



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Women-led
cooperatives
support
programme

FAO's experiences
in the field



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Required citation:

FAO. 2024. *Women-led cooperatives support programme – FAO’s experiences in the field*. Ankara. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9567en>

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ISBN 978-92-5-138582-1

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Abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICA	International Cooperative Alliance
ILO	International Labour Organization
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PDoAF	Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SuTP	Syrians under Temporary Protection
UN	United Nations

Foreword

Gender inequalities are evident in agriculture labour markets, where women are more likely than men to hold low-wage, part-time, seasonal, and informal employment. Gender based discrimination also undermines women's voice and decision-making power as they tend to lack access to information and networks and are systematically under represented in rural institutions and organizations.

One of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation's (FAO) mandates is to "advance equitable livelihoods, contribute to the elimination of poverty by promoting full and productive employment, decent work, entrepreneurship, equitable access to resources, and adequate social protection for all actors along the food value chain and leave no one behind". Even though women make a substantial contribution to food security and nutrition as they continue to be primarily responsible for domestic and care work at the household and community level, they do not always have a say about critical choices to be made, nor do they have control over the income generated through their work. Closing the gender gap in agriculture is, therefore, essential to fulfilling FAO's mandate.

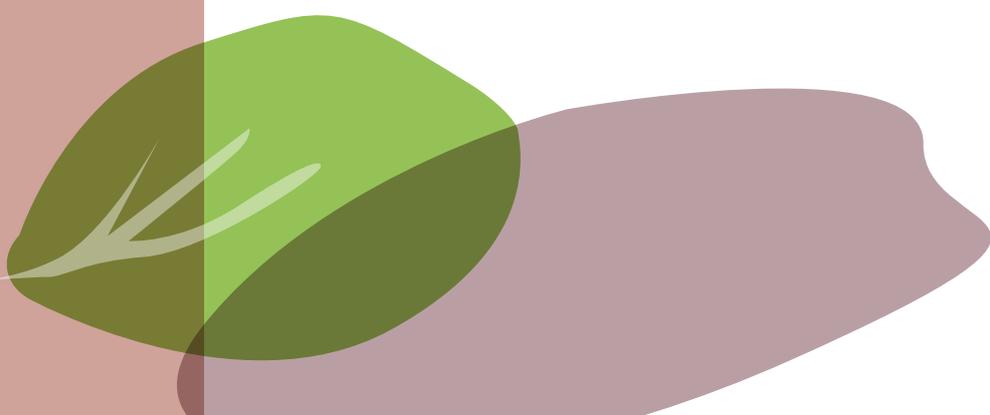
Agriculture in Türkiye is dominated by small family farms; about 90 percent of those employed in the agriculture sector are owner-producers and unpaid family workers, mainly women. Forty-three percent of agriculture workers are women, a larger percentage than in most other sectors. Women working in the agrifood sector are more engaged in seasonal and low-paid jobs due to their low level of skill, limited experience, and their role as primary caregivers, with limited access to child-care services.

FAO recognizes that persisting inequalities between women and men are a major obstacle to agriculture and rural development, and that eliminating these disparities is essential to building sustainable and inclusive food systems, and resilient and peaceful societies. According to the FAO policy on gender equality for the period 2020-2030, special attention should be placed on overcoming the persistent gender inequalities that undermine women's potential and increase their vulnerability to the economic challenges facing the agriculture sector.

Cooperatives in rural areas can and will also contribute to women:

- to produce and market value-added agriculture products;
- to purchase agriculture inputs and small agriculture machines at lower and affordable prices;
- to access credit instruments for financing new and additional agriculture enlargement investments;
- to transfer the knowledge and experience of other women from other parts of the region, country, and world;
- to set up partnerships and establish solidarity and collaboration networks to design and prepare development projects and obtain funding;
- women-led cooperatives are a model of women's organizations. This model aims to achieve income-generating activities and social goals together and envisages equality between cooperative members;
- cooperatives effectively contribute to women's human capital, and employability and limit their poverty by providing vocational training, professional life, and work experience;
- women-led cooperatives contribute to the transformation of the unequal gender based; division of labour and power relations in the household – this is achieved by cooperatives by expanding women's place in economic and social life, and by accessing resources such as income, social networks, institutional rights, and services;
- through cooperatives, women socialize and cooperate with each other rather than try to tackle problems alone, get a better position both in the family and in the community, have marketing and sales opportunities, and get entrepreneurship opportunities, child care services, and education.

In this respect, FAO's work to support women to participate in cooperatives and rural organizations, and support women-led cooperatives and organizations, is more or less the only uninterrupted international effort in least developed and developing countries to reach gender equality as per the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).







Viorel Gutu

Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia

Effects of cooperatives on women's economic, social and cultural empowerment

As FAO, we bring women and youth to the fore in all our work. Under the “better life” target stated in our strategy document covering the 2022–2031 period, “gender equality and the empowerment of rural women” is one of the 20 underlined policy areas. In this context, we prioritize the role and visibility of women in all the projects we carry out – because we know that if we do not close the gender gap in the agrifood system, all our efforts to support sustainable agriculture and rural development will be in vain or weak. The future of food systems depends on enabling women in the agriculture sector to tap into their potential.





Dr Ayşegül Selışık

FAO Assistant Representative

Cooperation means solidarity, collaboration. Without establishing this solidarity, it will not be possible to achieve social and economic integration. As FAO, our goal is to make these structures sustainable so that women can stand on their own feet after the project. I believe that strong women will look to the future more hopefully, with strong brands with stories. At this point, as our cooperatives put it, we will continue to “light their way” as FAO Türkiye.

Women-led cooperatives are structures established and operated by women, facilitating the participation of women in social and economic life, working for both social and economic purposes in their activities. In other words, women-led cooperatives are women only structures endeavouring to reduce economic and social inequalities based on gender in society, serving social development as well as creating employment for women at local level. The fact that women-led cooperatives operate in the interests of social concerns, and contribute to development, is due to the basic principles of cooperatives, not because they are women-led cooperatives.

According to research, women-led cooperatives contribute to at least three SDGs: eliminating poverty, promoting gender equality, and economic growth. Cooperatives have led to an increase in female employment, the creation of a new brand, encouraged good agriculture and clean production, an increase in healthy living standards, a decrease in migration to big cities, and an increase in village activity due to the e-commerce of cooperatives. In addition to earning money, women have become more active and visible in their social life, and more willing to have their children and grandchildren pursue higher education. These studies indicate that women-led cooperatives enable bargaining with patriarchy for the socioeconomic empowerment of women in societies where the patriarchal structure restricts women. It is also thought that in a closed community, women’s socioeconomic participation is made easier through women-led cooperatives.

Women-led cooperatives provide a significant opportunity to support women’s leadership, where gender inequality issues in leadership, management, and decision-making processes exist. Findings show that leadership empowers women. Women not only manage cooperatives but also become community leaders in some cooperatives, such as Emirgazi in Konya, and Hafsa Sultan in Manisa.

Women transform the female identity into a collective one within the cooperative. Women take an activist role in women-led cooperatives, which is a movement in itself. The fact that women-led cooperatives in Türkiye is a movement, and that women's activist role is emphasized, is clear evidence that this model has a transformative role. Because women are not passive members of cooperatives, they fight not only for themselves but also for other women, act with cooperation and solidarity with other women-led cooperatives, and make collective legal demands for the improvement of their organizational capacities and sustainability.

It is apparent that women-led cooperatives do not compete with one another, but rather work together to build communication networks. Women-led cooperatives are also involved in collaborative economic efforts such as the purchasing of products and coproduction. Women-led cooperatives have faced common problems in the legislative framework, cooperative management and governance, sustainable business model development, and with financial difficulties. The legal regulations for women-led cooperatives are contained in the Cooperatives Law and the Turkish Commercial Code. The current legislation and regulations do not meet women's needs, including changes in the tax law, the inclusion of members in the scope of social security, and facilitating their work in the field of care services, grants, and funds for women-led cooperatives. In terms of sustainable business and financial difficulties, women-led cooperatives face similar problems.

Women-only rural organizations such as women-led cooperatives are a platform for solidarity, sharing their common problems and finding solutions, raising women's awareness of their rights, and earning income. Women-led cooperatives can provide the basis for creative and achievable resolutions in bargaining over power relations. Moreover, women led cooperatives provide not only an opportunity for employment, but also an opportunity for women to become socially empowered through training. Besides, they engage in leadership positions and decision-making processes. These opportunities are a small step towards gender equality because there are a considerable amount of women who would otherwise not be able to work or participate in the public sphere without participating in women-led cooperative activities.

Women-led cooperatives have created a network with local authorities, production unions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There is no single model of women-led cooperative, but rather various experiences. Based on FAO experiences in Türkiye, women led cooperatives are crucial rural organizations in terms of women's empowerment and promotion of gender equality.





FAO's global strategy on women-led cooperatives



Gender equality has become the focus of the international cooperative movement since the beginning of the 1990s. In 1995, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) signed a resolution, Gender Equality in Cooperatives, to create gender equality among cooperative partners at a global level. Similarly, the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized the importance of increasing the number of female partners in cooperatives, including women with management duties, in its Recommendatory Decision number 193 published in 2002. Thus, the United Nations (UN) made 2012 the Year of Cooperatives, and stressed the significance of cooperatives for sustainable progress and in the struggle against poverty, with the motto “cooperative institutions can set up a better world”. These advances have shaped cooperative policies and national strategies across the world.

Women in rural areas play crucial roles in agriculture activities and in increasing food and nutrition security, as farmers or producers, workers, and entrepreneurs. However, women in rural areas have less access than men to the resources and opportunities they need to be fully productive in agriculture and to ensure the food security, nutrition, and well-being of their families and future generations.

