



**Inter-Agency
Coordination**
Turkey

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE 

Workshop on Value Chain in Agriculture and Entrepreneurship

Virtual Workshop Report

17 December 2020

Opening and Introduction:

The FSA Sector Coordinator welcomed the participants and briefly explained that the objective of the workshop is to strengthen the knowledge of the FSA sector partners on Value Chain Systems in Turkey, both in agriculture and agri-food entrepreneurship, and to learn from existing examples of cooperatives and associations established by the FSA partners, with an objective to understand the value chains with market potential to provide employment opportunities for refugees and host communities in the agri-food sector.

Workshop Sessions:

The FSA Sector Coordinator moderated the workshop and MoAF, FAO, IOM, CIPE, PDoAFs contributed through presentations and valuable discussions on value chain in agriculture and entrepreneurship in Turkey.

Session 1: Income Generation through Value Chain Development in Agriculture sector in Refugees Response

On behalf of MoAF, EU Expert Mr. Guresinli from DGEUFR Department for International Organizations presented on Agricultural Value Chain in Turkey.

- For the Agricultural Value Chain in Turkey, MoAF has been prepared the 11th Development Plan, National Rural Development Strategy (2019-2020).
- Turkey is the seventh-largest agricultural producer in the world and the first largest producer in the EU.
- As an Agricultural Characteristic, Turkey has favorable geographic and climatic conditions, large arable lands, and rich crops patterns.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, a joint action plan has been developed to prevent any disruption in the supply chain by granting certain exemptions to the producers.
- Turkey exports over 1.690 products and is a leader in the production of nuts, figs, raisins and dried apricot. Annual organic production is around 1.3 million tons.
- Licenced Warehouses provide producers with healthy land, insured warehouse, preventing the disposal of their products during harvesting when prices low. Currently, 4.8 million tons with 91 licensed warehouses are available. The target for the 2023 is 8-10 million tons with 140 licensed warehouses.
- Turkey is among the top 10 largest poultry meat producer and the top 5 poultry meat exporters and is among top three honey production countries in the world.
- Agricultural Innovations: **Agricultural Monitoring and Registration System (TARBİL)** is aiming to keep Turkish farmers aware of the climate conditions and to keep production sustainable. Digital Agriculture Market (DİTAP) includes the entire food supply chain system from production to consumption.
- Agriculture Sector is one of the key sectors, especially to create labor force. Advantages of the agriculture sector for refugees are similar agricultural context, agricultural background, short-term outputs, new agricultural skills and sustainable income, exemptions on work permit regulations for refugees under temporary protection.
- The ministry works closely with FSA partners on livestock management and animal disease control, plant production and greenhouses, cooperatives irrigation management, agro-industry seasonal agricultural workers.

- Different trainings are conducted under the agri-food projects, Livestock Care and Herd Management, Citrus Grove Management, Harvesting, post-harvesting, Greenhouse Vegetable Production Cut Flower cultivation, Olive Plantation Management and Harvesting, Home Based Agricultural Processing, Entrepreneurship Training, Cultivation and harvesting of apple, grape, pepper, pistachio and cotton crops; farmer field school trainings, irrigation management, food hygiene.
- FSA sector Projects are increasing productivity and quality of products, supporting agricultural employment and household level income and food diversity, strengthening social cohesion between refugees and host communities, and building national and local capacities.

Entrepreneurship Expert Mr. Kuzu from FAO presented on agricultural cooperatives sector.

