mine whence riches flow.



## Case Study – Spain

The interviews were collected by FAMYLIAS in Madrid, Spain from July 3 to October 31 2019.

Researches were conducted in Madrid, either in FAMYLIAS' premises or in the entrepreneurs'. They have been selected according to their experiences in entrepreneurship. FAMYLIAS, as a training centre providing training for unemployed, migrants and women, has an extensive network of entrepreneurs trained and or looking for assistance.

It involved 7 women and 1 man from Australia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Peru, Senegal, Venezuela. The participants of the study work in following fields: tailoring, textile, design, animation, cuisine etc.

### Rosalía Polo

Rosalía is from Colombia. She was forced to migrate was because of threats against her and her family. They were hired to participate in a carnival in Colombia, and due to a series of agreements, there had to be a representation of the artists in the committees. This is how she and her husband were selected. Although it was an agreement reached with UNESCO and the Colombian Ministry of Culture, in the end the organisers did not want this group to be represented in the decision-making of this festivity. They were accused of rebellion. Rosalía's husband was held in prison for eleven days and received death threats on his way out.

Hence, they had to escape. First, they went to Bogotá, where they were hosted by an association of lawyers. After Amnesty International's intervention, they came to Spain in 2005. At first, and for 6 months, they had the status of refugees.

After this Rosalía returned to her country, but shortly was hired for a new show, and the story repeated again.

Therefore, she was forced to return to Spain as a refugee again.

Currently, she has her own business selling dance clothing - tutus, flamenco skirts, maillots, etc.

### Key points:

- Foundation Tomillo and a Union helped her to deal with all the legal and taxation issues. Otherwise, it would have been very difficult for her to do it all on her own.

- She received help in the creation of the business plan from Foundation Tomillo.
- Rosalía never made a commercial strategy and it was something that made everything complicated for her. What really made her create a commercial strategy was practice and trial and error.
- Risks she has faced have been various: financial problems (she had problems in paying the first payslips for her workers), finding new suppliers, dealing with customers.
- Regarding conflicts, Rosalía had solved them on her own, so far. She has faced racist aggressions, and, in another occasion, she had to end her commercial relationship.
- She got help from a Foundation working with migrants and a Union in order to help her with entrepreneurial projects and registration issues, also dealing with the Administration.
- In order to keep in touch with her clients, Rosalía addresses them either in their own working spaces (she is providing dance clothing) or in her workshop.
- She was helped by Foundation Tomillo to look for funding. Taxation is dealt by an external company.
- She finds it very important to have communication skills and a well elaborated speech, that can verify the clients that you control of the subject. Also, to give security and honesty to the clientele.
- Regarding creativity, Rosalía feels like it is important to acknowledge the perception of the environment that inspires you.
- Rosalía acknowledges that being Caribbean, she identifies very much with warm and lively tones. But, despite this, and after all the work she has done in Spain, she has found that the coldest tones also look good and can be very aesthetic as long as the tonalities are well selected.
- In order to work with dancers, she also participated in a colour theory workshop, with which she learned a lot. She chooses the colours based on the theme and also depending on the client's requests.
- In her work Rosalía uses lycra, beads and decorative items
- She feels like there was no need to promote the business, and no time. She was directly addressing her clients in their working place.
- Her suppliers are located in the two main cities in Spain.
- She has no connections with local administration.



- She doesn't know about copyright issues. For her, ethics in fashion have to do with implementing fair labour production with materials as ecological as possible and / or reused.
- With her employees, she agreed on a schedule to ensure that the women who worked with her could balance work and family, no matter when. They also distributed the work depending on the preferences of each one.
- While Rosalía is working with artistic and rhythmic gymnastics equipment, making and designing the costumes for the competitions, the teachers and coaches put on the music so that she could be inspired. She also saw the girls dance, and asked them about their tastes, so that she could look for images and try to represent them in an abstract way in the design of the maillot.

### **Rosalía's message:**

*Rosalía recommends not to start a business alone. She also suggests to identify a series of aspects beforehand: using the same terminologies (meaning of words if they're the same because of language or not) and quality and aesthetics (not the same according to country of origin).*

*In Spain Rosalía has learned to combine colours such as brown and green, as in her country they are not that common.*

*She advises not to get used to the aids and subsidies, because that makes you lazy. You might end up getting too used to this type of income circle.*

*Also, quality in the production and garments is key to keep customers.*

### **Montse Torres**

Montse was born in Australia to Spanish parents. However, she always wanted to live in Spain and she felt her origin very strongly. She studied in Sydney and graduated with a diploma in Arts in Fashion Design. She worked in this industry for a few years before she and her sister decided to start their own brand. They ran it for 7 years. After that, Montse worked for a few other fashion companies before finally moving to Spain.

Currently she is making patterns to order. She also offers sewing and patternmaking courses at her studio 3 days a week.



## Key points:

- Montse has an accountant who helps her with all legal and tax issues.
- She never developed a business plan. It just “grew organically” from her first experiences of working for other people and developed more with every new experience. However, she will be creating a proper business plan for her new label which she wants to launch in 2020.
- Montse cannot call her company a social enterprise at the moment. Concerning gender issues, she thinks it’s important for women and men to earn the same wage for the same effort, especially in the fashion and textile industry where there are more cases of slavery and exploitation than anywhere else.
- She promotes her business via word of mouth, online advertising and walk-ins in her studio. She advertises her sewing and patternmaking courses on the websites dedicated to crafts and creative courses.
- Regarding risk management, Montse doesn’t have a line of credit at the moment, so she has a limited budget.
- To resolve conflicts with clients, she normally talks or writes emails in order to clarify any misunderstandings, whether it be with pricing or deadlines or payments. If the payment is delayed or she doesn’t receive it at all, Montse involves her lawyer who can always suggest a few ways of dealing with the situation. She resolves any conflicts with her suppliers in the same way.
- She finds her partners through the Internet and, if it is possible for her, goes to their actual stores or workshops. She normally communicates with them via e-mail and mobile phone.
- She doesn’t know anything about financing schemes.
- She believes every entrepreneur needs to have following skills: leadership, flexibility, a strong work ethic, problem solving skills, communication, social skills, time management.
- Montse knows about upcycling and creative reuse. At this point she mostly uses recycled paper and fabric from donated clothing that can be reused.
- If she has to follow a brief, she will count the approximate number of hours the order will take and this will influence the price. Then she sends the price to the client and waits for their approval. If there is no rush on the order, she sets the date. After the job is done, she sends invoices to the clients.



- If the design she is creating, is for her own brand, she is researching the product she wants to create and lets the fabric dictate the pattern.
- Montse has her own library of patterns she can reuse. Sometimes she adapts the existing patterns to client's needs.
- She was always attracted to earthy colours, but now she feels like she has more blues and greens "creeping in". She also has to rely on what the fabric shops have to offer. She loves to use prints as they are on trend for the many years now. She feels like "there's no need to be basic".
- As for materials, she uses fabrics, cardboard, a mix of stationary, patternmaking tools, rulers, scissors, sewing and overlock machines, iron, pattern dummy, computer, colour cards, cutting table. For software she likes to use Adobe Suite and InDesign.
- She doesn't advertise her products for now, but when her line will launch, she will do it on her own. In order to build her online presence, she plans to build a website, her business' Instagram, Pinterest and maybe Facebook, even though she is not sure the last one is really useful for her target.
- To Montse, ethics in fashion is knowing how, where and in which conditions your product is being manufactured. It is also saying no to poor labour conditions, low wages, slavery and exploitation of workers. It's making something beautiful with a sustainable story behind it, even if it will take more time or investment.
- She says that ideas can appear from memories, dreams or feelings. After this she does some brainstorming and creates mood board, using Pinterest and other media to get a clear idea of what she is looking for. Then she makes a few sketches on paper to start the ball rolling.
- She is planning to sell the clothes from her future line also on Etsy.

### **Montse's message:**

*She would suggest looking at the competition and their market prices before starting and see if you can match the competitive prices. And also, to understand government fees and taxation system.*

Paola Perfetti



Paola is from Peru. She decided to come to Spain in 1993 as her work was very poorly paid back home and she had an aunt in Madrid who offered her to move.

At first, she was working as a maid in a wealthy family and as a care-giver for people with addictions, both in their homes and in rehab centres.

Paola always loved sewing and crocheting, but she wanted to learn more and develop her skills more. She started taking creative sewing courses at Customizando - a cooperative for social inclusion and a labour integration company. After these courses she had the opportunity to do a few internships with the company. At one point, when they received a big order, they chose to hire Paola as they already knew how she worked. After a while she was proposed to become a full member of the cooperative.

### Key points:

- The cooperative is run by an external management company, there is a partner who makes sure that all the legal and taxation issues are dealt with and the deadlines are met.
- As Paola joined the cooperative when it had already been up and running, she confirms that there is a business plan.
- Customizando, where Paola is working, is a cooperative of social integration and a labour integration company, so within its mission is to generate a positive impact within society. They are working on reducing the impact of fashion industry, which is the second most polluting in the world, and on ensuring that the conditions of the women workers are dignified.
- Concerning gender equality, Paola believes that there is a lot progress in fashion industry, but that further work must be done to achieve real gender equality.
- Customizando's commercial strategy is mainly to bet on sustainable fashion and promoting partners (first women) who formed the cooperative.
- To make sure there are no conflicts and to minimize the risks, Paola tells us that they always try to have everything in writing. Also, business risks are assessed in the company plan.
- Sometimes, conflicts arise despite having written documents. In such cases, if it was workers fault, the items are re-made without any additional costs for customers. The cooperative tries to resolve all the problems in the best way in order not to lose clients



- Regarding conflict situations at work, there are small problems arising, but Paola says that they are always been solved through dialogue and expression of emotions.
- Paola couldn't tell much about the suppliers' portfolio as it was established before she arrived.
- Customizando is a labour integration company and it has to have a promoting partner. This partner sets the prices, organises work in the workshop and searches for clients.
- Communication is mostly maintained through meetings, calls or emails. When the production process is nearing the end, the customers can come to the workshop to check the products.
- They know about financing schemes and apply for them every year.
- In Paola's opinion, every entrepreneur must be open and sociable, and have leadership skills.
- In her creative process Paola likes to reuse materials and create practical things. She is inspired by the things she sees in magazines, and often gets ideas from media.
- Outside of Customizando loves to crochet and to make small gifts for her family and friends.
- Regarding pattern making, on some occasions Paola created a few patterns, but generally it is not something she does in her line of work. Regarding colours, loves to use all colours, but prefers blue and green.
- Apart from usual supplies, they use also organic fabrics and reuse textile materials in good condition.
- Their products are being promoted through social networks, shows at fairs and events, advertising and website.