Cooperatives can play an important role in overcoming the barriers faced by women and in supporting small agriculture producers. Evidence shows that efficient cooperatives have the capacity to empower their members economically and socially, and to create sustainable employment through equitable and inclusive business models that are more resilient to shocks. Cooperatives offer small producers a range of services, aimed at improving:

- access to and management of natural resources;
- access to productive resources, technology, and infrastructure to increase small producers' productivity and income generation;
- access to markets for goods and food distribution;
- access to information, knowledge, and skills development to improve self-confidence and human capital;
- collective bargaining power in input and output markets; and
- active participation in decision-making, from the grassroots to policy formulation.

The services provided by cooperatives enable smallholder women and men to secure their needs and entitlements and to leverage market opportunities more effectively, thus contributing to poverty alleviation and the eradication of hunger.

Cooperatives, specifically women-led cooperatives, are the platforms that enable women to promote their leadership opportunities. Despite the household chores and labour-intensive work that women perform in agriculture, their role remains mainly unrecognized and unpaid, because of women's lack of a voice in decision-making processes at all levels – from households to rural organizations. Women leaders can advocate for increasing women's access to and control over resources and productive inputs, in turn boosting women's productivity, raising their incomes, and leading to the improved availability of food and employment, and decent work.

The active involvement of women in cooperatives and rural productive organizations would foster recognition of the role that women play in agriculture and help to eliminate the constraints and issues that they face. There is increasing evidence from research and field experience that collective action through cooperatives or rural organizations can improve the access of women to the resources, services, and information that would enable them to develop sustainable livelihoods. The gender policies of FAO have a strategic objective dedicated to ensuring that women have an equal voice and influence in rural institutions and organizations. Women-led cooperatives, or rural women's organizations, are effective in bringing women together and ensuring a safe space where they can gain self-confidence and learn how to exercise leadership skills, access information, join their efforts and create a common working culture, network, share experiences, and gain access to markets through interaction and free expression. Through cooperatives, women can address their needs and priorities.



Overview of Turkish cooperatives and focus on women-led cooperatives

The cooperative model itself has been used in Türkiye for over a century to advance employment opportunities, provide goods and services, and contribute to the economy. According to the ICA, a cooperative is an “autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations, through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise”. Women-led cooperatives specifically first started to be established in 1999 in Türkiye. They are created by women, for women.

In Türkiye, cooperatives are regulated by three ministries – the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation, and Climate Change. Law 1163 is the Turkish Cooperative Law. Article 1 of Law 1163 provides the following description of cooperatives:

Cooperatives are bodies with variable members, variable capital, and legal identity that are established by real and legal entities in order to ensure and maintain certain economic interests and especially the needs of their members toward professional life and living standards by means of mutual assistance, solidarity and service as trustees to each other. The ILO Recommendation 193 defines a cooperative as:

An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise (Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation. 2002. No. 193. Recommendation concerning the promotion of cooperatives. Geneva, 90th ILO Session, 20 June 2002).

The Turkish Cooperatives Strategy and Action Plan 2012–2016 proposes that cooperatives have an increasingly significant role to play in strategies for alleviating poverty and achieving a variety of benefits in Türkiye. These benefits include expanding access to finance, creating new jobs, improving market regulation, and increasing social capital. In this plan, placing women within cooperative organizations is also stressed, to increase their entrepreneurship activities and make them important actors in the economy.



FAO Türkiye Women-led cooperatives Support programme

FAO's twin-track strategy for supporting gender equality via the Women-led cooperatives support programme consists of gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions.

While gender mainstreaming focuses on systematically integrating a gender perspective to meet various needs and requirements, targeted interventions provide more direct input – through programmes and projects – into targeted areas where the gender gap is wider.

The Women-led cooperatives support programme adopts a multidimensional approach for women in the agriculture sector and rural areas. Supporting women-led cooperatives enables women to have financial independence, which also leads to increased self-awareness and personal development. Accordingly, the promotion and better representation of women in the community help to build an improved socioeconomic structure regarding gender equality. Social and economic axes and outputs of the programme work in synergy to contribute to a sustainable gender equality development climate, which will endure beyond the completion of the programme.

Furthermore, promoting and supporting gender equality also boosts innovation capabilities and mindset. Along with the extended market reach and direct selling capacity via the e-commerce platform Hepyeyinden.coop, which led cooperative members to plan to open up to international markets, the programme is shown to stimulate the production of new products. The introduction of digitalization and an innovation culture will help women create new opportunities for themselves and their communities.



Under the cooperatives support programme, agriculture development cooperatives under the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are defined as a target group together with women entrepreneurship, production and business cooperatives registered under the Ministry of Trade. Provincial directorates of agriculture and forestry identified potential beneficiary cooperatives, applied the selection criteria, and shortlisted candidates for FAO's final selection. FAO selected one cooperative from each province based on their potential to improve with the support they would receive within the programme. Therefore, the programme involves women-led cooperatives that are regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

FAO Türkiye supported 22 cooperatives as of October 2022, three of which (Turna, İlmek and Ankara Pastası) were established under FAO supervision, while the other 19 were already active. FAO supports the cooperatives through capacity development programmes and by supplying equipment.

The capacity development support includes training on decision-making, governance, and non-violent communication. In addition to communication and organizational development training, guidance and mentorship services are provided for financial management, tax, social security premiums, and income sharing models, together with consideration of agreed business plans. The equipment provision includes basic materials to produce defined products that are local and sustainable. The materials consist mainly of a mixer, vacuum machines, packaging tools, cooking materials, and so on. In some cooperatives, the support process is based on repairing and providing furniture for the



cooperative centre or sales areas.

The cooperatives were supported differently, depending on their requirements. To the cooperatives in Adana, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa and Van, renovation and marketing materials were provided, while Yigitali Cooperative in Bursa was supported through professional kitchen equipment and utilities. In Hatay, a lift was reconstructed, and renovation, materials, and equipment support was delivered. Fruit drying machines and materials were provided to Turuncu Eller Cooperative in Izmir, and members benefitted from brand registration and barcode improvements for their products. Tarhana chips production machines and equipment were provided to the cooperative in Kahramanmaraş, and the cooperative renovated the production facility and cooperative building and FAO supported this cooperative by providing for gluten-free products kitchen in Manisa.

FAO's cooperatives support programme was started under the first phase of the project, Promoting Self-Reliant Livelihoods Through Employment and Microentrepreneurship, which was conducted by the leadership of FAO with the support of the Government of Japan in 2017. The Şükraan Foundation for Supporting Agriculture Development and Social Improvement, From Soil to Plate Agriculture Development Cooperatives, and the Şemim Soap brand for Halep soaps in Mardin; the Turna Women's Cooperative for producing and marketing stuffed mussels in Izmir with the support of Izmir Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry; and the production and marketing of chili pepper and isot (Urfa pepper) in Şanlıurfa, were established during the first and second phases of the project. On the other hand, within the scope of the EU-funded Promoting resilience through improved livelihoods project, one women-led agriculture development cooperative in each project province (Adana, Bursa, Gaziantep, Hatay, Izmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Manisa, Sanliurfa, and Van) was selected to be supported in order to create employment and support women's entrepreneurship. All cooperatives were supported in the area of agrifood business development to strengthen self-resilience, create new employment opportunities, and increase the income generation of vulnerable people and host communities. Within the scope of the GEF (Global Environmental Facility)-funded project, Sustainable Land



Management and Climate Friendly Agriculture (implemented by FAO and the Government of Türkiye), one women-led cooperative was supported to improve the livelihoods of female farmers in rural areas. The fact that the chairperson of the cooperative's board of directors is the only female mukhtar in rural areas in Konya and Karaman – the project implementation sites – makes this support unique and important. Under the project, members of the cooperative were given training, and provided with equipment and materials.

In addition to ten women-led cooperatives, three additional cooperatives in Hatay, Izmir, and Manisa provinces were designed to benefit cooperatives' support. The total number of cooperatives that benefitted from support under the project was therefore 13, in ten provinces. The new component of the project aims to provide income-generation opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTP) and host community women by strengthening the capacities of selected women-led agrifood cooperatives in targeted provinces.

Within the scope of the Women-led cooperatives support programme, the main goals are to initiate the digitalization process and promote the Cooperative Business Model for production and management for women. FAO Türkiye has been providing mentorship and training to support members of the cooperatives in the following ways:

- Official cooperative documents were prepared.
- Cooperative members' training needs were analysed and a training plan was prepared and approved by FAO accordingly.
- Cooperative board members' training was conducted for increasing governance, and improve facilitation skills and organizational behaviour.
- Establishing a core value chain analysis.
- Digital platform integration and marketing.
- Social media support for visibility.
- Preparation of a cooperative business plan.



- Reporting.

In addition to this training, gender equality and women's empowerment training were provided to discuss the effects of cooperatives on women's economic empowerment, developing skills in areas such as income generating activities, capacity building, product development, marketing, and good governance through cooperatives, providing sociocultural services, raising awareness of women's human rights in accessing public services, and lobbying activities.

In order to follow the latest technological developments, increase women's marketing and digitalization capacities, carry out e-commerce services in joint cooperation, and create a common marketing area, it was planned to establish the e-commerce platform with the signature of ten cooperatives in ten provinces according to feedback from women-led agrifood cooperatives.

The joint cooperation protocol agreement between the cooperatives in Van, Kilis, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaras, Izmir, Adana, Sanliurfa, Bursa, Manisa, and Hatay was signed on 15 February 2022 in Izmir.

Furthermore, ten of these cooperatives jointly initiated the establishment of a new e-commerce platform under the guidance of FAO Türkiye. The platform, hepyerinden.coop, aims to enhance market opportunities and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the cooperatives by enabling them to reach a broader customer base, increase sales, decrease marketing costs, and benefit from other opportunities provided by digitalization. This platform will be run by the cooperatives themselves under the technical guidance of FAO.

A. Objective of the cooperatives programme

Through supporting cooperatives, inclusive economic growth by reducing inequalities between women and men enables an environment for a better life. Through cooperatives, women develop their personal capacities, socialize, cooperate with each other, strive together against the difficulties they face, increase their self-confidence, have a better position both in the family and in society, facilitate their access to economic activities, and



have marketing and sales opportunities.