- Cooperatives has an important role in the agricultural value chain. To empower the cooperatives in Turkey, there is an initiative called “Kök Project” that gives a general map of the cooperative system. Numbers of agricultural cooperatives and major cooperatives unions can be seen in the system. Although there is institutions, public support and private sector support; institutions and information cannot be combined to build up significant cooperative models, which are active in the value chain.
- Consumer cooperatives should be established alongside unions that play a great role in value chains. In Turkey agricultural cooperatives are under the MoAF and consumer cooperatives are under the Ministry of Trade, there is need for more collaboration between these two institutions/cooperatives. These two Ministries signed a protocol on the agricultural women cooperatives. With presenting good models to the society, action plans can be prepared to achieve good results.
- Actual datasets from field level are required to have reforms, structural models and strategic plans, and to implement Society 5.0 – Agriculture models. Digitalization in agriculture can help analyze both production and consumption habits. Technological growth and tools should be based on people's needs. Agricultural value chain map should be changed to improve efficiency of production and farmer organizations in Turkey.
- Examples of cooperatives were shared with the participants to compare different cooperatives under MoAF and MoT.
- In Turkey, there is need to have legislative models for social cooperatives. Digital Marketing is also critical and needs more attention while developing entrepreneurship models.

Q&A:

- WHH raised concern about decrease in arable lands due to the increase in the inputs of agricultural production, as it is an environmental concern for agriculture sector. Another question was around acquisition of agricultural land by the refugees under temporary protection, as it is difficult to find agricultural lands to lease from the landowners, even if land is leased from the landowners this affects sustainability of the process. What policy does the ministry follow to utilize unused areas as an agricultural land?
- MoAF explained that The General Directorate of Agricultural Reform analyses the lands through satellites and extracting geographic topography. The general directorate of state waterworks is aware of this issue and includes more irrigation projects especially by construction of dams. Settlement in agricultural lands is another problem causing these issues; with the existing legislations, the restriction of settlements in agricultural lands is provided.
- Regarding leasing of lands, MoAF is in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization; in 2020, it has been decided to allocate the state lands suitable for an

agriculture free of charge to farmers. The main focus is on products such as legumes, cereals, and forage crops. In this way, it is aimed to encourage production. Its applicability and convenience for asylum seekers should be investigated.

Session 2: Role of Agri-entrepreneurship and Digitalization for Refugees' Self-reliance and Income Generation through Value Chain Development

Mr. Mehmet Kuzu, the Entrepreneurship Expert of FAO in his presentation, gave information about experiences and best practices about digitalization and entrepreneurship in agri-food sector in Turkey.

The number of farmers has decreased by 48% in the last 12 years in Turkey. Agricultural lands also fell 12.3% in the last 18 years. New entrepreneurship policies are needed, conventional entrepreneurship is not answering the needs, and it is not sustainable. For sustainability, collective entrepreneurship is necessary.

Turkish Agricultural Ecosystem Stakeholders are working to have new policies for local agricultural development. Digital agriculture solutions have six main areas: digital procurement, agricultural e-commerce, smart training, information services, weather and climate services, digital finance. "Tabit" is the best practice of digital agriculture in Turkey, it has 1.6 million farmers database. To be able to manage all systems slack application can be used.

Agriculture sector needs dissemination, consolidation, and transformation. As an example for digitalization of agriculture; with the start of trade activities of Topraktan Tabaga (Soil to Plate) Artuklu Agricultural Development Cooperative in Mardin in November 2020, 500 thousand TL were generated, as the cooperative received more than 2000 orders. In one month, their products reached 73 provinces in Turkey.

Session 3: Self-reliance through Agricultural Livelihoods and Agri-entrepreneurship: Case Studies

Case Study 1: Mr. Ivan Lwanga, Project Support Officer IOM presented on "The Role of Agri-entrepreneurship And Farming Innovations & Digitalization for Refugee's Self-reliance".

IOM's project "Viransehir Open Area Farming and Food Drying" has supported both Syrian and Turkish farmers who are working together on the allocated land. In cooperation with Viransehir district governorate vegetable crops with strong consumer demand in local markets, such as red bell peppers, were identified for farming. The beneficiaries received basic agricultural training from the department of agriculture under the governorate, which included land reclamation, ventilation selection of inputs and tools, farm management and marketing. So far, over 8 tons of pepper has been grown on the land and transferred to the drying facility for drying and packaging.