### **Paola's message:**

*Paola feels like it's very important to be eager and informed, both on the procedures and laws, but also on documents.*

### **Alejandra Becerra**

In Venezuela Alejandra used to work on television as a designer. When one of her friends proposed her to move to Spain, she decided to give it a try. She took a vacation from her work in Venezuela and came to Spain for 3 months. She ended up liking her life there and decided to stay.



At first, she was working as a waitress, an office worker, a call centre manager, hence doing jobs that had nothing in common with her career in Venezuela.

However, with all of her previous experience as a fashion designer on TV and in her studio, she always wanted to start her on business. She was pursuing this direction for a while, sending her CV to various designers, but due to her irregular status the responses were always negative.

When she finally got her work permit and it seemed like everything could start rolling, other areas of her life got complicated.

Alejandra knows that the fashion world is very complicated and very closed, so she decided to start small, making clothes for children and teenagers at home, using her own sewing machine. She also teaches sewing classes and workshops.

### Key points:

- Alejandra attended courses for freelancers at the SEPE (Spanish Public Employment Service).
- One of the social workers referred her to a service where she could seek counselling, but when she did, she was advised to forget about becoming a designer and search for a cleaning job.
- Alejandra stood by her dream and told the social worker that she did not get any help in that office. Hence, she got referred to a job counsellor who gave her the contacts of FAMYLIAS.
- Alejandra created a business plan with her niece, but she didn't proceed with it because everyone told them how risky it was.
- She never had any conflict situations with her customers; the biggest issue she had was finding time to meet with them. On one occasion she had some troubles with adjusting the sleeves of a man's jacket, which made her feel very nervous. However, it was easy to come to an agreement with the client, who actually thanked her for her work.
- Alejandra normally goes directly to her potential suppliers, stores and so on, and tries to shop wholesale. She also uses the Internet and social media to search for suppliers.
- Customers who want to order clothes from Alejandra, normally call her or write her in WhatsApp. They also contact her through social media.
- Regarding accounting, Alejandra feels like she is very bad at financial issues. Previously she was invoicing her customers and keeping copies of those invoices for herself. She also kept





an Excel chart with all the clients' information, but it was very difficult to manage everything on her own.

- Alejandra knows about the existence of financial schemes for entrepreneurs and investment programmes for new businesses. However, the fact that her business is not registered reduces her opportunities to access these programmes significantly. She also stated that in order to apply she needs to collect and develop way too many documents, which is difficult for her business, as it is a one-person team.
- Alejandra uses many recycled fabrics and feels like it's a part of her business' mission.
- Alejandra always keeps her notebooks nearby so that she can always write or sketch down the ideas that come to mind. Then she draws detailed pictures of those ideas and brings them to life. She doesn't make prototypes due to the lack of time and money. She feels like this approach taught her how to quickly fix any kind of problem in a garment.
- She creates her own patterns and loves to use bright, eye-catching colours. However, over time she learned to use and combine all colours.
- The materials she uses are mainly fabrics that purchases or receives from clients, and all the accessories necessary for the finishing of her garments. She also takes jobs related to clothes adjustments, but feels like it is counter-productive, as then she has to spend way too much money looking for the right zippers, buttons or fabrics.
- Ethical fashion for Alejandra means working with respect, both the environment and for oneself. Alejandra was planning to register her designs, but wasn't able to finish the process due to the lack of finance.
- She promotes her business through social networks such as Instagram, and through the foundation that helps her to advertise her workshops and courses.

### **Alejandra's message:**

*Alejandra recommends everyone who wants to become an entrepreneur to be very eager, strong and not to lose hope. "It can be very complicated due to all the paperwork that needs to be done, but if you like what you do and are passionate about your idea, you shouldn't put it aside".*



Catalina is from Peru. She decided to come to Spain because back home she couldn't have financial stability she needed for herself and her son.

She started her hospitality and catering business in the wake of the strong crisis in Spain. In 2018 she lost her job and realised that she wanted to start her own business that can bring her financial freedom.

### Key points:

- It is very important for Catalina to do everything legally and on time. Taxes and accounting are managed by her administration office (third-party), although she also knows what she is supposed to pay and when.
- Catalina had a "very well analysed" business plan for her business.
- Catalina states that she created her business in order for it to be a social enterprise and to solve some of the current social issues, both in Spain and in Peru.
- Concerning gender equality, Catalina thinks that it's good that both sexes have the same responsibilities, but that they also don't take advantage of that issue to profit from each other.
- She didn't have a commercial strategy when she started her business. She feels like nowadays there are many means for successful promotion, for example social networks. Hence, she doesn't do magazine or radio ads. But she always carries her visit cards with her, attends events, uses social media such as Facebook and Instagram.
- Catalina was invited by universities to speak about entrepreneurship - to tell her story, her struggles and her success recipe.
- Her employees know their tasks and responsibilities. However, Catalina feels like they should also know other processes in case of any unforeseen circumstances.
- All of her employees did a training course on occupational hazards and on work-place safety.
- Catalina is trying not to have any conflicts with her clients. However, in the past when serious conflicts arose, she had to involve the police. Regarding conflict situations among the staff, she says that they never had any problems because they try to be respectful to each other and talk every issue through.
- She uses Internet in order to find suppliers



- Her main communication channels are Facebook, other social media, the business' website and phone.
- Initially Catalina and her partners had to invest their own money into the business launch, however she feels like they are doing very well with the sales. If there will be a need for a loan, she feels like it's more likely that they will invest their own money again. However, in the past they also won a grant together with another cooperative and normally apply for others.

### **Catalina's message:**

*Firstly, you should know the area in which you are going to work, the product you are going to offer.*

*Second – have a clear idea of what other businesses do in your sector. Third – study the market.*

*Fourth - be eager to work and think positively.*

*The most important part in any cooperative is the team.*

### **Tida Coly**

Tida is from Senegal and she started her business in Spain in 2015.

Apart from clothes made from African fabrics, among other projects of her company there are a festival called "Colours of the World" and workshops, always related to African materials, fabrics and products, which Tida brings from several African countries.

Tida says that, even though it is still a business, it has a strong component of inclusion and social promotion.

### **Key points:**

- Currently Tida uses social networks, her website and her store to promote her products. She travels a lot and participates in fairs and other events to advertise her business and foster sales.
- She started her business on her own, but later her sister who studied fashion joined the company. Together they are transforming the traditional Senegalese fabrics into modern pieces of clothing.
- In regard to legal issues, Tida is being helped by manager, who is also her close friend.



- She hasn't done any kind of a market study or a business plan.
- Tida considers her company to be a “socio-cultural” one. She wants every person who enters into her shop to get another idea of what immigration is and what “Black Africa” is.
- Regarding gender equality, she believes it is important for women to have equal rights, but she feels like sometimes the message of this fight gets lost. She believes that sometimes women think that in order to get equality they need to become men. "I want to be a woman not a man", but with the right and freedom to choose.
- She doesn't look for the customers, they're the ones looking for her. Although she acknowledges the fact that she doesn't have many products for men, hence they are not her target group.
- Tida assesses risks very superficially and recognizes that this is not a good way to work. Despite that, business goes ahead.
- She never had any conflict with customers. Even when if the clients remain unsatisfied, she always finds a way to work it out.
- Tida's suppliers are the people she used to know in Senegal. Same goes for the suppliers from other countries, as Mali or Burkina Faso – they are either her friends, acquaintances or family members.
- She communicates with clients and suppliers using different social media, calls, WhatsApp, and sometimes visits them personally.
- Tida didn't apply for any loans or lines of credit, because she had a negative experience in the past.
- In Tida's opinion, a person who wants to become an entrepreneur, above all, has to have a lot of patience, humility and know how to listen, whether they are building their business in their own home country or in another one.
- Tida is using recycling techniques through using even the small scraps of remaining fabrics in order to create small accessories.
- Tida doesn't care about fashion trends that much. She considers herself a creator, not a designer. She uses her intuition and her imagination a lot. She never forgets her roots and to create combinations of Western clothing with the African style.
- She and her sister have a number of patterns that they have been perfecting throughout their career. Although, they also allow themselves to be guided by intuition.



- They always try to wear bright colours regardless of the time of year, since it is possible to do also in Spain. In order to promote this approach, they create seasonal garments such as coats and jackets out of colourful African fabrics.
- Tida and her partners use African fabrics, beads and leather.
- She uses social media to promote her business, especially Facebook and Instagram, as well as her website.
- In regards to ethical and sustainable fashion, Tida believes that it needs to “become more seen and make more noise”.
- Tida sells some of her products on Etsy.

### **Tida’s message:**

*Tida believes that sharing her experience in building her own business with those who want to start their companies is very important. She says that in order to become successful it is very important to the environment where you are working, your target group and your product.*

### **Tilado Bendete**

Tilado was born and raised in Burkina Faso. After finishing high school in her country, she decided that she wanted to work in fashion and she went to Benin to study tailoring. After she completed the course, she returned to her country and opened a shop, that became quite successful.

However, later she had to leave her country because she was persecuted for political reasons. Hence, she came to Spain as a refugee. The idea to start making dresses from African fabrics came to her when she left the CAR (Refugee Support Centre). She couldn’t find a job, but realised that she has a practical skill that help her make living in her new country.

### **Key points:**

- Unfortunately, Tilado still cannot manage to register her business and works from home.
- She and her friend had an idea to open an African restaurant. However, she couldn’t do because she still needs to obtain all the necessary documents in order to legalise her working situation.



- She has no business plan beyond producing and selling clothes in her own store. Later, if she will have an opportunity to expand her business, she would like to do more things.
- She has no commercial strategy. Her main way of promotion is word of mouth and her main target are Spanish people.
- She didn't have any conflicts with her clients. She knew that they would like what she makes because women appreciate African fabric very much.
- She would really like to find partners, especially in order to open an African restaurant.
- Tilado created her own catalogue or models with different fabric samples. She shows it to her clients when they decide on what they want to order.
- She knew that the situation in Spain was complicated, and that she had to have great control over the money in order not to go to ruin, especially since she had two daughters in her care. She also had the experience of her business in Burkina Faso. At some point she has thought about asking for a loan, even consulting with a bank. Concerning National and EU funding, she isn't aware of funding in her textile business, but for the idea of her new business yes. At some point she thought about asking for some kind of help or subsidy to start up her business here in Spain. But her current residence/documentation does not allow it now. First it is necessary to develop a series of procedures, before being able to have an authorization to implant her own business.
- Regarding the necessary soft skills, she feels like any entrepreneur needs to put in a lot of effort and be patient.
- She herself likes to dress differently and stand out.
- Tilado doesn't know how to work with a pattern and she does everything by hand and by eye, taking the person's measurement and drawing the outlines of the garments directly on the canvas. Sometimes she has to make adjustments.
- She says that, as she uses only African fabrics, which are very colourful, she needs to be careful when she is combining them.
- As materials she uses different African fabrics, which she buys from Burkina Faso. Other materials she buys in Spain.
- For promotion she mostly uses the word of mouth. Sometimes people ask her to make them the clothes they saw on Tilado's daughters.



