



Bananika

Giving bananas a happy ending, demonstrating how seeing the value in unused fruit not only reduces food waste, but also promotes sustainability and creativity.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Terceira, Azores, Portugal

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 - Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19 - LEADER CLLD

Funding:	Total budget	47 799 (EUR)
	EAFRD	17 278 (EUR)
	National/Regional	3 049 (EUR)
	Private/Own funds	22 335 (EUR)
	Crowdfunding	4 137 (EUR)
	Award prize money	1000 (EUR)

Timeframe: 2020 - 2021

Project promoter: Tibério de Melo Barbeito

Name and surname: Tibério de Melo Barbeito

Email: info.bananika@gmail.com,
geral.quintadoscedros@gmail.com

Phone number: +351 967461369

Website: facebook.com/BananikaPortugal/



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extended shelf life, solving a problem faced by one of the promoters, as well as other banana producers on Terceira Island.

Bananika has come to occupy a market segment sought after by young consumers looking for refreshing, lower-alcohol drinks at a reasonable price, as an alternative to the usual beers, wines and ciders that already exist.

Summary

Bananika was born in 2017, in one of Europe's outermost regions, Terceira Island in the Azores archipelago. It has its origin in the creative minds of two partners, Tibério Barbeito and Leon Biermann. Their main objective was to give rejected bananas a purpose, demonstrating how seeing the value of unused fruit not only reduces food waste, but also promotes sustainability and creativity. The end result was a cider that also encapsulated the local identity.

On Terceira Island, it is estimated that over 100 tonnes of bananas are wasted every year due to overproduction in the hottest summer months and also because some of the bananas produced are not of a size that meets market requirements.

By creating a fermented banana drink, the huge amount of waste generated is transformed into a value-added product with an

Project results

- 1.5 tonnes of bananas saved from waste in one year from one producer.
- 3 tonnes of bananas used to produce Bananika, which would otherwise have gone to waste, since the project began.
- 14 000 bottles a year are currently produced, with a capacity of 18 000 a month.
- Transforming huge amounts of waste generated into value-added products with extended shelf life, opening up a new opportunity for Azorean banana producers to deal with overproduction.
- Sense of community in the project. The brand provides a feeling of belonging shared by the younger population. The feeling of connection and mutual support is essential for promoting collective well-being and development of strong social ties in the outermost region of Europe.
- Participation in entrepreneurship challenges and competitions, awards won.





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Key lessons and recommendations

Attendance at public events, social networks and the media were all vehicles for publicising the project and presenting it as a successful, credible and inspiring example.

The success of the product, which is much appreciated by locals and tourists alike, also demonstrates its quality, in addition to the fact that it has created so many ancillary benefits. It has also been recognised and won several awards, both in terms of the product itself and the ecological aspect of the project. Furthermore, a brand has been created that a community, a region and an island can all identify with.

Context

Tibério Barbeito is a 36-year-old sales technician, born and raised in the city of Angra do Heroísmo, on Terceira Island, in the Azores. He is a farmer and ornamental plant nurseryman, and as a banana producer, he became aware of the enormous waste that results from banana production.

Wondering what to do with the fruit that consumers no longer buy and that the market no longer has the capacity to sell due to the high level of production in the summer months, he began to look for ideas for use that would later lead to the process of transforming bananas into a fermented drink.

In 2017 he met, through a mutual friend, Leon Biermann, a 33-year-old German studying for a master's degree in business at the Portuguese Catholic University. Their mutual passion for beekeeping and agriculture formed the basis of their friendship. Together they presented Bananika at the 'Ready to Start Angra' start-up event and ended up winning.

It took around two years of testing, carried out by Tibério himself, to get all the fermentation parameters under control, with the aim

of achieving a transformation process that results in a quality drink with an alcohol content of 5-6%, slightly fruity and with an aroma that identifies with the island where it is produced.

During this period, the brand was designed and registered, market research was carried out and contacts were made with other farmers interested in delivering their excess production.

