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Success Story: Dionysis Daloukas, La Petite Cantine

In 2015, a beautiful idea was born, of creating a restaurant accessible to everyone, and by this (everyone), I also mean people with disabilities.

The main concept was to create a place where people with disabilities and people from socially vulnerable groups would be able to work, and, at the same time, socialize and better serve society. Therefore, I made the decision to form a team with people who would be able to go on with this idea and bring it to fruition.

Coming here, I found warm people, I found people co-operating, I found people who can take on a goal and take it further, and above all - and this is the important thing - I found people who can work together well.

However, it is important to have a very good team, whose members complement each other, in order to maximize the efficiency. Without a "team" and, I am saying it again, without a smart idea, nothing can never be done.

Let's give some more details about the enterprise. "La Petite Cantine" is a multi-function space situated in the city of Volos, in Greece. It is a cafe/restaurant offering Greek products, Mediterranean cuisine - because we have to support our country and our local products- and a place of culture. What do I mean by place of culture? Many artistic and cultural events are organised, book presentations, musical events.

Different Associations can organize their meetings here. As well as any other form of visual art. The truth is that this venture has faced many challenges. We faced common problems, such as the bureaucracy, the mistrust of people and a reluctance to accept a business where people with disabilities work. In Greece there is the economic crisis...

Our main goal, in the years to come, is to be able to make the best possible use of this building, to renew our yard, to improve it, in order to become more accessible to everyone. And in the back of our mind there is an idea, or a desire at some point, to open up a second place somewhere else, to establish a second branch in another Greek city.

I hadn't work for many years, until I found "La Petite Cantine". The job here is suited to the needs of a person with kinetic difficulties. I can work fewer hours, fewer days, it's less demanding than other similar jobs.

My advice to the young people, is that even in the middle of an economic crisis, such as the one in Greece today, even in such difficult circumstances, if there is a strong desire to act, if

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there is zest and willingness to work with others, combined with a smart idea, they should come together, as a team, and work to realise their dreams.

What they have to do is prepare as best as they can, develop a very well-structured business model, which can, when combined with a smart and promising idea, result in the creation of a healthy business, a lucrative business, a business that may aspire to future growth.

Essentially, the feelings I have over the past two and a half years that La Petite Cantine is open, can be described as a great pleasure for being able to implement what I had in my mind, especially in a country facing many difficulties, and realising that, going through all those difficulties, I became stronger and better prepared for the future.

There is a very friendly climate in "La Petite Cantine", from everyone and to everyone there is solidarity from everyone, which is very important for anyone at his workplace. That's what I wanted to say...

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