Merits of Farming Innovations Like Solar Dryers are the productivity increase in terms of labour, energy cost saving; less wastage of dried products; high hygienic standards; higher durability and transparency over time is important for the green-house effect; Solar Dryers maintains colours and nutrients of fruits and vegetables; better product quality; better prices, higher affordability level, better payback power of farmers.

Cooperative will be providing high bargaining power for products, social cohesion, and access to information, finance and credit, protection from shared negative forces in the form of exploitive traders and markets. Refugees need drawing on shared life/business experience and the common desire to progress and advance economically proper financial management and planning.

Agri-entrepreneurship equips the beneficiaries with lifelong vocational skills that will increase their access to the labor markets and creating additional long-term employment opportunities for the beneficiaries, increasing household incomes for the beneficiaries. It allows reduction of reliance on humanitarian aid and providing them to settling in the current place. Awareness of shared responsibility helps to ensure social cohesion.

Selection criteria of the beneficiaries are; having experience in the field of agriculture, being fragile, to have no livelihood. Lists were obtained in local governments, on the selection process.

Case Study 2: Mr. Osman Çakıroğlu the Project Director of LIFE Project from CIPE, shared with the participants Life Project's goal and strategy. The LIFE Project equips food entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge they need to build successful businesses in the food sector while building social cohesion across refugees and host communities. The 3 years project will end in December 2020. The goal is to prove sustainable livelihoods and building social cohesion through providing skills and education around food businesses. Two food entrepreneurship incubators are available in İstanbul and Mersin, providing trainings and industrial kitchens. Over 3 years, more than 300 entrepreneurs graduated, more than 1000 beneficiaries being certified as food sector workers. 60% of beneficiaries are women. Providing access to financial accounting, legal marketing as Business support services. On seasonal bases, Life Project is giving specialized workshops. In Gastro diplomacy events, sharing foods, recipes of foods and stories. The Cuisine of LIFE cookbook is a story recipe cookbook, it has been published. Life project is providing seed funding and COVID 19 support funding.

Mr. Alaa Alarori, Field Coordinator of LIFE Project presented the case of one of the beneficiaries, Muhammed. Muhammed moved to the Turkey three years ago, started to grow oyster mushroom in the greenhouse. The key to growing oyster mushroom is a being highly demanded product, easy to grow and the Return on Investment (ROI) is high. Oyster mushroom cultivation requires controlled temperature, humidity, and CO2 levels. There have been some cost challenges on growing oyster mushroom. Controlling temperature, humidity, and CO2; reducing the cost of utilities and cost of compost. COVID-19 affected the sales as the distribution routes were disrupted, it becomes a sales challenge. In addition, oyster mushroom has a short shelf life, on the day of harvest it has to go to the wholesalers, it was challenging for the producers.

For responding to challenges, copper pipe system for temperature control, instead of using AC, using Solar energy for reducing utility costs, cold storage room for increasing shelf lifetime and sterilization and pasteurization room for compost preparation were used. Muhammed continues to build his own brand through social media.

Session 4: Women Empowerment and Agri-entrepreneurship, for Syrian Refugees and host communities in Turkey

Mr. Murat Ozoglu Project Coordinator from FAO started the session through introduction of Agricultural Livelihood Projects under Syrian Refugee Resilience Plan of FAO. The project has two main components, employment and self-employment of the beneficiaries through agri-entrepreneurship opportunities. Under employment component, FAO is providing vocational trainings, private sector engagement, job fairs, İSKUR service points, and support to private sector. Under self-employment, FAO is providing entrepreneurship trainings and support, cooperative trainings and support; it is mainly focusing on women empowerment. To involve women, FAO mainly focused on sectors of interest to women.

