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Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and  
Sustainable Development through  
Circular Economy in North Macedonia

# GOOD PRACTICES BROCHURE CIRCULAR BUSINESSES

from North Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and  
Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and the Czech  
Republic





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# INTRODUCTION

To ensure sustainable economic development globally, it is necessary to introduce a new economic approach that will highlight sustainability and waste reduction. One such approach is the **circular economy**, with a main goal is to achieve economic growth without increased use of resources.

Unlike the traditional "take-make-dispose" linear model, the circular economy promotes efficient and responsible use of resources through **closed-loop systems**. It enables maximum usage of products and their parts through reuse and recycling, as well as the continuous return of materials and energy in production and consumption processes.

The Republic of North Macedonia, faced with environmental challenges and aspiration for EU integration, needs a **systematic approach** to implementing the circular economy principles. These principles are aligned with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and supported by the EU Economic and Investment Plan, which envisages fostering sustainable, inclusive and competitive growth, especially in sectors such as energy, transport, as well as digital and green transition.

In this regard, the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a **Long-Term Strategy for Climate Action** in 2021 with a focus on the circular economy. To date, activities to transition towards a circular economy have been initiated by international partners, civil society organizations, and academia. In March 2024, the OECD published the **"Roadmap to a Circular Economy"**, which demonstrates the most relevant industries and their circular socioeconomic potential for North Macedonia.

In the Macedonian circular economy ecosystem, the civil sector is one of the most active actors in education, raising awareness, engaging the local community, and introducing innovations.

However, promoting sustainable resource usage through practices such as sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling materials and products to extend their lifespan (the **so-called 8P principles**) are also innovative circular business models of many civil society organizations, social and green enterprises, and a growing trend among young people.

This **Good Practices of Circular Businesses Brochure** tells the stories of **22 circular businesses from North Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and the Czech Republic**, led by civil society organizations, social enterprises and other local actors in the social and circular economy, in a simple and conversational style.

The Brochure aims to **inspire civil society organizations and social enterprises** in North Macedonia to develop innovative ideas and circular business models following the example of the given success stories and to engage in the circular economy, contributing to the protection and preservation of the environment and fight climate change through circular social entrepreneurship.

The Brochure focuses on the **circular business founders' personal stories**, the challenges, opportunities, and future of the circular economy in their countries and the Western Balkans. It also contains details on the origins and development of the circular businesses, their socio-economic impact within the local community, and their importance for environmental protection.

We believe that this Brochure will inform and inspire civil society organizations and young people, encouraging them to take action and contribute to the fight for a healthier and cleaner environment through circular social entrepreneurship.

**Marjan Icoski**  
*Program Director at ARNO*



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# NORTH MACEDONIA





## ECO LIFE: ECO-TILES PRODUCTION FROM PREVIOUSLY COLLECTED PLASTIC

Plastic is not a new problem in Gevgelija, North Macedonia. It is scattered in public spaces, streets, parks, schools, and sometimes it is difficult to collect as much as people can throw away. But the idea of the activists from Eco Life Association wasn't "just" to collect the plastic - but to use it in an innovative way, to create a product that could be of use.

As Dragica Chobanova from Eco Life tells us, the organization was found in December 2019. Initially, they focused on working with elementary schools, where they would raise awareness about the proper selection and recycling of waste PET bottles. With the help of a partner company, they installed jumbo bags for plastic collection, and soon began offering educational workshops for children.

To wrap up the process, they also included collective plastic collectors from vulnerable categories, giving them the opportunity for social and economic support.

"We managed to reduce the presence of waste plastic in the Municipality of Gevgelija by 20% and educate over 50 students.

At the same time, we created an opportunity for income for vulnerable categories, thus entering the circle of the circular economy. After detailed research on innovative approaches, we came up with the idea of processing plastic into eco-tiles, made of 50% waste plastic and 50% sand," Chobanova explained.

According to her, this is a solid, safe and high-quality ecological product, popular mainly among the younger generations.

"The younger population is mostly interested in eco-tiles, which they buy and use for building paths, for ground cover in camps, yards, etc. We also collaborate with associations and public institutions," she said.

Instead of polluting the environment, plastic becomes a resource used to glorify and decorate public spaces. Therefore, Eco Life is expecting greater interest from local self-governments.

"We expect greater support from the Municipality of Gevgelija by including the eco-tiles in the pavement of external surfaces in the city - sidewalks, parks, paths, and similar. At the same time, citizens can actively get involved by donating plastic waste from their homes, which will then be used in the production of eco-tiles," she pointed out.

Eco Life is not only ecological and circular, but also a socially responsible association. Their team employs a person from a socially vulnerable category, trained to produce eco-tiles.

"If we increase our production capacity and sales, we will be able to employ even more people from vulnerable groups. Through our activities, we've managed to educate the citizens, especially young people, about the proper use of plastic and other types of waste. We do this through trainings, educational programs and visibility campaigns," Chobanova highlighted.

Their initiatives, she concluded, prove that waste can become a valuable resource, which at the same time protects the environment and strengthens the community.

**Business Name:**  
Eco Life

**Location:**  
Gevgelija, North Macedonia



**Social/Environmental mission:**  
Reducing and recycling plastic waste and employing vulnerable categories of people

**Sustainability Practices:**  
Using a reusable resource - eco-friendly

**Clients and Target Group:**  
Legal and private entities, as well as public institutions - schools

**Founded:**  
2019

**Founder/Team:**  
Association

**Main Activities:**  
Recycling waste plastic



**Circular Business Model:**  
Reuse of waste plastic in the production of eco-tiles for outdoor decoration made of 50% waste plastic and 50% sand

**Impact Examples:**  
50 tons of waste plastic collected, of which 8.5 tons of tiles were produced; memorandums signed with elementary schools in Gevgelija, as well as a Partnership Agreement with a waste management company from Gevgelija



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## MIRJANA JOSIFOSKA: PRODUCES HATS AND TURNS THE LEFTOVERS INTO HAIR TIES TO OBTAIN ZERO WASTE

Mirjana Josifoska's love for hats has existed since a very young age. She watched her grandmother wear hats, then her mother, and then she wore hats herself, especially since her teenage years. Hats were a reflection of style, but also practical protection. In the summer they block the sun, while during winter, they protect the face and hair from the cold.

"After a while, I wanted to buy myself a designer hat and realized that such a thing does not exist on the domestic market. That was exactly what motivated me to find the first Macedonian designer hat brand," Josifoska said.

The idea for ethical hat and hair accessories production was brought to her by the namesake brand "Mirjana Josifoska", whose first collection "The Seven" she represented in 2021 at the 24th edition of Fashion Weekend Skopje.

The collection was inspired, designed, and named after one of the seven women: Anita Ekberg, Charlotte Rampling, Elsa Peretti, Isabella Rossellini, Linda Evangelista, Monica Bellucci, and Sophia Loren.

Now, most of these pieces have become basic models that are characteristic of the brand, and with each new collection, Josifoska creates a new variation of these models in a new color or material.

The collections are presented and sold through various channels, online and offline, while the "base", i.e. the production studio is in Tetovo, North Macedonia.

"These are uniquely and hand-crafted hats, using artisan techniques. When selling, I pay attention to personalized packaging that consists only of cardboard and paper, and no plastic," the designer explained.

Being a designer in North Macedonia presents a unique blend of opportunities and challenges. After researching designer piece consumers in the country, she learned that there was interest, and an even greater one for fashion accessories.



"Our mission is to reduce textile waste through sustainable design and ethical production. We use 100% certified materials, production surplus, or materials of 100% natural origin. We employ a 'zero-waste' tailoring technique in the production process, aiming to minimize waste as much as possible. From all the hat production leftovers, we create even smaller products – hair ties, intending to reduce waste to almost zero," the designer stressed about her business.

In their work, they also collaborate with women from rural areas of Tetovo, as well as with young women from the Polog region. Moreover, in the summer of 2024, they hosted interns from the "Skala" school for a paid internship in the fashion and graphic design area.

"The goal is to stimulate as many citizens as possible, as the company grows, to change the perception of the textile industry, which is dying," she stressed.

At the same time, Josifoska believes that the design process in the area of sustainable fashion is easier today than before, and this is due to the extensive access to information. Everything is digitalized, the data is at your fingertips, but you still have to "buckle down" and learn the craft.

"The Internet is enabling us to discover things, and we also have great access to resources. However, it's not enough just to draw, be an illustrator, but to truly and deeply delve into what you do. It's all a combination of creativity, craft, the Internet, research, and then involvement in the community, in order to foster support," Josifovska concluded.

**Business Name:**  
Mirjana Josifovska

**Location:**  
Tetovo, North Macedonia

**Main Activities:**  
Sale of designer hats and fashion accessories



**Social/Environmental mission:**  
Reduction of textile waste through sustainable design and ethical production

**Clients and Target Group:**  
Wider female population

**Awards/Recognitions:** 2nd prize at Uplift Western Balkans 2022, winner of SEEU TechPark Incubator 2023, winner of Green Ideas 2023, winner of Venture Devils Demo Day - Arizona, USA (through the GIST Innovates the Balkans program), nomination for the German Green Alley Award 2024, winner of the GreenSkills Impact Business Acceleration Program 2024

**Founded:**  
2022

**Founders/Team:**  
Mirjana Josifovska



**Circular Business Model:**  
Reusing; hat production leftovers used for new products

**Impact Examples:**  
The work involves women from rural areas of Tetovo and young women from the Polog region

**Sustainability Practices:**  
"Zero-waste" tailoring technique in the production process; use of textile waste or materials of natural origin; packaging is made of paper, no plastic



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## RETO NADEZH: REPARATION AND SALE OF OLD FURNITURE AS A WAY OUT OF ADDICTION

Goce Mukevski has been an integral part of the Reto Nadezh (Reto Hope) family for the last six years of his life, which has existed in Macedonia since 2006. He has faced addiction, has gone through some very difficult times, and now spends his days in this social enterprise, which is also a center for addiction rehabilitation.

To many, Reto Nadezh may seem like a seemingly ordinary house far from the hustle and bustle of the city. But for Mukevski this is more than home, he lives here, volunteers and works. Everyday he is surrounded by different tools, hammers, drills. Old furniture can be found all around, which he repairs so that it can be reused.

"My biggest motivation is to help other people, just as I got help when I entered the center. Today, as a person who functions normally, I want to pass that on to others," Mukevski said.

He passes on his work ethic to several people who have faced addiction - residents living in Reto Nadezh. They come to ask for help, to get away from drugs, alcohol, or gambling, and he has already become their mentor.

Together, through everyday obligations, without the Internet and phones, they move towards resocialization.

"Through work therapy, through craft, they learn and practice healthy life habits. They need discipline to go back to society," Mukevski explained.

The furniture and home appliances at Reto Nadezh are donations from the citizens. Anyone who is interested leaves as much as they want, and the enterprise collects the donations directly from the citizens' homes.

The collection is free of charge. Then, the employees select what can be repaired, recycled, in order to have these products in their offer at the second-hand furniture store in the village of Batinci, Skopje.

The enterprise's motto is "Your waste is someone's fortune."



