Supporting vulnerable people with their business projects in the Lyon region

A vulnerable population on our doorstep
The shortage of jobs in France is hitting the most vulnerable particularly hard, especially single parents and refugees: 40% of the former live below the poverty line and 40% of the latter are among the long-term unemployed. For them, entrepreneurship can be a springboard to inclusion. But, in general, half of businesses do not survive any longer than 5 years. It is, therefore, becoming absolutely vital to provide these vulnerable project leaders with increased support to give them every possible opportunity to keep their businesses going.

Enabling sustainable inclusion and meeting regional needs
In 2018, Entrepreneurs du Monde created the ICI (Incubation Creation Inclusion) project in Lyon to promote the lasting socio-economic inclusion of people who are vulnerable or on the verge of poverty.

The team helps them to set up businesses that meet one of the region’s needs: sustainable catering. This support in a growing market gives entrepreneurs a real chance of success and viability.

Training and support
Project leaders are welcomed and are helped to remove the obstacles to their integration, in partnership with local public and private organisations. Those who have realistic business projects receive support: they are individually monitored by a volunteer mentor and take part in training provided by the team or by experts (business strategy, accounting, law, insurance, etc.). The others are directed towards our local partners, who are better able to meet their needs.

Towards viability and potential spin-off
As with all the programmes it creates and incubates, Entrepreneurs du Monde is structuring and supporting the ICI programme to help it become autonomous in every aspect. The team’s main aim is to ensure that it achieves financial viability. It is looking into what is the most appropriate type of legal structure and exploring self-financing opportunities. If the results of this first programme in France are positive, Entrepreneurs du Monde will extend its model to other regions and open the door to the creation of businesses in other promising sectors.
Start of the 4th intake
The entrepreneurs in the first 3 intakes had projects in very different fields. For the sake of greater efficiency, and in response to a local need, the team has decided to refocus on sustainable catering projects. So it has revamped its training and support programme so as to enable entrepreneurs to test their business for 4 months after the initial 2 months’ training. Project leaders, therefore, gain experience and funding to help them get established.

A programme that benefits everyone
The benefits of this support are threefold:
• For vulnerable people: removal of the obstacles to entrepreneurship, job training, business creation in a promising sector.
• For the region and its businesses: outlets for local producers.
• For local residents: catering services offering healthy local food and intercultural opportunities.

Varied and determined entrepreneurs
This year, 10 project leaders are embarking on an entrepreneurial adventure and offer a varied culinary journey: two Georgian sisters who are passionate about cooking, a Lebanese serial entrepreneur, an experienced Franco-Cameroonian cook, a young Frenchman keen to launch his raw food concept, an Iranian psychologist who is retraining to set up a cultural café, a Syrian caterer who has led a very eventful life, an Italian who wants to breathe new life into an old grocery store, a French woman with a cookery-themed integration project for young refugees, and even a Chinese “fast good” outlet.

Testing the business in real conditions
After the two months’ initial training, the project leaders will be able to test their business in real conditions for 4 months, in premises suited to their project: placement in a restaurant, on a specially provided stall, in their home in the case of a catering business or in Entrepreneurs du Monde’s Food Truck.

Visit our website to follow the “Flavours and wings” Food Truck’s journey around the Lyon region and treat your taste buds to some new flavours.

www.entrepreneursdumonde.org