- Her daughters use online platforms and social networks, mostly Facebook, to show off their mother's dresses and garments. However, Tilado feels like it doesn't work that well.

### **Tilado's message:**

*"Above all, I would tell them to work cautiously, without slowing down and to be sure of what they are offering to their clients. Also, to bring their talent and patience into their businesses".*

### **David Kaplun-Medina**

David is from Venezuela. He originally came to Spain because his partner is Spanish and they wanted to try and live in her home country.

His partner's parents wanted to start a business, and David so it as an opportunity to create something together and unite their different areas of expertise.

They ended up opening a tea house called THE ZAGUAN in the centre of Madrid. Currently it is both a teahouse with the restaurant service, and a leisure/coworking space.

### **Key points:**

- In order to do everything right in the questions of legalisation and taxation, David and his partners involved a management company. They suggest that everyone, who feels like they need help, to hire someone from outside as a consultant. They have a financial consultant as well.
- David created a business plan for his partner's parents who had greater financial solvency and invested more into the development of the business.
- The company can be called a social enterprise as their goal from the beginning was to promote social initiatives in the space they had created.
- David feels like gender equality, like any other freedom for which people had fought in the past, is a fundamental human right.
- In order to promote their business and find new customers, David and his partners use the following channels: related networks, advertising, social media promotion and word of mouth.
- They have not faced conflicts with customers.



- They distribute tasks and work within the working team using a specific schedule was developed during the general meeting with all the members. Depending on the situations, some of the conflicts inside the company were resolved peacefully, but, in other cases, they were forced to fire a few people.
- In order to effectively communicate with their loyal clients, David uses a mailing list, through which the company informs them about any new activities.

### **David's message:**

*David recommends that everyone, who wants to start a business, first organise a piloting stage in order to see if there is a demand for this specific product or service and whether the business will be successful.*

### **Mercedes Garcia Rivas**

Mercedes is originally from Mexico, but has lived most of her life in the United States. As she wanted to potentially focus her career on international relations, especially the European model, she decided to move to Madrid in 2014 and pursue a one-year master's degree there. After the graduation and returning to the United States, Mercedes felt the need move back to Mexico for a while. However, after some time she and her Spanish partner realised that they cannot stay there due to social insecurity and limited opportunities. They wanted a clean start, and, as Mercedes didn't feel like she had any particular ties to any country, they decided to move to Spain again.

There they created ECODICTA – a subscription-based clothing rental, that aims at boosting the use of already existing clothes and supporting the second-hand market. They consider that the most sustainable garment is the one that already exists, hence, in order to be fashionable, there is no need to be constantly buying new clothes, but rather wearing already existing ones. Once the garment becomes outdated, it can be donated or upcycled in order to give it a second life. In addition, ECODICTA potentially aims at donating garments and collaborating with NGOs that can distribute these unused garments to the people who needs them.

### **Key points:**





- Mercedes and her partner had an appointment at Madrid Emprende (Madrid City Council Service) where they were advised to seek consultation in a business incubator. There they received useful information regarding their marketing strategy and the creation of the business plan.
- With the help they received at the business incubator, they have developed the business plan for their business, and also received training on other business aspects such as social networks, marketing, etc.
- ECODICTA is a social enterprise, as it was started with the idea of contributing to the sustainability of the planet above all.
- As far as gender equality is concerned, Mercedes stated that during many meetings with investors she was the only woman in the room. This fact definitely adds to her insecurities about being a migrant, but nonetheless, she believes that Spain is much more progressive in terms of gender equality compared to Mexico.
- In order to establish the prices, Mercedes and her partner took into account all of the costs they had, the small initial investment for the inventory and the amortization value of the pledge. Currently the profit margins are minimal, and they continue to seek help to further improve the project.
- They promote their business via social networks, but, as their idea is quite unusual and innovative, they have received lots of attention from media as well. Mercedes is the one in charge of their social networks, especially Instagram, and she states that for her it's very important to show a bit more content from "behind the scenes".
- Mercedes feels like any conflict situation should be resolved in a transparent and positive way, by trying to meet client's expectations.
- The choice of suppliers is tailored to the needs of the partners. Various clothing brands and the sustainable fashion association, as well as businesses found via social networks can all be their suppliers under certain circumstances. Same goes for the partners - they find them through social networks, the sustainable fashion association and Internet search.
- Internally, decision making is realised through monthly meetings with the company's partners. During these meetings the partners analyse the company's current state of affairs, progress and future steps.



- Communication with clients is realised through social networks and emails, as well as personal contact.
- Mercedes feels like they are a bit behind on legal issues – they are currently doing everything themselves, but would love to find an agency or an agent who would've deal with all of the procedures.
- They have not received any public aid or subsidy, as in order to apply for them their business has to be registered as an S.L. (“Limited Society”). This legal status can be very useful for Mercedes and her partner; however, they cannot obtain it as the process would require a big investment. They also feel like they are not well informed on the types of financial schemes they can apply for.
- Mercedes feels like every entrepreneur who wants to start a business needs to know how to connect with others, how be a salesperson at all times and should also have empathy in order to make connections.
- They know about ethical fashion trends and aim to have long-term agreements and partnerships with brands that work on upcycling.
- Mercedes and her partner look for inspiration in the work of similar brands all over the world and brainstorm on which ideas are adaptable to their own brand and which ones are not.
- The materials used in their work are the clothes and the computer, as this is a digital service.
- The way to control quality is to work very close to the dry cleaner they work with. They examine garment by garment, with basic rules for quality control in accordance with the state of the boxes, maximum hygiene on the part of the garments and the people who examine them (for example, examining them with their hair up, and other types of habits that they have defined for quality control).
- Ethics in fashion to Mercedes means not only thinking about what we wear, but also about the impact of which garment - the waste, the wages, the ecological footprint. To see behind the clothes.
- With regard to the protection of intellectual property they have some basic knowledge on the topic, but have not yet registered their trademark because of the costs and uncertainty regarding the future of the brand.

## **Mercedes' message:**

*Mercedes believes that migrants who want to start a business in Spain should make use of existing aid, even though it is somewhat complicated, especially mentoring.*

## Silvana Andrea

Silvana is from Argentina. She came to Madrid in order to pursue a Master's degree in design and textiles. Upon graduation, she did an internship in a haute couture workshop and eventually was offered a job there. She ended up working there for about 4 years, until 2009, when she decided to move forward with her clothing brand, specialised in skirts and dresses.

Unfortunately, her brand wasn't successful, as Silvana had to do everything, including management and finance, herself and felt quite overwhelmed. She acquired many debts and this, together with the lack of work-life balance, led her to the decision to terminate her company.

She was working for other employers for a while, as well as teaching sewing classes, and currently offers her services in pattern making, purchasing fabrics, production management, and teaching workshops for other designers.

### Key points:

- Silvana didn't receive any consultations, mentoring or subsidy, but currently she works with the Treasury and says that they have supported her a lot on the issue of taxes. She tried to apply for a financial scheme offered by the Commune of Madrid, but felt like it was very unrealistic and "not adapted to the realities of the people who are applying for it". She is not aware of any other subsidies, credits or similar economic formulas.
- She hasn't used or made a business plan.
- Silvana does not consider her company to be a social enterprise, but hopes that one day it will become one. However, in order to make this transition, she will have to carry out a series of actions that she cannot apply at this moment, even though she is trying. For example, using only sustainable fabrics, creating work places for other etc.
- She says that gender equality depends on educational work and that she never let anyone and anything stop her from advancing in life, studies or business because she is a woman.

- Although she never wrote a business strategy, she had a vision of her business and its development - looking for design fairs, promoting her services through word of mouth and through recommendations from acquaintances and clients.
- Silvana did not do an initial risk assessment and considers that it was something she should have taken into account as it would have prevented her from having the debt problems she had.
- She had only one employee for a period of time, but found it difficult to “act as a boss”.
- Silvana works with the same suppliers for many years. She found them through the network of people working in the textile sector and feels like after such a long collaboration she can trust them.
- Silvana believes that an entrepreneur should have excellent communication skills and know how to network and connect with people.
- Her inspiration comes from constantly doing new things and changing her approach continuously.
- She makes all of her patterns by hand, with paper and pencil. Recently she has started to venture into making them digitally and is currently learning how to do it more effectively. The main colours she uses are black, red and white, but overall, she uses all kinds of colours in her clothes.
- Regarding equipment and materials, Silvana mostly uses paper and pencil, sewing machine and her computer.
- Her quality control process includes making proper garments in order to check whether the pattern is well made. She usually delivers these garments together with the patterns as a sample for her clients. She believes that it is innate to take advantage of all the material you have.
- Silvana promotes her services through word of mouth and through recommendations from acquaintances and clients. She connects with clients mainly by phone, via WhatsApp, email, in person. She doesn't promote her services on social networks. She thinks it's something that should change, but it's not something she likes.
- She feels like ethical fashion is the future. She has only recently entered into the sustainable fashion sector, but would love to continue and use only sustainable organic fabrics.



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- She knows about intellectual protection, but she thinks that it is a waste of time, because it does not work in the world we live in, and even less so in the fashion sector. She believes that everything was already invented before.
- She uses Mach Mode to offer her services. It is an incubator in Barcelona to be able to connect freelance within the fashion sector.

**Silvana's message:**

*In Silvana's opinion, in order to start a business, you need to forget where you come from or where you are going. "What matters is what you do and whether you trust yourself and your work".*

*She also advises to work with partners, to have people who will teach you how to do things and give you support.*



## Case Study – Italy

All of the interviews were collected by CESIE in Palermo, Italy from May to September 2019.

The participants of the study are 4 men and 6 women from Afghanistan, China, Gambia, Georgia, Senegal, Tunisia and Ukraine. All of them either are small business owners in the field of fashion, ethnic cuisine, photography, music, game design, or are pursuing careers in creative environments such as theatre.

### Anna Vlasiuk

Anna is from Kyiv, Ukraine. She came to Italy for family reasons in 2010, when she was 25 years old. Photography was her hobby for many years, however at one point she saw that the photos she publishes in social media, receive a good feedback, and she started receiving invitations to shoot weddings and engagements from people she didn't know.

