

Role model portrait

Reda Berradi

“Be honest and work in your community to build your clientele”

Who I am



My name is Reda Berradi and I am from Marocco. I was born in Meknes. We arrived in Sicily at the beginning of the Eighties with my family. Sicily gave me the opportunity to stay here and study at the University of Palermo, Faculty of Literature. I worked as a cultural mediator in the social sector. I also worked as a researcher at the University of Palermo investigating minorities

living in the city. After this experience in the social science sector, I decided to challenge myself and become an entrepreneur in the restaurant business. It was a challenge. I opened a social restaurant called “The house of cultures”. That was my house which was open to anyone who wanted to cook and share their traditions with other people: migrants who taught local people how to cook ethnic food. After this experience with “The house of cultures” I decided to become a food entrepreneur. This experience started in Danisinni neighbourhood, a wonderful area in Palermo which welcomed “The house of cultures” with its local inhabitants who were so happy to host such a project that we also created a shared garden to grow vegetables, the first shared city garden in Palermo. After this experience I decide to become an entrepreneur to make a living and improve the quality of my life.

The difficulties and obstacles I faced in Italy

Of course, starting a business in Italy and especially in Sicily is very difficult because of the slow bureaucracy. Often it is incomprehensible and it really slow your business,

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



with all the good will you can put it really affects your business. You have to be very stubborn; you have to go every day to the public offices and try to connect with professionals like labour consultant, tax consultants, a friend that has experience as a restaurant owner. So, at the beginning it took almost two years to make my dream come true. I took two years to overcome all these bureaucratic obstacles. My strengths in this business idea were my story, my origin, my social engagement, my professional activities in the territory and in the city. This allowed me to start my restaurant with a vast and variegated clientele: my political buddies, my fellow students. This has been an important strength to start up my business. I have to thank all my friends and staff who gave me the opportunity to learn from my mistakes and improve my performance as a business man. It is important to know that if you decide to be an entrepreneur in Palermo this will absorb lots of energy, you have to learn all laws and rules. There are a lot of controls from the public authorities which can fine you so you have to know everything to avoid fines.

What I achieved

Part of my success is due to the city of Palermo which is very welcoming. People are very open minded, at least the people I know. For a foreigner it is difficult to get a mortgage or financing to start a business but I had the advantage to have people who believed in me right from the beginning helping me to get a loan from the bank. Also, many people helped me in my business giving me support and advice so I have to thank the city of Palermo because my business would be much more difficult to set up in another European city. Here there is a sense of community, of contact and solidarity.

If I am sixteen today...

I would recommend myself to study. My parents were pushing me to study because I was a bad student. Another advice is to hang out with the right people. In this way you can be transparent, open heart and honest.



What is success for me

Success is sometimes linked to dreams and ideas. I am very lucky because in pursuing my dreams and ideas I was very lucky. Being lucky is one of the key factors of success. Within an idea success is also given by willpower, commitment, lucky circumstances.

A person that inspired me

Many people inspired me. Of course, during the years I changed my models. When I was young, I was more “revolutionist”. So, my models were Malcom X, Che Guevara, all the personalities who fought for our civil rights and freedom. Growing old, I had the need of referring to someone more tangible, so I am happy to have a brother who is an exceptional person, who fights against Mafia. Under an intellectual point of view, I am inspired by some personalities related to culture and theatre. In Italy it is easy to know architects, writers, directors, in general in the artistic and cultural sector.

Three words to describe what you need to be successful in the job market

From my experience in Sicily, two things are fundamental: studying to improve your skills and knowledge in the sector you like; honesty to make a contribution to our community at local level. It is important to create the base for your clientele for your business. Honesty is the key and first factor to build a relationship between you and your clientele. Engagement, dedication and never stop innovating oneself, never stop believing on oneself. Of course, it is difficult to get a loan from a bank but there are other ways to fund your business such as friends and people who trust in you.