Customers come to the store to find repaired cabinets, closets, armchairs, desks, sofas, or chairs. Everything is offered at a reasonable price.

The funds from the sale go to the mission of Reto Nadezh. In this way, by extending the life of the furniture, this entire community practically extends its life, sustains itself.

"There is a frequent misinformation that we donate. That's not true. Quite the contrary, the furniture is donated to us by someone who does not need it, or it is old and shabby. We cannot repair everything that is donated, but we find a use for it in occupational therapy. We don't throw it away. It's important that the residents learn to forge, sand, varnish, tighten, and similar skills. Meanwhile, we cover the costs of the center with what we sell. Electricity, water, food, drinks," Mukevski explained.

**Business Name:**

Reto Nadezh, Foundation/Social Enterprise

**Location:**

Batinci, Studenichani Municipality, North Macedonia



**Social/Environmental Mission:**

Work integration of people that had faced addiction; developing work skills; reduction of wood/furniture waste

**Clients and Target Group:**

Former addicts who need support, all interested citizens that need used furniture

In early 2025, the center had four mentors, already experienced in transferring knowledge and work habits.

At the same time, 30-40 people with various addictions pass through Reto Nadezh annually. Everyone gets the opportunity to be part of a program that is rehabilitative, social and circular, and then, if they wish, to become mentors themselves and continue this mission.

**Founded:**

2006

**Main Activities:** Rehabilitation of residents; reparation and restoration of furniture; sale of second-hand furniture



**Circular Business Model:**

Repair, reuse, recycle

**Sustainability Practices:**

Using old and unwanted furniture as a community donation; selling furniture for self-sustainability

**Impact Examples:**

Work therapy of 30-40 residents annually



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MK



Извор: Центар за социјални претпријатија - <https://centarsp.mk/organizacijata-za-socijalen-i-ekonomski-razvoj-in-vivo/>

## IN VIVO: BIO-HUMUS PRODUCTION AND REINTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH LESS OPPORTUNITIES

"When we say self-sustainability, we don't say it for potential donors to see a good project application. By practicing social-entrepreneurship initiatives, we confirm that the financial self-sustainability of civil society organizations is achievable," Dejan Stojanovikj, director and one of the seven founders of the Association In Vivo from North Macedonia, said.

In Vivo has existed since 2018, and the founders have a minimum of 20 years of professional experience in various professions and industries. In Vivo is their way of practicing social responsibility.

"We are looking for ways to help people with fewer opportunities, to give them an incentive towards real and sustainable reintegration into all spheres of everyday life. The development of multiple models of social entrepreneurship, in which marginalized people are engaged, is in the DNA of the Association. We have a special focus on homeless people and former persons deprived of their liberty," Stojanovikj explained.

One of the examples of how they practice social entrepreneurship is the production of bio-humus.

"We started with bio-humus, because that initiative unites several segments: helping and supporting people who live and work in rural areas through utilizing resources (cow manure) that are often unused, then supporting organic production, as well as educating and supporting people who want to 'challenge' their social and economic status... Hence, in 2019, we created our first 'facility' for production. That was the first sprout, our first step towards our own product," Stojanovikj said.

Since then, In Vivo has been developing its own brand of bio-humus, Green Vivo. With personal funds and support from donors, In Vivo members have procured materials to build three new bio-humus production facilities. After increasing their capacity, they took a step forward to raise awareness of local organic production, instead of using chemical products to grow fruits and vegetables.

"Two domestic, eminent Macedonian laboratories have shown that our bio-humus is of top-notch quality, also confirmed by the farmers who use it. We currently have the capacity for an annual production of 15-16 tons of bio-humus. Although that's a relatively humble amount, it's still enough to meet the needs of our small organization," Stojanovikj explained.

In terms of educating people with fewer opportunities, as a basis for their (re)integration, they are particularly proud of the “360 Degree Reintegration” approach. It was launched with the “Yoda” project, named after a character from the movie “Star Wars”. The program aims to describe the path of local “protagonists” from homelessness to full inclusion in all social processes. It is about 2.5 years of intensive work, after which these people serve as a local example that dignified and sustainable reintegration is indeed possible.

"Basically, our Association does not agree with some of the approaches to reintegration practiced by some organizations. Our stance is that there needs to be an appropriate balance between the rights and obligations of the people involved in these programs," Stojanovikj said.

It's no secret that many homeless people get their meals from one place, their clothes from another, and they get certain services from a third place... And, this is generous, but it becomes a scheme in which the society is doing these people a disservice instead of a favour by allowing them to just "take", over and over again, like a charmed circle. In practice, they receive support, but without the obligation to do something for themselves and the system that is trying to help them – which proves unproductive in the long run.

"Statistics from true experts on the situation say that, with this approach, only 3% of homeless people are interested in participating in reintegration programs," Stojanovikj emphasized.

According to him, these people need a more extensive approach. An opportunity for someone to accept them, to continuously work with them, to enable them to learn, to communicate appropriately with the environment, and ultimately, to acquire habits and skills needed for the labor market.

**Business Name:**

Green Vivo, In Vivo Association

**Location:**

Sopishte Municipality, Skopje, North Macedonia

**Main Activities:**

Biohumus production



**Social/Environmental Mission:**

Support for organic production; support for people from rural areas; support for people with fewer opportunities

**Clients and Target Group:**

Fruits and Vegetable Producers

**Impact Examples:**

Production of over 15 tons of bio-humus (annually)



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**Founded:**

2019

**Founders/Team:**

Dejan Stojanovikj



**Circular Business Model:**

Reuse with Added Value

**Annual Revenue/Turnover:**

Micro Enterprise Category

**Sustainability Practice:** Financial self-sustainability through sale of biohumus

**Awards/Certificates:**

Acquired the Status of Public Interest Organization; this prestigious status is granted by the General Secretariat of the Government of North Macedonia



# KREMESTARE PARTYWEAR: FORMAL ATTIRE ACCESSIBLE TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

Ever since Milena Nekjak was a teenager, she would collect piles of clothes at home. Jeans, blouses, T-shirts. She would wear some of them two or three times, but would never throw them away. Her mother would often say: "Why are you collecting all this garbage?"

But she knew it wasn't garbage. Every piece of clothing, can be useful to someone, somewhere, so she started an initiative that would later grow into a business model that brings change to the fashion industry.

At the same time, she contributes to the circular economy and promotes sustainability in North Macedonia - "Kremestare partywear".

"The Kremestare story begins during the Corona period. I started off a bit naively, with no idea that it would grow into a business. At home, I was focused on myself, looking at clothes that no longer suited me in style or weight. On the other hand, there were younger 'Gen Zers' who couldn't even buy such T-shirts, but were still aware and appreciated things. That's why I created an Instagram profile for donated or second-hand clothing that I named Kremestare. Many people thought it was some Spanish or Italian word, but it's actually an old word from Bitola that means a hanger, the triangular one," Nekjak said.

When she saw that there was potential, she continued her work after the Corona pandemic. She was at university, studying Informatics, simultaneously. Then she met her business partner, Ivona Markoska, with whom they brought innovation to the idea - not only selling, but also renting out party-wear.

Hence the full name Kremestare partywear.

"We took that whole hustle, that mission with Ivona, to another level. We offer an eco-friendly and affordable option for buying or renting clothes for parties, formal events, wedding dresses... We started from ourselves. Girls and women don't want to show up at different weddings wearing the same dress. There's no way," Nekjak said.

When she talks about "affordable options," she's talking about pieces of gowns that might have a market value of 500-700-1,000 euros, but they sell them for a third of that amount. The savings on rent are even higher. Hence the opportunity to serve the entire community.

The Kremestare partners believe that this initiative marks a new concept in Macedonia, where the practice of renting formal wear is not common. Also, there's a thrift and circular approach to the clothes; they don't get thrown away. At the same time, they offer a change in the fashion industry, which provides an alternative to the traditional retail model. A concept that supports the idea that "luxury" and sustainability can coexist.

Our goal from the start was to have it circular, sustainable, to have it donated if necessary, where necessary. When clothes are retained, for example, we give them to a designer who had an exhibition of old clothes at the Fashion Weekend. We are interested and open to moments like this - to donate if it doesn't sell. Everything for a good cause," Nekjak concluded.

**Business Name:**  
Kremestare Partywear

**Location:**  
Bitola, North Macedonia



**Social/Environmental Mission:**  
Reduction of clothing waste, thrifty and affordable fashion

**Founded:**  
2023

**Main Activities:**  
Sales and rental of wedding and party dresses

**Sustainability Practices:** Using eco-friendly materials, saving by renting



**Circular Business Model:**  
Clothing rental

**Clients and Target Group:**  
General female population



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## REDI RECYCLING: INFORMAL WASTE COLLECTORS HAVE BECOME GREEN AGENTS

It is estimated that there are between 3,000 and 5,000 informal waste collectors in North Macedonia, 1,500 of whom operate in the capital city of Skopje alone. They collect waste from the streets, parks and along the river Vardar, where one can often see piles of "floating" plastic bottles.

The informal collectors clean the city and protect the environment through their work; they are actually the most efficient waste selectors, but still, they are not registered as legal workers, they don't have insurance, nor any institutional support. They are most often members of the Roma community and operate in the "gray zone".

This life situation started to change for them with the activities of the social enterprise Redi Recycling which recognized them as relevant stakeholders who actively contribute to the improvement of society.

"The Redi Recycling mission is to organize and formalize informal collectors, while establishing a system for primary waste selection. This system involves placing selection bins for plastic, paper, and electronic waste within residential buildings and companies, allowing citizens to select their own waste. Our green agents, who were previously informal waste collectors, are now employed by the company and use our license, obtained in 2021," Asib Zekir from Redi Recycling explained.

The green agents ride electric tricycles and collect selected secondary raw materials, neighborhood by neighborhood, building by building. They currently serve 20,000 citizens distributed across some 450 facilities in four municipalities in Skopje - Karposh, Aerodrom, Kisela Voda, and Centar. The idea is to expand this network to other cities throughout North Macedonia, and then to the neighboring countries.

"Anyone who wants to register their building, house or company can contact us, or do so through the free mobile application Redi Recycling. That way, we have insight into who the applicants are, we contact them, and install waste selection bins for them. It's necessary to have the consent of over half of the residents in the building. If 51% of the house council votes against, then we remove the bin, but these are really rare cases," Zekir emphasized.



Meanwhile, Redi Recycling also organizes e-waste collection actions in towns outside of Skopje. So far, they've had successful actions in more than 10 towns and rural areas in the country. These actions allow people to dispose of faulty televisions, machines, or old computers that they keep at home only due to nostalgia.

All collected secondary raw materials are then taken to warehouses.

"In this way, we actually influence the circular economy, because after treatment in warehouses, the waste is taken to recycling centers, and the centers further process the raw materials and thus create other products," Zekir pointed out.

The catalog on the Redi Recycling website includes products such as children's swings, shelves, clocks, tables, eco-chairs...

Zekir said that at "Redi" they also work with entrepreneurs, as part of the mission to develop an ecosystem in the Roma communities. That is, they have developed a database of entrepreneurs, previously mapped by "Redi," in order to know their daily challenges, problems, and also their interests in business expansion.