They get better job and entrepreneurial opportunities, take leadership positions, and have better access to child care services and education. Not only do they meet their needs economically, they also meet their social and cultural needs. Women's empowerment through cooperatives, partnership, cooperation, participation in decisions, and the development of leadership, business development, and business management skills, create positive changes in their lives, enabling them to have a better life, and a reduction in gender inequality.

B. A joint e-commerce platform – hepyerinden.coop

Within the scope of the project Building Resilience of SuTP and Host Communities in Türkiye through Supporting Socioeconomic Integration and Creating Livelihood Opportunities, the following cooperatives came together to establish the “hepyerinden coop e-commerce digital platform”: Artos Women's Agriculture Development Cooperative (Van), Ayıntap Agriculture Development Cooperative (Gaziantep), Kilizi Agriculture Development Cooperative (Kilis), Mutlu Besin Agriculture Development Cooperative (Kahramanmaraş), Nazende Agriculture Development Cooperative (Şanlıurfa), Samandağ District Centre and Neighbourhoods Agriculture Development Cooperative (Hatay), Soma Women's Agriculture Development Cooperative (Manisa), Tapan Eli Women Farmers Agriculture Development Cooperative (Adana), Orange Hands Agriculture Development Cooperative (Izmir), Emirgazi Women's Enterprise Production and Business Cooperative and Uludag Yiğitali Women's Agriculture Development Cooperative (Bursa). Through the e-commerce digital platform established by ten cooperatives from ten provinces, cooperatives will be able to follow the latest technological developments, increase their marketing and digitalization capacities, carry out e-commerce services in joint cooperation, and create a common marketing area.

Detailed information on the cooperatives supported by the FAO cooperative support programme – which was signed by the hepyerinden.coop E-Commerce Digital Platform Agreement – is included in Table 1.



Table 1. Women-led cooperatives

Adana	Tapaneli Farmer Women Agriculture Development Cooperative (TapaneliKoop)
The cooperative has 23 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Lavender products, raspberry jam
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes, and its social media accounts are active for marketing. It has provided a product list and details about products for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Ankara	Pastry Women Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative (AnkaraPastasiKoop)
The cooperative has 25 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship	
Main product	Gluten free patisserie.
The cooperative, established in 2022 with 13 members, has achieved significant success in a short period of time, through the technical and equipment support received from FAO. The efficiency of the members in sharing work and responsibilities is the key to the cooperative's success. It produces gluten-free products for celiac patients, and has developed a great strategy in product development in this niche market by working closely with relevant associations to determine the market's needs. By sharing their product trials with customers for free, and developing products based on the feedback received, the cooperative made a turnover of TRY 1 million in just nine months.	
Financed by the Japanese Government	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Bursa	Esebey Women Agriculture Development Cooperative
The cooperative has 22 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship	
Main product	Local food restaurant including the traditional tomato paste, flour, and jam.
The cooperative, which was established in 2019 with seven founding members, continues its activities with 19 members. It was allocated a place for production by the municipality, and later increased its technical and production capacity with the support of FAO. The cooperative, which also employs Syrian women, provides a restaurant service in a historical building, and lives up to the slogan "from field to table" by growing its own tomatoes. It also plays an active role in events and festivals, and has become an exemplary cooperative in a short period of time. In addition to retail sales, they also make bulk sales through agreements with national and international chain markets.	
Financed by the Japanese Government	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Bursa	Orhanili Women Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative (OrhaniliKoop)
The cooperative has 23 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Brunch service, local food
The Orhanili Women's Cooperative, located in the mountainous and rural district of Bursa, already existed, but it was inactive until it received technical and equipment support from FAO. With the support of the local government, the cooperative was allocated a production site for five years, where they serve breakfast and sell their products. Orhanili stands out for its natural beauty and rural tourism, with numerous festivals and events organized in the area and with the cooperative taking an active role. It has made significant progress with national and international support, creating a brand called Beyce and selling its products on various digital platforms.	
Financed by the Japanese Government	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Bursa	Uludağ Yiğitali Women Agriculture Development Cooperative (YiğitaliKoop)
The cooperative has 18 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Local breakfast, raspberry jam
The cooperative has started production and services processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. The cooperative has a breakfast serving area, and its members serve their customers their products for breakfast. Therefore, here in the cooperative, there are agriculture production activities together with a breakfast cafe enterprise. The cooperative has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop.	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Gaziantep	Ayıntap Agriculture Development Cooperative (AyıntapKoop)
The cooperative has seven members, and all are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Peanut butter, garlic pickle, dried strawberries
AyıntapKoop is a newly established cooperative. In Gaziantep, there is no agriculture women-led cooperative, so the implementing partner became a pioneer to establish a women-led agriculture development cooperative. The cooperative has not started production yet; it needs an operational place for production and packaging. The operational place that was sustained for cooperative work has been renovated through project support. During this process, the cooperative gets help for packaging from other resource providers. The cooperative sustains products from different producers and markets those products via social media. The cooperative has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Hatay	Samandağ Centre and Districts Agriculture Development Cooperative
The cooperative has 75 members – 47 men, 26 women, and two institutional members with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Pepper jam, walnut jam, pomegranate syrup
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. It has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop. In Hatay, Samandağ Woman Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative is registered as a member of Samandağ Agriculture Development Cooperative. The joint cooperative model is an important value for women's involvement and collective work for regional organizations that work at the same local.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Hatay	Samandağ Woman Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative (SamandağKoop)
The cooperative has 25 members – 23 women, and two women institutional members, with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Pepper jam, walnut jam, pomegranate syrup
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. It has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Izmir	Gümöz Mandarin Woman Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative
The cooperative has 11 members and all are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Mandarin products (cologne, dessert, vinegar, etc.)
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes, and its social media accounts are active for marketing. It has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Izmir	Özgür Turna Women Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative (TurnaKoop)
The cooperative has 19 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Borek, cake, geographical indication products.
The cooperative was established in November 2019. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the cooperative sustained its business plan and sales and marketing processes. Cooperative members are disadvantaged for many reasons, such as being victims of domestic violence, and some being earthquake survivors and refugees. The cooperative is the first supported by FAO Türkiye. One of the things that makes the cooperative sustainable is its training methodology, involving non-formal education and regular mentorship	
Financed by the Japanese Government	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Izmir	Turuncu Eller Agriculture Development Cooperative (TuruncuEllerKoop)
The cooperative has 11 members, and all are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Mandarin products (cologne, dessert, vinegar, etc.)
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. It has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop. In Izmir, Gümöz Mandarin Woman Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative is registered as a member of Turuncu Eller Agriculture Development Cooperative. The joint cooperative model is an important value for women's involvement and collective work for regional organizations that work at the same local.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Kahramanmaraş	Mutlu Besin Agriculture Development Cooperative (MutluBesinKoop)
The cooperative has 14 members, and all are women with Turkish citizenship. Five Syrian workers are invited according to the needs of the production process.	
Main product	Dried foods, crisps tarhana, Turkish noodle
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. The cooperative has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop. The cooperative is very active at the local and national levels.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Kilis	Kilizi Agriculture Development Cooperative (KiliziKoop)
The cooperative has 41 members, and all are women with Turkish citizenship. The cooperative has ten Syrian members.	
Main product	Olive oil soap, olive oil
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. It has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Konya	Emirgazi Women Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative (EmirgaziKoop)
The cooperative has ten members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Molasses, chickpeas, beans, lentils and thyme.
Emirgazi Women's Enterprise Production and Business Cooperative was established in Emirgazi (Konya) during the implementation of Sustainable Land Management and Climate Friendly Agriculture project. It was financed by GEF and implemented by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The members of the cooperative were given training on the history of the cooperative business model, governance in cooperatives, cooperation and decision-making, sales and marketing, and production and packaging in cooperatives. Equipment is also provided by the project, namely through the provision of a vacuum machine, barcode machine, computer, cash register, cooker, refrigerator, benches with cabinets and sinks, and steel boilers. Office space that was renovated according to the needs of the cooperative was provided by the district municipality of Emirgazi. The cooperative produces, packs and sells products in cooperation with Emirgazi municipality. They are also working together to develop a new product, chestnut coffee. It is present on social media and is a member of hepyerinden.coop. The cooperative will start to select products for hepyerinden.coop in the near future.	
Financed by the Global Environmental Facility	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Konya	Women Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative (EmrulgaziKoop)
The cooperative has seven members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Weaving rugs and handicrafts.
The cooperative, which has received raw material and weaving loom support from FAO, makes products such as carpets and rugs.	
Financed by the Global Environmental Facility	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Manisa	İlmeK Agriculture Development Cooperative
The cooperative has 15 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Weaving rug and handicrafts, eriste, tarhana, jam, tomato paste, and breakfast sauce.
In 2022, the cooperative was founded with seven members, and now has 14 members. It was established with the aim of increasing the employment and quality of life of disadvantaged women groups living in the region, and it has worked with Syrians under Temporary Protections. The cooperative, which received its first international support from FAO, is still in production. In addition to weaving, it has added local food products to the production range for a more sustainable production method for income generation.	
Financed by the Japanese Government	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Manisa	Women Entrepreneurship, Production and Business Cooperative (SalihliKoop)
The cooperative has 20 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Dried grape, molasses, grape leaves, dried tomato, olives, olive oil, lavender oil, jams, and traditional local food.
In 2019, the cooperative was established with nine founding members, and it currently has 15 members. After being trained by two cooperative members, a total of 60 women students are receiving education in the municipality's ceramics workshop. The cooperative, which received technical, and equipment support through the FAO project in 2022, is a social responsibility example that supports two disabled members. In addition to traditional food products, the cooperative produces lavender products alongside tomato paste, jam, olives, and olive oil.	
Financed by the Japanese Government	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Manisa	Soma Women's Atelier Production and Marketing Cooperative
The cooperative has 16 members, and all are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Jams, tomato sauce, Sakura handicraft products
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. It has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Mardin	Soil to Plate Agriculture Development Cooperative (TopraktanTabagaKoop)
The cooperative has 20 members, all of whom are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Soap, lentils, sesame, molasses, rice, and others
The cooperative was established in 2019. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the cooperative sustained its business plan and sales and marketing processes. The cooperative workers are mainly refugees. There were about 50 people working with the cooperative during the project implementation period. With FAO support, the cooperative produced 20 000 soaps, and during the pandemic the cooperative sold those soaps for hygiene. The income from sales of the soap was used for a unique e-commerce platform. Instagram influencers supported the marketing of the e-commerce platform, and since then, cooperative sales have increased rapidly. Today, is one of the most popular cooperative e-commerce platforms.	
Financed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Sanliurfa	Nazende Agriculture Development Cooperative (NazendeKoop)
The cooperative has 36 members – eight men and 28 women. Twenty-two of the members have Turkish citizenship, and 14 are Syrian.	
Main product	Pepper (isot), tomato souce
The cooperative has started production and packaging processes and its social media accounts are active for marketing. The cooperative has provided a product list and product details for the e-commerce digital platform hepyerinden.coop. The cooperative does not have proper production facilities. Cooperative members use their own production and packaging facilities in their own areas.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Van	Ahtamara Woman Agriculture Development Cooperative (ArtosKoop)
The cooperative has seven founding members and 13 newly registered members – all members are women with Turkish citizenship.	
Main product	Dried beans, honey, kavut (breakfast flour)
AhtamaraKoop is a newly established women-led cooperative in Van. Before the project implementation, there were no women-led cooperatives in Van under the Ministry of Trade or the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The cooperative has not started production and packaging processes yet. The place of the cooperative that was sustained by the district municipality of Gevas has been renovated according to the needs of the cooperative. The cooperative had some problems with management processes, and some members resigned, with the rest of its members organizing a general assembly meeting for cooperative reorganization. The cooperative has started renewing its social media accounts and selected products for hepyerinden.coop. The digitilization process is still ongoing.	
Financed by the European Union	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

