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Project helps the women in south city

MERSIN
Anatolia News Agency

In two-and-a-half-years, a joint project conducted by the special provincial administration of the southern city of Mersin and a handicraft foundation has reportedly benefited 624 women.

With loans provided by the handicraft foundation called Mersin Special Provincial Directorate and İÇEV, 54 women out of 624 were given the opportunity to establish their own businesses. Initiated in June 2007, the micro-project is designed to help women stand on two feet and increase their contribution to the country's economy.

Speaking at a ceremony, Mersin Gov. Hüseyin Aksoy said the project's goal is to create opportunities for women. "600 women have drawn loans," he said. "We are providing loans for 24 more women. Thus, a total of 624 women will benefit from the loans opened within the scope of the project in two-and-a-half years."

"The women that have established their own businesses started to employ other people or their partners. This way, they have developed themselves and made progress in terms of becoming a businessperson," he said.

In terms of increasing the confidence of women, Aksoy said: "Moreover, the women willing to establish their own businesses can be provided with loans through the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation within the scope of the project to reduce social risk. There are also courses organized to boost women's professional skills. As long as women develop their entrepreneurial spirit and want to open their own workplaces, we will continue providing support."

To date, 300,000 Turkish Liras have been allocated to these business ventures, he said.



BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES: During the workshop in Istanbul, Gülseren Onaç, president of KAGİDER, described in detail the bureaucratic hurdles the organization faces while trying to get women more access to government procurements for the money borrowed from the World Bank Group.

Turkish women need to step up lobby effort

An official from the World Bank advised the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey, or KAGİDER, to lobby the Turkish government so that it, in turn, encourages the international organization to be more inclusive of businesswomen in the supply chain.

Juliana Oyegun, the director of diversity programs at the World Bank, said it was the job of women's NGOs to exert pressure on the government to be more inclusive on World Bank projects.

A group of international experts dedicated to having more women-owned businesses represented in the global value chain shared their experience with KAGİDER at a workshop on how and why corporations are utilizing women's business enterprises.

Elizabeth Vazquez, the founder of WeConnect International, said that while women-owned businesses represent 25 to 33 percent

A group of global experts dedicated to having more women-owned businesses represented in the global value chain, shared their experiences with Turkish women at a workshop in Istanbul. An official from the World Bank says women's NGOs need to lobby their government to gain more access to the supply chain

of all private businesses in the world and that women do two-thirds of the world's work, they only own 1 percent of the means of production. Women represent over 50 percent of the world's population, yet they are invisible in the value chain, said Vazquez.

Lack of data

WeConnect is an umbrella organization with the mission of increasing women's competitiveness by creating opportunities for women to compete for contracts. It encourages corporations to employ diversity programs so that they buy specifically from women suppliers. The key challenge in this domain is the lack of clear data and statistics on women as vendors, said Vazquez. This problem was echoed as well by Marianne Schoenig, the global lead of supplier diversity for gender in Accenture, a global man-

agement consulting company.

"We have the intention of being gender inclusive but the main hurdle is how can we find the women-owned businesses, and do business avoiding unacceptable costs, risks and time burden," said Schoenig. The smart way to overcome that hurdle is through connecting buyers and women-owned businesses. In this sense, she said they had a good cooperative relationship with WeConnect International.

Beata Kozłowska from Boeing, the aerospace giant that employs supply diversity programs, emphasized that looking for more women as suppliers does not mean positive discrimination for businesswomen. "We put the same standards to all our suppliers," she said. "There have only been a few times where we were not satisfied and had to annul the contract," she said, emphasizing the success they had

working with women suppliers.

Oyegun, meanwhile, talked about the World Bank's practices. The bank has two levels of procurement. The first is the procurement made by the bank itself to cover daily activities. The second level is done by the governments that borrow from the bank. "We have no direct ownership of money borrowed by member countries," she said, adding that women NGOs should exert pressure on their government to have access to procurement realized by the World Bank money. "Each government is free to spend the money it borrows. How can we influence Turkey so that Turkish women participate in spending this money? Local women organizations have a key role to play."