"Roma entrepreneurs use services from the 'Redi' organization to formalize their businesses, write business plans, for digitalization, and similar. Now, we also have green businesses that we support, but we are again redirecting the green component to 'Redi Recycling', thus directly influencing the circular economy," Zekir emphasized.

**Business Name:**

DUSO REDI Reciklazha DOOEL Skopje

**Location:**

Skopje, North Macedonia



**Social/Environmental Mission:**

formalizing informal waste collectors, inclusive sustainability

**Sustainability Practices:**

Recycling, upcycling/reusing, using electric tricycles for waste collection

**Clients and Target Group:**

The general public

**Awards/Certificates:**

EU Award for Roma Integration

**Founded:**

2020

**Founders/Team:**

REDI Association Skopje

**Main Activities:**

Collection and transport of non-hazardous waste; upcycling of products from waste materials



**Circular Business Model:**

Reusing; recycling

**Impact Examples:**

25,000 service users, 54tons of paper, 55tons of plastic, 15 tons of electronic waste



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[www.redi-ngo.eu/recycling](http://www.redi-ngo.eu/recycling)

<https://www.facebook.com/p/REDI-Recycling-100075731125059/>

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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/redi-recycling/?viewAsMember=true>



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# KOSOVO





## KOSOVO GLASS RECYCLING: PIONEERS IN GLASS RECYCLING

Dugagjin Berisha is a father of five, but he is also a "local father" - an example of identification among the community around "Marin Barleti" in Gjakova, Kosovo. He is an environmental enthusiast and owner of a construction company, and has long organized eco-actions, educating the neighborhood about the importance of cleaning up the environment, collecting waste, and recycling.

He has passed these values on to his son Martin, as they became pioneers in glass recycling in Kosovo - not only in an ecological sense, but also by transforming this process into a business model.

"We voluntarily take care of the neighborhood. We planted trees, collected waste - all the children joined in, as well as the older population. We sorted the waste into different categories. We shipped the cans and plastic for recycling, but we couldn't find a solution for the glass. At first, we stored it in a basement, and later a friend of my father's gave us a piece of land to store it. When COVID came, we had time to explore ideas. That's how we realized that we had to become sustainable, so at the end of 2019 we registered Kosovo Glass Recycling," the younger Berisha said.

They started off without machines, they even had no money to invest. It was not until 2023 that they managed to become profitable, because in the previous years, everything they earned was reinvested in the workshop. At the same time, they found a way to create something valuable from thousands of tons of glass - through crushing and recycling - that would also create vacancies.

"It's currently four of us, but the plan is to expand the team, especially this summer (2025). We collect glass packaging, but also flat glass from wind manufacturers, which we then use to create sand used in pool filters. This product is sold mostly during summer. Also, it's used to clean dirt from iron, wood, etc," Berisha said.

The other products they sell are terrazzo tiles: bathroom tiles, kitchen countertops, interior design tables, various types of tiles for outdoor and indoor use... In general, they do business with swimming pool manufacturers, restaurants, hotels and cafes, but also with architects.

"We don't use glass just for decoration; in fact, we replace ordinary sand, which is usually extracted from riverbeds and thus destroys nature. When you are a unique business, the pioneer in what you do, you are also responsible for educating," he emphasized.

As for community education, he claims they didn't have to put in much effort because the neighborhood was happy to recycle. Once people heard they existed, they would even come from other towns, carrying bags full of jars and wine bottles.

“Collection is not a problem, nor is sorting glass, given that people are provided with containers and infrastructure. This is nothing new - people have done it before, and they still keep glass jars and bottles in pantries and basements. It was a challenge for us to educate companies not to see waste as something to be thrown away, but as a valuable raw material,” Berisha from Kosovo Glass Recycling emphasized.

The municipalities remain a challenge. They are less likely to buy their products, even though they are sustainable and long-lasting, especially compared to other materials.

“In addition to not trusting recyclable materials and products made of them, there is another side to the coin. With such products, there is no room for corruption,” he said.

**Business Name:**

Kosovo Glass Recycling & CO

**Location:**

Gjakova, Kosovo

**Main Activities:**

Collection, separation, crushing and repurposing glass waste



**Social/Environmental Mission:**

Creating jobs through the utilization of glass waste

**Clients and Target Group:** Swimming pool construction companies, restaurants, bars, hotels, households

**Impact Examples:**

120 tons of recycled glass/repurposed annually



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However, they remain loyal to the eco-friendly and circular mission, step by step. They know that the vast majority of glass packaging in Kosovo is not reusable. Companies do not reuse it; they just produce new glass. And it has to end up somewhere. At best, it goes to a landfill. At worst, it ends up in rivers or underground.

“There are municipalities that receive European funds for waste selection, but they have nowhere to dispose of that waste, so they simply dig a hole and bury it. That is disappointing. Although glass itself is not a major polluter, the problem is that the opportunity to create something useful out of it is lost. However, glass packaging can be a polluter, because it sometimes contains harmful substances. So, we started all of this for environmental reasons, but we realized that the only way to make it sustainable is a business model. Now our model is already being copied in other countries.

The future of glass recycling is in international cooperation,” Berisha stated.

**Founded:**

2019

**Ofounders/Team:**

Dugagjin Berisha, CEO and Founder



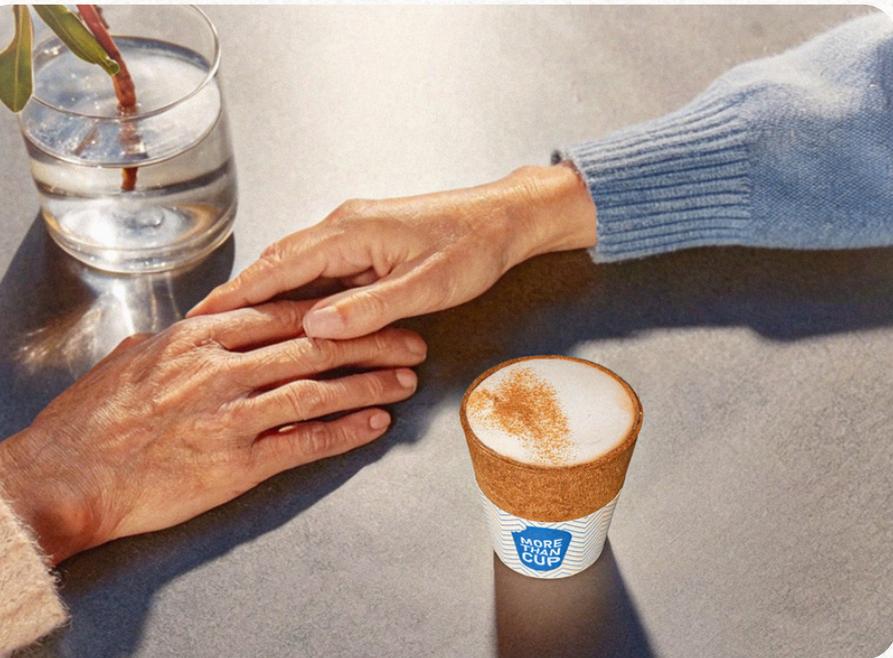
**Circular Business**

**Model:**Upcycling, reuse, recycling

**Annual Revenue/Turnover:**

Small business < below 30,000 EUR

**Sustainability Practices:** Using glass waste as a raw material for the production of glass media for pool filtration and terazzo elements such as tiles, tables, countertops and bars



## MORETHANCUP: DRINK IT, THEN EAT THE CUP

For a group of enthusiasts, it all started with a simple thought: what if you could drink coffee without creating waste? Every day, millions of people enjoy their morning coffee, but what happens to all those single-use cups? The truth is that most of them end up in landfills, or pollute rivers and lakes. They saw this problem and decided to do something about it.

Thus, in 2022 in Kosovo, the MoreThanCup business was born, and with every 1 million more-than-cup cups consumed, approximately 5,000 kilograms of waste can be prevented from polluting the environment.

"We operate as a company with a strong social and environmental mission. We have a clear goal: to make the world a cleaner and more sustainable place. Our focus is on reducing single-use plastic waste by offering an alternative that is not only biodegradable but also edible. Yes, you read that right - you can eat our cups after you've had your coffee!", MoreThanCup emphasized.

Their business model is simple but efficient. They create cups from natural grains, which come in several different, vegan flavors, such as chocolate, vanilla, or a sugar-free option. They do not contain artificial colors or aromas. They sell them to cafes and eco-friendly businesses, and after usage, they can either be eaten or they decompose naturally.

"Unlike traditional paper or plastic cups, which take decades to decompose, our cups leave no trace," the business representatives pointed out.

This means that in case someone is not hungry and doesn't eat the cup after drinking the coffee, and it ends up on the ground, the cup will be gone in two weeks. At the same time, the company's commitment to sustainability goes beyond the product itself. Even during production, the imperfect cups are not thrown away. They do not end up as waste.

"If a cup doesn't pass our quality tests, we grind it into biscuit crumbs which are then used to make cakes," MoreThanCup representatives explained.

There is no doubt for them that MoreThanCup is more than just an eco-friendly solution – it's also a profitable and growing business. Currently, their cups are distributed to more than 10 cafes, with monthly orders of 500 to 2,000 per location in Kosovo alone, as they also export to Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

"Our online sales are constantly growing, and we are expanding our distribution network to more countries. The global market for edible and sustainable packaging is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, and we are positioning ourselves as leaders in this new industry," they pointed out.

Their motto is: "We don't only sell a product - we change habits."

In other words, MoreThanCup's commitment is not just to make cups, but to completely rethink the way people consume and dispose of everyday objects.

"We collaborate with local cafes, events and businesses that share our vision and actively educate the community about sustainable choices.

We believe that small changes lead to big impacts. By simply replacing a regular cup with a MoreThanCup, people are contributing to a cleaner world. It's a small step for coffee lovers, but a huge step for sustainability. And that's exactly why we do what we do," the edible cup business said.

**Business Name:**  
MoreThanCup

**Location:**  
Prishtina, Kosovo



**Social/Environmental Mission:**  
Reducing waste from single-use plastic or paper and offering a biodegradable alternative

**Sustainability Practices:**  
Use of natural grains for products

**Clients and Target Group:** Former addicts who need support, all interested citizens that need used furniture

**Founded:**  
2022

**Founders/Team:**  
Jeton Alshiqi and his team

**Main Activities:**  
Edible cups production



**Circular Business Model:**  
Reusing cup waste for other products

**Impact Examples:**  
Product export to Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia

**Awards/Certificates:**  
Winners of Kosovo Green Challenge



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## SIMPLY GREEN: TURNING CAR TIRES INTO WEALTH

It may be cliché to talk about how the pandemic has opened a new "creative window" for many, but it's always useful to see what actually emerged from that bridge between isolation and creativity. Especially when it comes to environmental sustainability and social change.

Such an example is Dorina Lluka Davies from Kosovo, whose main focus was to recycle textiles, plastics, wood, and metal. However, in late 2022, she turned her attention to another environmental challenge: discarded car tires. At the same time, with a background in economics, psychology, and over 20 years of experience in the youth sector, Davies was far from the ideal candidate to revolutionize furniture making.