All products were defined in May–June 2022 by cooperatives according to their stock situations and production business plans (raw material, financial plan, equipment). After the marketing of those products (three selected products from each cooperative), cooperatives could add more products to their online shop on hepyerinden.coop by considering their business plans, and financial and human resources situations.



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C. Stories from each cooperative

Women's empowerment through gastronomic excellence

Atiye Sönmez Erdoğan – Samandağ Kadın Girişimi, Üretim ve İşletme Kooperatifi, Hatay

Atiye is a local entrepreneur who is proud of her city's cultural inheritance. She had the vision of promoting the rich cuisine of Hatay – a UNESCO-registered gastronomy city with 680 flavours – to local and international food enthusiasts. As a result of her and her colleagues' efforts, the cooperative has trademarked seven brands.

She is a prominent figure in the local community, as a member of the Municipal Council and the branch leader of the Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği (Atatürkist Thought Association). She began the cooperative with a social focus, stating that “we set out to enable women who were left alone in many areas to come together in an organized manner and to guide our housewives, each of whom is a master in their own kitchen.”

“It is an honour and privilege for us to be supported by FAO”

Thanks to the support of FAO, the cooperative expanded its market with a digital presence. The e-commerce platform Hepyerinden.coop enabled the cooperative to sell its products online, directly to the end user. As a next step, she wants the cooperative to open up to the international market and promote the skills and labour of Hatay's women.



Not the money but the self-discovery

Hamide Polat – Kilizi Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Kilis

“This initiative helped me find myself, and made me more confident. Women can do anything, whenever they want. There’s really nothing women can’t do”

For Hamide, cooperative work is a family occupation. They produce soap, olives, and olive oil. Her husband founded an olive union soon after Kilizi Agriculture Development Cooperative was founded, and both the cooperative and the union collaborate on quite a number of projects. Ayten, Hamide’s daughter, was about seven or eight years old, when they established the cooperative. Today, Ayten is working alongside her mother as a member of the cooperative. Hamide says, “Our cooperative has always been an important part of our lives. The cooperative and my daughter grew up together. ”

“We paid for the majority of the costs ourselves because women did not have much economic independence at the time”

Hamide and her co-founders faced many challenges when they founded their cooperative. Many people didn’t believe in their mission but she and her friends set out to prove them wrong. “Since then, the number of members has gradually increased, and now we have reached 40 members. The governor and mayor of Kilis are also aware of our cooperative and its efforts, and they also support us.”

Hamide explains that the cooperative has had a great impact on her personal journey. She explains as follows: “My life hasn’t changed much since I started to earn money with the cooperative. I continued to live my life as it is, but there are changes in my personality. ”





New markets and new dreams

Işık Demirdöğen – Mutlu Besin Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Kahramanmaraş

“One of my biggest dreams is to see our cooperative’s name and our products in the markets of countries such as Germany and the Netherlands.”

Işık lives in Ceceli village, Kahramanmaraş. Since their village is close to the city centre, they have access to relatively more job opportunities. Işık describes her life before the cooperative by saying that she did not feel the need to work. “There was an understanding that could be translated as ‘if your husband works, you will be satisfied with that,’ which is no longer the case. We made the decision to change that.”

“Life has shown me that the way to achieve what I want is through challenging obstacles”

After she had children, she realized that life couldn’t be spent at home all the time. She decided to look for ways to improve herself. She started to make tomato paste, phyllo pastry, and tarhana – a local cereal food- and phyllo pastry herself in the village, but she had to market them somehow. In search of new ways, they started to produce a reliable approach with the cooperative. “Why shouldn’t we see our own products in markets abroad, why shouldn’t the products there be our products?”

She dreams of travelling abroad, describing her desire to meet new people and learn about other cultures. She also wants to see their products sold on an international scale. “Travelling is my dream, but I think we need to develop this business first, we still have a long way to go.”



An exotic first for agriculture

Zeynep Yavuz – Nazende Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Şanlıurfa

“FAO has been one of my major supports during this journey, shedding light on this path” Zeynep Yavuz is a High School of Commerce graduate, and before she joined the cooperative, she had a greenhouse where she grew her own cucumbers and isot peppers in Şanlıurfa. She explains that after her cooperative journey began, she started to grow dragon fruits. She was in search of a product that would bring a high profit. “I saw on the news that dragon fruits were consumed by important people, including Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. I concluded that this fruit had a high added value and I proposed my husband to plant it.”

“I can say that I’m the first person to produce dragon fruits in Şanlıurfa, and even in Türkiye” She visited the greenhouses in Mersin, Adana, and Tarsus one by one and learned how dragon fruits is grown, and ten days after that she started planting. “When it started to be heard that I was producing dragon fruits in Şanlıurfa, many institutions and organizations contacted me, and Anadolu Agency did an interview with me.”

“I greatly appreciate FAO’s support; I believe we can make our dreams come true with their support”

After dragon fruits, she started growing papaya plants. In their cooperative, they aim to grow tropical fruits – their next try will be with mango. In the long run, due to its high vitamin value, Zeynep plans to innovate to develop new dragon fruit goods such as infant food additives, fruit powder, and dried fruit. For diabetics and athletes, she also plans to make cookies and a drink with dragon fruits.

She aspires to provide her kids with the ability to do everything that she was unable to do, and to continue her university education.

Training can change everything

Esra Özdemir – Nazende Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Şanlıurfa

“My biggest dream is to improve myself. My school changed my life. I have become a girl who has a completely different outlook on life”

Esra Özdemir received an associate degree in agriculture from Harran University. After she graduated from Imam Hatip High School, she never considered studying agriculture, but her father insisted. “Because we live in the country, he encouraged me, thinking it would be useful for us in the future,” she explains.

“Thanks to the women who believed me and trusted me, we gained 25 members. It can also be said that I took on the role of leadership”

Inspired by the products where she did her internship, they decided to establish a cooperative. Esra took the leadership role during the establishment of the cooperative.

“Initially, I knew nothing about the subject. By chance, I came across a training given around this time and I attended this training. After that, I worked hard to get women to join the cooperative.”

She points out that the main problem for their cooperative at the moment is their sales performance. They want to be a global player in the market. In Nazende, they produce tomato paste, pepper paste, dried eggplant, and külünçe, which is a cookie that does not go stale for a long time. Esra's aim is to produce whatever possible in Şanlıurfa, and proceed according to the needs of the people.

A young woman who leads

Devrim Şeker – Artos Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Van

“My father encouraged us to study and wished an equal education for all of us.”

Devrim Şeker is 25 years old, and the vice president of their cooperative. She was born, grew up, and lives in Güzelkonak village in the Gevaş district of Van. Her family and friends are engaged in agriculture. They produce for both domestic and international market. She graduated from the department of business administration and now studies social work.

“We women work in the fields and we sell our products, but both the total income and the amount given to women are both very low.”

They began negotiations with the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry (PDoAF) to establish their cooperative, registered women as farmers, and FAO provided them with a farmer education scheme. They trained for a month there.

“In addition to our small income, we wanted to work for ourselves rather than depend on our husbands and fathers for financial support”

Along with their partners, they purchased, packed, and sold their own goods. They have their own sales location on the island pier, and the profit from that shop was the first money they ever earned.

The future viability of this cooperative is something Devrim cares about. In order to at least have an impact on someone, she wants to leave a lasting impression on those who come after her. “I want them to expand their audience, generate their own revenue, and carry on the cooperative in the same manner. My greatest wish is to continue to help those who are here even if I have to go. I want to at least see people continue doing business.”



A natural born rebel

Aycan Bayezit – Artos Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Van

“While working in the fields and hoeing, there was no distinction between us, but when it came to social life and education, men came first”

The president of Van Artos Agriculture Development Cooperative, Aycan Bayezit, was born into a farmer family. She went to primary school, and was able to attend secondary school only for a year before being forced to drop out school. She describes her life story as an act of rebellion. “The education of girls was not given priority,” she says. “Boys came before girls. This was bothering me. My story actually started with a revolt against this situation.”