Ms. Esra Uzun Head of Department from Bursa PDoAF (FAO IP) presented the project activities in Bursa. Women are at a disadvantage compared to men in education, health, organization, social security and decision-making mechanisms. The proportion of women who can convert labor force into income in agriculture is quite limited. Bursa provincial agriculture and forestry authority and MoAF act with the aim of rebuilding the position and social role of women in society through the power of agricultural knowledge. In line with this goal, a Women Farmers Studies Group, which will carry out activities under the PDoAF, has been established. Provincial Directorate provides training, publication and information services for rural women. It is aimed to provide independence and self-confidence, strengthen social solidarity, increase non-agricultural activities and professional movement ability, and enrich cultural life. There are 7 Cooperatives and 27 Associations / Economic Enterprises that carry out agricultural production and commercial activities. Trainings are provided to women farmers who take part in the cooperatives and associations establishment process; trainings such as raising organizational awareness, division of labor, marketing and e-commerce, packaging, hygiene, occupational safety, and gender equality.

During the commencement of these activities, Bursa PDoAF engages with local administrations, public institutions, NGOs, universities and the private sector. With the protocol signed with İŞKUR in associations and cooperatives; by providing training on local food products, bakery products, home-type table olive processing, sustainability is increased after training. When necessary, projects are prepared by directing national and international grant support project calls to associations and cooperatives to improve their entrepreneurial capacities, increase their technical knowledge and complete their tool and equipment needs.

Challenges: Business activities slowing down during the pandemic, Failure to activate the breakfast room within the scope of production disruptions and COVID-19 measures. Beneficiaries (especially Syrian Beneficiaries) have difficulty in attendance due to insufficient economic gain.

Ms. Nigar Gurel Savluk from the Izmir PDoAF (FAO IP) presented on the activities in Izmir. Through cooperatives, it was aimed to enable women to stay together and do a more sustainable business. In 2019, it was decided to support Vocational Trainings with Entrepreneurship and Cooperative Trainings so that the women beneficiaries can be more active and empowered. Long-lasting studies were carried out to determine the sector in which the cooperative will be located. In the food sector, it was decided to produce stuffed mussels due to the high demand for female workforce. When choosing the sector, strategies were determined to overcome all difficulties.

Under FAO SRRP projects, Izmir PDoAF is working in cooperation with Public Education Directorate, İŞKUR (Turkish Business Agency), KOSGEB and private sector. Once the vocational training was completed, certified entrepreneurship training was given to both Syrian and host

community beneficiaries with KOSGEB and Public Education partnership. Cooperative trainings were organized and the beneficiaries and continuous technical support was provided to the cooperatives.

Turna Women's Cooperative was established on 10 October 2019 with 7 founding partners. After the establishment, partnerships of 13 beneficiaries became official. The Most Important Outputs of the Project, Izmir's first, and Turkey's second multicultural cooperative was established.

Session 5: PSEA and AAP Framework in Entrepreneurship and Agricultural Livelihoods

Ms. Nese Cakir FSA sector Gender Focal Point (Gender Specialist FAO) briefed the participants on PSEA & AAP Framework in Entrepreneurship and Agricultural Livelihoods. Syrians under temporary protection and host community members in agriculture exposed to social and economic vulnerabilities, struggle to access stable and reliable livelihood opportunities, in agricultural labour tend to be more vulnerable than those who have skilled jobs in other sectors, the agriculture sector engages more women than other sectors, women in the sector are more often engaged in seasonal, low paid and low-skilled jobs with a primary caregiving role in families. Many women, especially among Syrians under temporary protection have very limited access to formal and full livelihood and employment opportunities, risks of power increase on vulnerabilities and lead to negative coping strategies, increasing the risk of SEA.

To strengthen Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), partners should institutionalize agency-specific codes of conduct, appoint dedicated PSEA focal points, and establish effective and accessible community-based complaint mechanisms. Robust PSEA systems are crucial in protecting the most vulnerable populations, especially refugee women, men, girls and boys from the risk of abuse of power. The capacity of government and non-government actors and services in all sectors will be strengthened to effectively respond to GBV and PSEA. Sexual Exploitation is an abuse of vulnerability, differential power, or trust.