"I started to see things differently and became deeply concerned about the environment after I gave birth to my twins," Davies recalled.

This concern prompted her to start Simply Green, a business that turns used tires into stylish and functional furniture. For this venture, she did a lot of research, reading, and monitoring of the situation in the field. So, she realized that the scope of the problem is huge.

"With about 500,000 to 600,000 cars for a population of 1.5 million in Kosovo, millions of tires are thrown away every few years," Davies explained.

In a country without a systematic tire recycling program, this was both an environmental challenge and an opportunity. She asked herself - what if I could transform these tires into something completely new, something that people would want to have in their homes?

"But I had no experience in furniture making - I didn't even know how to use a drill!" she recalled.

Rather than give up, Davies opened a workshop in her father's garage, experimenting with tires to create chairs. Her father and husband regularly helped, patiently teaching her how to use the tools. They faced many setbacks and spent countless hours perfecting the design.

"With persistence and creativity, I developed different products and even trademarked one of the designs," she emphasized.

Today, Simply Green offers about a dozen different products, with 80-90% of the materials being reused.

“In addition to tires, we also use wood from old kitchens or cabinets that people no longer need. Each piece is carefully crafted to ensure durability and quality, and two products are never the same!

By turning waste into high-quality furniture, not only do we reduce the amount of waste in landfills, but we also offer clients unique designs that support a more sustainable lifestyle,” explained Davies.

For her, Simply Green is not just about creating eco-furniture - it's also about challenging gender norms in a male-dominated industry. Hence, women are the driving force behind this business.

“In Kosovo, out of several hundred woodcraft companies, only two are run by women. By running the company and actively participating in the production process, I am simultaneously opening up new opportunities for women in Kosovo’s green and circular economy. The skills I acquired with my father and husband are now being passed on to women who want to join us and leave their imprint in the furniture industry,” she said.

As Simply Green continues to grow, producing up to 100 unique pieces per month, Davies is focused on increasing production and raising awareness about the circular economy.

**Business Name:**  
Simply Green

**Location:**  
Gjakova, Kosovo

**Main Activities:**  
Design and production of eco-furniture from upcycled materials such as wood, plastic, metal and textile



**Social/Environmental Mission:**  
Transforming waste materials into sustainable furniture while empowering women in the green industry; reducing waste; promoting gender equality; creating eco-products

**Clients and Target Group:**  
A business model aimed at both B2B (business to business) and B2C (business to consumer)

**Founded:**  
2022

**Founders/Team:**  
Dorina Lluka Davies



**Circular Business Model:**  
Reuse; repair; redesign

**Sustainability Practices:**  
Low CO2 emissions thanks to the use of simple tools and minimal electricity; use of eco-materials; promotion of reuse

**Annual Revenue/Turnover:** Small business with an ambition to become micro



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# BOTANIC: A REVOLUTION THROUGH REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

The Veliu sisters have always known that the future is connected to nature. They founded Botanic, an organic tea brand that not only brings the authentic taste of forest fruits into people's homes but also sheds new light on sustainable and regenerative practices in Kosovo.

"Growing up on a small family property surrounded by wild fruits and plants that have quietly grown for generations, we felt a deep need to pay them a tribute. With love and devotion, we dreamed of sharing them with the world, by creating products that reflect the essence of our land, crafted with care and authenticity," the Veliu sisters said.

Botanic is seen as the culmination of passion for nature and commitment to quality. From harvesting and outdoor cultivation to packaging, every step reflects their engagement to sustainability.

"We don't want to just sell tea, but to also change the way people treat nature. Our mission is to promote sustainable methods of collecting plants (not to uproot them) and to strengthen the local economy," they emphasized.

In this regard, Botanic uses circular principles: production waste is minimized, packaging gets recycled, and the collected herbs are processed locally, rather than just being exported as raw materials.

"We strive to operate with full resource efficiency, without creating waste during our activity. We apply regenerative agriculture practices and offer products in recycled paper and biodegradable packaging," the sisters explained.

Since 2019, Botanic has developed some ten types of tea. Whether customers prefer mallow tea, wild apple, rose hip, elderberry, or a combination of mint and sage... all are certified organic and have an authentic taste. They are offered through shops and pharmacies across Kosovo, and can also be ordered through social media.

"Our teas have no added aromas, colors, or flavor enhancers, but rather pure nature in a cup," they emphasized.

Beside teas, they recently tested the first product in their food line - dried porcini mushrooms, aimed at gourmets and professional chefs.

They are finalizing their refill and reuse programs, actively encouraging customers to reuse containers and reduce the demand for single-use packaging.



Although institutions in Kosovo still do not fully recognize the importance of sustainable and circular practices, the younger generations are showing a growing interest in ecological and organic products. Botanic hopes to strengthen its market position, but also to inspire other businesses to follow its example.

They believe that sustainability is not just a trend, but a necessity.

**Business Name:**  
BOTANIC

**Location:**  
Skenderaj, Kosovo



**Social/Environmental Mission:** Zero waste in the production process; employing women from rural areas

**Sustainability Practices:**  
Use of ecological materials; sustainable and regenerative practices in agriculture

**KClients and Target Group:** Pharmacies, organic stores, restaurants



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“Botanic uses the global perspective and the latest information on climate change mitigation and adaptation, combining them with local resources and accessibility. Our mission to connect people and nature allows us to advocate and act for sustainability through the lenses of the private sector and the agricultural community,” the Kosovo circular business said.

**Founded:**  
2019

**Founders/Team:**  
Blerinda Velju, Arnita Velju

**Main Activities:**  
Sale of organic teas in recycled packaging with biodegradable filters



**Circular Business Model:** Natural, renewable resources; reduction of raw material use; minimization of landfill waste

**Awards/Certificates:**  
Best Green Idea for 2021 – at the 10th Anniversary Regional Competition of Balkan Green Ideas (BGI)



Funded by  
the European Union



Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and  
Sustainable Development through  
Circular Economy in North Macedonia

# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA





## MAJA HALILOVIĆ: BIOHACKER FOR HIRE

From a young age, Maja Halilović was a curious child obsessed with science and books. Over time, she developed a passion for so-called "living" fashion and became the first bio-designer in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with many years of work and research in the field of sustainable and biodegradable materials based on bacteria and organic waste.

In this way, she began to make clothes, bio-packaging, bio-candles, bio-diesel, various bio-materials... in order to replace harmful industrial materials, plastic bags, but also to generally introduce a new ecological moment in the way of dressing, heating, and living without accumulating waste.

"My fascination with organic waste and SCOBY (that rubbery byproduct of kombucha) grew into a full-fledged bio-design career. I didn't have a big plan - just experiments in my kitchen that turned into patented products and international awards," Halilović said about her business.

The awards have helped her exhibit her creations in cities like London, Belgrade, and Cologne, while through Bio Co Culture, her passion project, she communicates with artists and scientists to make bio-design more accessible.

At the same time, Halilović is a solo player. Just her, her lab coat, and contracts with companies or institutions for specific projects. "Think of me as a 'bio-hacker for hire,' who connects science, art, and sustainability," she said.

Regarding the circular business model, Halilović sticks to her mantra: waste = raw material.

"I turn coffee grounds into bio-diesel, eggshells into bio furniture, and food waste into candles (Bio-candle, my award-winning child). Companies hire me to transform their waste into products they can sell or incorporate into their designs. Example: a local coffee shop chain now partially heats its space with bio-diesel from its own waste. Full circle, no guilty conscience," she explained.

Halilović also holds lectures and conducts her research in the area of bio-design and holds workshops on the production of bio-materials.

For the bio-designer, there is no doubt that all of this is important, for all of us.

“Imagine a world where garbage doesn’t accumulate, but becomes furniture, fuel, or a designer piece. That’s the future I’m fighting for. By the way, showcasing Bosnia’s potential as a green innovator? Priceless!”, emphasized Halilović.

**Business Name:**  
Biodesign Studio

**Location:**  
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Main Activities:** Research and development of biomaterials; design of eco-products; workshops and education on biodesign; exhibitions and public installations; consultations on sustainable practices; bioart and collaborative projects; climate advocacy



**Social/Eco-mission:**Waste revolution; zero waste advocacy; climate resilience; youth engagement

**Clients and Target Group:** B2B clients: environmentally aware brands, hotel and hospitality sector, museums/galleries and waste producers; B2C consumers: ethical shoppers, biodesign enthusiasts, parents/educators; Institutions: schools/universities

**Impact Examples:**  
4 tons of organic waste annually to make products instead of landfill; 1000+ biocandles made, 500+ participants trained in biodesign; 3 ongoing partnerships with eco-organizations from the Balkans; 1 permanent museum exhibition

When she looks into the future, she goes back in time, to when it all started.

“I remember when I patented a product, I celebrated by making a candle out of my morning coffee grounds. I’m a solo bio-designer who turns rot into a revolution – one eggshell lamp at a time, slowly and gently. Let’s normalize ‘waste’ as a superior resource!” she urged.

**Founded:**  
2017

**Founders/Team:**  
Maja Halilovic



**Circular Business Model:**Reuse and upcycling of materials; product redesign; educational workshops as a service; collaborative repair and regeneration; art rental/leasing; closed-loop manufacturing; knowledge sharing platforms

**Sustainability Practices:**Innovations - from waste to resource; low-energy production; closed-loop design; radical transparency

**Annual Revenue/Turnover:**  
15-25,000 EUR for 2023 and 2024;

**Awards/Certificates:**  
Gold Award in South Korea for "Bio Candle" awarded by KIPO/KWIA; Bronze Medal at the 75th International Innovation Exhibition "IENA" in Nuremberg; MADE IN B&H 2023 Award; Balkan Green Ideas B&H Award;



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## WOOD SURGERY / LEJLINA RADIONICA: NEW SPARK FOR OLD FURNITURE

"From a moldy Sarajevo basement, from the premises of the military English language school, this conference model arrived - #lupina chair, which we have never seen before," reads a post on the Facebook profile of "Wood Surgery / Lejlina radionica" (Lejla's Workshop).

This post is just a part of the commitment and activity of lawyer Lejla Selimović, who put her law career on hold because she felt better holding a tool in her hands- in a workshop.

Through her business "Wood Surgery / Lejlina radionica", Selimović repairs, restores, and redesigns furniture that is "collecting dust" in someone's basement, garage, attic or summer house. In the hands of this lawyer from Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, these disposed pieces get a new spark and, then, find a new function and decorate homes.

"I am an introverted and creative person by nature. I've always loved colors, I loved drawing, loved to notice beautiful and different things. I ended up at the Faculty of Law quite by chance, I worked in the profession for two years, as is expected of us after receiving a degree. At one point, while I was looking for my 'place under the sun' in the uncertain business environment and working 8 to 4, I decided to return to my creative side. While I was decorating my apartment, I realized that interesting and original pieces could be created from old, seemingly unusable pieces of furniture, and I became interested in this previously completely unknown area," Selimović said.

Initially, Selimović produced armchairs, chairs, as well as larger pieces, such as sideboards and dressers. It turned out that such massive furniture was quite impractical for work, storage, transportation, but also billing due to the time and effort invested. Today, she enjoys making chairs and armchairs the most.

