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FLIPPED STUDIO “SUCCESSFUL INNOVATOR” - NOVA

Project No. 2020-1-LT01-KA227-ADU-094751

**Motivw: Sustainable Fabric stories from the Last Divided Capital.
Nicosia, Cyprus**



George Kyrrou, Cyprus



Sector: Fashion

Position: Social Entrepreneur

About me

I was born in Nicosia, Engomi, and I was fortunate to attend a private school during my high school years. I got my Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from Kingston University in London. Upon my return in Cyprus I started building a fashion start-up and social enterprise called MOTIVW (pronounced motivoh). MOTIVW is a social enterprise and sustainable fashion initiative which aims at upcycling, salvaging, repurposing and swapping fabrics and military uniforms from the last divided capital in the world: Nicosia. MOTIVW aims at changing the local mindset and inspire people to move away from the fast fashion industry and towards a more sustainable way of using, reusing, swapping and upcycling clothes, materials and fabrics.

My way to the CCS and main achievements before the Pandemic

MOTIVW originated because, as a graphic designer, I am fascinated by patterns, consequently at MOTIVW we predominantly upcycle military uniforms. I was also fascinated by history and the division of the island of Cyprus therefore working with fabrics that carry a military character was also a creative way to protest the militarization of the island. Also, MOTIVW was founded for environmental reasons and for my deep love of fashion. MOTIVW tries to salvage and save materials from ending up in landfill, especially things that can be used for decades. Our work is mostly upcycling with durable military uniforms but we also put events on the site depending on the specifics of the project. For example, we had a series of upcycled jackets made to order in a stall in an art festival. We put together cloths exchanges/swaps where people can renew their closet and we put a massive fabric sale with salvaged fabrics, almost 4 tons and helped the local craft community grow during.

Before the pandemic, a main achievement was that MOTIVW project was awarded a social entrepreneurship award from Kingston university in the 'Bright competition' which is an internal competition within the university. We were awarded 15000 British pounds to get the business started we were also awarded the European Institute of Technology's (EIT) climate launch pad. We qualified and won the national final in 2020. Then we went to pitch on the regional final at the EIT.



Photo: Hats designed by MOTIVW using upcycled army uniforms

The challenges faced during the Pandemic and innovation solutions to overcome them.

Within the pandemic we held a cloth swap were I was not present at because I was stuck in the United Kingdom due to Covid travel restrictions and another swap was postponed and ultimately cancelled because of the lockdown. Production was stopped, no factories, no garment industry,



even if we designed the projects and items could not be realized. Markets closed. We did not have a website at the time so we could not make online sales and we had no products to sell. We had a collaboration with Bird Life Cyprus, some t shirts that were sold through Instagram and hand-delivered by car. So no income and no way of producing income either.

In April 2020, we were fortunate to be contacted by a fabrics salesman who needed to get rid of fabrics. Otherwise they would end up in landfilled. It was a massive risk. We burnt through our entire budget to empty the container. We created a fabric sales by appointment, we had a set number within the space. This lasted for 5 months. This was innovative because people were buying in bulk. It was unwanted fabrics, we knew how to market it in the right way. Marketing and the power of social media.

What I learned during the Pandemic was to be more professional, to believe in my ability to market, to further developed my speaking and social skills to promote my fabrics. The pandemic also taught me the value of hard work and the value of taking risks.

‘Own your eccentric nature and always evolve your ideas’

My future plans and aspirations for developing my career in CCS.

My future aspirations for developing my career in CCS is to grow MOTIVW into a full time job, into a non-traditional clothing brand that values mending, reusing and not buying when someone has the chance to. The projects goals is to be a cultural and eco-friendly project from other artists, be a seminar art exhibition

My suggestion for those who wish to work in CCS (

Start. Start working. Stick to it. And it will work out. One way or another. And if it doesn't, do something else.



T-shirt designed by MOTIVW

Additional Information

Us artists nowadays, we need to be inventive. We are the only group of people that its within their DNA to take risks. Other professions do not have the opportunities to take risks. You can change disciplines because you are an artist. You are allowed to do all these things because the concept of what are an artist is has changed in the digital age. And what is an artist if someone who does not question the norm.



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This good practice story is prepared by Center for Social Innovation (CSI).

Self-reflection questions

1. What have I learned from this story?
2. How can innovation in the fashion industry also have a social impact?