

AGRICULTURE-ORIENTED SERVICES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN TÜRKİYE TÜRKİYE'DE YEREL YÖNETİMLERİN TARIM ODAKLI HİZMETLERİ

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Son yıllarda yerel yönetimler tarafından yerel kırsal kalkınmayı destekler verilmektedir. Birçok ülkede bu tür hizmetler çoğunlukla merkezi yönetimler tarafından sağlanırken, Türkiye'de son yıllarda yerel yönetimler de tarımsal faaliyetlerde paydaş ve destekleyici aktörler olarak rol almaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de büyükşehir yönetimlerinin tarımsal faaliyette bulunan üreticilere sağladığı destek hizmetleri hakkında bilgi sunmaktadır. Çalışmanın verileri, Türkiye'nin yedi bölgesinden örneklem olarak seçilen yedi büyükşehir belediyesinin 2022 ve 2023 yıllık faaliyet raporlarından doküman incelemesi yöntemi kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonucunda, dünyadaki benzer örneklerden farklı olarak Türkiye'de büyükşehir belediyeleri yönetimleri tarafından tarımsal faaliyette bulunan üreticilere çeşitli başlıklar altında destek sağladığı görülmüştür. Birçok ülkede merkezi hükümetler uluslararası kuruluşlarla iş birliği içinde tarımsal üretimi desteklemek amacıyla yerel yönetimlere katkı sağlarken, Türkiye'de yerel yönetimlerin bu desteklerden yeterince yararlanamadığı görülmektedir.

ABSTRACT

In recent years, local governments have been supporting local rural development. While in many countries such services are mostly provided by central governments, in Türkiye, in recent years, local governments have also been playing a role as stakeholders and supportive actors in agricultural activities. This study provides information on the support services provided by metropolitan governments to producers engaged in agricultural activities in Türkiye. The data processed within the study was obtained from the 2022 and 2023 annual activity reports of seven metropolitan municipalities selected as a sample from seven regions of Türkiye using the document analysis method. The present research holds, unlike implementations of the kind in the world, metropolitan municipal governments in Türkiye provide support to producers engaged in agricultural activities under various headings. While central governments in many countries provide contributions to local governments to support agricultural production in cooperation with international organisations, the present study notes that local governments in Türkiye do not benefit from these supports sufficiently.

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Introduction

National development, regional development and local development are concepts that complement each other and in the absence of one, the other will be negatively affected. Especially in recent years, the importance of local development and rural development has been expressed on many platforms by both national and international institutions and organizations, and special institutions, projects and grant programs have been carried out to ensure development in these areas. Rural development bears many economic, social, and cultural dimensions. It is especially effective in planning and determining the economic and social future of the region and locality in which it is located. Economic factors constitute an important dimension of rural development. Thereby, the potential, differences, agricultural areas, and production of rural areas are important. In particular, the effective use of agricultural areas, the selection of appropriate products, the development of spraying, irrigation, fertilization facilities, and the increase in the quantity and quality of the product to be taken in the season affect the realization of rural development (Güzel, 2020).

Among the main reasons for the studies and supports related to rural development, the existence of a large gap and inequality between urban and rural areas in terms of social, economic, infrastructure, health, education services, cultural activities, etc. comes to the fore. Since these services that urban dwellers benefit from are not provided to rural dwellers, the number of people who want to continue living in rural areas is decreasing day by day and people living in these areas migrate to cities to live a life with higher standards (Smith and Wiggins, 2020). This reason leads to rural areas being emptied, and a decrease in agricultural activities carried out intensively in rural areas. Considering people's greatest need is to ensure that they can continue their lives in a healthy way, that is, to feed themselves and survive, it is clearly seen how important it is for all people in the world to be able to continue and support production in rural areas. Local governments can use rural developmental tools more effectively (Ploeg et al., 2020). Local administrations' giving importance to rural development and cooperating with stakeholders will contribute to economic and social development both locally and nationwide. Local development is the development and strengthening of economic activities at the local level in a way to cover all elements of development. One of the most critical elements among these elements is undoubtedly the support of agricultural activities (Huang and Huang, 2023).