At the same time Anna was faced with the necessity to provide for herself and her little daughter, so she started building her photography business from scratch.

She characterizes her product as “taking photos of everything related to love” – christenings, engagements, weddings etc.

### Key points:

- Her product is photography. She shoots “everything that is connected to love”. Normally she is invited to take photos of weddings, christenings, family reunions.
- Anna doesn't really look at how her colleagues' set prices, but instead analyses the value of what she is doing. She feels like saving people's memories for them has value. Also, she constantly works on improving her skills – takes classes, visits workshops. This should also be reflected in the price. For the shoots outside of Palermo she tries to include also the price for the gas.
- She is registered as a private photographer and always consults her accountant, who helps her with the taxes and other legal issues.
- She makes all the decisions herself. However, if she wants to ask an advice from someone, she asks her father, because he has his own business.

- Anna never made a business plan, as initially she never thought that photography will become her business. Also, she never had an experience of searching for funding, so she feels like she never had a need to work on a business plan.
- She never created a commercial strategy as well. She feels like it's her point of weakness, because she never thinks about her business "in a commercial way". She plans to work on a commercial strategy in the future.
- Anna believes in gender equality and feels like photography is a male-dominated field. "Sometimes I feel like being a photographer is a very physically demanding work, because I need to carry all of my equipment etc. However, it's easier for women to create a contact with the client".
- She says that she doesn't really look for clients, they find her on their own, mostly through social media, Facebook and Instagram.
- Last year she decided to take all the clients she gets, because she felt like if it's her full-time job, she needs to act appropriately. However, sometimes she can suggest clients to work with another photographer, if she feels like the client can be problematic.
- Her first contact with clients normally happens through Skype in order to create contact. She also communicates with them via email.
- For Anna it's very important to know her clients before the shoot.
- She feels like she is very lucky, because she never had any serious conflicts with her clients. If they have any small issues or requests, she can help them with, she always does it.
- Anna is working on her own and on the terms of her business licence is not allowed to employ anyone for now.
- For Anna the main business risks are related to her physical health, as she needs to be in good health to be able to work, her equipment, that needs maintenance and updates, and losing the footage materials (that's why she always copies every photoshoot on two memory cards and shoots with two cameras). The biggest risk for her was registering her business, as now she is obliged to pay taxes and declare all of her income.
- She knows about local Sicilian funding programmes for young entrepreneurs, but she never applied for them, as she doesn't really need any funding - when she started, she already had all the necessary equipment.

- Regarding her creative process, Anna already knows the best time to shoot in certain locations (light, when the places are empty etc). Sometimes ideas come suddenly, just as they go through the photoshoot. But wedding photos are usually quite cliché, because people normally want to receive a few very specific pictures in the end, so wedding photos don't give much space for creativity.
- Among the soft skills which any entrepreneur needs, Anna named flexibility, strict discipline, openness and sensitivity. She says that in her opinion, you cannot become a photographer, if you don't love people.
- Anna doesn't use any materials in her work, but she is very serious about controlling the quality of her photos. Normally, she works with her own taste and judgement.
- She mostly uses pastel colours and pre-sets, because these are the colours people usually associate with wedding or love story photoshoots.
- She promotes her services through Instagram, Facebook and her website/blog, and says that social media was that tool that helped her to start her own business.
- In Anna's opinion, ethics in fashion, photography etc. is the same as ethics in normal human relationships.
- She doesn't use any online platforms to sell her work, as she feels like she cannot really make an income selling photos on website such as Etsy.

**Anna's message:**

*"Just start it and don't give up! We all have our dreams, so we need to go for it and make them happen".*

**Amina**

Amina is from Senegal. She came to Italy in 2001, when she was 24 years old.

At first, she and her husband came to France, then transferred to Milan. Then, as her sister-in-law who lived in Palermo, was pregnant, they went to visit her and eventually decided to stay there. Amina says that, in her opinion, it was her destiny.

Since she was little, she loved to cook and feed other. She also loved to sell things and always had natural commercial skills. At one point her friends told Amina that, instead of always making big





dinners for everyone at her own expense, she should start charging a small payment for the food she offers.

Amina says that at first it didn't feel right to her, but she didn't have a fixed job, so she had no choice. Now she is the owner and a chef of a Senegalese restaurant in the city centre of Palermo.

### Key points:

- Her product is the traditional Senegalese food. She has a restaurant and also often provides catering for weddings, christenings etc.
- She has a unique approach to price setting – in her restaurant clients can order plates of any food for 3, 4 or 5 euro, depending on how hungry they are.
- Amina is certified as a caterer and renews this certification every three years.
- Her husband and their three daughters all help her run the restaurants.
- She did create a business plan during one of the projects she was involved in, but she feels like she wants to work on it more.
- Same with the commercial strategy – she made it with the help of the trainers, as during the project she was coached on business development, but she feels like this strategy still needs some work.
- Amina feels like in some way her restaurant is a social enterprise, because it became a kind of a community centre for many Senegalese people residing in Palermo.
- She doesn't really look for clients: her regular customers bring their friends, so for now she never felt the need to promote her restaurant. However, when she will open a bigger restaurant in the future, she plans to promote it.
- She doesn't use social media, but many customers tell her to create a Facebook page. Amina says that she would love to do that, but she has no time to post anything.
- If there is a conflict situation with a client, Amina chooses to resolve it with patience and try to stay calm no matter what. She says that this tactic is effective, as some of the clients, who caused scenes in the past, later returned and apologized.
- Amina feels like in terms of risks opening her restaurant and investing her own money in it was the biggest one. But in her opinion, it is very important to be ready to risk, or you will not achieve anything. Now this big investment pays off every day.



- She has a few suppliers in Senegal who sell her specific spices. Other ingredients for her dishes she buys from trusted suppliers in Palermo, whom she knows for years. She says that she is very careful about where she buys the ingredients as “feeding people is a very delicate thing”.
- Regarding the financing schemes, she feels like she needs someone to put more pressure on her to finally apply. She keeps postponing it because she works long hours every day, without weekends.
- Amina thinks that every entrepreneur should have the capacity to not give up. “To start and to continue, and never give up”.
- She cooks following the traditional Senegalese recipes, but also adapts them to her customers, as sometimes some of the dishes can be too spicy.
- She cooks with the most common ingredients in Senegalese cuisine - rice, meat, fish, vegetables and various spices.

### **Amina’s message:**

*“I think that when we speak about food and restaurants, it cannot be only business. It is so important to love cooking, to love food. Without this you will never become a good cook or open a good restaurant”.*

### **Dine Diallo**

Dine came to Italy from Guinea in 2016. Now he is a part of an artistic group of young refugees who invent and develop table games, focused on narration and sharing. The group is called “Giocherenda” which translates from Pular as “solidarity”, “interdependence”, “strength that comes from the union”, “the joy of working together”. The fact that this word is so similar to the Italian word “giocare” (“to play”) gave them an idea to start creating games that can be used for storytelling and sharing memories. Now, apart from table games, they also make textile products. Currently “Giocherenda” consists of 10 associates.

### **Key points:**



- Dine says that they are currently developing their game. They also have a tailoring shop/atelier, where they produce branded tote bags, backpacks, wallets, laptop and tablet sleeves etc. from African fabrics. In the future they plan to work also with traditional Sicilian fabrics as well. In addition, they take small jobs related to clothes or shoes altering when they have a client who asks for it.
- In order to set the prices, they first needed to understand what they could offer and what their competition was making. Then to calculate the cost of the production, including the price of the fabrics, threads, other expenses. Then they made a comparison between these two numbers and figured out their prices.
- Currently “Giocherenda” is registered as an organization for social promotion. By the end of the project it will become a social enterprise.
- Dine says that, as they are a rather big group of people, always discuss every decision together.
- They have both the business plan and the commercial strategy. However, they still want to improve them.
- Currently “Giocherenda” consists of 8 men and 2 women. They are planning to actively involve more women in the future.
- They sell “Giocherenda” products through Internet – on Facebook, Instagram, Etsy – and on thematic fairs, events. In a few months their website will launch and they will be able to sell their products with the help of E-commerce. In December 2019 they are opening a store in the centre of Palermo, which will also act as their creative studio. They also plan to distribute their products among other sellers in Palermo.
- They have 4 principal roles in the organization (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer). Other associates contribute according to their talents and aspirations.
- In the process of risk evaluation, they take all the necessary precautions, but things happen and Dine feels like it’s very important to know how to react when something happens and how to manage these situations.
- Currently they are buying African fabrics from Belgium and The Netherlands, as it is much easier to buy them inside the EU. Wood for the games they buy in Palermo, from a local sawmill. They usually look for quality and also for traceable materials, so they researched their suppliers for a long time.



- Dine believes that new entrepreneurs should study the field and the product they are trying to develop. “Many people think that the money is the most important part, but it’s not – the most important part is to have an idea”.
- As they create their products together, they organise meetings, dedicated specifically to game design. For their 6th game, for example, they already met 5 times and still haven’t finished.
- For bags and backpacks they normally use very generic templates. For laptop and tablet sleeves they use the standard measurements (13’, 14’, 15’). They can also do them according to the client’s preferences and specific measurements.
- Dine says that even though technically you can copy anything, but no one can copy the personality of your product, if you create something special.

### **Dine’s message:**

*“You need to be ready to sacrifice many things and say no to many things as well in order to focus on your dream”.*

### **Doudou Diouf**

Doudou came to Italy from Senegal in 2010 together with his band. He was 40 years old at that time. He says that he had a valuable product to sell – his music – and, as he couldn’t do it in Africa, he chose a country where it was possible. Apart from concerts, he also opened a dance and percussion school in Palermo.

His last business venture is Ciwara – a restaurant of ethnic African food in Vucciria, one of the historic Palermitan markets. In his words, if someone is hungry after his music and dancing, he can also offer them food.

### **Key points:**

- Doudou’s products are his music, inspired by African songs and rhythms, African dance and djembe drums classes, and recently also food and cultural activities that take place in his restaurant.



