

City Mezitli	
Country	Turkey
Population	194,014
Title of policy or practice	Mezitli Female Producers' Market
Subtitle (optional)	Mezitli Female Producers' Market as a social innovation method for social inclusion.
URL video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQ_SL_VwTkc
Category	Social and Economic Equity
SDGs	SDGs 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11.
Brief description	<p>Mezitli was founded as a municipality in 1968, but it was just in 2008 that Mezitli's boundary enlarged to 40 neighbourhoods. Although during the past years it evolved very fast to be a modern urban area with housing as well as working places, schools, hospitals and modern infrastructures, still almost ¾ of the Mezitli area consists of mountains, plateaus and fields (with 8,126 ha agricultural land). The Mediterranean climate is appropriate for a broad variety of fruits and vegetables, especially citrus, grape, peach and olive products. The big growth in population, mainly due to migration from the east of Turkey, but also the influx of people from the neighbour countries like Syria (especially because of war) since 2010, has been a big and ongoing challenge for Mezitli. Therefore, the region has a high need for a social-cultural inclusivity approach as well as economic projects to ensure local peace and give the inhabitants a good living environment and future perspectives to almost 26,000 plus registered Syrians and to 194,014 Turkish citizens. Women are still one of the most vulnerable groups as in the society of Turkey, they are often very much dependent on their families and mostly on their male relatives or husbands. The economic independence is a main factor for women of all ages in order to be able to make their own choices in life and to feel more self-confident. The main goals of the Mezitli Female producers Market is to reduce the gender-based barriers, to increase working opportunities for women; social and cultural exchange between women; to strengthen local female producers from all social and cultural, economic levels, support the local women to organize themselves, encourage them to a more active participation in society and, thereby, increase their self-confidence. Physical infrastructure and main monitoring have been provided by the Mezitli Municipality, as well as support with experienced staff for the general implementation.</p>
Date of start and state (ongoing/completed)	08/2014 Ongoing
Actors and stakeholders involvement	Partnerships with several non-governmental organizations and civil initiations related to activity headings has been developed. Mersin Rotary Club engaged us on EVKA Programme for women producer's and women and men professionals gave seminars to female producers on such topics; Polluted World and Recycling, Home Accidents and First Aid, Early Diagnosis Saves Life, Young people addiction, Women's Rights, I love myself, Heart health, Communication in house. Mezitli Soroptimists, TEMA, Mezitli City Council, etc.
Approach	<p>Analysing the current situation of female producers in 40 neighbourhoods, Assembly decisions, stay strong against the local market's men representatives, Creation of a strong sales strategy and physical environment development for women with subsidiaries, Encouraging women to produce and get out of their homes to work, Increasing women's ability on social, economic, environmental and global development goals.</p> <p>Introducing, Encouraging female producers on safe, sustainable producing.</p>

<p>Innovation</p>	<p>Turkey is a developing country and Mezitli is one of the fastest growing cities of Turkey. Neighbourhood markets are so usual in our city but usually men are dominant on that market as like the other economic tools. Those markets have a big rant; each stand's rent at the markets is very expensive and even if you have money you can't rent any of the stands without lobbying. Our project managed to reach female producers in 40 neighbourhoods of Mezitli; provided stands to women with just two preconditions; living in Mezitli and being a female producer (producing cheese, cake, marmalade, bakery, meals, desserts, olive, olive oil, handmade any kind of product is accepted). Women reached their self-confidence and independency thanks to our female producer markets with hundreds of thousands of consumers. Women are introduced to sustainable Development Goals as sustainability, good farm applications, being a woman, women rights, marketing methods, good health and well-being, peace, justice, strong institutions concepts according to their needs. The concept of this project allowed us to reach women who are usually not going out of their house or neighbourhood without any permission of their family (sometimes it will be a father, husband or brother). Now those women have their independency and they communicate with each other (educated and non-educated ones, like engineers and primary school graduated) as producers and consumers. 650 female producers have stands at 9 female producers' markets.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Mezitli Female Producers' Market is a revolutionary project, as it is the first in Turkey to open up a market that is completely run by female producers. At the same time, it has some evolutionary aspects, as there was time giving to the local female producers to organize themselves in cooperation with the future consumers. It was very important to involve the target group in the whole process, from the establishing until the evaluation of the initiative. Local markets have a long tradition, but experience has shown that female producers often are excluded because of certain barriers, one of them is the financial barrier, but also the selection criteria of the local markets (usually male) administration. One basic solution for that was to not take money from the female producers to open up their selling stand, as well as only female producers being allowed to sell in the market. The concept strengthens the local market as only female producers from the region are accepted as sellers. Small productions as organic vegetables from small gardens, home-made produces handicrafts are specially welcomed. Citizens living in Mersin province started to reach affordable food on affordable prices and good quality. The market monitoring, balancing the prices with the free economy being done by women. Women from rural areas who were also getting used to the difficulty of reaching the market have now achieved to buy their own cars. After 5 years, they have learned how to drive and got their own licences.</p>
<p>Inclusion</p>	<p>Establishing a female producers' market with free conditions for women was a challenge for us. Local market representatives, who are paying rent for their stands at the other local markets, stand against the female producers' market. Our mayor and the related women assembly members addressed that by explaining to assembly members, municipal units and citizens that the female producers' market was established for the needs and abilities of women living in Mezitli. Female producers produce fresh fruit, vegetables, pastry, all handmade products in their own home, sometimes on a hill or in the city centre. We aimed to provide a social inclusive environment for women from all religion and heritage, so not only to Mezitli/ Turkish citizens but also to Syrian or Asylum seekers who are living in Mezitli. Our Female Producers' Market's theme is an inclusive and comprehensive model for women in the social and economic environment. Territorially, the Female Producers' Markets and producers are located and living in Mezitli, but all visitors/consumers are from all the Province. The goal is to develop and manage a project with an inclusive approach.</p>
<p>Adversity coefficient</p>	<p>First of all, the legislative structure has been re-organized and re-written for the Female Producers Market. A regulation had been written and presented and voted by the assembly. A monitoring system has been created with the women of the municipal staff, female producers and assembly members together. The objections of the local markets union and male members have been listened to, but we have insisted on creating an inclusive Female Producers' Market model. Female producers do not pay any rent for the stands nor electricity or water or other management costs. Sales policy and product quality are other challenges for us. There has been an effort to overcome</p>

these obstacles by creating a monitoring committee for them. The monitoring and balancing of the prices are important to provide low-priced but high-quality food for all. It is hard to break women's glass ceiling. It is hard to gain their trust and provide facilities for their real needs. Some capacity increasing activities have been planned and organized by partnership with NGOs and people have volunteered in financial management, women rights, being a mum, being a woman, etc. Getting Syrians or Asylum seekers to the markets is very hard but the fight is not over. We are doing announcements for the market and the first step was being a consumer. Each day, all women and female producers are included in and made part of the structure. At first, female producers were getting permission from their family but now their family accepted their freedom and independency. They were carrying their products on busses or family cars; now they own their driving licences and cars. They own their own money; they can buy their bread by themselves and give allowance to their kids. ✓Three central aspects coming together in an innovative way in this initiative. First of all, women are strengthened, as mentioned before as local female producers are supported by this initiative, local small-scale economy profits from this strategy. Female producers get a chance to get more self-esteem and to earn their own living. Thereby they are strengthened as women in their position in society, get more independent and have better possibilities to take their lives in their own hands. Strong women, gender equality, sustainable small-scaled production, these are all aspects giving a better quality of life to the whole district and its citizens. Local resources import is promoted and thereby strengthened together with the female population.