In order to grant women more access to the World Bank supply chain, NGOs should exert pressure on their governments, Oyegun said.



Go forth, explore your world!

"I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting."

That's Steve Jobs describing how he dropped out of Reed College years ago. He talks about how the decision to drop out was scary because he didn't know what would happen next, and how he felt guilty because his parents were completely devoted to the idea of sending him to university, so much so that they were spending every dime of their savings to do so.

But Jobs is a naturally curious person, and after he dropped out, he started taking classes that might have seemed strange and pointless, but for some reason caught his interest. One of these was a calligraphy class.

He took the course and didn't use the knowledge for 10 years, but eventually that training in aesthetic design would play a critical role in creating the first Macs.

Curiosity is being attentive to the world around you. It is about trying things out, and researching them, and being intrigued about life in general. Curiosity doesn't mean looking into something because you have to, and it doesn't mean learning how to solve a problem under orders from your boss. It means wondering how something works, simply because you don't know how yet.

It means having fun learning about the world, even though your new knowledge might have no immediate application to your life right now.

Stepping out of the comfort zone to explore new opportunities

Business success is not all about perfect planning, excellent strategy and brilliant execution. It is also about spotting and exploring opportunities, and you can't always do that from the comfort of your living room.

You've got to go out into the world. You've got to step out of your comfort zone, and curiosity allows you have fun while you're doing it.

Here's one example of what curiosity can do for your business: Most career coaches spend their spare time reading books about coaching and psychology. Those books seem close, familiar, relevant. But what if, instead, you spent that time learning about art, and how painters think and work? Chances are pretty good that after a while, you would be the only career coach who understood the art world, and you could form a new niche for yourself offering art therapy as opposed to regular counseling sessions.

You would stand out, you would have something special to offer the world, and your customer base and popularity would grow as a result.

Collecting candy dispensers

Or look at the real-life example of Pierre Omidyar, the founder of eBay. One night Omidyar's fiancée was talking about one of her hobbies, collecting and trading Pez candy dispensers. Pez is a candy that comes packaged in colorful plastic dispensers designed to look like classic cartoon characters.

There was already a large community of collectors spread across the United States, but there was no simple way for them to buy and sell their wares. Omidyar set up a simple website these people could use for their person-to-person auctions, the business grew quickly, and by the time eBay went public in 1998, it was hosting hundreds of thousands of auctions per day, and the company was worth over \$3 billion.

Omidyar's success began with simple curiosity. It began with him asking, "What are these Pez dispensers," "Who are these people who trade them," and "What would help them trade more with each other?" At the end, Omidyar was a multi-billionaire. But at the beginning, he was just a curious guy who wanted to know more about some candy dispensers.

When people with an entrepreneurial spirit see something interesting, they dive right in and start learning. They don't know where it will take them, but they understand that that's part of the fun. So the next time you find yourself thinking, "I wonder how..." have some fun with it. Go down the roads you've never traveled before, because you never know where they'll take you.



AID: Hüsnü Özyeğin (R), chairman of the board of trustees at Özyeğin University, says they are helping Turkish women obtain better qualifications. AA photo

Goldman, Özyeğin cooperate in project

ISTANBUL
Anatolia News Agency

A global initiative launched last year by the U.S.-based global investment bank Goldman Sachs to provide 10,000 underprivileged women, predominantly in developing and emerging markets, with business and management education, is taking place in cooperation with the Özyeğin University in Turkey.

The project, titled "10,000 Women," aims to increase the entrepreneurial talent and managerial pool of women in developing and emerging economies and contribute to sustainable economic growth by decreasing sexual discrimination. The program was implemented in a total of 16 countries, including eight African, five Middle and Far Eastern

and three American countries since 2008. The project aims to reach 10,000 women around the world with a \$100 million budget within the next five years.

The project aims to contribute to women's success in business life by providing training in business life and management skills, in cooperation with universities and research institutions, Michael Sherwood, vice chairman of Goldman Sachs, said following an agreement with Özyeğin University.

Sherwood said they hope to open up a bright future for Turkish women in cooperation with Özyeğin University Center for Entrepreneurship. The center has a global academic structure and an efficient communication network.



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