“Starting in April during the spring, our work days in the field would last until 15 November. We were hoeing, weeding, planting, and harvesting during this time”

Their cooperative’s story began with the notion that they would be able to create their own business and assist others in order to stop being dependent on or demanding from others. The idea for a cooperative arose after they heard news about cooperatives while Aycan was visiting Istanbul. “Numerous challenges were put in our way, and many people did not think we could succeed.”

She came in contact with FAO through training. “We received a lot of assistance from the Rural Development Branch Manager Bünyamin Bey, whom we got to know through the FAO support under the Farmer Field Schools, we were happy to learn about FAO’s supports.” Today ArtosKoop’s main products are dried beans and honey. The cooperative also started renewing its social media accounts and selected products for hepyerinden.coop, the e-commerce platform for women-led cooperatives.



Never give up the fight

Duru Göçmen – Ayıntap Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Gaziantep

“In ten years, I hope to have made significant development with our cooperative, had a lot of success, and completed works that will serve as a legacy for my kids”

Duru Hanım was born and raised in a village in Gaziantep, but ever since she got married at the age of 19, she’s been residing in the city centre. Because her father forbade it, she was unable to continue her education after primary school. Now she continues her high school education, and since her eldest daughter is in high school she is helping with her as well.

“I’m a person who had a lot of dreams, but none of them have come true. I want to make progress in pursuing my goals”

She had a strong interest in agriculture growing up, and she has applied this knowledge to her own projects. For instance, she tried growing quinoa in Gaziantep for the first time, as a gluten-free option for celiac sufferers, but unfortunately all the crops went to waste, since she couldn’t find buyers. ***“I would have been the first woman to produce oyster mushrooms in Gaziantep thanks to another effort, but this endeavour was also unsuccessful because of a procedural technicality.”***

“The cooperative, in my opinion, is one of the most crucial stages in achieving my unfulfilled goals”

Their cooperative is now focused on making peanut butter, but she says that if they can expand the range of products to include pickled garlic, dried fruits and vegetables, and other items, she may consider dedicating herself full time to the cooperative. She has great faith in herself and fellow cooperative members. ***“I want to use the cooperative to plan projects that will benefit society, like the quinoa-growing for celiac sufferers. In terms of women’s power, I believe there is nothing we cannot accomplish.”***

“FAO has given me the chance to experience a lot of firsts,” adds Duru – she thinks FAO and women can accomplish a lot of things together.

Take risks to make it

Feride Candemir – Nazende Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Şanlıurfa

“I’m rather certain that when you’re alone, nothing happens. Something can be accomplished when people come together”

Feride Candemir has been the owner of a small, boutique restaurant in Şanlıurfa since 2017. She has a degree from the Statistics Department of the Faculty of Science at Anadolu University and worked at Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality. She moved to Şanlıurfa in 2004 for family reasons. She has participated in a variety of European Union projects as a coordinator.



“I don’t think we can achieve anything without taking risks, that’s one of my life philosophies”

Of her entrepreneurship journey, she says: “I enjoy having friends and cooking so I began with a modest goal. Although our space is still small, our capacity has grown.” Everyone told her that her goal was too risky because Urfa is a place where barbeque (ocakbaşı) is highly preferred. However, her life philosophy is that people can’t achieve anything without taking risks.

Feride is in Nazende Agriculture Development Cooperative’s gastronomic food section. She is one of the founding members of the cooperative. “Even if you decide to walk alone, you can only move to a certain point. Better results are obtained through consultation and joint efforts. Being rewarded for one’s efforts is a really wonderful thing, regardless of age. I feel at ease in Nazende. It’s great that our organization gets support.”

From “only a mother” to a cooperative founder

Hilal Kız – Tapaneli Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Adana

“Through this cooperative, I was able to get to know myself a lot better and realize that I want to work in social business fields where I can interact with others”

Tapaneli Agriculture Development Cooperative founder Hilal Kız was born in Tapaneli village, Adana. She is married and a mother of three. She sees her mother as a positive role model for her: “I believe my mother had a significant impact on me. Like her, I always made an effort not to be dependent on my husband.”

Her journey started at home, producing handicrafts, and led her to establishing a cooperative. She wanted to do other things as well, because this was not sufficient for her. “In this process, I took my qualified instructor certificates and started to teach in courses in public education centres. Following that, we established the Tapaneli Agriculture Development Cooperative.”



“We were delighted to make our first profit in the cooperative. In the end, that money was used once more to pay for the cooperative’s expenses”

However, the epidemic started to spread very quickly once their cooperative was founded. As a result, they were unable to act; they could not even hold a board meeting. They later rented a facility, and made it ready with the help of FAO.

Thanks to FAO, they received training on making candles, and soap for marketing. In addition to candles, soap, perfume, and lavender oil items, they also set up jam and pumpkin desserts to be sold there.

She describes her life after setting up the cooperative. “I used to be only a wife and mother, and all I wanted to do was raise my kids. But once they were adults, I devoted myself to our cooperative.

Women’s empowerment and gender equality can lead to better lives, better production, and a better environment for all. One such story is that of how Hilal Köz and Emine Karakoca created a lavender agribusiness cooperative to improve their lives and livelihoods. It’s the last of the lavender harvest now, and with 20 other women – all from rural families with limited economic resources – they are working hard to get the crop in on time. Yet none of them are there as part of the seasonal, unpaid, or family workforce, which are the conditions that many rural women around the world work under. Instead, they manage themselves with the Tapaneli Women Farmers’ Cooperative, an all women-run cooperative supported by FAO and the Adana PDoAF.

Making dry land flourish

Hilal’s grandmother calls her the voice of the women in their village. Now known as “the lavender valley”, Adana was once unfertile and arid. Now, thanks to the determination of the women who founded the cooperative, the valley blooms and produces, processes, and markets lavender.

The solidarity of these women in Adana seems to have paid off. The cooperative was founded five years ago by three women, eager to develop sustainable livelihoods on their ancestral land. The cooperative was established first to combat drought that severely affects rural communities in the region, which makes lavender production an increasingly popular option



for a viable alternative crop in dry areas of Türkiye.

The cooperative is not only involved in the production and trade of the plant, but it also markets some products such as lavender tea, oil, honey, marmalades, cologne, and bouquets, thanks to proper machinery, equipment, and training at the cooperative's premises.

"I am the president of the cooperative," says Hilal with a big and proud smile, while closing off the day's accounts and calculating the amount of lavender they have produced this season. "We have 20 members, of which 15 have lavender gardens on their own land."

"I've learned to produce and earn money jointly with other women in the cooperative, and I'm happy now," says Emine proudly, a fellow villager and member of the Tapaneli cooperative. She's been working since age 13, often as an unpaid child labourer in agriculture. Now she is able to make a living and take care of her family. Emine claims that she has increased her awareness of the importance of equality between men and women and of standing on her own feet, thanks to her job at the women's cooperative.

"I lost my father at the age of four. While I was still growing up, I had to take care of my family and three siblings," she adds. Her life changed when she met Hilal and the Tapaneli Women Farmers' Cooperative. Emine joined the cooperative's training on lavender production, packaging, and marketing. "Because in my work I use my knowledge, I can make my own decisions."

After the cooperative became operational, women farmers of Adana quickly recognized that it could support more women. The business grew quickly and from just three employees in the initial months, this increased to 20 members, and they can hire up to 40 women in peak season.

"At first, of course, we did not receive much support from others,"

Hilal continues, emphasizing the challenges that women all across the world confront on a daily basis. "When we wanted to establish a cooperative, they brought up unsuccessful examples," she added. ***I said that there were no women in these cooperatives, and I insisted that we remain an agriculture development and women-led cooperative."***

Getting the help needed

Thanks to FAO's technical expertise and support in developing inclusive rural policies in underdeveloped regions, the Adana Tapaneli Women Farmers' Cooperative trained rural women in business planning, financial management, networking, marketing and sales, and time management. FAO also provided necessary tools, equipment, and technical support services to women to support them in starting small-scale businesses and production. The cooperative has enabled many successes, but better market access is still needed to ensure sustainable income for these families. In response to this need, FAO conducted market assessments in Türkiye to identify agrifood products with a strong and stable consumer demand in local markets, and assessed the feasibility of small-scale joint



production cooperatives.

Grassroots of Activism Leads to Economic Empowerment

Zuhal Güneş- Ilmek Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Manisa

From representation in local governments to women-led cooperatives

The Ilmek Agriculture Development Cooperative, created by the women of Hafsa Sultan area, is supported by the Japanese government in order to increase women's presence in decision-making processes and local administrations.

We only have seven years left to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. However, women's representation in decision-making is very low in many countries around the world, including Türkiye. Zuhal Güneş is the Muhtar of Hafsa Sultan district (population 20 000), where he changed the representation of women in local administrations. There are 1088 muhtars in the 17 districts of Manisa. According to data from the Confederation of Mukhtars of Türkiye, only 25 of the 1088 muhtars are women.

An activist defending her own rights

Zuhal Güneş is a retired mother of two children who has suffered from gender discrimination. She is also a volunteer activist for the We Will Stop Femicide Platform, and Women's Councils Non-Governmental Organization. ***"Our main concern is women and children. We stand by the families of murdered women, abused and raped children, and follow their cases. We are fighting for criminals to be punished without discount. Of course, we also try to support women for their economic empowerment,"*** says Zuhal in a determined tone of voice.