- He says that when he sets prices, he considers not only the prices of ingredients and staff salaries, but also his image, the image of all African people in Palermo, about his values. Before the opening of the restaurant he announced to all the staff that they can eat the same things they offer to clients. “This way I showed them that they are important, but also that it’s their place too”.
- Doudou stated that opening the restaurant was difficult as no one wanted to rent a space or give any funding to an African man. He says that he had to find an Italian partner, as unfortunately “here people trust an Italian more”.
- As he is the only owner, he makes all the decisions himself.
- He doesn’t have neither a business plan, nor commercial strategy. He says that he always gets frustrated when someone asks him about them – he has everything in his head and says that in Senegal this would’ve been enough for any loan or funding scheme, but not in Italy.
- He cannot really call his restaurant a social enterprise, but he tries to employ as many people from Senegal as he can.
- He promotes his business through Facebook and advertising, but feels like the most effective way is still the word of mouth.
- Doudou says that everyone is welcome in his restaurant, but due to many factors he cannot cater to vegans or celiacs.
- Currently he has 7 people working for him - 4 in the kitchen, 3 in management and bookkeeping. They all knew what positions they were hired for.
- Doudou buys only traceable ingredients as this way he can avoid many problems. Special Senegalese spices are actually supplied by his mother – she buys them in Senegal, collects all the invoices, so this way they are also retraceable.
- He says that he worked on the idea for Ciwara for 3 years – studied, planned every detail. As he didn’t have much business experience, he had to study a lot, but saw no other option, as he felt the need to bring this idea to life.

### **Doudou’s message:**

*“You need to be honest with yourself. Life will bring you many opportunities, but you need to be honest and understand what you really want. Respond to the question: “What do you really want to do?”. And then give everything to it – your time, effort, money”.*



## Lidia Apanasenko

Lidia was born in Kyiv, Ukraine just a few hours after the explosion on the Chernobyl atomic plant. Hence, the first times she came to Italy was via the hosting programme for Ukrainian children who were very young during the catastrophe. First time she stayed with one family from Naples for a summer, and then was coming to Italy to spend summer with another family in Umbria for a few years. She graduated from the university in Kyiv, but really wanted to visit Italy again. So, she did a European Voluntary Service project with a school in Palermo in 2014 and in the end of the project was offered a contract to continue her work there.

As Lidia always loved drawing and sketching, many of her friends were telling her she needed to start selling her works, make postcards, offer them for magazine covers etc.

So, she proceeded with this idea and over the past few years 3 years have published three yearly calendars with the sketches of Palermo and Sicily, sets of postcards, made painting for private clients etc.

### Key points:

- Lidia's products are illustrations, calendars with illustrations, wall art in any format, any paper-based format of art in general.
- At this moment she doesn't sell her original works, only copies. She usually sets her prices by comparing them to the prices on the market. If she sells her works from the shop, she also counts in the percentage that the shop will take.
- She currently collaborates with a shop owner, who offered her a contract as a "free artisan" and who sells her works. This way she can run her business legally.
- She is currently working on a business plan, but it she says that it is not a traditional one. "It's more of a creative plan for my business and my art".
- She is currently working with the owner of the shop she has the contract with on the creation of the commercial strategy.
- She sells her works and find customers through Instagram and Facebook. She also presents herself personally to business owners and show them her portfolio or send them her presentation.



- Lidia never has any serious conflicts with clients. However, once she had to stop collaboration with one of the shops as the owners wanted 50% from every sale and it wasn't an option for her.
- When she gets an interesting offer, for example painting an original picture, she invests all the money into her business, for example, into printing more calendars or postcards.
- Lidia checks all the competitions she finds in Italy, Ukraine or on the EU level and tries to participate. However, for now it is not a priority for her, as she feels like she needs to focus her efforts on the other aspects of the promotion now.
- She describes her creative process as walking with her eyes "open". She always notices the places she wants to sketch later, and then comes back with a sketch book and pencils. She prefers to sketch the place from nature. However, if the weather is changing or the light is not good anymore, she can finish her sketch from a photo.
- She feels like an entrepreneur should be organized and disciplined, have the capacity to dream and to motivate, inspire yourself, imagine that everything you want to achieve is possible.
- In her work she uses the materials that she buys both in Italy and in Ukraine - paper, water colours, marker, pencils, gel pens.
- She loves the upcycling trend, but doesn't know how she can use them in her work.
- Lidia feels like the colours she uses change together with her skills level – she used to use all the colours when she was starting, but now, as she found her style, she become more of a minimalist in the colours she uses.
- She tries to sell her works on online platforms, such as Etsy and Society6. But even though she loves them, they require a lot of effort and attention every month.

### **Lidia's message:**

*"Don't be afraid! Follow your dream, your interests and believe, that everything is possible. It is worth risking it".*

Mia Pailodze



Mia was born in Abkhazia in 1984. When the war started, her family moved to Tbilisi. She came to Italy for the first time as a participant of the programme for Georgian children who experienced war – they were given a possibility to come to Sicily for 3 summer months and stay with a family. Mia was coming to Menfi every summer since she was 11 and staying with her host family.

When she grew up, she graduated in economics in Tbilisi, but soon realised that this work wasn't for her. Hence, she applied to Accademia di Belle Arti in Palermo to study fashion, because she was always interested in it.

After the graduation, she was working as a waitress in a pizzeria and saving as much money as she could in order to later invest into the creation of her own business. In 2016 her aunt told her about a competition for young designers in Georgia, that gives its winner an opportunity to create a collection for Tbilisi fashion week. Mia invested all of her money in it, risked it all and won. Her first collection SicilyAMO was a big success, articles about it were published in Vogue Russia, Official Ukraine etc. This is how her brand was created.

### Key points:

- Mia's products are clothes, shoes and accessories for women. She also provides services of making clothes for corporate clients as well. All of her clients are in Georgia for now.
- In order to set the prices, she calculates all the expenses (for the fabrics, electricity, her seamstress' salary) and it influences the price. If she creates the design herself, the item will be more expensive.
- After the first collection's success, she took part in another competition for young entrepreneurs in Georgia, and won again. It gave her a possibility to buy all the necessary equipment. At the same time, she received a very big order from a client. This way she was able to register her business and have a very successful start.
- She makes all the decisions herself. She says that she needs to take all the opportunities for now if she wants to achieve success.
- Mia says that her connection to Italy helps her to be more successful on Georgian market.
- In order to participate in the competition for young entrepreneurs, she wrote a business plan. However, now it is outdated, as she achieved everything, she planned for in it. Now she feels like she needs to hire someone who will help her to level up.
- She doesn't have a commercial strategy, but knows what she needs to do in the future.





- Mia's business is registered as an atelier and a trade mark in Georgia, hence, she pays the taxes there. For any legal issues she works with professionals.
- According to Georgian laws, entrepreneurs doesn't pay taxes when they export products, so Mia is very motivated to sell her products outside of Georgia.
- Regarding gender equality, Mia says that she will never pay her female seamstresses less than male ones and will never accept being paid less than a man.
- She mostly finds her customers via Internet, social media and fashion weeks. Fashion week is always a great advertising for a designer. She also plans to work with bloggers in the nearest future, but is still planning all the details. "If I will gift a blogger with a jacket and after she wears it, I will receive 10 orders for the same jacket, I need to be ready to provide them".
- Mia never has conflict with clients because she believes that the client is always right. Sometimes she has to explain them what is possible to do and what is not, but in a very diplomatic way.
- Currently her atelier in Tbilisi consists of two seamstresses and a director. She also works with a few seamstresses on a project basis and invites them when the atelier receives a big order.
- Due to the fact that Mia lives in Palermo, she cannot control everything personally. She says that there were a few conflict situations between the staff members and at one point she actually had to go back to Georgia in order to understand what was going on. Now she believes that they found a right model of the staff management.
- She says that there are many risks related to her business, as from the start she invested all of her savings into it. Few times she also faced problems while purchasing fabrics – there is no guarantee that she will be able to sell all of the items later. Now she is buying fabrics only for samples, and only after the finalization of an order she orders the necessary amount.
- In order to find the best suppliers, she participates in fairs and exhibitions in Italy, selecting the best quality fabrics. She puts a lot of attention into the quality of the fabrics and for now works with Italian suppliers.
- In order to control their quality, she normally checks the composition, speaks with the producers, suppliers, try to know more about their reputation.



- Mia knows a few funding programmes in Italy and in Sicily and plans to participate in those ones aimed at young entrepreneurs.
- Mia believes that the most important quality a young entrepreneur should have is confidence. “You need to be confident in what you are doing and how you are doing it. If you show the lack of confidence, people might lose their respect for you”.
- Mia’s first and favourite collection was based on Sicily and she says that she put all of her soul into it. There were Sicilian colours and palm leaves elements, because this is what inspires her in Sicily.
- She says that when she feels inspired by something, she starts going deeper and deeper into it - shapes, colours, segments. After this she starts sketching and developing the ideas and only later starts choosing fabrics, buttons, etc.
- She uses many recycled fabrics as it is a very popular trend and is interesting for her clients.
- Creative reuse of vintage clothing is something she really likes for herself, but doesn’t think she will be able to offer it to her clients.
- Mia builds all the patterns herself, based on the standard ones and adapting them to every model she creates.
- She usually creates a sample in the standard S size, as it is common in fashion. She says that she would love to make other sizes in the future, as the world have changed and fashion should address the needs of every person.
- She normally creates monotone looks in white and other other muted colours. Sometimes she can create something in red, blue, but never a colourful fabric, only monochrome.
- Mia says that in fashion ethical lines are quite blurred. “Normally Zara starts selling the copies of runway models the next day. And there is nothing we can do about it. I see it as a form of flattery, honestly. If one day they will make a copy of any of my models, I will be super happy”.

### **Mia’s message:**

*“You need to really want it. This is the most important part. When you really want something and then achieve it, you look back and think: “Wow, it wasn’t difficult at all”.*



## Mounir Bouzouita

Mounir came to Palermo from Tunisia for a 15-day vacation. And stayed there, because, in his words, he fell in love with Palermo. So, 15 days turned into 33 years.

In Tunisia he used to study fabric making and wanted to open his own factory. However, when he came to Palermo, he changed the field and worked in different restaurants for about 21 years. Then his father got very sick, but the restaurant owner didn't let him go to Tunisia to see him. Mounir went anyways, to see his father and stay with him, as he died in 15 days. The same happened to Mounir's mother later. After this he realized that he wanted to work for himself and proceeded with the opening of his restaurant in Palermo city centre.

However, he still cannot manage to go to Tunisia often – in 33 years he went there only 7-8 times.

### Key points:

- Mounir's products are Tunisian dishes such as brick and falafel, as well as kebab and pizza.
- Regarding the prices, he says that he is not setting them high, because his restaurant is his passion.
- Mounir's restaurant is officially registered and he has all the necessary certifications. He also pays all the taxes with the help of an accountant. He hopes to open a bigger restaurant in 6-7 months.
- He never felt any prejudices against himself or what he is doing. "Actually, Italians are coming to me, Tunisian, to eat pizza. It almost never happens".
- He feels like his business can be called a social enterprise to some point, as he only employs foreigners. Currently he has two staff members working in the kitchen, and he often takes extras, when they have lots of work.
- He promotes his restaurant through the Facebook and a street board next to his restaurant. Also, the work of mouth plays a big part. He also has 4 diplomas from Trip Adviser with 4,5 points.
- Mounir resolves all the disputes with the clients by doing what they are asking for. "I respect client's wishes".