"In addition to the practical reasons, they provide a special touch to the room and say a lot about the owner," she pointed out.

She purchases pieces of furniture at symbolic prices; people often give them to her as gifts, she goes to bazars for old and used items, searches the Internet, and if a company sells old, discarded furniture - she'll show up there as well. She sees potential where most people see waste.



The furniture she restores is mostly designed and manufactured in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s – pieces that furnished the offices of large factories, institutions and enterprises, with the inscription "Made in Yugoslavia." It is also often a matter of pieces belonging to the Vintage and Mid Century Modern styles.

"I usually work with pieces that are at least 50 years old, and sometimes the process of dismantling them without causing damage is a real challenge. The screws are corroded, the nails are cracked, the furniture has at least three different layers of paint, the seat of the chair has been upholstered at least twice, some parts are missing, and the wooden structure is eroded... The time required for restoration depends on the piece, because each chair or armchair has its own story. And, apart from the condition, it also depends on what the client expects and how they imagine the final product," she explained.

Now, her products are constantly promoted on social media and are in demand outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, although logistics can pose an obstacle. Selimović also goes against the stereotype that "carpentry is only for men."

**Business Name:**

Wood Surgery / Lejlina radionica

**Location:**

Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina



**Circular Business**

**Model:** Repairation; restoration; redesign

**Clients and Target Group:**

The general population

"Just as everywhere in the region, the conditions for women entrepreneurs in B&H are quite ruthless, and the environment discouraging. However, the fact that I accepted a profession that is treated as a male one, has helped me and played a big role in my promotion," she emphasized.

In addition to promotion, social media is also suitable for education, so she addresses her fellow citizens there. By reusing and recycling, they prevent the creation of new waste and thus protect the environment.

"The majority of the pieces in our workshop are actually objects whose final destination should have been bulky waste. We are proud of the number of old pieces that have come our way, and we believe that we have contributed at least a little to making our planet a more beautiful place to live," Selimović emphasized.

**Founders/Team:**

Lejla Selimović

**Main Activities:** Restoration and sale of old furniture



**Social/Environmental**

**Mission:** Transformation of old chairs and armchairs-waste into unique pieces of furniture; waste reduction

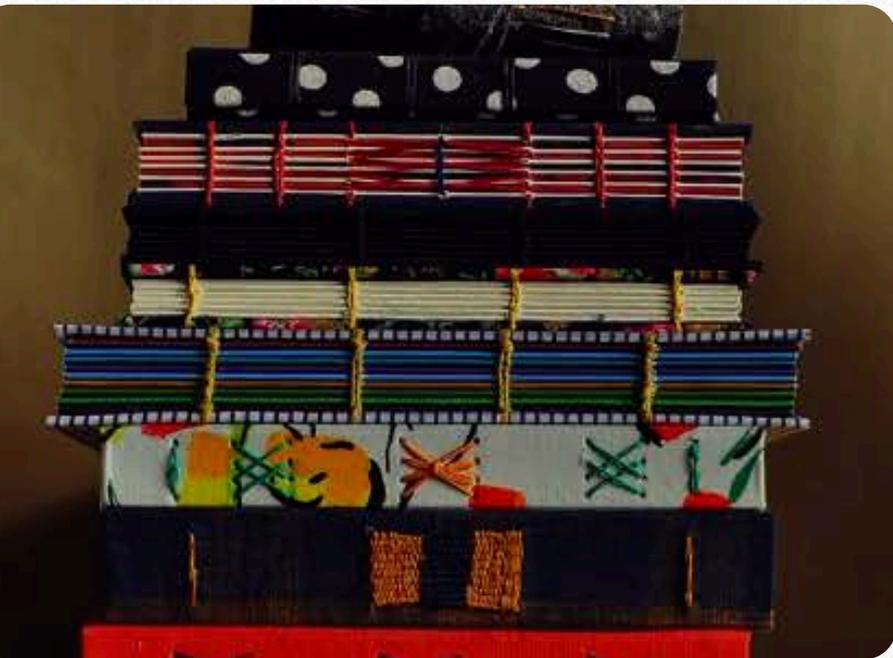
**Impact Examples:** Product demand outside of B&H



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## STUDIO TISA: ECO-BRAND WITH ARTISTIC CRAFTSMANSHIP STATUS

Nina Stanarević is known in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the only bookbinder - a craftswoman who combines tradition with technology in bookbinding. But not "ordinary" books, but books composed of multiple materials, which she tries to extend their shelf life, instead of them ending up in the trash.

Her love for sustainability and ecology is common knowledge in Banja Luka, which dates back 25 years to when she was in elementary school, where she attended an environmental section. That interest stayed with her to the point that she even considered studying ecology after high school. In the end, however, she opted for graphic design.

With 10 years of work experience, she spent most of it in the textile industry.

This journey helped her open Studio Tisa, a small business in Banja Luka. It's an eco-brand with the status of an artistic craft, through which she creates products every day that are equally good for both users and the environment.

"I mostly make sketchbooks, photo albums, scrapbooks, diaries, notebooks, by hand...

I occasionally make useful and decorative wooden objects, such as trays, bowls, etc., when I manage to get leftover wood from local woodworkers," Stanarević explained.

Since sustainability and ecology have become a lifestyle to her, she has poured everything she knows into the Studio Tisa business.

"It all started in my last year of studies, when I started making sketchbooks from found materials: scraps of paper and cardboard, pieces of textile from old sewing projects, and I binded them with dental floss because I read that it could be a good alternative to a bookbinding thread. I've kept that way of working ever since – using found and disposed materials," she said.

She's a type of person who would rather make something herself than buy it. She was inspired by several DIY (Do It Yourself) blogs. She watched, learned, and applied.

"For years I used second-hand and upcycled textiles for book covers, such as pillowcases, old clothes... Then I started experimenting with dyeing and especially natural dyeing using food waste, invasive plants and adding embroidery and 'punch needle' and all other ways of upgrading textiles. Then, I found a paper supplier who offered recycled and eco-papers," Stanarević emphasized.

Today she still works this way, and more. She hasn't bought new textiles in three years now – she buys second-hand, from old clothes or home textiles.

"I use locally made recycled felt made of textile waste from B&H. I work with eco and recycled paper, produced in green factories that use less water, wind energy and replace 40% of the cellulose with agricultural waste," the owner of Studio Tisa explained.

In practice, instead of throwing away, she converts. In her studio, she tries to use as little waste as possible.

"I make my own paper using my own waste, I use other people's residue like wood, textiles, and leather, and I give my remains away for others to make something out of them: waste leather for jewelry, waste wood for children's toys, etc.," Stanarević said.

In terms of her connection to the local community, she says: "I offer products that are good for me as the creator, for you as the user, and for our planet Earth after you're done with them."

You can also find her occasionally leading workshops related to bookbinding and eco-topics, or putting together DIY videos for social media. She's also actively involved in the artisan and artist community, where she organizes small pop-up bazaars.

"My products are quite specific, niche, especially because of the strong focus on sustainability. I believe in local production!", Stanarević emphasized.

**Business Name:**  
Studio Tisa

**Location:**  
Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Main Activities:**  
Making hand-bound books from found and recycled materials



**Social/Environmental Mission:** Waste reduction; support for local production

**Clients and Target Group:**  
The general public



**Founded:**  
2021

**Founders/Team:**  
Nina Stanarević, Founder, Bookbinder, Designer



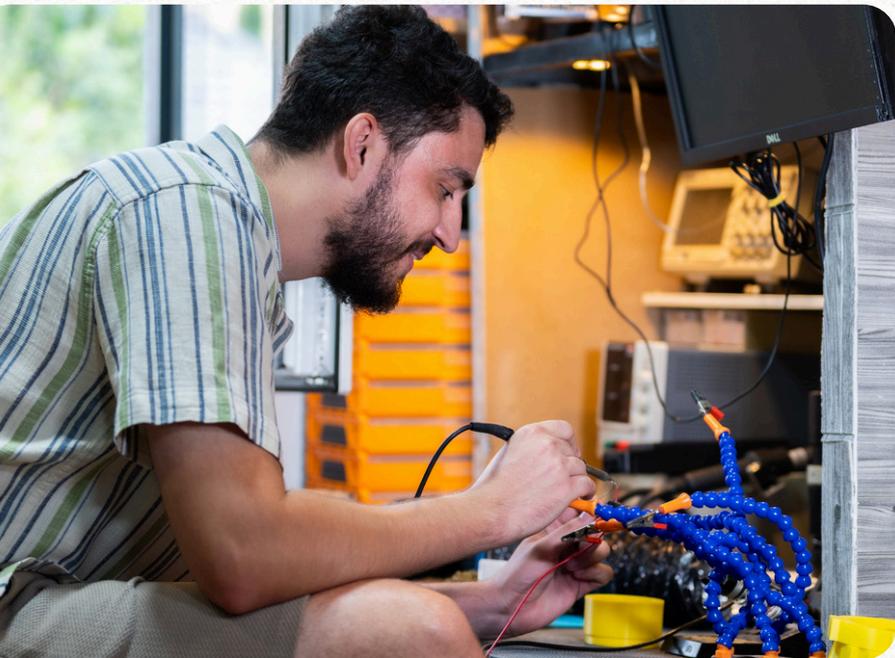
**Circular Business Model:** Reuse, recycling, repurposing

**Sustainability Practices:** Use of eco-materials, recycling, and repurposing of materials

**Awards/Certificates:**  
First place at "Budi neko uz obrt eko" (Be someone with an eco-friendly turnover) for small eco-friendly businesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina



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## PRINT YOUR FIX: 3D PRINTING CAN REPAIR AND REPLACE OBJECTS

Imagine, instead of throwing away a broken drawer handle or a lost piece from your favorite board game, you just make a new one – just like the one you need. That's the power of 3D printing.

By the way, 3D printing is not just some futuristic technology that sounds cool – it's something that can benefit everyone. This way, you can repair, upgrade, and recycle objects that would otherwise end up in the trash bin.

Instead of buying new, you simply extend the shelf life of the old one. In addition to being practical and sustainable, it can also be super creative – you can print everything, from unique decorations to useful gadgets and machines for specific usage.

Muhamed Jusufagić from Bosnia and Herzegovina understood all this, and now runs a 3D printing business called Print Your Fix. He got "hooked" on electronics and informatics in high school. While other peers were thinking about gaming or programming, he was also interested in graphic calculators.

"I started taking those calculators and fixing them, because they were often broken. Then I continued with old computers and old game consoles.

I realized that there were a lot of broken consoles and that you could make a good living with them. I mainly turned to mechanical engineering because I often encountered physical damage and had to insert replacement parts and similar," Jusufagić said.

During his college days, the prices of 3D printers started to drop. If in the past they were sold for 1000-2000 euros, they dropped to 250-300 euros. He could already afford such a machine, and since 2016 he has been tinkering with a 3D printer, to be a tool that would help him replace, service or speed up the repair of various objects.

"Once I design a part, I can print it endlessly on any printer.

So, if I can solve my problem, I can help anyone, anywhere in the world. For example, three years ago I was repairing headphones, and the same design came to me again last week, from a different person. The crack was in the exact same place, so I used the same file to repair it. Those headphones are no longer being produced and are quite high in quality, functional, and it would be a pity to end up in waste," he said.