This study, which examines the agricultural services provided by local governments to support rural development in Türkiye, compares local governments' agricultural services to support rural development around the world and examines whether there are similarities and differences. For this purpose, seven metropolitan municipalities selected from seven regions in Türkiye are determined as the research sample and compared with local governments in different parts of the world that provide agricultural services. In the study, local governments around the world being are compared with the local governments selected as the sample from Türkiye in terms of local services to support rural development, the services provided for this purpose in Türkiye differ positively from other examples in the world in terms of their diversity and quantity. When compared to the local governments in the world countries, it is seen that local governments in Türkiye play a more active role in agricultural services for rural development in many areas such as agriculture, husbandry, environment, financial support types, cooperatives, training, spraying, vaccination, equipment, vehicle etc. supply, expert-technical personnel support, seed, fertilizer, water use and protection, seedling, sapling support and grants. This can be explained by the fact that in many countries, there are legal regulations that require agricultural services to be implemented by central governments, and local governments may not be credited much importance in this field. However, considering that local governments are now important stake holding actors even in global systems, it may be possible to provide these services by granting legal powers to local governments as in Türkiye.

Methodology

This section presents the information about the aim of the study, the importance of the study, the method of the study, and the national and international literature review.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to reveal the scope, methods, and subcategories of agricultural services provided by local governments in Türkiye to support rural development by comparing them with national and international

examples. In this way, whether the agricultural services of local governments in Türkiye to support rural development are adequate when compared with international examples, and what the similar or different implementation examples are is investigated. There are 81 cities in Türkiye. One metropolitan municipality in each of Türkiye's seven regions (Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Central Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, and Southeastern Anatolia regions) was selected to provide agricultural services to support rural development. Seven metropolitan municipalities (Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya, Samsun, Konya, Erzurum, and Gaziantep) constitute the sample of the study. The data of the study were obtained by using the descriptive analysis method and the document analysis method through literature review by examining the annual reports of these metropolitan municipalities for the years 2022 and 2023. The annual reports of these metropolitan municipalities selected as the sample were examined by accessing their corporate online pages.

Literature Review

This section represents the studies on local governments' agricultural services to support rural development separately under the headings of studies in Türkiye and international studies.

National Literature

Some studies conducted in Türkiye on agricultural services of local governments to support rural development are as follows. Kaldırım (2012), in his study on rural development policies in Türkiye, the KÖYDES project, within the scope of its contribution to local governments, mentions the importance of the KÖYDES project despite the destruction of rural areas by urban activities. Yenigül (2016), in the study titled “The Role of Urban Agriculture and Local Authorities in Protecting Agricultural Land in Metropolitan Cities” reveals the importance of urban agriculture practices because of agricultural production on social, economic, and environmental sustainability in sustainable urban development policies. While agriculture and agricultural production have taken place among the working subjects of local governments, it is concluded that metropolitan governments have become important actors in issues related to agricultural production in Türkiye. Keskin and Yıldırım (2018), in their study titled *Agricultural Development and Metropolitan Municipality in Izmir*, present information on the policies and services developed by Izmir Metropolitan Municipality in line with the goal of agricultural development. Gümüšoğlu et al. (2020), in the study titled “A Model Proposition for Application and Effects of Agricultural Policies Towards Economic Development in Local Municipalities” discuss agricultural policies based on economic and technological developments within the scope of Metropolitan Municipalities processes, and offer suggestions for improvement based on strengthening communication and cooperation between rural areas and the city, and propose a model proposal that will help eliminate the difficulties experienced and may be experienced. Kayadibi, (2023) in his study titled “The Effect of Agricultural Supports of Local Government on Entrepreneurship Tendency: Konya Example”, examined presents the agricultural services of local governments to support entrepreneurship. Bitgin and Aslan (2023), in the study titled “An Assessment on Agricultural Policies of Local Governments: Gaziantep Province”, reveal the agricultural policies and stakeholder actors of Gaziantep metropolitan municipality.

International Literature

To the general framework of the studies published in the international literature, international structures and central governments are more prominent supporting local development, but recently local governments have been seen as stakeholder actors, and it has become natural for them to take an active role. To prevent a global food and water crisis, global organizations have been developing collaborations by taking a preventive attitude and involving the governments closest to the source of production, i.e., local governments, through national central governments. In this sense, it is seen that the role of local governments in rural development and agricultural production has started to be emphasized in the international literature. Some of the international studies on local governments' agricultural services to support rural development are as follows. Sibbing et al. (2019) state that local governments in the Netherlands have recently taken on more roles and conducted projects to support sustainable food production, security, and support. Raja et al. (2019) state that local governments have become more visible and important actors in the agricultural field worldwide. Raja et al, also state that local

governments are seen as stakeholder actors to support local producers in projects carried out in food production and water supply. Espluga (2021) argues that alternative agri-food services based on agroecology and food sovereignty can create opportunities to support sustainable local development in Spain. Mosha (2024) investigates the agricultural equipment subsidies provided to producers by the Ministry of Agriculture across Tanzania and the adequacy of these subsidies and reveals the need for structural adjustments.

