


THE MISSION OF THE WOMEN FARMERS PROJECT | CIFTCI KADIN PROJESİ:

To recognize and develop the technical and managerial capacities of Turkish women farmers through education, while supporting the region's economic advancement toward sustainable agricultural development and gender equality.



Women Farmers, Village of Elmali, Turkey

INSPIRED BY THE SCALABILITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE ANNIE'S PROJECT, a nationally recognized risk management educational program for female farmers operating in the United States, **DR. ROBIN BRUMFIELD**, New Jersey's Program Leader for Annie's Project and an Extension Specialist in Farm Management in The School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, and **MICK MINARD**, a Photographer and Communications Strategy Consultant with an expertise in reporting the impact of market-based strategies for social change, formed an east-west partnership with Akdeniz University in Antalya, Turkey to adapt the Annie's Project model to train Turkish women farmers on the best practices and basic skills necessary for them to scale and sustain profitable agricultural businesses.



A plain of wheat pointing north from the Mediterranean coast, 90 km (56 mi) west of the city of Antalya near KUMLUCA, an agricultural and touristic stronghold between the Taurus Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea, and the location of the pilot program for the Women Farmers Project.

FROM SEPTEMBER 5TH TO SEPTEMBER 12TH 2011, Dr. Robin Brumfield and Mick Minard worked in collaboration with DR. BURHAN OZKAN, Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Advisor to Rector and Coordinator for Bologna Process Coordination Office at Akdeniz University, BEDRULLAH ERCIN, the Provincial Director of Food, Agriculture and Livestock in Antalya Province, and a select team of Agricultural Extension Educators working at The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) to conduct a needs assessment and preliminary feasibility study to determine the scope and program of the **WOMEN FARMERS PROJECT**.

A truck hauls onions along route D635, somewhere on the road between Antalya and Elmali, Turkey.

THE PILOT: A 28-HOUR COURSE TO TRAIN 40-45 WOMEN FARMERS FROM KUMLUCA. The pilot courses are offered to small-scale citrus and greenhouse producers, and will run from October 24th to November 18th, 2011. The underlying objectives of the pilot include an examination of 1) the socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale farmers participating in the pilot, 2) an understanding of the system of farming they practice, 3) a determination of their level of interest in and adoption of improved production technologies, business planning and management strategies, and new tools for disseminating knowledge and best practices, 4) an articulation of the constraints and opportunities for achieving sustainable agriculture and 5) the implications of these constraints and opportunities for scaling the project and for improving local extension services. As such, the program is built on these four guiding principles: situation specificity -- project flexibility -- farmer participation -- mainstreaming women's programs.



THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS FOR THE PILOT PROJECT SPAN SECTORS AND DISCIPLINES, AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: DR. BURHAN OZKAN (right), Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Advisor to Rector and Coordinator for Bologna Process Coordination Office at Akdeniz University, BEDRULLAH ERCIN (center/gray tie), the Provincial Director of Food, Agriculture and Livestock in Antalya Province, a select team of Agricultural Extension Educators working at The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) (center), ERSIN YAMAN (left), an Agricultural Extension Educator in Kumluca, and Turkish women farmers (pictured on the following pages).

THE INTENDED IMPACT OF THE WOMEN FARMERS PROJECT will be measured by their ability to use agricultural and enterprise skills to calculate and manage the risks of changing their patterns and methods of production, along with small but significant improvements in or creation of business practices and enterprise planning, in particular, their ability to take advantage of new or growing markets - an indication that women farmers begin to think entrepreneurially, analyzing their situation and identifying income-generating, cost-saving and environmentally sound activities.



IN LIGHT OF THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY and the intended accession to the European Union, Turkey will prove to be more competitive and will reliably meet consumer demand for safe and high quality food IF the country invests in programs that develop the specific skills and talents of its women farmers, who currently account for approximately 45% of the country's agricultural workforce. Economic development has and will continue to transform the agricultural sector in Turkey, and the process includes greater commercialization, urbanization and integration into the global economy. These trends and changes bring with them challenges and opportunities, some with a distinct gender dimension.



HALIME ERKIS (center) and **HASIBE CETIN** (upper left) grow button mushrooms (*Agaricus bisporus*) in the town of Korkuteli. Over the last two decades, mushroom growing has become one of the most dynamically developing fields of agriculture in Turkey, with one of the largest producers, SMS ERSAN LTD., based in Korkuteli. Halime, who sells directly to Ersan Ltd., uses 100 square meters of the ground floor of their new half-built home (lower left) to produce 2.5 tons of mushrooms annually. With 8 years of experience growing mushrooms, Halime harvests 90 kilograms per day.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AREAS HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON AROUND THE WORLD: they represent a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy through their roles as farmers, laborers and entrepreneurs, yet almost everywhere they face more severe constraints than men in access to productive resources. They are less likely than men to own land or livestock, to be trained on new technologies, to have access to credit or other financial services, or to receive education or extension advice. Data on female farmers are limited. Most women engaged in farming do so within a household production unit, and their activities are not usually separable from those of the household as a whole.