In general, 3D printing takes place in two phases: design and print. A 3D model is created through a software solution, and the material for the product also plays a big role. It's important what it is made of, whether it is resistant to sun, rain, cold...

"If the 3D printer is used for decorations, vases or similar - then the material is not that important. But if we are making spare parts for cars, for machines in industry, in that case we must be careful," the owner of Print Your Fix explained.

The plastic used for 3D printing can be organic or petroleum-based. Eco-friendly ones are those that are plant-based, with starch, etc. And that is important, because the print emits micro-particles into the air, so the material should be eco-friendly for use at home and, consequently, for the buyer.

**Business Name:**

PrintYourFix

**Location:**

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Main Activities:**

3D design and printing



**Social/Environmental**

**Mission:** Extending the shelf life of products and reducing waste.

**Clients and Target Group:**

Clients who have a specific problem and need a special design for furniture or machinery; customers who have broken but functional devices and need a spare 3D printed part; customers who want to upgrade the design of a car, gadget, etc.

**Sustainability Practices:**

Repairing, repurposing, recycling and use of eco-materials



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"This is a tool that allows the circular economy to manifest. Especially when using and maintaining materials of plant origin, unlike those on the market. Every tool is a double-edged sword, as one edge is the circular economy," he emphasized.

3D printing is a new technology and it takes time to adapt, to make people aware of its possibilities. That is one of the main goals of Print Your Fix.

"For the last three years, I have been trying to bring it closer to them, to show them its potential and how it can make their lives easier. Even for us 'in the loop' it's still unknown what the true potential is. What is certain is that demand is growing. I have published my services on local platforms, as well as the services of my associates, and the interest is growing. Although B&H is a small market, with only 2.5 million inhabitants, the need for education and servicing is still growing," Jusufagić concluded.

**Founded:**

2023

**Founders/Team:**

Muhamed Jusufagić



**Circular Business Model:** Repair, upcycling, recycling

**Impact Examples:**

At least 1,000 devices saved through repurposing, repairing them directly or indirectly, making a more pleasant design for cutting and recycling PET plastic bottles, making machines for the University of Sarajevo PMF - Biology ANT SPINNER insect documentation machine, and the files are available online for free



## ORMARIĆ: WARDROBE UPDATE THROUGH DIGITAL THRIFTING

Sustainable fashion and the reuse of clothes are becoming more and more popular, and Ormarić (small wardrobe) is a company from Bosnia and Herzegovina that actively supports this change. But not only for buying, but also for selling clothes in one place, so that clothes circulate, are exchanged, get a second, third, fourth chance.

What started as a second-place idea at a local startup competition in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a year and a half later, four young people have launched their own app, through which they have already created an engaged the online community.

"We noticed a big problem - people were struggling to find second-hand clothes online, if at all.

We want to give them the opportunity to earn money and at the same time help the environment. By exchanging clothes, we are making fashion more sustainable and greener," Emir Kurtović, CEO of Ormarić, said.

The Ormarić app is a virtual space, a digital bulletin board, where users can sell their clothing, shoes, cosmetics, as well as other fashion accessories - watches, jewelry, scarves, hats, bags, and similar.

The buying and selling process on Ormarić is simple. Users create a profile, upload photos and descriptions of the clothes they are selling, and buyers can choose from different categories and filter by size, color, price or location. Once they find the item they want or search over 20,000 products, they can easily purchase it through secure payment methods, and the product is delivered to their address.

But Ormarić is not just a platform for buying and selling - it is also a platform for education.

Through humanitarian events and educational activities, the team strives to create conscious generations that will be more responsible consumers, but also reducers of textile waste.

"We put a lot of time and effort into giving back to the community. Last December, we organized a student charity second-hand clothing flea market. We work to promote the positive aspects of second-hand fashion among younger generations and spread the 'thrift' culture," Kurtović pointed out.

They also convey these values through various initiatives on their Instagram page. There you can find actions like "clean out your wardrobe, make money and travel to Rome". Also, that "thrift goes better in pairs" or "thrift is a way to fight fast fashion that is destroying the planet".

They also promote the concepts of "upcycling" and "transforming old into new".

"The fashion industry has a huge impact on the environment, but switching to used and online shopping can significantly reduce its ecological footprint.

The production of new clothes requires enormous resources and generates a lot of waste. Online platforms make it possible to find brands that focus on sustainability and ethical production, so that citizens can be sure that their purchase supports eco-friendly and responsible practices," the company representative said.

**Business Name:**  
Ormarić

**Location:**  
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina



**Social/Environmental Mission:** Reducing the impact of fast fashion; reducing textile waste

**Sustainability Practices:**  
Reusing pieces of clothing

**Clients and Target Group:**  
General public in B&H

**Founded:**  
2023

**Founders/Team:**  
General Manager Emir Kurtović, Product Manager Bilal Hodžić

**Main Activities:**  
Online market for second-hand clothes

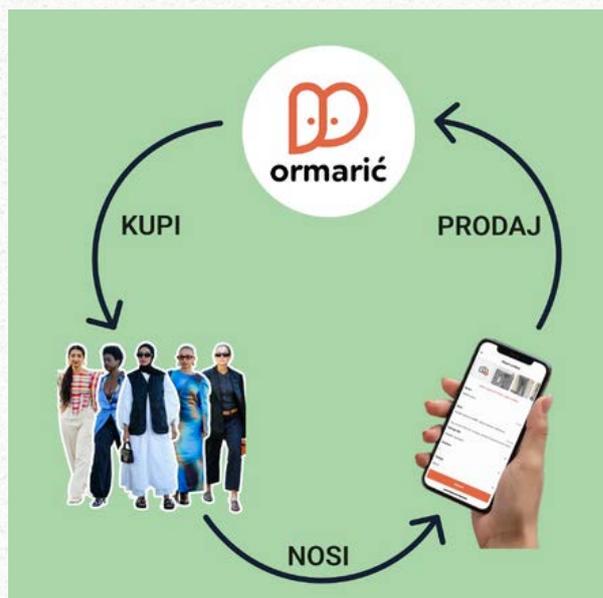


**Circular Business Model:**  
Reusing

**Impact Examples:**  
1,500,000 liters of water saved; more than 16,000 users; over 3,000 pieces of clothing with a new owner



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# SERBIA





## NEWPEN: PENCILS AND COLORED PENS MADE FROM NEWSPAPERS

Did you know that a single pencil can draw a line over 50 kilometers long, write over 45,000 words, withstand over 20 sharpenings, and make 654,873 drum super-solos?

Well, Slavica and Dragan Marković from Smederevska Palanka, Serbia, also didn't know these things until 2017, when they realized they no longer wanted to work in hospitality and run their "Irish Pub". They decided to embark on an adventure with graphite pencils and colored pencils made from recycled newspaper, in order to offer something new and ecological to the market through NewPen.

"One evening my wife and I were watching the movie 'The Odd Life of Timothy Green', a story in which one of the main characters works in a pencil factory. A few days later, I think it was on 'National Geographic', a documentary about the 'Stella' factory was showing. And then it came to us that no one in Serbia was producing graphite pencils anymore, so - we could! I started researching, I saw how in China and India they are made from old newspapers and there was no longer any dilemma about what we would do," Dragan Marković from NewPen said.

For the needs of the business with his wife, he called up two more friends and in 2018 they founded the company. However, it was not until January 2019 when a machine arrived from China that they could start production.

"We use only three components: graphite, unread newspapers or recycled paper, and glue. From China, they gave us a glue specification, but it smelled like resin, and we didn't even know if it was healthy to use. Fortunately, in the building where we work, there is another company that manufactures binders, so they suggested a glue based on corn starch. That glue turned out to be fantastic for our products," Marković recalled.

At first, they collected newspapers from restaurants, bars, and cafes. However, the work took off when they merged with the newspaper Politika, because on the one hand they needed a standard paper supplier, but on the other hand, only this edition and that of Sportski žurnal (Sports Journal) were suitable for their pencils, both because of the format and the quality of the paper.

"We had to test our products at the Public Health Institute, because everyone is chewing pencils. We got great results! Then we gave our fourth-grade son a handful of pencils to share among his friends, and we also gave them to our friends with children. Again, we got great feedback! Of course, we roamed with the thickness of the pencils, until we realized that 7mm was the ideal size," he said.

After a slight setback due to the pandemic, NewPen is now expanding, both domestically and abroad. Their hallmark is the use of recycled paper instead of wood, non-toxic materials, minimal energy consumption and dominant hand-made craftsmanship, which, according to Marković, indicates a straightforward orientation towards environmental protection. And, joy for the children, as a target group.

"Around 14 billion wooden pencils are made in the world every year, and around 82,000 trees are cut down for that. Not a single new tree needs to be cut down for our pencils! Also, one ton of recycled paper saves 12 trees from being cut down. This means that in these four years, with our production, we have saved a whole beautiful park. At the same time, our products are intended for the youngest. One of our missions is for generations of environmentally conscious individuals to grow with us," Marković emphasized.

**Business Name:**

NewPen

**Location:**

Smederevska Palanka, Serbia



**Social/Environmental**

**Mission:** Production of quality and eco-friendly pencils and color pencils; use of recycled paper instead of wood and toxic materials; environmental education of young people

**Sustainability Practices:**

Minimal energy consumption; dominant physical labor in production

**Clients and Target Group:** General population with a focus on young people; companies; stores; bookstores; media

According to him, it is important that the pencils and colored pencils they offer, in addition to being eco-friendly, are also of good quality. Someone who goes to a store may buy it once because it is specific, eco-friendly, interesting, but they will go and buy it a second time if it's of good quality and does the job for them.

"On the other hand, pencils will always sell. I remember when my child started school, his teacher asked him to use a pencil more for his hand motor skills. It's the same with newspapers, some people will always leaf through newspapers with coffee, regardless of the fact that many read portals. Have you heard of 'Politikin Zabavnik' (entertainment magazine)? It was created in 1936 and now has its 86th birthday and 17,000 editions. We made 17,000 pencils from their unsold 'Zabavniks' and each issue came with a pencil. There are also newspapers from abroad, issues that were never sold, that have left over, so we make pencils out of them. That's what's called a circular economy," Marković pointed out.