Zuhal talks about how she faced discrimination as a woman in her working life and how she ***struggled with the problems she faced before she was elected a muhtar. "It is very important to get support and to get stronger together. I was harassed by the general manager at a corporate company where I worked for 25 years. Firstly, I did not take any legal action not to damage the company's reputation. I told the chairperson of the board of directors that I had been harassed. Despite the fact that she was a woman, she stated, 'I can't neglect my general manager for a secretary,' and fired me without pay. This is where my struggle began with a powerful company against me and I risked everything. I filed a criminal complaint with the prosecutor's office. All the women around me and NGOs supported me by saying that 'Zuhal Güneş is not alone in the 13 provinces of Türkiye'. We held demonstrations with women in front of the factory where I work. We raised public opinion. I won my reemployment case, but the abusive manager was acquitted for lack of evidence."***

With the support of women, Zuhal started the work of ten women in ten neighbourhoods within the scope of the We Will Stop Femicide Platform project. She started working as a muhtar in the 2019 elections. In one of the projects, she developed as a muhtar, she realized

her goal of establishing a library for each muhtar's building, and a cooperative for women in the neighbourhood.

Women-led cooperatives contribute to reducing gender inequalities

Zuhal continues to speak confidently. ***"We continued our efforts to bring together vulnerable women's groups, especially in our neighbourhood, to strengthen them economically and to facilitate their social cohesion. Although our cooperative was not established yet, we continued our agri-food production for three years and we had the opportunity to get to know each other in this process. We were organized with good solidarity. We were all happy when women produced and became stronger. Of course, it was very difficult to find the necessary economic support during the establishment phase. At this early stage, we met FAO through the Manisa PDoAF. We also received machinery and equipment support from FAO."***

İlmeK Agriculture Development Cooperative continues its production with 15 members, an increase from its seven founding partners.

Zuhal concludes her speech by saying, ***"Many thanks to the Manisa PDoAF, the Japanese government, FAO, and everyone who contributed, who showed me that I am never alone and will never walk alone."***

Through women-led cooperatives, women not only find entrepreneurial opportunities and leadership positions, but also meet their economic, social, and cultural needs. FAO Türkiye continues to support women producers with its cooperative programme.



Nurturing prosperity: Salihli Women's Cooperative Cultivates growth, unity, and knowledge sharing

Salihli Kadın Girişimi Üretim ve İşletme Kooperatifi, Manisa

The Salihli Women's Initiative Production and Business Cooperative, which was established in cooperation with FAO Türkiye and Manisa Provincial Directorate, in the Aegean region of Türkiye, Manisa, Salihli, is supported by the Government of Japan. Şehnaz Uğurçay is one of the 25 strong women in the cooperative. Through the cooperative they have established, they both enjoy co producing and develop their personal capacity, socialize with other female friends, and understand how doing business together helps them overcome the difficulties they face. Şehnaz confidently said: **Working here has benefited to me not only financially but also spiritually. Besides new knowledge and skills, I made new friends. I met new people. While we all work in the fresh fruit drying facility, we also get recipes from each other, we talk about many subjects such as contributing to the home economy, child care, general culture; this is a very good opportunity for socialization and the new information I learn is always a part of my life. It makes a very positive contribution to every aspect of my life.**

Production of women in Salihli in solidarity through cooperatives

Facilitating women's access to economic activities, access to marketing, and sales opportunities, enables them to obtain better and decent job opportunities. Şehnaz says: "Until I found Salihli Women's Cooperative, I was a non-working woman who spent most of my time doing housework, cleaning, visiting neighbours, apart from the occasional agriculture work I went to, such as harvesting vineyards, figs, and olives. After meeting with the cooperative, I first attended the Production and Marketing of Local Food Products training given by FAO and Manisa PDoAF. We received this training from Salihli PDoAF personnel for 40 days with 25 women. Afterwards, we received a two-day Non violent Communication Training from FAO personnel. Both trainings were very useful for me, I learned a lot of new information and got a certificate. After the training, I started to work in the drying facility of the cooperative."



Salihli Women-led cooperative is now a second school

Şehnaz was born into a family of four children. With a sad tone, Şehnaz said: "I wanted to study very much, I couldn't do it because of the impossibilities. But I was married at a young age," she says, adding proudly right after, "but Salihli Women's Cooperative was like a second school for me. Now I have a son going to college and a daughter studying in high school. My biggest wish is for both of my children to access education and have decent work."

In the Salihli Women's Initiative Production and Business Cooperative, supported within the scope of the Project for Supporting Employment and Livelihoods carried out by FAO and Manisa PDoAF, Şehnaz continues to work at the vegetable and fruit drying facility with her female friends and concludes her speech as follows: "I wish there were similar opportunities for more women. I would like to thank FAO, Manisa PDoAF, and Salihli Women's Initiative Production and Business Cooperative for providing us with these trainings and supporting the project."

If I can't use my hands, I use my imagination

Cennet Polat – Mutlu Besin Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi, Kahramanmaraş

"Women need to break prejudices. First, we have to change our minds. We must bring out the fighting spirit of women"

Cennet Polat says that entrepreneurship has always been in her soul. With her husband's support, she started to make and sell daily filo pastry and eventually became the first female tradesperson in her district. She began selling at markets, but she encountered a lot of opposition, particularly since she is a woman. "Nearly everyone claimed that it was a man's job, but I persisted. Within a month, I became quite proficient at my profession and continued it for ten years and provided employment to other women," she reminisces.

"I originally estimated a five-year timeline for this project, but we accomplished a lot in 1.5 years"

Over time, she developed the daily filo pastry business and started making börek, but in the process, she had a health problem. She says that women should defy prejudices. "We must bring out the fighting spirit of women."



That's why I'm doing this job. I was unable to work for two years after my sickness, but I never gave up. The doctor told me I couldn't use my hands, but I used my imagination to start growing mushrooms that weren't common in Kahramanmaraş."

Cennet and 13 of her colleagues founded the cooperative. They have occasionally experienced financial troubles, but they persisted. "My brothers and my husband were very supportive, I even had to sell my wedding ring." They started their journey with 14 members, but new friends join them every day. They sold all the products they produced in the summer and were entitled to join the Agriculture Credit and Cooperative Supermarkets.

An aspiring role model

Gürsel Appa – Turuncu Eller Tarımsal Kalkınma Kooperatifi & Gümöz Mandarin Kadın Girişimi, Üretim ve İşletme Kooperatifi, İzmir

"We aim to make a small contribution to the atmosphere while also repairing the soil. Knowing our carbon footprint and working with minimal waste are core values for us"

Gürsel was born in Bulgurca village, the daughter of an illiterate mother and a father who dropped out of primary school in the third grade. Her father prioritized her brothers in terms of education. According to her parents, as a daughter she had to stay at home and help her mother. ***"Since one low grade would put an end to my education, I never gave up my studies. I pursued my education at the Ege University Faculty of Science, Astronomy Department,"*** she explains.

"Gümüldür mandarin is a really unique product. Everywhere the same crop is grown, but no mandarin has the same flavour and juiciness"

When she retired, she enrolled in classes, such as jewellery design courses for instance. She started making products in the garden and was interested in lots of hobbies at home. In the meantime, she learned about cooperatives from her friends who were involved in the mandarin industry and work for the cooperative. As a consequence, 12 women gathered, and they founded the Gümöz ve Turuncu Eller Cooperative to produce the Satsuma mandarin.

"I manage the cooperative's business using my personal mobile phone, and I pay the bills myself"

Six months after they founded Gümöz, the pandemic spread widely, and they faced a really challenging financial situation. When they examined the loans, they realized that the interest rates were very high, so they applied to FAO, and were thrilled to meet Esmâ Hoca as part of this project.



Gümöz also want to be a role model for others in agriculture. Gürsel says that **“poor agriculture practices harm the soil, poison the populace, and make it difficult to market our products. We aim to make a small contribution to the atmosphere while also repairing the soil. Knowing our carbon footprint and working with minimal waste are core values for us.”**

From local flavors to global success

Irem Gülşen – Orhanili Kadın Girişimi Üretim ve İşletme Kooperatifi, Bursa

Story of the establishment of the cooperative

Baklava, Turkish delight, and sourdough bread are made and served on special occasions in Orhaneli. We women took our first step by starting production with these local foods. However, we had neither the equipment, the place, nor the raw materials to prepare our product, so we decided to visit the Mayor of Orhaneli, Ali Aykurt. We explained what we wanted to do this because we have one thing in common – each of us grew up and ate bread from this land. Our mayor supported us and allocated us the ground floor and use of the garden of the building, which was used as the mayor’s lodging previously, and has an oven. Afterwards, yastaç (a board on which dough is rolled out, on which to eat), rolling pins, and rugs were collected from the houses. We collected as many trays as there were in the shop. We borrowed walnuts, oil, and flour. The other materials are the same. We started with the spirit of cooperation. We had great sales during the bairams, and interest was great. However, we did not have an official name – we wanted to produce and invest in the products we produce, but we had to formalize this business.

One day, Esra Uzun, Branch Manager of the Bursa PDoAF, visited us. She listened to us, observed our shortcomings on the spot, and noticed our determination. Bursa PDoAF supported us under the Promoting Self-Reliant Livelihoods Through Employment and Micro-Entrepreneurship project organized by FAO and funded by the Government of Japan. Within the scope of the project, trademark registration procedures for the historical name of our district, “Beyce”, was made.

Through this project, we are working with SuTP living in our region. We turned this women-led cooperative, which was established in 2015 but inactive, into a sustainable and active cooperative in 2019 with the support of FAO, Bursa PDoAF, and Orhaneli Municipality.

The cooperative support programme provides not only resource support but also training opportunities.

The standardization of the products was ensured with the Local Food Products Production training given to our partners by the food engineers of Bursa PDoAF. Important steps have been taken on the way to becoming a cooperative after the training on organizing awareness, cooperatives and marketing, as well as food production training by the women farmers technical team of Bursa PDoAF.

We had the chance to receive many trainings on social media and accounting, especially on label legislation. We went through many processes while trying to adapt our traditional methods to food legislation. For example, we used to know the consistency of tomato paste by moving it up and down in the coffee pot, but we learned that this is the wrong method for correct bottling. We measure the brix ratio of tomato paste with a refractometer and we bottle it in appropriate numbers.



