

Björn Söderberg

“Social responsibility and profitability must be combined and put into practical action.”

Björn is a young social entrepreneur. He has already, at the age of 28, build three companies, one in Sweden and two in Nepal. All of his companies have a strong base of social responsibility and practicality, rather than long hours of drafting policy documents. The philosophy is simple – what is actually important is what you really do, not what you say!

Björn Söderberg was awarded “Speaker of the year 2008” by Talarforum, “Leader of the future” by Junior Chamber International in 2007 and “Sweden’s most inspiring entrepreneur” by the confederation of Swedish enterprises in 2004.

Björn went to Nepal at the age of 19 with a quest of ‘gaining perspective’. We get to follow Björn through his journey to Kathmandu, from the slums around the Baghmati river to developing smart phone applications with Nepalese engineers. The first company Watabaran was inspired by the unattended piles of garbage all around; followed by Fair Enterprise Network, and WebSearch Professional an IT company based in Kathmandu. All of his three companies thrive with one common value of combining social responsibility with profit in order to create a sustainable development.

Entrepreneurship

Björn could learn to produce much with minimal resources only in a country like Nepal. He remembers, “We did not have any money, just an idea and a vision that we could do something to change a careless and pathetic garbage situation. We sold 3000 Christmas cards of recycled paper to a Swedish company, even before we learned how to produce it. After that we learned how to produce handmade recycled paper and made our first delivery on time.”

One of the core themes to Björn’s lecture is about his failures and the difficulties of running a business in entirely another culture and setting. His motto is very realistic, “The person who has never failed has never really tried.”

Leadership & production

“Our aim is to make profit, expand the business so we can employ more people, recycle more garbage and make a bigger positive impact in the society. To achieve this we must ensure that we always work to become better and more efficient.”

When working as a social entrepreneur it is equally important to apply good leadership along with efficient production methods and hard work. Björn shares his realistic experiences of managing companies in a developing country; his experiences is exciting, inspiring and pragmatic, ranging from finding creative solutions to overcome 12 hours of power cuts every day to dealing with corruption and motivating the employees.

***Title:** entrepreneur*

Companies:

- Fair Enterprise Network AB – establishing companies in developing countries
- Watabaran Pvt. Ltd – recycling paper in Nepal
- WebSearch Professional Pvt. Ltd – An IT Company in Kathmandu
- Watabaran Alternative Energy Pvt. Ltd - Björn is right now in process of starting a new company in Kathmandu, working with renewable energy