**Founded:**

2018

**Founders/Team:**

Slavica Cokić Marković CEO, Dragan Marković co-founder

**Main activities:** Sale of pencils and color pencils made from recycled newspaper



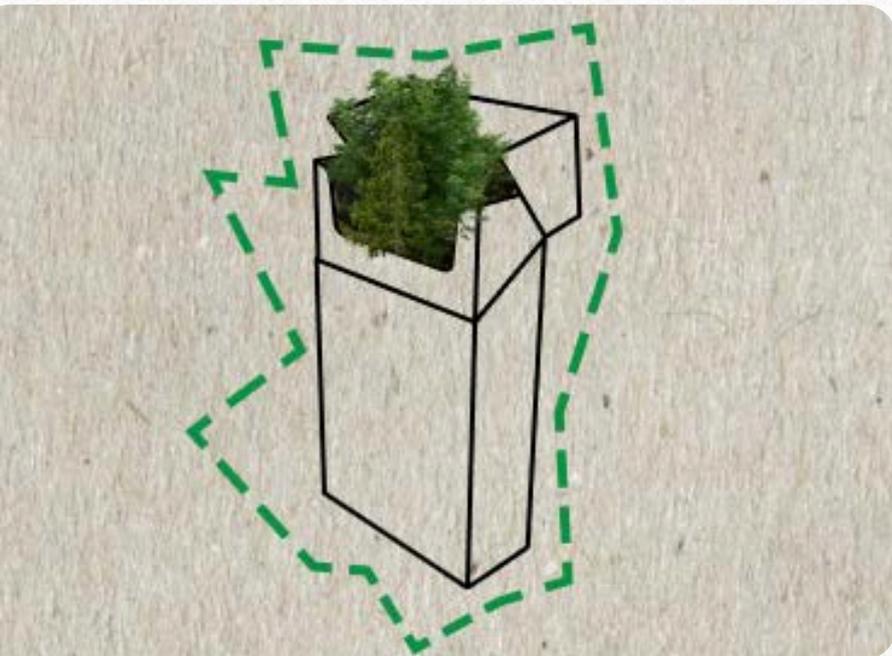
**Circular Business Model:** Recycling; upcycling.

**Impact Examples:** Expansion and collaboration with clients/companies abroad; significant amounts of trees saved by using newspapers instead of trees



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## NAŠA KUĆA: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP OR "SOUL ECONOMY"

Naša kuća (Our Home) from Belgrade was founded in 2007 as an association for the support of people with disabilities. A group of parents came together with the idea of providing their atypical children with a meaningful life in the community.

They are now a social enterprise. They work in the area of what is called social entrepreneurship or "soul economy," a way of doing business that puts social benefit above profit.

In other words: they provide conditions for people with atypical development to be active, useful, progress and build their future, by being included in a product line that satisfies the affinities of multiple clients.

"Through the activity, we provide a Day Center service, implement educational programs for these people and their families, for service providers, work assistants and trainers, for experts, as well as education of the immediate environment and the wider community," representatives of Naša kuća explained.

A characteristic of their production is that they use waste. That is, they manually produce paper from empty cigarette packs - packaging with the highest percentage of cellulose on the market. The paper they produce comes in different dimensions, weights and textures.

It is multipurpose, be it as art paper, printing paper, but also organically purified paper to obtain paper cups and food delivery containers, which are recyclable and biodegradable.

"The raw materials for production are collected by the citizens, state institutions and the private sector, thus including the wider community in the cycle of sustainable development and the circular economy," Naša kuća representatives said.

In addition to production in Belgrade, they have established a network of small paper producers in ten other towns: Zaječar, Leskovac, Aranđelovac, Kragujevac, Novi Sad, Feketić, Novi Pazar, Priboj, Lajkovac, Nova Varos, where people with disabilities work, and their local communities supply them with raw materials.

The products are used by individuals, artists, the business sector, educational institutions and civil society organizations.

"In this production, we involve the academic community for innovative solutions - biodegradable cups and paper containers - and the introduction of new technologies. We use an ancient Japanese paper-making technique thanks to a long-standing cooperation with JICA. At the same time, we cooperate with the economic sector, which helps us construct adapted work equipment," representatives of the social enterprise pointed out.

They are proud that many companies use their material and design to produce their promotional materials. Hotels and restaurants use this paper and the packaging made of it.

"In addition to this unique paper production, which directly contributes to reducing paper waste, CO2 emissions and tree logging, as well as saving energy and water, while also stimulating socioeconomic development by employing people who have difficulty finding work, Naša kuća also produces healthy vegetables, salads, spices and micro-spices in an urban garden. In doing so, we use innovative hydroponic techniques," they emphasized.

**Име на бизнисот:**  
Naša kuća

**Location:**  
Belgrade, Serbia

**Main Activities:**  
Manual production of multipurpose paper from waste; production of eco-friendly packaging, production of vegetables and garden products through hydroponic techniques; daycare center



**Social/Environmental Mission:**  
Active inclusion of people with disabilities; support for these people and their families; waste reduction

**Clients and Target Group:**  
The main target group is people with disabilities, and clients are individuals, artists, the business sector, institutions and organizations.



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Projections by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations show that by 2050 this technique will be dominant, as, due to climate change, it will be the only one capable of providing food for large urban areas.

"In addition to primary production, we are also organizing a center for educating citizens about all the possibilities of installing small hydroponic gardens in private apartments and houses," Naša kuća representatives added."

To conclude, their mission is to provide a meaningful life and a safe future for people with atypical development in the environment, but also in the wider community. In doing so, they take a step further to change the social paradigm and the position of this population. The environment is sensitized, environmentally aware, open to change, actively participating and creating conditions for sustainable development and a secure future for its members.

**Founded:**  
2007



**Circular Business Model:** Repurposing and recycling paper

**Founders/Team:**  
Anica Spasov, Association President

**Impact Examples:**  
Established a production network in 10 towns; raised awareness of the potential of people with atypical development

**Sustainability Practices:** Sustainable work integration and economic independence of people with atypical development; saving energy and water in production



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# MONTENEGRO





## ATELJE PROPUPH: ECOLOGY, ART AND TRADITION ON EVERY SHEET OF PAPER

Mia is a graphic designer and Tiho is a painter. Both of them come from Montenegro, and both are Academy of Fine Arts graduates. They started an eco-educational, and business venture in 2013 from a home workshop in Donji Kokoti, near Podgorica, which two years later was named Atelje Propuh (Studio Draught).

What started as a small idea to recycle straw from various plants has grown into a business that offers authentic paper products, but also spreads awareness about preserving nature and the cultural heritage of Montenegro.

“When we started, we didn’t expect such success,” said Mia, who, together with Tiho, is responsible for the development of this artistic and ecological workshop. “Our work began with simple experiments in creating paper, but we quickly realized that we could do much more.

We realized that the synergy between art and ecology can be used to make a living,” Mia added.

Every sheet of paper they create is the result of combining traditional techniques with modern environmental standards. Most of the products, such as “seeded cards” (cards that contain seeds and can be planted), are made from straw and fibers from various plants (linden, lavender, ragweed). They are not only a resource, but also help preserve nature or “the eternal teacher” as they call it.

“Every piece of paper is not just paper,” Mia explained. “It carries a message. When you plant it, you’re not only helping to revive a plant, you’re creating something that benefits bees and the environment. It’s our way of impacting the world, even if it’s in small steps,” she pointed out.

Hence, Atelje Propuh calls on customers not to throw away the product after use, but to plant it and thus become part of nature. “Thus, each of our customers becomes an eco-activist.

They become more aware, because they are unlikely to throw it in the bin after use. It is easier to put it in the ground and let nature do its thing. By doing so, at least for a second you think about nature, you realize how important it is to protect it, from ourselves.”

The wide range of products of Atelje Propuh includes paper packaging, paper collars... but, nevertheless, in 2016 and 2017 Mia and Tiho presented eco-graphics - the one they are most proud of. Using the ancient technique of woodcut and combining it with handmade paper and natural paints, they create works of art that represent the cultural heritage and biodiversity of Montenegro.

They are practically like postcards. On each such graphic print, for example, one can find motifs from important local landscapes, protected species, animals or various plants. Such are the rivers Morača and Zeta, then the Skadar frog, the minnow fish, the European roller, or the everlasting plant of immortality - curry plant.

"Ecographics is not just art. It is also education," emphasized Mia.

In addition to selling products, Mia and Tiho have also been working on workshops for pupils and students, including graphic technicians and architects, for the past few years.

**Business Name:**  
Atelje Propuh

**Location:**  
Podgorica, Montenegro

**Main Activities:**  
Sale of authentic paper art eco-products;  
promotion of eco-graphics



**Social/Environmental Mission:** Turning plant waste into paper; education about the flora, fauna and historical heritage of Montenegro

**Clients and Target Group:**  
The general public

"We believe that the best way to protect the environment is through education. Every student who learns about the paper-making process, recycling, and the importance of eco-art will be a future activist for a green future," representatives of Atelje Propuh said.

"When we started, we didn't know where this journey would take us, but now we know we are doing something important. For us, for the nature, and for the future generations," they concluded.

**Founded:**  
2021

**Founders/Team:**  
Mia Pejović, Director



**Circular Business Model:**  
Reusing; recycling

**Sustainability Practices:** Recycling straw and plant fibers; saving energy in handcrafting

**Impact Examples:**  
Developed awareness among young people about paper recycling through numerous workshops; collaboration with artists and activists



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# THE CZECH REPUBLIC





## REKÁVA: COFFEE IS NOT THE END, COFFEE IS THE BEGINNING

Coffee most often means waking up. For some it's a ritual, for others tradition or socialization, while for some it's just a habit or routine.

Coffee is drunk constantly, everywhere.

If we take the cafes, offices and households in the Czech Republic alone, they create 80,000 tons of coffee grounds annually.

On average, that's about 3.5 kilograms per person, and per cafe - 1.5 tons. All that grounds usually end up in waste bins, and then in landfills, thereby contributing to the creation of greenhouse gases.

Jana Šrámková and her team recognized this problem, which is why they founded ReKáva.

"Our mission is simple – to divert this valuable resource from waste and find a useful usage for it. In this way, not only do we reduce pollution, but we also create something useful for the community," the founder Šrámková said about their service for collecting used coffee grounds.

She described their system as smart, eco-friendly and efficient.

Cafes and companies that are part of the service receive special smart buckets with sensors. When the bucket is full of coffee grounds, one of ReKáva's couriers, collects it on an electric cargo bicycle and replaces it with an empty one.

"We connect cafes with gardens, so the grounds get a second chance, improving the quality of the soil for plants. In addition, the grounds remain in the locality where it was produced. In this way, we support local products. Our goal is to create cities without waste," representatives of ReKáva explained.

The grounds can also be used for their pots for growing mushrooms. These pots are called "Hubárium", sold together with oyster mushroom mycelium, and are now a recognizable ReKáva product.

"With the help of our 'Hubarium', we will help you turn your coffee grounds - from a coffee machine, capsules or the bottom of a cup - into oyster mushroom. And all of that from the comfort of your home! It's easy, anyone can do it! All you need is 'Hubárium' and coffee grounds," the business' website states.

ReKáva is seen not only as a system for such waste management, but also as a circular economy tool. The business has received support from various organizations, as well as the Prague City Council. They recognized ReKáva as a solution for sustainable, urban environments. In addition, the business won second place at the "Nakopni Prahu" competition, which allowed them to present their idea at the international "Expo Smart City" fair in Barcelona.

"We realized abroad that our idea was not only eco-friendly, but also economically sustainable. Companies have an increasing need for waste management, and our smart sensor buckets allow them to provide transparent monitoring and ESG reports," founder Šrámková explained on one occasion.

"Our vision is simple – to show that every waste can be a new opportunity. We just need to think smart and seize that chance," she added.

According to ReKáva, coffee doesn't end when you take the last sip. On the contrary – it's just the beginning of something new.