Objectives

The project had four main objectives, the main one being to fight food waste. On Terceira Island, around 13% of banana production, or 100 tonnes, is wasted every year. This leads to generating economic value from a product that would otherwise be wasted. With Bananika, waste is transformed into a value-added product, generating economic value for the promoter and other producers who deliver their waste. Value is also found in a by-product of the drink, with the banana peels and solid pulp resulting from pressing used for organic fertiliser. Finally, there was the creation of a new brand for the region, with Bananika being the only banana cider in the country and already now part of the Azores brand.

Activities

Prior to commencing the project, around two years of work were spent researching, testing and perfecting the technique that led to the final product.

Bananika trademark registration was ongoing from 2017-2018 and in January 2018, the project was presented at Ready to Start Angra - a boot camp for entrepreneurs organised by Angra do Heroísmo City Council, through StartUp Angra and in partnership with Beta-i (one of Europe's leading business accelerators). During the event, a business model was created for Bananika. Tibério's know-how in banana production and fermentation, together with Leon's business insights, led to them winning the event.

2019 also saw the pair participate in the BET (Bring Entrepreneurs Together) social entrepreneurship challenge where a crowdfunding campaign was carried out. Bananika had a total of 194 contributions and raised EUR 4 137. They also took part and finished second in Taste Up, an accelerator programme designed to promote innovation and the tourist experience in the areas of gastronomy and wine tourism.

With CAP funding, the pair acquired the machinery and equipment needed to produce the drink (e.g., laboratory equipment, ripening tanks, maceration and fermentation tanks, filling machines, labelling machines, and other items that enable the production of a beverage that meets the market requirements for quality and stability).





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By December 2022, Barbeito and Biermann had implemented a strong digital marketing strategy for promotion in Portugal, with the official launch of the brand coming six months later at the Sanjoaninas festivities in Angra do Heroísmo. They went on to win the Lisbon Food Affair Innovation Award in the food and beverage category later that year and take part in the Até à Última Pisca seminar at the invitation of the Angra do Heroísmo Chamber of Commerce. This initiative brought together government, business and charity experts on two themes, the first focused on strategy and planning for combating food waste, and the second with the presence of businesses and organisations which implement projects and actions to combat waste, such as Bananika.

Today, Bananika is sold in a large number of local bars, restaurants and shops and also in locations on the mainland.

Main results

Since the project began, it is estimated that around three tonnes of bananas have been used to produce Bananika, which would otherwise have gone to waste. In 2022 alone and from just one producer, 1.5 tonnes of bananas were saved from waste.

By creating a fermented banana drink, the project is transforming the huge amount of waste generated into a value-added product with an extended shelf life. The drink is opening up a new chance for Azorean banana producers to deal with their overproduction. The company is currently producing 14 000 bottles per year, although the current plant can bottle up to 18 000 bottles a month.

The project has also generated a sense of community, with the brand providing a feeling of belonging shared essentially by the younger members of the population. This feeling of connection and mutual support is essential for promoting collective well-being and the development of strong social ties in this outermost region of Europe.

The product has participated in various business challenges, festivals and competitions, ending up as a finalist in the BET24 Social Entrepreneurship Fair, second in the Territórios Criativos Taste Up competition and winner at the Lisbon Food Affair Innovation Awards in the food and beverage category.

Key lessons

One of the most pleasing aspects of Bananika is that it is an innovative project born from the ideas of two young people who were concerned about food waste and environmental sustainability.

The success of the product, which is much appreciated by locals and tourists alike, also demonstrates its quality, in addition to the fact that it has created so many ancillary benefits. It has also been recognised and won several awards, both in terms of the product itself and the ecological aspect of the project. Furthermore, a brand has been created that a community, a region and an island can all identify with. This has been achieved by working with the government of the Azores to associate the product with the Azores Brand, which aggregates and distinguishes the region's best products, increasing the potential for networking with and between other similarly recognised products.

Additional informations:

Facebook:

facebook.com/BananikaPortugal/

Instagram:

instagram.com/bananikaportugal/

TikTok:

tiktok.com/@bananikaportugal



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