Following measures should be taken against sexual exploitation and abuse: UN organizations have PSEA policy infrastructure such as codes of conducts, internal reporting, and PSEA-relevant human resources policies in place. Visibility materials raise awareness about PSEA and community based complaints mechanisms (CBCMs). It should be ensured that all stakeholders, beneficiaries, representatives of different community groups are aware of PSEA policies and the possibility of reporting confidentially. Actors including UN, implementing partners, NGOs, INGOs should enforce a zero-tolerance policy towards SEA and put in place systems that would allow prevention and effective response. Joint messaging on beneficiary rights, PSEA and how to report SEA should be decided.

Session 6: Discussions, Conclusions & Recommendations:

The workshop was a fruitful opportunity for all participants to know more about the value chain in agriculture and entrepreneurship and to learn from the existing examples of agri-food cooperatives and enterprises in Turkey.

Following are the questions from the discussions during the workshop:

- EUD: Which three ministries made the protocol on women cooperatives in what year?

FAO (Mr. Kuzu) explained that, on 30 October 2018, MoAF, MoT and MoFLSS signed the protocol on the agricultural women cooperatives. Under human resources development the programme supported by the EU, MoFLSS is implementing the EU programme in 30 provinces for 3 years. In 2021, it is planning to start supporting agricultural women cooperatives and gender-equal cooperatives.

- GFP FSA sector requested MoAF for its strategy around supporting women's adoption and use of agricultural technologies and women's inclusion in the process of technological innovation in agriculture

MoAF explained that the Strategy Paper and Action Plan on Empowering Women (2018-2023) issued by the MoFLSS and Strategy Plan of the MoAF (2019-2023) are relevant strategies that target women and their access to the technology and trainings, moreover the Ministry is currently drafting the Action Plan on the Empowerment of the Women in Rural settings.

- Can agricultural cooperatives be a solution to prevent the impoverishment of the rural poor?

Agricultural development cooperatives focus on agricultural production. Prevention of the impoverishment depends on the conditions of the region, considering the activities in a province. From a technical perspective, small credits and loans have been provided to the rural poor for establishing cooperatives. MoAF has some articles under its strategic documents to empower cooperatives and rural women.

Following are the main recommendations from the discussions during the workshop:

- **Need to have strategic plan on the digitalization of agriculture sector.** MoAF has started to increase its focus on digitalization in agriculture. There are serious regulations and procedures in this regard. MoAF and FAO developed National E-Agricultural Strategy under a technical cooperation project while engaging universities and civil society organizations. A five years action plan is drafted (2021-2026), under this strategy, there are certain activities like analyzing the current situation on digitalization of agriculture in Turkey. The action plan is expected to take force in June 2021.
- **Need for Agricultural Monitoring System during the COVID-19:** MoAF has developed a monitoring system during COVID-19 and MoAF is publishing monthly journals on the website. These journals give information about the status of the value chains and the Crop Production Department of MoAF, price fluctuation and supplier demand fluctuations data. In addition, MoAF is developing a strategy to keep the market active.
- **On developing Strategy on the Cooperatives, MoAF and Ministry of Trade should collaborate.**
There is need for collaboration between MoAF and MoT around cooperatives that fall under agri-food sector and are covered by one or the other ministry to create synergies. FAO as FSA sector lead, to encourage such cooperation between the ministries.

- **Need to increase the number of women managers, and the number of women cooperatives.**

Though FSA sector partners are focusing on establishing women cooperatives and women engagement in agri-food businesses through employment and income generation activities, yet the number is not very high and more consolidated efforts are required from all FSA partners to ensure women engagement while designing their activities.

- **Access to financial instruments and educational opportunities by women:**

It was realized that there is a need for creating linkages between existing strategic documents and programming in FSA sector partners on access of women to economic opportunities in agri-food sector. MoFLSS' Strategy and Action Plan on Empowering Women (2018-2023) and MoAF's Strategy Plan (2019-2023) are the guiding tools regarding the access of women to the technology and trainings, financial instruments and educational opportunities. MoAF is drafting the Action Plan on the Empowerment of the Rural Women that will further guide the programming and response strategy in agri-food sector.