

Project Group (Number and Name): **47 The role of sustainable entrepreneurs in societal U-turns for sustainable development**

Comment

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The climate change increases the importance of sustainable behaviour and awareness rapidly. Shocking pictures of starving people, landscapes, which became infertile and uninhabitable and disastrous climate catastrophes dominate the daily news. These developments ask for a necessary change in the consumers' and entrepreneurs' action and face them with new challenges. Never has the role of sustainable entrepreneurs been more important for sustainable development as some turning points in environmental change are already irreversible. Consequently, there are numerous challenges for sustainable entrepreneurs. In the following some ideas how to implement sustainable entrepreneurship and the associated challenges and difficulties are presented.

The first association many people have when they think or hear about sustainable products or services is "unaffordable". Unfortunately, this cannot be denied as sustainable businesses have way higher expenses such as fair wages, compared to regular competitors. On one hand parts of the population cannot afford sustainability due to their low income. Here the possibilities for sustainable entrepreneurs are limited since most expenses cannot be lowered quickly without a loss in quality or sustainability. It is a problem that lawmakers could have a bigger influence on. On the other hand, there are still people who can afford higher prices for sustainable products but do not see the necessity or do not have the willingness. In this case, it's the responsibility of sustainable entrepreneurs to win these people as new customers by communicate why the sustainable products are the better choice and encourage as many people as possible. After all, the change sustainable entrepreneurs must initiate can only be achieved if most of the society supports them and shares their willpower for sustainable U-turns.

Due to the given circumstances, it is the politics' responsibility to support sustainable business-models to enable for example sustainable start-ups to become serious competitors of the big companies. Indeed, there are high risks for the free-market economy when the politics interfere with the competition of the economy. But sustainability and environmental protection themselves are not profitable for companies. Rather the opposite: Sustainable development is one of the core barriers for economic growth. Having a look at the last years and recent developments of climate change, we see that most of the big companies are not even now motivated to change their business model in a sustainable way. And these companies are still successful, but some innovative start-ups, which really advocate for a more sustainable future can't compete with these companies on the level of mass consumption and mass industry. That is why the politics must act and make sure that

sustainable entrepreneurs have a chance to establish themselves in the mass market and compete on the same level than the big companies do.

To conclude, one challenge is to combine sustainability in its various forms with economic growth. Sustainability in entrepreneurship does not merely focus on ecological but also social and economic sustainability. To facilitate this, a fitting environment for those companies needs to be established for example via politics. Furthermore, a mutual awareness of both, the customers' requirements and the companies' sustainability aim must be created in an accessible way for all customers. Consequently, there are obstacles to overcome. If everyone aims for the same sustainable development goals, the much-needed change can be achieved.