Our friends from Syria had Turkish language problems. Most of them did not know Turkish. Women were in a very difficult situation to do the necessary procedures for their children's school and hospital-related issues. Over time, each of them learned Turkish and they were able to express themselves without the need for an interpreter or looking for anyone around them.

We overcame the language problem so that our relations with each other became stronger.

With each other we shared our personal lives, and joked, and sometimes when we had problems, we solved everything among ourselves without needing anyone. The Syrians were very timid due to the difficult conditions in which they came from, but we understood that women are women everywhere. We have seen that women who produce, work, and shine the light of justice can only overcome all difficulties if they act together.

The lands of Orhaneli are indeed very fertile.

We, women, run a breakfast room for the visitors of Sadağı Canyon, which is located in our district, and has become a centre of attraction in terms of both local food production and rural tourism and our guests who want to spend a peaceful and pleasant time. We process agriculture products in accordance with market conditions, natural and reliable. We produce food, accept organic products grown on the territory of the region as raw materials and share our local flavours with you. Here, too, we visit our rural neighbourhoods and obtain our raw materials directly from the producers there. We have no trouble finding the raw materials for each of our products in the neighbourhoods of our district or in the neighbouring villages. Thus, our farmers, who sell their products directly, are very happy and they always say that they will plant more for the next year, which makes us very happy.



Touch women's lives

Maybe two rows of pepper will be planted – it may not seem like a big thing when we look at it, but women need to be touched in their lives, and we have elders who get their children and grandchildren educated with the products they sell. It is very important that we are in contact with them here as well.

Being in a cooperative environment and producing together by sharing seems like a kind of therapy to us. The social environments we all grow up in are different, and the social norms we learn are different, but we women are the only song that is very loud here. The cooperative has become a place where we find healing, forget our troubles, reduce our sorrows by sharing, and increase our joy by sharing.

We officially have 23 partners. However, the number of women participating in mass production processes reaches three times this rate. We have partners from young university graduates, middle aged women, and even grandparents. We have to prepare a lot of products during periods of high orders and winter preparation processes. That's why we get support from women living in our district.

We all have different stories about joining the cooperative.

It is not possible for us to tell the story of all of us one by one. But at the end of the story, we are very happy to meet in our cooperative, where our souls find healing. We love our district; we need to work for the development of our district. We want to ensure the continuity of the production and promotion of local delicacies and show the ingenuity of local women to the world. We have products in different flavours, from noodles, tomato paste, sourdough village bread, and tarhana to thyme pressed, roasted fish, pickled peppers, local breakfast,



pancakes, Turkish delight with walnuts and poppy, and homemade baklava. We used to offer our products for sale by opening an exhibition in our cooperative or in the Historical Beyce Bazaar. We are currently on all social media platforms.

During the pandemic, people's consumption and buying-selling needs have changed.

Orhaneli is already a district that is self-sufficient with its production at a certain point, but we needed to reach people. During the pandemic, we never stopped production, sometimes running away from home and sometimes taking our permission. Then, our sales via Trendyol started. In this way, we transfer our products all over Türkiye. We are working on other websites as well. Thanks to such platforms, we were able to find a starting point in the difficult times of the pandemic. The interest of people also makes us very happy. We wake up in the morning with enthusiasm for the day and come to our cooperative. We contribute to our domestic economy. Of course, our job has its challenges. We always need different things. However, the spiritual satisfaction that this place provides allows us to overcome all difficulties.



The world will become a better place as we come together as women who produce and support each other. We know this.

We want to ensure that our traditions, which have been going on for years, are passed on to new generations through our cooperative. Our biggest dream is to be a good cooperative example at the point of creating employment without gender-based discrimination. We want to show it to the whole world, regardless of language, religion, or race. Thus, we want to contribute to the increase in the number of women's initiatives in the world.

The development and progress of society are directly proportional to the empowerment of women in that society. As women produce and become more visible in social and economic life, they will realize their capacity, skill, and effort and thus will put their feet on the ground more strongly. Solidarity, meanwhile, is always the cure for us women. Together, we must make our women more visible in socioeconomic life. Because if women produce, they empower, if women empower, they change the world.



D. Number of members in each cooperative

Cooperative	All members 2021	Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTP) members 2021	All members May 2023	SuTP members May 2023
Adana - TapaneliKoop	17	0	23	0
Ankara-AnkaraPastasıKoop	13	6	11	6
Bursa-EsebeyKoop	19	0	19	0
Bursa-OrhaniliKoop	23	4	13	2
Bursa - YiğitaliKoop	12	0	18	0
Gaziantep - AyıntapKoop	0	0	7	0
Hatay - SamandagKoop	65	0	75	0
İzmir-TurnaKoop	20	10	22	10
Izmir - TuruncuEllerKoop	0	0	11	0
Kahramanmaras - MutluBesinKoop	0	0	14	5
Kilis - KiliziKoop	36	5	41	4
Konya Emirgazi	7	0	10	0
Konya-EmrugaziKoop	0	0	7	0
Manisa-İlmekKoop	15	14	14	0
Manisa-SalihliKoop	15	0	15	0
Manisa - SomaKoop	0	0	12	0
Mardin Topraktan TabagaKoop	20	20	20	20
Şanlıurfa - NazendeKoop	0	10	36	17
Van - AhtamaraKoop	0	0	20	0
Total	262	69	388	64

Source: Author's own elaboration.



E. Main products and marketing situation of each cooperative

Cooperative	Production 2021	Production 2022
Adana – TapaneliKoop	Lavender: 10 tonnes Lavender sac: 1 000 units Lavender soap: 100 units Lavender oil: 10 kg	Lavender: 25 tonnes Lavender sac: 10 000 units Lavender soap: 1 000 units Lavender oil: 25 kg
Ankara-AnkaraPastası Koop	Sandwich bread Birthday cakes Biscuits Boreks Turkish traditional desserts	There are 24 different pastry products
Bursa-EsebeyKoop	Newly established	Tomato paste: 1 200 jars Tarhana: 400 kg Jams: 400 jars Erişte: 450 kg Yufka: 3 000 unit Meat pasty (Turkish-style ravioli): 250 uncooked, 150 cooked
Bursa-OrhaniliKoop	Tomato paste 4 500 jars Jams 1 600 jars Thyme with olive oil 1 000 jars Menemen paste 500 jars Breakfast sauce 500 jars Tarhana 500 kg Turkish ravioli 500 kg Pickle (grilled pepper) 1 500 jar Pickle 300 jars Cooked yufka (filo) Baklava Bread	Tomato paste 6000 jars Jams 4 600 jars Thyme with olive oil 2 000 jars Menemen paste 750 jars Breakfast sauce 500 jars Tarhana 500 kg Turkish ravioli 500 kg Pickle 2 500 jars Cooked yufka (filo) Baklava Bread
Bursa – YiğitaliKoop	Raspberry jam: 0 Noodle with vegetables: 500 kg Milk jam: 0	Raspberry jam: 880 kg Noodle with vegetables: 1 tonne Milk jam: 1 320 kg
Gaziantep – AyıntapKoop	No products Pomegranate syrup: 820 kg Dried mint: 100 kg	Do not have production area, has selling point
Hatay – SamandagKoop	Walnut Jam: 1 750 kg Pomegranate syrup: 820 kg Dried mint: 100 kg	Walnut Jam: 3 750 kg Pomegranate syrup: 1 640 kg Dried mint: 200 kg
İzmir-TurnaKoop	Hatay kömbesi 550 kg Borek 450 kg Tomato sauce 450 kg Tarhana 750 kg Meat pasty (Turkish style ravioli) 250 kg Jams 300 kg Falafel 110 kg Sarma 480 kg	Tarhana Sarma Tomato sauce Jam Vinegar

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Izmir – TuruncuEllerKoop	Mandarin Dessert: 500 kg Mandarin Jam: 200kg Mandarin Quince Jam: 120 kg Bergamot jam: 80 kg Orange Sou: 8 kg Mandarin Peel Flour: 5 kg Mandarin Cologne (70 ml spray): 1500 pieces Mandarin Delight: 200kg Orange Candy: 10 kg Mandarin Turmeric Noodles: 25 kg Artichoke Noodles: 25 kg Dried Mandarin: 0 kg Thyme Juice: 20 kg	Mandarin Dessert: 450 kg Mandarin Jam :270 kg Mandarin Quince Jam: 150 kg Bergamot jam: 95 kg Orange Sou: 9 kg Mandarin Peel Flour: 25 kg Mandarin Cologne (70 ml spray): 1500 pieces Mandarin Delight: 250 kg Orange Cand: 25 kg Mandarin Turmeric Noodles: 40 kg Artichoke Noodles: 50 kg Dried Mandarin: 10 kg Thyme Juice: 25 kg
Kahramanmaras – MutluBesinKoop	Cips Tarhana: 30 tonnes Dried Mushroom: 0 kg Dried eggplant/pepper: 1 000 set	Cips Tarhana: 60 tonnes Dried Mushroom: 500 kg Dried eggplant/pepper: 3 000 set
Kilis – KiliziKoop	Olive: 30 tonnes Olive Oil: 200 tonnes Olive soap: 0 tonne	Olive: 50 tonnes Olive Oil: 300 tonnes Olive soap: 20 tonnes
Konya- Emirgazi Women’s Enterprise Production and Business Cooperative	Molasses 3.5 tonnes Chickpeas Beans Lentils Thyme	Molasses 2.5 tonnes Cereals (10 tonnes estimate) • chickpeas • beans • lentils Thyme Acorn coffee (innovation product)
Konya-EmrulgaziKoop	Weaving rug pillow 3 pieces Weaving rug bag 7 pieces Weaving rugs throw pillow 5 pieces Weaving rug for souvenirs 10 pieces	Weaving rug pillow 5 pieces Weaving rug bag 20 pieces Weaving rugs throw pillow 15 pieces Weaving rug for souvenirs 30 pieces Weaving carpets 5 pieces Weaving rug Tulu 2 pieces
Manisa-İlmekKoop	Newly established	Turkish pasta with vegetables Turkish pasta with milk Tarhana Jams Menemen (tomato and vegetable sauce) Tomato sauce for breakfast
Manisa-SalihliKoop	Dry grapes Dry tomato, olives and olive oil Dry tomato with oil 200 jars Jam 250 jars Grape leaves 500 jars	Dry grapes Dry tomato, olives and olive oil Dry tomato with oil 100 jars Grape dry leaves 250 jars Grape leaves pickle 100 jars Peach jam 150 jars
Manisa – SomaKoop	Rose hip jam: 1 000 kg Acuka: 1 000 kg	Rose hip jam: 2 220 kg Acuka: 2 550 kg
Mardin- TopraktanTabagaKoop	102 acreage Sorghum wheat 200 000 Halep olive soap	Variety of spices Vegetable oils Varieties of dumplings Tomato paste Mardin bread Halep olive soap String beans Selling more than 170 farmer products
Şanlıurfa – NazendeKoop	Isot: 0 tonne Pepper tomato sauce: 0 kg Külünçe: depends on demand	Isot: 1 tonne Pepper Tomato sauce: 450 kg Külünçe: depends on demand
Van – AhtamaraKoop	Kavut: 0 tonne Beans: 0 tonne Honey: 0 tonne	Kavut: 2 tonnes Beans: 5 tonnes Honey: 4 tonnes