SEBAHAT KILINC, 54, grew up farming in Yilmazli, about 16 km from where she currently grows greenhouse tomatoes, apples and table grapes on one acre in the Village of Elmali.

BY EMPHASIZING THE EMPOWERMENT, PARTICIPATION AND TRAINING OF TURKISH WOMEN FARMERS is to recognize them as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food security in Turkey. Ultimately, the Women Farmers Project and its local partners hope to inspire and support new networks, equal access to productive resources, land, financing, technologies, training and markets. With specialized training in business management, information technologies, alternative production systems, soil productivity and plant nutrition, among others, the women can pursue opportunities to start-up new ventures, upgrade or improve existing businesses, expand their customer base or enter new markets.



KEZIBAN DURMAS, 30, has a primary school education, has been farming for over a decade and grows primarily greenhouse tomatoes on an acre of land in Elmali. When asked what she wanted to learn most from the Women Farmers Project, she laughed and said: *“I would like to learn how to grow tomatoes! My husband decides what I do and I do it; I have many unanswered questions about production and marketing. I am very interested in these things.”*

FATIME BIRCAN, 30, has been farming since she was 5 years old. Fatima grows a mix of fruits and vegetables on two acres in the Village of Yilmazli. With the support of her husband, who buys the fertilizers and negotiates all business-related contracts with local commissioners and chemical companies, she is eager to innovate her production methods, even, she says, *“break from traditional farming techniques so we can make more money.”*

WOMEN FARMERS IN THE VILLAGE OF ELMALI gather around to be interviewed by Dr. Robin Brumfield and Dr. Burhan Ozkan (pictured lower right) during a series of site visits while conducting a needs assessment and feasibility study throughout Antalya Province. By enabling each women to participate actively in her own development, the results from the initial survey of their priority needs, interests and current capacities helped to determine the final training program and pilot location for the Women Farmers Project.





For 18 years, **SELVER YILMAZ**, 44 and a mother of two, (sitting above) has run a dairy farm in Dosemealti in Antalya Province with her husband Saban (right). Dropping out of primary school because it was too far from home, she began to manage her father's small herd of cows and then married a farmer. As members of the local agricultural development cooperative, chaired by **CENNET EKIM** for the last 6 years (standing above), they have a daily buyer for their milk just 500m from their farm, which Saban delivers by cart. When asked what she would like to learn most to make her 16 hours of daily labor on the farm more profitable, she answers: **“I want to learn everything, especially how to keep my milking parlor clean and my Holsteins [*Bos taurus*] healthy.”**





“It is hard work but I like to farm. I am my own boss. I can be home to raise my children.”

GULSUM GERIKALAN, 45, lives in the town of Altinova, near Antalya’s airport. With a primary school education, she has been farming for the past 18 years - with 12 of those years as the sole proprietor. She married a farmer and worked on another farm nearby for 3-4 years before starting her own. She relies on a consultant to tell her what chemicals to spray. Working 13-16 hour days, she produces over 150,000 stems of standard carnations (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) per year on less than half an acre. Not including labor, her expenses are 50% of sales. On a consignment basis, she sells her total production to an exporter she met through her farming neighbors who sells to the Ukraine and Russia. When asked specifics about the exporter’s fees, she remarks: *“He gives me no information about his commission or costs, but I trust him, I have been selling to him for 12 years.”*



Farming since she was 12 years old, **UMMS INCE**, now 37, grows Gerbera daisy or African daisy (*Gerbera jamesonii*) and Goldenrod (*Solidago* 'Goldenmosa') varieties for cut flowers with her husband, Aydin in the town of Varsak, about 14 kms north of Antalya. They sell every stem to an exporter with relations in Moldova. Wanting to increase their gross income, Umms and her husband decided to grow more flowers per hectare by increasing their plant density, ultimately leading to a problem with humidity, which forced them to heat their greenhouse. Even with the additional expense of heating, their business is profitable.



SEHNAZ OLCEK is a woman farmer living in Kumluca, the location of the Women Farmers Project pilot. For 8 months of the year, she grows bell peppers (*Capsicum annuum*) in a 0.6 hectare (1.5 acre) poly-covered greenhouse. She makes all of the decisions on the farm while her husband has an off-farm job. During peak harvest times, four extra workers, either family members or hired labor, help her with the harvest.

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Narrative and Photography by Mick Minard

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