

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Bugday: Farmers markets, agrotourism and sustainable consumption in Turkey

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Name: Bugday Association for Supporting Ecological Living

City, country: Turkey

Name of entrepreneur/founder: Zeinab al Momany

Description: Buğday is a non-profit, non-governmental organization which aims to bridge the gap between organic farmers and urban consumers, through Organic Agriculture, Ecological Living, Agro-Biodiversity, Eco-Agro Tourism and Urban Agriculture initiatives. Bugday set up the first 100% organic market in Istanbul which operates weekly.

Investment: *Start up capital:* 60,000 € + In-kind support by the local municipality and Buğday Association.
Rate of return on investment: Not applicable given this is a non for profit organisation.
Sources of funding: 60,000 € from institutional sponsors (only the first year), 40,000 € (in-kind) from Şişli Municipality, 40,000 € from Buğday as voluntary labour force.

Employment generation: The Şişli Market set up by Buğday employs 3 full time-staff and 2 volunteers each weekend and the market places in Istanbul host 750 stands which employ approximately 80 people.

Timeline: 1990's: Buğday (Wheat) ecological movement started with a restaurant/wholesale store/meeting place offering local and organic food and ideas about ecological living.
2002: "Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living" founded
2002-2005: Project development for market place
2006: Marketplace officially inaugurated, takes place weekly

Geo-social-economic setting: In Turkey, shopping in the market is still popular however hundreds of small scale agricultural producers in Turkey are among the most marginalized groups. Turkey is experiencing rapid economic development, industrialization and urbanization which is causing a transformation from a local and agricultural based economy, and hinders the penetration of locally grown, ecological agricultural products into marketplaces of big cities like Istanbul. Turkey has tremendous fertile land for organic agriculture operations along with suitable circumstances both ecologically and climatologically. The majority of Turkish labour force still works in agriculture industry in rural areas, and the local market for organically grown and healthy agricultural goods is becoming increasingly apparent in the Turkish society.

Key features: Rural development, Organic Farming, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Awareness raising, Holistic health benefits.

Overall rational and motivation:

Change the situation in Turkey where the majority of the organically grown and certified agricultural goods were exported to the European and other countries while the Turkish consumers did not have direct access to fresh and affordable organic goods. A social driver is to sustain rural livelihoods through organic agriculture, preventing further immigration to the urban centres, and environmental concern to reduce erosion, water consumption, pesticide, insecticide use and the carbon footprint of agricultural production, and increase demand for sustainable agricultural products. Finally the project aims to establish a commercial zone, which guarantees the producers a place for their value-added organic products are sold.

Strengths:

Establishment of market place in Şişli (Istanbul), where purchasing power and awareness is relatively high among consumers, strong relationships between local farmers and Bugday as well as other stakeholders like Şişli municipality, effective communication and existing network of Buğday association.

Challenges and constraints:

Legislative aspects related to Turkey's Organic Agriculture Law which was being developed at the same time as the market. Rules and regulations in establishing the standards to the market place were not clearly defined and took many years of practical know-how and legal infrastructure remains ineffective for organic standards. Administrative challenges related to the day-to-day upkeep of institutional relations, weekly prices, dialogue between producers and a high dependence on external relations with variety of stakeholders.

Direct activities and Impacts:

Social: Bugday has more than 1500 members and 2000 volunteers throughout Turkey. Since 2006 over 200 volunteers have participated in market programmes.
Environmental: The trend of high prices for organic produce has been changed and demand has increased in other cities zmir, Ankara and Antalya. Sisli Municipality has supported the project and it has been adapted to other municipalities with interest in duplicating the project. Additional projects include the Camtepe Ecological Center, a Seed Network, TaTuTa - Eco-Agro Tourism and Voluntary Exchange and Cumhuriyetköy Community Garden.
Economic: The majority of products are sold at 1.50-4.00€ per kilo with estimated 25,000-30,000€ of weekly turnover is generated weekly in this single marketplace dedicated to organic goods.

Use of innovative Technologies:

20.000 people receive the weekly electronic bulletin.

Evidence of a holistic approach/world view:

Buğday association has been instrumental in changing perceptions of significant numbers of consumers about the effects of different agricultural practices, Turkey's agro-biodiversity priorities and challenges as well as the health and social-political aspects of food.

Scale of benefits:

Belief that women alone can demand their full rights, legal adjustments to enable them to be part of Unions.

Policies, incentives and regulations needed:

Programs and activities for informing and updating the entrepreneurship community on environmental developments, legislation and green entrepreneurship case studies, and the government's perception on SCP policies and green entrepreneurship.

Lessons and recommendations:

Sponsors and non-profit support are critical for the initiation and demonstration of certain green business models and create commercially replicable cases, Cooperation with knowledgeable and dedicated NGOs for starting green business is an advantage"

References: www.bugday.org - <http://ekolojikpazar.org>