- He says that he has to evaluate all the risks related to his business himself because he doesn't have an adviser, and he wishes he had.
- Mounir works with one specific supplier since he opened his restaurant - they sell halal meat of high quality.

### **Mounir's message:**

*"You need to behave well, respect the laws, be clean in all senses. Then everything will work out for you. Cultivate patience, calmness, respect for others. You need to make everyone feel at home, so don't be pretentious like "I'm the boss".*

### Shapoor Safari

Shapoor is from Afghanistan. He arrived in Italy 2002 by boat from Turkey - he spent 5 days in the sea and safely arrived in Italy. However, the next two boats drowned – more than 370 died.

He says that in his country everyone is an artisan, so he was also always doing something from wood - key chains, candle holder. When he arrived in Italy, he couldn't find a job, so he started selling his works. Later he found a job in a restaurant washing dishes, but in a few months, they saw that he knew how to cook as well. This way Shapoor became a sous chef, then a chef. However, he still works on his unique artisanal pieces.

### **Key points:**

- Shapoor's products are jewellery and candle holders, sometimes interior design pieces. Now makes them less often, as he works full time. However, he is currently finishing a course on entrepreneurship and wants to start working on his business more seriously.
- Regarding prices, he says that he knows he needs to set the prices higher and rethink his strategy.
- His business is not registered now, but before, when he used to sell his works as a street vendor, he had all the necessary documents. Now his official work place is in a restaurant, but he is working on registering his business as well.

- He has a business plan, but it needs an update now. He is currently working on this and on the creation of the commercial strategy in the course that he is taking.
- He never advertised his work, and mostly found his clients through his friends. When he used to sell his pieces on the street, his clients were the people who were passing by and taking interest in his products.
- Shapoor says that his business has minimal risks as he works with upcycling and reuse.
- He uses many second hand materials and items, as well as details from interior stores.
- In his opinion an entrepreneur should always be patient and in good mood.
- Shapoor says that in his creative process it is very important to really see things. "I usually just look at a piece of wood or at some old parts for a bit until I open my eyes and finally see what it can become".
- He uses bone, wood, beads, glass, plastic, leather, toothpicks and matches. He also reuses older pieces, broken furniture, clothes etc.
- He loves natural colours with a pop of colour sometimes.
- He would love to use social media to promote his business and communicate with his clients, but doesn't really understand it yet. However, he is working on it.

**Shapoor's message:**

*"People, who really want something, will always find a way to do it. You should never say "I will never manage", because people have infinite capabilities".*

**Tamar Kiria**

Tamar was born in Abkhazia, Georgia but her family had to move to Tbilisi in 1993, when the war started. The first time she came to Palermo with the project for the children of war, and she was spending all summer in Sicily for a few years.

She studied in a university in Tbilisi for one year, but always wanted to work in fashion and decided to proceed with her dream. Hence, she quit the university and applied for a scholarship at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Palermo, as she already knew some people here and had her host family nearby.



In Palermo Tamar studied fashion design. She graduated in 2007, but wanted to continue her studies and proceeded with the master program for fashion stylists and fashion editors in Accademia del Lusso in Milan. She then did numerous professional courses for seamstresses and courses on the felting in Palermo. In the past years Tamar worked in many different places, including making dresses for clients, styling and even teaching dress making and felting in prison for women and for children with disabilities in a social centre in Enna. At the same time, she continued working on her collections, took part in many fashion shows and competitions. In order to make documents and be able to work after the graduation, she took a job at a LiuJo store in Palermo, then had to go back to Georgia and wait for an invitation from her employer. She worked there for a few years until she had to go back to Georgia for family reason. She lost her job as she didn't know when she will be able to return. When she came back in 2016, she had to start working for herself and make dresses for her customers full time. In 2018, as the things were not going that well, she decided to return home, to Georgia, and think about something new. However, before that she started a collaboration with a shop/creative lab in Palermo, where she sells her dresses and also receives clients who want dresses made to measure. In 2018 she also participated in Milan Fashion Week, in designer section.

### Key points:

- Tamar's products are Dresses and other clothes made to measure, accessories (jewellery, bags, scarfs etc).
- She is having difficulties with figuring out the prices for her products. Normally she counts in the cost of the materials, and, as she uses very good quality ones, for example hand-painted silks, the price can be quite high. But she feels like she cannot put the real price on her garments, as, in her opinion, people in Palermo are not used to ordering dresses, made especially for them.
- In the times when she had just graduated from the Academy, she had to deal with all the issues regarding her residence permit. Right now, she collaborates with this lab as a free artisan.
- She feels like my origins help her, as many clients say that she has a different approach, different aesthetics in what she offers, and they appreciate it.
- She has a business plan, but is not managing to follow it 100%, mostly because she works on her own. She is currently creating a commercial strategy.



- Tamar uses Instagram and Facebook for promotion, and her clients are bringing their friends often. She really appreciates informal relationships with her clients – many of them later call her, bring small presents, coming to the shop to talk.
- Conflicts can happen sometimes, because many clients can't really imagine a finished dress. So, Tamar feels like she needs to be very good at explaining all of the steps to them. Once she had to repurchase the fabric with her own money and remake all of the garment in order not to lose the client.
- She normally looks for supplies in small Sicilian shops where she can touch all of the fabrics, look through the buttons. She works with a painter who paints on silks – she gives Tamar silk with hand paintings and Tamar makes dresses, skirts and tops from them. So, the biggest part of materials comes from Sicily, but sometimes she brings silk, wool, various elements from Georgia.
- She knows that there are funding programmes and would love to understand how they work.
- Tamar thinks that every entrepreneur should have motivation and discipline
- She feels like it is very important to follow what inspires you.
- She works with silk and wool. Normally people make flowy dresses from silk and something more casual from cotton and linen, but Tamar says that she loves doing things differently and loves breaking the rules.
- She loves to use elements of upcycling and reuse in her designs.
- Tamar creates her own patterns for every client.
- She says that she loves all colours, because they have a great therapeutic effect. She especially loves the green colour.
- To promote her products she uses Instagram, Facebook and word of mouth. She used to have an Etsy shop, but it wasn't really working for her, because it required a lot of time.

***Tamar's message:***

*“The most important thing is to believe in yourself. If you don't, no one will believe in you. If you do, you will make it. Also – don't be scared of sacrifices and difficulties, without it you will not reach your dream”.*



## Yan Li

Yan grew up in China, graduated from a university there and worked for about 3-4 years, but she didn't really like her job. So, she decided to start from a clean slate. She came to Italy because there was a university programme for students and because her mother was living in Monreale (a small Sicilian town 20 minutes away from Palermo) at that time.

When she was already living in Palermo for some time and studying at the university, one of her friends found an announcement that Teatro Massimo is looking for extras of Asian origin for the production of "Madame Butterfly". Yan says that she agreed without even thinking. "I was feeling so bad the first day, but I still came to the theatre all excited to start! It was a great experience and I realized how good it feels to be on the stage".

She says that In China people in her circle never really considered acting as a job, because, in Yan's words, there "you are either a big star or a failed actor. Also, you need to be as young as possible". In Italy, however, she saw many smaller theatres and productions and less ageism - this actually made her believe that she can do it too. After this, she did a short silent movie about diversity, another production of Teatro Massimo - now a modern interpretation of "Turandot", another short touristic video, a music video with her friends and was about to act in another one.

Also, about a year and a half ago she started taking classes of contemporary dance and contact improvisation, and their group already did a few performances, which she loved.

She is currently waiting for the results of her friend's project – if it will be approved, she will act in a play at the Palermo Cathedral in the Christmas time.

### Key points:

- Yan really hopes that she will be able to make a living with acting in the future, as this is something that she enjoys a lot.
- She says that she is not in a place to set prices yet. Unfortunately, being an extra in an opera is not a stable job and is not paid very well.
- She still has my student residence permit. As she works full time in an online shop that sells luxury items, she will do the conversion of her permit in a few months. Normally when paid for her acting services, she receives an invoice, it goes straight into her fiscal account directly and then she declares all of this income every year.



- Yan says that this is not that much creativity in acting as one might think, especially on the opera stage. “You know your steps, but you don’t play with your face as you are too far away from the audience. In movie making it’s different, as the camera is filming only you”.
- She prefers theatre plays, as there you are playing in front of the live audience. Cinema is not that attractive for her, as actors need to repeat the same thing over and over again.
- Yan is planning to take acting classes as soon as she will finish her last exams in November 2019 and start acting on a more professional level. She also plans to create an acting curriculum and put more effort into searching for acting jobs.
- She doesn’t promote herself yet, but normally people who know her invite her directly. She feels like in his sense being a foreigner helps, as she is often invited to play Asian characters.

**Yan’s message:**

*“Try to learn the language of your new country, you will have more opportunities like this. And then just go for it and try!”*

## Case Study - Greece

These 10 case studies were collected by Club for UNESCO of Piraeus and Islands over three months.

The average age of the interviewees is 43 years. 70% of them are women.

All of the participants live in Greece for more than a decade and own or work in small local businesses, all connected to the world of fashion. 70% of the interviewees are self-employed.

### Anna

Anna was born in Belarus in 1959. She married an army officer and had one daughter with him. However, her husband was killed during the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl.

Anna had no savings and no particular hard skills except for repairing and mending clothes. Thereon, she was forced to work as seamstress.

In 2005, she visited a friend of hers in Greece who encouraged her to move in Piraeus, in Greece.

Anna decided to go for it.

In only a few months, she launched her own local business of designing and selling hand-knitted socks.

### Key points:

- She created a business plan with the guidance of a legal counsellor. She also consults an accountant and a lawyer on any legal and tax issues.
- Anna transformed her business into a social enterprise by collaborating with homeless' shelters.
- Anna notes that she had witnessed gender discrimination against other female entrepreneurs, but she has not faced such behaviours herself.
- She uses her communication-related soft skills (empathy, understanding, kindness) to resolve disputes with her clients.
- It is difficult for her to use social media platforms in order to communicate with her clients. Instead, she has uses professional cards with her workshop address and her mobile phone.
- She thinks interpersonal skills and communication skills such as empathy and listening are necessary for an entrepreneur.