**Business Name:**  
ReKáva

**Location:**  
Prague, Czech Republic

**Main Activities:**  
Coffee grounds collection service; sale of mushroom growing container



**Social/Environmental Mission:** Reducing coffee waste; supporting local production

**Clients and Target Group:**  
Cafes and restaurants; gardens; citizens who want to grow mushrooms using coffee grounds growing pots

**Founded:**  
2020

**Founders/Team:**  
Jana Šrámková, Founder



**Circular Business Model:**  
Reusing coffee grounds

**Sustainability Practices:**  
Economic sustainability through monitoring coffee waste; creating sustainable urban environments

**Awards/Certificates:** Second place in the Nakopni Prahu competition



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## MIWA: PREVENTING WASTE AT ITS SOURCE

At a time when the world is "drowning" in plastic waste, and only about 2% of it is recycled, Czech business MIWA wants to transform the retail sector and eliminate packaging from the supply chain.

By using reusable capsules together with smart dispensers, MIWA creates a circular model that reduces the use of packaging materials by 90% and waste from various products, such as regular food, pet food or personal care products. On a side note, it reduces CO2 emissions by 62% compared to traditional packaging systems.

"When we talk about sustainability, it's not because it's 'trendy' or because someone wants to hear it, but because we actually live it in our everyday lives," Petar Baca, founder and CEO of the business said.

The initial idea came from two significant experiences, Baca explained: "Firstly, my children made me much more aware of sustainability issues. Secondly, my professional background in packaging design helped me realize the enormous amounts of waste that single-use packaging creates."

"Developing MIWA did not require only an innovative approach, but also well-understood logistics and processes that can be implemented globally. "We are trying to create a model that will integrate all participants in the trade network and encourage them to respect it," he added.

The MIWA system is set out as follows: manufacturers fill capsules with their product (e.g. whole grains) and seal them. The packaged capsules travel through the standard distribution chain - cafes, restaurants, offices, and mainly retail stores. There, the MIWA capsules are fed into electronic dispensers, previously set up and installed at the location.

"The capsule is like a printer cartridge: inserted, emptied, and replaced with a new one. Once the capsule is removed from circulation, MIWA returns it to reuse the material and produce new capsules," the company representatives explained.

Citizens can shop with their own containers at the sale point, or by using reusable MIWA smart containers, provided on site. They look like jars. They are filled with the desired food through the dispensers, which also measure the amount of food. It's as simple as weighing fruit on a regular scale in a store. By the way, the smart containers are connected to the MIWA application, through which you can pay, check nutritional facts, or participate in rewards for sustainable shopping.



"Our system is designed to be economically sustainable for all parties: producers, stores and consumers. Although the system requires a change in the way traditional trade works, it seems like a natural next step, as it allows consumers to reduce their environmental footprint," Baca said.

Using technology and partnerships in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, MIWA is expanding the market for sustainable packaging solutions.

"We believe that our solution will be adopted by many traders, and in 2025 we expect to start pilot projects in several European countries," he added.

**Business Name:**  
MIWA

**Location:**  
Prague, Czech Republic



**Social/Environmental Mission:**  
Drastic reduction of packaging from the supply chain; new practices in sales and product procurement

**Sustainability Practices:** Efficiency in resource reuse; sustainable sales and purchasing; product quality control, material, hygiene and safety

**Clients and Target Group:** Brand owners/brand manufacturers; supermarkets; shops; cafes; offices

According to analyses, the MIWA system has 71% less environmental impact compared to traditional packaging models.

"We advocate for a completely closed cycle, in which packaging is reused and recycled in the end, instead of creating waste.

The circular economy is the way to go. It's about returning to the rational use of the resources we already have and preventing their consumption. For us, this means reducing waste, but also building economically sustainable business solutions," Baca concluded.

**Founded:**  
2017

**Founders/Team:**  
Petar Baca, Founder and General Manager  
+4 people in management

**Main Activities:**  
Design and production of original circular packaging for the entire supply chain - reusable capsules and smart dispensers



**Circular Business Model:**  
Reusing, recycling

**Impact Examples:**  
Compared to single-use packaging, MIWA's circular system reduces materials by 90% and CO2 emissions by 62%.

**Awards/Certificates:**  
New Plastics Economy Innovation Prize 2017; support in the European Innovation Council (EIC) 2021 program



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# OPRAVÁRNA: DON'T BUY NEW - REPAIR THE OLD

If you don't know how to fix an object, it doesn't mean you have to throw it away. Maybe someone else can fix it for you? At least it's easy now, when anyone who knows how to use a keyboard and a mouse, and has basic digital literacy has access to the Internet.

In the Czech Republic, the platform Opravárna has been launched, which links repair businesses with people who need their services. This is a network that allows users to easily choose between professional services, various craftsmen and service technician.

So far, there are over 1,900 such registered.

"We easily connect customers with the nearest service or repairer at a reasonable price. As the only platform in the country, we can help with almost anything – from sewing pants, finding a 'instant handyman', revamping furniture, to more complex tasks like replacing a broken phone screen or repairing a refrigerator," representatives of Opravárna explained.

By simply typing down a description of the repair required and paying a small fee for website maintenance, the request is sent by e-mail to registered repairers and services. They offer a price, and the customer has the opportunity to choose between them over a period of 30 days, contact them and expand the scope of the search.

"Once the work is done, the customer rates the repairer," they added.

As part of its mission, Opravárna has founded the Association Opravme Česko (Let's Fix Czechia), in order to bring together all relevant partners who pursue the same goals, primarily aimed at preventing waste and transitioning to a circular economy.

The association aims to make products last as long as possible, to be of higher quality and repairable or, if not possible, to be professionally recycled. Furthermore, consumers should be more aware and better oriented when choosing between buying or repairing.

"We don't like the fact that most products - from mobile phones to fridges and shoes - break down immediately after the warranty expires. The contemporary economic system forces us to buy a new product, even though the existing ones can be repaired. Instead of ending up as waste, the country and our environment are full of skilled people and companies that can extend their shelf lives," Opravárna representatives emphasized. They find it important to adhere to the principles of socially responsible business.

"We put more than half of our profits back into community development, we offer additional income to everyone, including people who have difficulty finding employment, and through our work we contribute to sustainable development and environmental protection," Opravárna representatives pointed out.

That's why their motto is "don't purchase items unnecessarily, preserve nature and support the local economy."

**Business Name:**

Opravárna

Location: Prague, the Czech Republic

**Main Activities:**

Connecting businesses with people who need their services



**Social/Environmental**

**Mission:** Protects the environment by preventing unnecessary waste, saving valuable mineral resources, and supporting the local economy

**Impact Examples:**

Almost 7,000 repair/service orders processed

As part of their mission, they also want to change the national laws in the Czech Republic in accordance with EU legislation, given that analyses show that 45% of waste still ends up in landfills.

**Founders/Team:**

Jan Šarvat, Association President and Lusi Čarvatova, Founding Member



**Circular Business**

**Model:** Repairing, reusing, repurposing

**Impact Examples:**

It saves time and money by avoiding unnecessary purchases of new devices/objects;

**Clients and Target Group:**

Everyone who needs repairment

**Sustainability Practices:**

Enables you to save time and money by avoiding unnecessary purchases of new devices/objects



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## FOREWEAR: SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS AND GIFTS FOR COMPANIES

Marketa Brychova started organizing a volunteer “clothing exchange” in 2008, together with her friends in Prague. At that time, the term “exchange” was not yet popular in the area. It was an initiative that they organized twice a year in their free time, intended for the general public, but often with a focus on vulnerable groups, such as the elderly or socially disadvantaged categories.

The unclaimed collected clothes from the events were donated to various humanitarian organizations, hospitals, homeless shelters or children foster homes. Documenting the activities has helped the project team gain support and enter the Social Impact Award competition, where they were selected to develop the idea through social entrepreneurship - i.e., to make the volunteer project financially sustainable.

That's how FOREWEAR was born.

“We tackle at least four complex challenges. We take unneeded textiles, which only take up space in most people’s closets, and turn the waste from textile production into beautiful and practical recycled products. These products are not only environmentally friendly, but also have a social dimension, as they are sewn in a special (shelter) workshop. In addition, FOREWEAR helps solve the eternal problem - what smart and sustainable gift to choose this year for Christmas or another event,” Bryhova pointed out.

So far, they have collected over 35,000 kilograms of clothing, made over 20,000 recycled products for a wide range of companies, while creating significant vacancies for seamstresses.

“Today, FOREWEAR’s work moves in two main directions. The first is organizing clothing collection actions in cooperation with companies. The donated clothes are then sent to charity stores, which employ people with disabilities.”

“The second, and primary direction is upcycling the surplus textile materials into corporate products, such as notebooks with recycled textile covers, organizers, journals, reusable gift bags, multi-purpose toiletry bags, document folders, and pockets for electronic accessories,” she said.

FOREWEAR has developed over 100 colorful and unique product designs for various companies. Each series goes through a cautious process of adjusting the look according to the brand identity – from choosing colors and printing on recycled textiles, to final sewing with care and precision.

"First, we design and approve the product's appearance together with the client. Then we print the materials, sew them at our shelter workshop, and finally we carry out quality control and packaging," Bryhova explained.

She emphasized that these are not typical promotional items with large logos, but high-quality, stylish and functional products intended for long-term use. By the way, they are made by "Czech hands".

"The sewing is done by women with mental health disorders, employed by the social enterprise FOVY. They operate in flexible conditions, with reduced working hours. The seamstresses in these workshops are skilled professionals, we have been cooperating with them for more than 10 years," Bryhova added.

**Business Name:**  
FOREWEAR

**Location:**  
The czech republic

**Main activities:** Making sustainable corporate gifts from recycled textiles



**Social/Environmental Mission:** Changing awareness of corporate gifts and objects; sustainable and practical products made of recycled materials; supporting disadvantaged seamstresses and women with mental health issues

**Clients and Target Group:** Companies with more than 100 employees, institutions, municipalities

**Impact Examples:**  
Over 35,000 kilograms of clothing collected and more than 20,000 recycled products produced; over 100 colorful and unique product designs

The companies' reactions motivate them for the future, she said, adding that associates appreciate the environmental and social value of the business.

"They love the story behind each piece – the recycled materials, the people who make them, and the personal touch. In the future, we hope to build long-term partnerships, especially with city institutions, universities, and large companies that could use these products in their packages for new employees or students. Our goal is to expand the usage of sustainable materials and create quality products with a meaningful story and wider application," Bryhova concluded.

**Founded:**  
2013

**Founders/Team:**  
Marketa Bryhova, Founder and part of the Social Enterprise FOVY team



**Circular Business Model:**  
Upcycling, recycling

**Annual Revenue/Turnover:**  
Low income to support 1 person

**Sustainability Practices:**  
Use of recycled textile materials; long-term cooperation with the socially

**Awards/Certificates:** Social Impact Award 2013; Sole Proprietor of the Year in the City of Prague 2015; Jury Prize at the Franco-Czech Chamber of Commerce Competition in 2019



**Contact Information:**  
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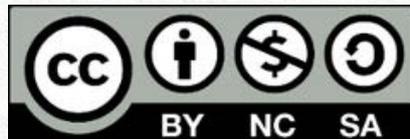


### Project:

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### Project Consortium:

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