Source: Author’s own elaboration.



Conclusion

Agriculture cooperatives make up a remarkable proportion of cooperatives worldwide. They contribute to global and national food security, help to combat poverty, and support income generation and empowerment for smallholder producers. In agriculture, cooperatives provide both economic income, and social and political participation, for women – whether in mixed cooperatives or in women-led cooperatives. As women earn income and participate in community development and decision-making processes, their representation and voice increases. The cooperative experience of women who are part of small scale agriculture producers plays an important role in the empowerment of rural women. It is evident that the bargaining power of women in women-led cooperatives, and women's income, have increased. Women's access to resources, technology, and infrastructure has also been supported by cooperatives. Women's role in cooperatives is gaining importance in terms of reducing poverty – it is an important tool for women's participation, and social and economic empowerment. The cooperative model creates significant opportunities for the employment of women in rural areas, the informal economy, and income increase through improving livelihoods and access to resources and services. Although cooperatives are an important tool for women's participation in economic activities by fostering multidimensional empowerment to realize their potential, cooperatives need to open more space for women's leadership, gender equality strategies, and cooperation with other cooperatives.



Annexes

Annex 1. General objective of the programme and its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The FAO Türkiye Cooperative Programme is a vital initiative that aims to align with various global goals and achieve sustainable development. This alignment is crucial as it directly contributes to the fulfilment of the United Nations SDGs. The programme specifically focuses on:

- Goal 1. No poverty
- Goal 2. Zero hunger
- Goal 5. Gender equality
- Goal 8. Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 10. Reduced inequalities
- Goal 13. Climate action
- Goal 17. Partnerships for the goals

By addressing these goals, the programme seeks to create positive social and economic change in Türkiye.

The programme's core principles, known as the FAO's four betters, further enhance its effectiveness – better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life. By focusing on these, the programme ensures a holistic approach to sustainable development that considers the well-being of individuals and the environment.

To achieve its objectives, the programme employs various training principles. Non-formal education is utilized to empower agriculture cooperatives and equip them with essential skills. Non-violent communication forms the basis for harmonious interaction and collaboration within these cooperatives. Sociocracy provides a democratic decision making process that fosters participation and inclusivity. Sustainability is prioritized through the use of semi-structured methods, ensuring that development is not only efficient but also environmentally friendly.

Overall, the FAO Türkiye Cooperative Programme aims to increase the participation of agriculture cooperatives in policy dialogue, improve their technical and managerial skills, strengthen their decision-making processes, and ultimately contribute to sustainable development. By aligning with the SDGs and incorporating various training principles, the programme is taking significant steps towards creating a more inclusive and prosperous community in Türkiye.

Annex 2. Business Development and Entrepreneurship Programme

The programme aims to provide comprehensive training and support to women entrepreneurs, focusing on key areas such as business development, entrepreneurship, decision-making, organizational structure, marketing and e-commerce, and financial management.

In the area of decision-making, participants learned about non-violent communication, which emphasizes compassionate and effective communication techniques. They were also introduced to the four components of non-violent communication, enabling them to practise these skills in their daily interactions. The history and methodology of sociocracy were explored, with a specific focus on circles and roles within sociocratic organizations. Organizational structure is another important aspect of the training programme. Participants gained knowledge of the ideal structure for cooperatives, including the number of members, and management. They also learned about the responsibilities of board and audit members, and the decision-making procedures between different boards. The importance of the general assembly in ensuring democratic decision-making processes was also highlighted.

The programme provided participants with a deep understanding of marketing and e-commerce principles and tools. They learned how to build best practices and develop a comprehensive marketing plan. Furthermore, they explored statistics related to e-commerce and discovered the most popular platforms for online business, including Hepyerinden.coop.

Finally, the training programme addressed financial management, focusing on income generation and sharing policies, and financial planning. Participants gained valuable insights into income generation policies, enabling them to develop effective strategies for sustainable growth. They learned about income-sharing policies within cooperatives and the importance of financial planning for long-term success.

The Women-led cooperatives support programme was committed to empowering women entrepreneurs by equipping them with knowledge and skills in various key areas. Through comprehensive training, participants were better equipped to establish and manage successful cooperatives, contributing to their personal growth and the overall socioeconomic development of their communities.

Programme content

Topic 1. Decision making

- what is non-violent communication?
- the four components of non-violent communication
- practice of non-violent communication
- history of sociocracy
- methodology of sociocracy – circles
- roles in sociocracy
- practice of sociocracy

Topic 2. Organizational structure

- number of members and management
- responsibilities of board and audit members
- general assembly
- decision-making procedures between different boards
- ideal organizational structure in a cooperative

Topic 3. Marketing and e-commerce

- principles of marketing
- tools of marketing
- how to build best practices?
- marketing plan
- statistics related to e commerce
- most popular e commerce platforms
- Hepyerrinden.coop

Topic 4. Financial management

- income generation policies
- income sharing policies
- financial planning

Annex 3. Cooperatives education, cooperatives around the world and in Türkiye

The aim of the programme is to improve the knowledge of cooperatives partners, increase ownership and management power in cooperatives, increase cooperation and solidarity between partners and cooperatives, and strengthen the capacity of cooperatives administratively and technically. It is also to ensure an increase in capacity of cooperatives in accordance with the principles and values of cooperatives, to ensure the development of cooperatives in accordance with experiences across the world and in Türkiye, to contribute to the social and economic development and welfare of the partners and society in which the cooperatives are located, to emphasize the cooperation and solidarity of cooperatives at the national and international level, and the importance of their organization. In line with the SDGs, the aim of the training programme is to draw attention to the cooperation of the United Nations and FAO with the ICA, the parent organization for cooperatives at international level, and to reveal the importance of the work of cooperatives related to the SDGs at national and international levels. The training programme aims:

- To inform cooperatives about which legal infrastructure and which cooperative practices they carry out in solving global problems, and of achievements at national and international levels.
- To teach how cooperatives can produce solutions in times of crisis.
- To show the importance of making strategic plans for the future for cooperatives.

In the educational study, partners were told about the cooperatives development process, and the importance of principles and values. The importance of cooperatives in development is due to the economic and social advantages they have. Within this framework, the process, experiences, and results obtained in Türkiye and around the world are explained with examples. FAO's work on cooperation in line with the SDGs has been described. Information was provided about the importance of the cooperation between FAO and the ICA, and the Memorandum of Understanding they signed. Taking into account the practices in Türkiye and around the world, the issues to be considered in corporatization, the steps for successful management in cooperatives, and the importance of capacity development for cooperatives were explained.

Information was given about the advantages brought by digitalization, as well as the benefits and methods of intercooperative national and international cooperation. The expectations of cooperatives and the roles they will play in the face of global problems in the twenty-first century were explained.

Course content

1. Cooperativism and its history
2. Values and principles in cooperativism
3. The social and economic importance of cooperatives
4. Development with cooperatives
5. Cooperation and organization in Türkiye and around the world
6. Cooperative practices and expectations in Türkiye
7. FAO and the SDGs
8. FAO and cooperativism
9. FAO-ICA Cooperation Agreement and the importance of cooperation

10. Issues to be considered in cooperation
11. Steps for successful management in cooperatives
12. The importance of capacity building in cooperatives
13. Intercooperative national and international cooperation
14. Global problems and expectations in the twenty-first century, the role of cooperatives in solving problems

Annex 4. Brand design, prepared by Esma Civcir

The principle of “leaving no one behind” was applied, using coproduction and sharing. Women’s cooperatives in rural areas work according to the agriculture calendar, with a focus on seasonal work and product development during the winter. They store food products and traditionally develop additional products in their spare time. Training has been conducted based on this tradition, using materials found locally and emphasizing sustainability. Paper and parcel packaging is mandatory, and sustainable material and product development training is provided. Traditional rural handicrafts have been transformed into design products for daily use, creating an additional income stream. Study tours support analysis, research, and development, and training aims to empower women to create creative and sustainable products.

Capacity development activities included focus groups that were organized based on skills, art knowledge, and talent in each cooperative region to strengthen women’s cooperatives. Workshops were held in 13 provinces to develop brand designs for products with potential in e-markets. Capacity development training was provided on sales, marketing, communication, leadership, design, and general management. Recommendations were given on establishing reliable marketing and sales contacts and ensuring quality control. The development of a vision to promote and exhibit art workshops and products made abroad in the e-market was also emphasized. Overall, efforts were made to support women’s cooperatives in improving their sales and marketing abilities and expanding their reach in both urban and international markets.



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