- Her starting point is her clients' desires and suggestions. She pays close attention to what her clients asks of her.
- She uses recycling techniques and reuses the products she has not sold by changing the patterns and designs.
- Her origin influences her designs. As she comes from Belarus, she loves using red and green colours, as they are the colours of her country's flag.
- Regarding materials, she mostly uses wool.
- As she is not managing to use social media in order to promote her products, she organises a fair in her workshop. It usually takes place twice a month.
- She has created a complete list of her clients' telephone numbers and communicates with them twice a month.
- As her workshop is located on one of the most popular streets of Piraeus, there is a lot of personal contact with the clients as well.

### **Anna's message:**

*Even though Anna didn't have any substantial funds and was almost 50 years old when she moved to Greece, she took a great risk for herself and for her daughter. She turned a difficult and unhappy situation into her second chance in life.*

### **Arsham**

Arsham was born in Armenia in 1972. After graduating from high school, he worked at the family shoemaking business. When his father passed away, Arsham had to close down the workshop due to the big amount of debt. In 1994 he moved to Athens and found a job in construction. However, he was not satisfied with the working conditions.

As he had lots of experience in shoemaking and repair, he decided to start his own business. Currently he owns a small enterprise focused on repairing and designing shoes in Piraeus.

### **Key points:**



- Arsham knew the exact structure of the business he wanted to start, had a financial strategy and realistic goals. He proceeded to work with an accountant who guided him through all the legislation and taxation issues.
- He didn't experience many disputes with his clients. If this happens, he puts forward his sense of humour and his kindness in order to resolve any conflict.
- Arsham describes himself as a young man with a great sense of humour. He believes in communication skills as a necessary condition to satisfy clients and grow any business.
- He is aware of the existence of many grants for young entrepreneurs, but he never applied for any of them due to the bureaucracy of Greek authorities.
- Arsham repairs old leather shoes and designs leather sandals. He prefers the natural colour of leather. However, in his designs he uses colourful threads and beads.
- For materials he mostly uses real leather.
- Arsham uses social media platforms in order to promote his new designs and communicate with his clientele about new orders.
- He wants to approach his staff in a friendly and familiar way. He also distributes the work accordingly to the number of orders and working time. This is why he has created two working shifts at his workplace.
- Regarding copyright, he does not know about copyright issues.

### **Arsham's message**

*Arsham recommends to have realistic goals and think out of the box at the same time. He inherited the hard skills of shoemaking from his father and combined them with the soft skill of willingness to learn.*

### **Hammad**

Hammad was born in Pakistan, in 1981. Due to the turbulent situation and terrorist attacks in the region he was forced to immigrate to Greece in 1996. That year over 75 people were killed and hundreds of people were injured in a bomb explosion in Pakistan.

Initially, Hammad was homeless. He was staying in a homeless' shelter and was forced to work as a street vendor in order to survive. After almost a decade in Greece, he succeeded in starting up a small business focused on fashion accessories.

Unfortunately, now things are not going well financially. At the same, Hammad remains a young, polite and happy entrepreneur, who still struggles, in order to keep his business alive.

**Key points:**

- Hammad had neither a business nor a commercial strategy at the beginning of his business venture.
- His business is supported by a legal consultant who helps him with all of the legal issues.
- Hammad was trying to deal with all the tax issues himself. Unfortunately, he was lacking specific knowledge, so now he owes a significant amount of money to the Greek Tax Office, which he is paying off in instalments.
- He thinks that people in Europe doesn't have to worry about the gender. In his opinion, this topic is very important in countries, in which women's freedoms are restricted.
- Hammad experienced racism from the part of his clients, but he thinks that the best ways to deal with it is to stay polite and kind.
- He thinks that soft skills, such as honestly, politeness and respect for others, are an integral part of being an entrepreneur.
- Hammad loves bright colours and patterns. His products are oriented at women of all ages so he wants to cater to every woman's taste and preference.
- He mostly works with cotton, lycra and leather.
- Hammad uses his Facebook page in order to promote his products and communicate with his clientele, as well. He doesn't feel the need to use any other online platforms.

**Hammad's message**

*Hammad didn't have neither a business plan nor a commercial strategy, and hence had difficulties in dealing with taxation issues. He recommends to all the new entrepreneurship to be guided and advised by professional financial advisors.*



## Beatrice

Beatrice is 41 years old. She came to Greece from Congo during the Second Congo War as an asylum seeker. Although a peace agreement was signed in 2002, episodes of extreme continued happening in many regions of Congo, in addition to food shortage and diseases outbreaks. Beatrice lost both her parents and her siblings because of that.

She moved to Greece 11 years ago. In the beginning, she worked as a hairdresser. However, she was always creating handmade accessories and ethnic jewellery as a hobby. When she got fired from the hair salon, she decided to make her hobby a job. Now she owns a kiosk where she samples and sells her jewellery.

Beatrice is a warm and affectionate woman, a creative jewellery designer and a strong seller.

### Key points:

- Beatrice did use a business plan in order to start her business, but she did not have a commercial strategy.
- She gets legal advice from an NGO and is dealing with taxes on her own. Although, she admits that for her it is very difficult.
- Beatrice has not faced discrimination based on her gender or race. She feels that if a woman commands respect, there is no space for racism or discrimination.
- Whenever there is a conflict situation, she solves it on her own in a gentle polite way.
- Beatrice is a warm, polite artist who believes soft skills are very important. She thinks an entrepreneur should be kind, polite and pleasant.
- She knows about trends like recycling and creative reuse and works with them. Whenever it's possible to transform some of her jewellery that has not been sold, Beatrice is doing it in order to create new designs.
- Her jewellery, which are created in a traditional African style, are oriented towards women of bohemian style. This is why she prefers earthy tones, as well as geometric shapes and designs.
- Beatrice's jewellery are crafted with many different kinds of supplies, but most times she uses beads and crystals.

- Beatrice uses social media platforms to promote her new designs and communicate with her clients for new orders. She feels like there is no need to use online platforms to promote her products.

**Beatrice's message:**

*Beatrice is considered a war victim. She lost her home and her family due to the war. She transformed that loss into her creativity, designing and selling traditional African jewellerys to women from different continents. She recommends to transform your feelings, both sadness and happiness, into creativity and motivation.*

**Arta**

Arta was born in Albania in 1986. At the age of 5 she and her family were forced to immigrate in Ioannina, Greece, for economic reasons, as her father had lost his job and her mother was a homemaker. After staying in Ioannina for about a year, Arta's family decided to move to Athens. Arta graduated from a high school there and proceeded with her education the field of fashion design. As a design student, she worked under the guidance of experienced professionals. Currently, she has a business of repurposing old denims into shopping bags.

**Key points:**

- Arta has both a business plan and a commercial strategy.
- She also consulted a lawyer before starting up her business.
- Regarding the taxation, she notes that she can handle it by her own as she owns a small business.
- Arta's business is a social enterprise. She recycles and reuses old, second-hand textiles (denims) and repurposes them into shopping bags.
- She thinks that gender is not an obstacle, as she had never faced issues with gender equality.
- Arta says that she is very flexible regarding conflicts with her clients. She notes that if a customer is not content with her work for an objective reason, she always fixes the issues. In extreme situations, she gets the product back and reimburses the customer. In any case, she is never rude.



- She thinks that the most powerful skill for an entrepreneur is patience.
- Arta never received any funding from any programme, neither national nor local.
- She knows about recycling techniques as they are the corner stone of her business idea – she recycles old denim into tote bags.
- She works with denim and prefers its natural colours, so she never dyes the fabric. However, she adds some patches and crocheted flowers, hand-made by her mother, who is a seamstress.
- Arta uses social media in order to promote her new designs and communicate with her clientele about new orders, complains and refunds.
- Arta supposes that ethics in fashion covers a range of issues such as working conditions and exploitation.
- Arta thinks there is no need to use online platforms to promote her shopping bags as long as she uses social media platforms. She notes that it's an extra expense that she doesn't need as she uses social media for free.

### **Arta's message:**

*Arta advises young entrepreneurs to think out of the box and be brave. She loves open-mindedness, innovation and green initiatives, and wants to unite these three concepts a new work approach. This is how she entered into the world of entrepreneurship and this is what she suggests other entrepreneurs do as well.*

### **Victor**

Victor is 40 years old. He was born in Ethiopia and comes from a family of farmers. He and his family had been suffering from hunger and periodic famine for many years. His parents refused to leave their home, but Victor was thirty years old then and wanted a brighter future perspective.

Hence, he was forced to immigrate to Greece ten years ago. At first, he faced homelessness and the bureaucracy of Greek authorities.

Thankfully, with the help of an NGO he was able to acquire the necessary documents in order to live and work legally in Greece.





For the first six years of his life in Athens he was working as a street vendor. However, he was very skilled in knitting, as it is a common occupation for men in Ethiopia. Hence, he started knitting unique-looking felt scarves without any tools, with his hands.

Currently he sells his creations from a kiosk in Athens that acts also as his workshop. So, many of his customers are stopping by to also observe him working.

### Key points:

- Without having any business plan or commercial strategy, Victor started up a small, local business.
- Victor is consulted by a lawyer and an accountant regarding legal issues and taxes, as he cannot deal with these issues on his own and prefers to receive qualified help
- He never had any disputes with his clients. However, he experienced a few conflicts with his suppliers and was forced to stop working with them.
- Victor is a polite and kind artist who believes that an entrepreneur should have effective communication skills.
- He uses the whole range of colours. He says that Ethiopia is composed of colourful landscapes, so he is inspired by them.
- In his work he uses a felt material, made of wool.
- Victor promotes his scarves by using social media platforms, specifically Facebook.

### Victor's message

*Victor is communicative, polite and good-tempered. In order to make a living in his new country, he combined traditional crafts and modern trends. He wasn't discouraged by the fact that he didn't have many specific hard skills. Instead he embraced that one he had and worked on developing and strengthening it. This is what he advises entrepreneurs, as well as being open-minded, creative and innovative.*

### Chen

Chen was born in Fujian, China, in 1976. Until 2004 she had been working as a salesperson in various women clothing stores. However, she wasn't satisfied by the working conditions – her salary was



low, she could not cover her basic needs, working hours were unlimited without any overtime pay or even rest breaks.

In 2005 she came to Greece, following the example of her Chinese friend who did the same. Her friend introduced her an attorney that guided her through all the paperwork she needed in order to be able to live and work legally in Greece.

In the beginning, she worked as a shop assistant at a Chinese clothing store. A few years later, when she saved a decent amount of money, Chen decided to start up her own business focused on women clothing.

Now, she is a successful entrepreneur and has her own business, that currently gives job to four other people, is profitable and pays its taxes on time.

