

Video Transcript

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NONPROFITS

Learning from a social entrepreneur

[Georg von Schnurbein] Did you ever think about what happens to the used soap bars in hotels? Dorothee Schiesser and Cintia Jaime did. And they came up with a great idea. The idea was to establish a complete process to make the hotel soap bars reusable.

First, they connected with the hotels and agreed with them to collect the used soap bars. The collected soap is delivered to a nonprofit organization that provides workplaces for handicapped people. There, the soap waste is grinded, washed, and recycled into new soap bars. The recycled soap is controlled and tested by a laboratory. Finally, the social business cooperates with NGOs that work on the improvement of health and hygiene of people in need. The soap bars are distributed through the local NGOs correspondence.

Hello, Cintia. Good to have you here.

[Cintia Jaime] Thank you.

[Georg von Schnurbein] What was your motivation for SapoCycle?

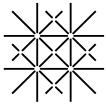
[Cintia Jaime] Well, actually, one of the motivations for me to help as entrepreneur in this world, is to see that the chaos is like a plan in this world, the chaos is already developing all the time with this overpopulation. And we have to help on to bring order, to bring justice, to bring things. That nobody can take it alone.

So, when Dorothee asked me and proposed this beautiful idea of recycling the soap of hotels and helping with that children in need, and then afterwards we added the disabled people doing this recycling that was, for me, like, "wow, yes. You got me. I have to, I can help on".

[Georg von Schnurbein] And what was the major challenge in starting it?

[Cintia Jaime] Well, there were different moments with really great challenges to solve. As you know, we started from the scratch. So at the beginning, there was the acquisition of key partners, so we have a collaboration model. And the first was, of course, the hotels, they have to deliver the soaps. And we had two hotels to start. We had "Wohnwerk", where we process, recycle the soap. And then the distribution partner was really very difficult.

And then we wanted the Red Cross because of logistics. It's very important to have very good logistics to reach the children in need and the families in need. And then there was the director of the "Zweimal Weihnachten" or "Two Times Christmas", and also from the catastrophe, which was the perfect person. But he was always on the plane, or he was always abroad, and never in the office. And I called him I don't know how many times, I think about 13 times at least. And I never called anybody, not even an ex-boyfriend so much in my life without receiving a call back. And now he's helping on the board of our foundation, he's really a beautiful person, and he added a lot of value also. So that was the very difficult moment of our foundation, we couldn't start otherwise.



And the second challenge was, we are a very fast growing foundation in fast development scenarios and that needed internal organization also. It has to develop. And at that time, it was very difficult also because we had from two hotels, we grow in 200. From distribution, we have to reorganize. And we were voluntary. So that brought us in some crisis. And then I said, OK, let's call "Benevol", another foundation, to bring voluntaries on the team.

And now we are working with a very high motivated team, it's already passed, but there was at the beginning was – wow – was growing so fast. Now we have 100 hotels, right? At the beginning, we started with two. So the speed was in two years very fast.

[Georg von Schnurbein] Thank you very much.

[Cintia Jaime] You're very welcome.

[Georg von Schnurbein] As we can see, for the dream to come true, and for the plan to become a successful enterprise, the entrepreneurs faced several challenges. The first one was to get everyone on board. The two founders needed support from luxury hotels to collect and supply the soap. Next, they had to find a sheltered workshop where they would let the soaps recycle. Additionally, they had to find a nonprofit for the distribution of the soap. Finally, they needed some seed money to start the project.

The second challenge was to meet regulatory standards, especially requirements of hygiene. There's a reason why the hotels throw away the used soap. In order to be recycled, the soap has to be filed off, cleansed, and reshaped.

The third challenge was the distribution. International nonprofit organizations cannot just take some 100 soaps and deliver it to households. In order to make it efficient, the soap has to be included into a larger project of training on hygiene or support of families.

Finally, Dorothee Schiesser and Cintia Jaime managed to find solutions for all these challenges and created a win-win situation for all parties involved. They create added value through recombining existing products and processes. That's entrepreneurship at its best, but for a social cause.