### Key points:

- Before starting her business, Chen was already experienced in the area of both fashion and commerce. She had a specific plan and strategy of the structure and promotion, as well as a business model. She also knew everything she needed about materials, suppliers and costs.
- She received counselling from another Chinese entrepreneurs who lives in Greece.
- Chen also receives support from a consulting company regarding taxation and legislation. She is consistent regarding her tax issues and pays everything on time.
- She has experience of working with rude and disrespectful clients. When she started her business, some of her clients discriminated her because of her origins as well. However, when she faces such conflicts, she stays polite and calm.
- Chen notes that comprehension and kindness are the key skills for any entrepreneur. She thinks that in order to be comprehensive you have to be a good listener and respect your clients' point of view.
- She likes many different colours and patterns. She prefers to have a big range of products as this way she can cater to any client in a different way.
- She has a great variety of materials, but prefers cotton, denims, lycra, lace and linen.
- Chen promotes her products through social media. She can also communicate with her clients this way.
- Chen says that as she comes from China, she knows exactly what ethics in fashion is. She notes that child labour in the manufacturing sector and working conditions remain a huge



problem in China. This is why she has decided to create a healthy and friendly environment for her employees.

- Chen does not use any online platforms because she promotes her products on Facebook.

### **Chen's message:**

*Chen was a victim of unethical fashion practices in China. She used to work over 12 hours per day and her salary was below minimum wage limit. When she decided to start up her own business in Greece, one of her first desires was to create a healthy and friendly environment for her employees. This is her strongest recommendation to new entrepreneurs - to respect their employees. This way they are going to be loyal, fulfilled and motivated to perform at their best for the company.*

### **Anita**

Anita was born in Albania, in 1974. She moved with her family to Greece in 1991, when she was 17 years old. Her family immigrated to Greece because of economic challenges in Albania.

In the beginning, they moved to Crete, where Anita's father worked as a farmer. But, as she remembers, the working conditions were not good. So, they moved to Athens, where he started working in construction.

Anita was facing enough problems with the language, so her parents chose to send her to a vocational rather than a general school. She started taking lessons in dressmaking and received a scholarship for a college of fashion design.

When she got her diploma, she decided to create her own fashion workshop for clothes alterations and repairs.

### **Key points:**

- Anita created a business strategy and started up a small, local and social enterprise. However, she never made a commercial strategy.
- Currently she has two employees.
- In order to be on top of her legal and taxation paperwork, Anita works with an accountant. She notes that for a few years now the taxes became too high. However, she manages to pay them in time.



- Anita considers her business as a social enterprise, as it is eco-friendly. She recycles old textiles in order to design new clothes.
- Anita had experienced inappropriate behaviour from her clients. However, her slogan is “The client is always right”, so she chooses to stay polite and respectful. She respects her costumers’ opinions and gets inspired by them. Unfortunately, she had to end a commercial relationship with one of her suppliers after a racist outbreak.
- Anita thinks that teamwork is the most powerful soft skill. She has two employees now and acts as a mentor to them. She is always open to their questions.
- She is aware of the existence of financing schemes, but she never applied for them.
- Recycling: Anita recycles and repurposes old textiles in order to design new clothes.
- In her work she prefers to use earthy tones and geometric patterns. She works with every textile, for example cotton, lace, lycra, denim.
- Anita promotes her work and new designs through social media platforms.
- She notes that ethics in fashion is about manufacturing and working conditions, as well as workers’ exploitation. Her employees never work overtime and are never paid poorly. She respects ethical fashion and always wanted to create a unique surrounding for her employees.

## **Anita’s message**

*Anita feels like it’s impossible to start a business without knowing the purpose and having a business model. She recommends to be guided by professionals and learn from mentors. She advises to invest in both high quality materials, even if they cost more, and in a healthy working environment.*

## **Isabella**

Isabella was born in Brazil in 1980. In 2013, due to the high levels of unemployment and inflation, she started planning her move to the U.S. However, the changes in U.S. immigration system made it extremely difficult for her to enter the country legally. Hence, Europe became an attractive option for her. She already had friends who were living in Greece, so she moved to Athens. Today, she notes that the process of getting all of her immigration documents in order and getting a residence and a work permit was exhausting due to the bureaucracy of Greek authorities.

At first, she was teaching Latin American dances part time, but the payment was quite low. A friend suggested her to use her language skills and apply for a work at the call centre for Portuguese client support.

This completely changed the quality of her life. She was finally content with her salary and now had a possibility to pursue her other interests, such as fashion. She was fond of designing clothes, creating patterns and examining fashion magazines.

Isabella became self-taught seamstress and designer, who currently owns her own fashion workshop and designs skirts.

**Key point:**

- Before starting her business, Isabella created a business plan and a business model for her enterprise.
- She is working with an accountant and says that without professional help and guidance, she wouldn't have managed to deal with all the legal and tax issues.
- Isabella faced inappropriate behaviour and rudeness from both her clients and suppliers. She doesn't take it personally and chooses to not overthink the situation.
- In Isabella's opinion, problem solving and effective communication are the soft skills any entrepreneur should have.
- Isabella is aware of the existence of financing schemes, but she has never applied and never been funded.
- Even though she notes that she is a "green-thinking" person, she does not use recycling techniques in her business.
- Isabella's designs are inspired of Brazilian carnival. She loves bold colours and different patterns, and in her designs uses cotton and lace.
- She promotes her skirts through social media platforms, especially Facebook. However, she does not use online platforms to promote her products and notes that online platforms are not as direct and effective as social media.
- Isabella is aware of ethical issues in fashion, that is why she created a healthy workplace environment. She listens to everyone's ideas and recognizes hard work.

**Isabella's message**



*Isabella recommends all the new entrepreneurs to work on a clear idea for their business and to create a business model. Without business and commercial strategy, it is very hard to start an enterprise.*

*Moreover, Isabella relies on her origin, culture and traditions a lot. She says that the greatest inspiration comes from our roots.*

## Maria

Maria was born in Albania in 1984. Both of her parents were unemployed for a long time period, and Maria remembers that they were not able to afford the basic school equipment for her. They were forced to immigrate from Albania to Athens in 1993.

When they entered Greece, Maria's family experienced a lot of xenophobia, from both Greek authorities and ordinary people. They had numerous issues with their immigration documents as well. Maria and her parents were atheist, but had to be baptized in the Greek Orthodox church in order to change their names and become a part of the Greek community.

After graduating from high school, Maria started taking art lessons and specialized in drawing and painting. After the end of her studies, she decided to do something innovative and eco-friendly, but relevant to her studies.

Maria uses acrylic paint to revitalize old shoes. Currently, she has a small workshop, where she draws and paints on used shoes, turning them into the works of art.

### Key points:

- Maria created both a business and commercial strategy for her enterprise.
- She receives help regarding legislation and taxation from an accountant. She is consistent regarding her taxes and pays them on time.
- Maria's enterprise is social in her opinion, as she created an eco-friendly business. She repurposes old shoes, paints on them and decorates them.
- Maria has never faced any problems regarding gender equality. Although she comments that gender is not a social obstacle, nowadays.
- Maria seldom faces conflicts and disputes with her clients. Whenever she does, she tries to be polite and don't take it personally.



- She says that the most powerful soft skills an entrepreneur should have are kindness and generally good manners.
- She is well informed about financing schemes, but she has never applied to any of them.
- Maria works entirely on recycling and reuses canvas second-hand shoes by repairing, painting and decorating them.
- Maria loves comic books, so she is inspired by the colours often found in comic books. She is an admirer of bold colours and comic patterns.
- Maria uses social media to promote her products. She organizes open bazaars in order to promote the products.
- She notes that ethics in fashion is about working conditions, working hours, healthy and unhealthy working environment and exploitation.

### **Maria's message:**

*Maria suggests everyone to think outside of the box and not to be afraid to be differently. She is a "green-thinking" person and wanted to give a different, innovative perspective to entrepreneurship. Maria recommends new entrepreneurs to think creatively, evolve and be willing to learn more. Moreover, Maria also convinces many of her costumers to think "greener" and be more conscious about ethical fashion.*

## General summary

The research of the good practices in France, Spain, Italy and Greece have showed many similarities and also many particularities from country to country.

- In France, most of the interviewed entrepreneurs have migrated for family reasons and are not facing residence issues in most cases.
- In Greece, more than half of the interviewees had worked on a business plan and commercial strategy before they started up their enterprise.
- Many entrepreneurs in Greece are struggling with paying the taxes, as they became quite high and the system is not easy to understand.
- In most of the countries the interviewees were complaining about the bureaucracy regarding the immigration process.

The research showed the following key points, very common along the whole research pool.

- Many of the participants of the study are struggling to finalise their business plans or have never created one. Those of them who did, speak about the benefits of having a clear business idea and a commercial strategy before the start.
- Most of the interviewees used the help of lawyers, tax consultants, accountants, NGOs etc. in order to deal with legal issues and taxes. Those who didn't, mostly state that they have experienced major difficulties and sometimes even have to pay big amounts to the Tax Agencies.
- Some of the businesses were created with the purpose of becoming social enterprises. However, the study also showed that the term "social enterprise" is not that widespread yet.
- Many of the respondents spoke about risk management as something they think about a lot and have a very clear idea what are the current and future risks for their businesses are.
- Almost every interviewee stated that the conflicts, especially with the clients and suppliers, are better resolved with calmness, politeness and that it is important to not take things personally.



- Also, most of the participants of the study highlighted the importance of quality in both materials and ingredients, and stated that they did a very profound research of their suppliers and work only with the most reliable ones.
- Only two of the responders underlined the importance of the use of traceable materials and ingredients, however this is a very important factor, especially for businesses, involved in import activities.
- Most of the participants of the study speak about the importance of soft skills such as communication skills, discipline, motivation, politeness and good manners.
- Most of the interviewees says that, even though many of them know about the possibilities of getting funding from different programmes, they have never tried to apply because they either don't have time or feel like it is very difficult. However, those ones who did, say that these opportunities helped them bring their businesses on the next level. Hence, there is a definite need for more informational materials about funding opportunities.
- Many of the respondents are aware of the upcycling and reuse techniques, however there is a definite lack of knowledge on the possibilities it can give an entrepreneur (for example, upcycling of the pieces that were not sold last season, etc)
- Almost 100% of the interviewees are using social media such as Facebook and Instagram for the free promotion of their products and services. However, they tend not to use other platforms such as Etsy, as they require more time and efforts, and sometimes also require payment. There is a necessity of the training module specifically focused on the opportunities Etsy and other online platforms can give an entrepreneur.
- One of the very effective and innovative ways of promotion is working with bloggers and influencers, however only one the respondents spoke about it in her interview.

Taking all of this into account, we can conclude that the training modules, chosen by the consortium for the creation of the "Intellectual Output 2: Training course-learning material" can be very beneficial both for the new entrepreneurs and those, who already have a significant experience in fashion and creative industry.