Overview of the Concept of Rural Development

The word “rural” means belonging to rural settlements, belonging to the countryside. Rural refers to places where there are no urban services, and the population is quite low compared to cities. A rural area defines the place where the population makes a living through agricultural activities (Güzel, 2020). The areas referred to as “rural areas” are settlements outside the settlement areas defined as urban areas, where agriculture and animal husbandry activities are carried out, expressed with names such as villages, hamlets, etc. In rural areas, the economy is based on agriculture, and it is stated that the division of labor and specialization has not developed in the human communities living in these areas. “Development” addresses the transformation of the economic, social, and political structure in a society (Geray, 1999). Rural development refers to the services, strategies, projects, and activities carried out to improve the living conditions of people living in rural areas and to improve their economic and social lives and to provide them with a better standard of living (worldbank.org, 2022). Rural development includes activities that enable people living in non-urban areas to grow economically, socially, and with welfare in their regions, improve their quality of life, and receive the services provided to people living in cities (Atkinson, 2017). Rural development aims to improve the production, income, and welfare levels of individuals living in rural areas in a way to change their social and economic structure, to balance the relationship between people and land, and to create the physical and social infrastructure that exists in urban areas in rural areas (Geray, 1999). Thus, a rural area that can stand on its own feet and contribute to the national economy will be created instead of a rural area that is constantly trying to be sustained by transferring resources (Yeşilbaş, 2011).

Activities to Support Rural Development

Among the main reasons for rural development efforts and support, the existence of a large gap and inequality between urban and rural areas in terms of social, economic, infrastructure, health, education services, cultural activities, etc. stands out. Since these services that people living in urban areas benefit from are not equally available to people living in rural areas, the attractiveness of living in rural areas disappears, and people living in these areas migrate to cities to live a life with higher standards. These reasons lead to the emptying of rural areas and the decrease in agricultural activities carried out intensively in rural areas. However, to produce food, which is an indispensable element of life for people, there is a need for land and the operation of land and agriculture. Most of the land suitable for agricultural activities is in rural areas, not in cities. This reveals how important rural areas and the agricultural activities and productions to be carried out in these areas are in the production of the nutrients necessary to sustain human life. Both central governments and local governments around the world offer support and grants to people living in these areas and engaged in production activities to continue food production-centered activities, especially agricultural production, in rural areas that have become empty because of reasons such as climate change, climate crisis, global warming, economic problems, and urban life being more attractive and helpful than rural life. When it is considered that the greatest need of people is to ensure that they can continue their lives in a healthy way to feed and survive, it is clearly seen how important it is for all people in the world to continue and support production in rural areas (fao.org, 2021).

It is essential to highlight the significance of agriculture, particularly in rural regions. Agriculture plays a strategic role in ensuring sufficient, nutritious, and balanced diets; optimizing the use of limited resources; and fostering a robust and dynamic economy (Sarı, 2019). Food is the most fundamental need of humans and serves as the foundation of life. Agriculture fulfills most of this essential need. However, agriculture, which is vital for sustaining all life and civilization, is currently experiencing a profound and significant crisis, both globally and within Türkiye. The substantial increase in agricultural production, particularly over the last century, in response to contemporary demands, has resulted in an ecological crisis for the world that functions as a closed system.

Although sunlight supplies the energy required for life, all other resources are limited. Historically, the primary challenge faced by human societies has been the inability to align their diverse demands with the capacity of ecosystems to endure the resulting pressures. Given that agricultural production does not sustain the current global population, it is unlikely to meet the needs of the increasing population in the future (Yılmaz, 2020; Söylemez et al., 2023). The agricultural sector, which plays a crucial role in meeting the food needs of society, producing raw materials for non-agricultural sectors, and financing a healthy workforce and development, has experienced a decline in its share of the global economy because of rapid urbanization, increased industrialization, and the swift growth of the service sector. As agricultural lands diminish under urbanization rates, the sector, which has been relegated to the background, struggles to meet the rising food demand associated with population growth. Many countries have started efforts to enhance agricultural productivity through technological and genetic methods. These countries have also shifted their focus towards the production of agricultural products with high added value that do not rely on labor (Bayraç & Yenilmez, 2005; Bitgin & Aslan, 2023).

Efforts and projects aimed at sustaining agricultural production activities in rural areas typically emphasize services that support producers and farmers throughout various agricultural production processes. These services include infrastructure development, access to financing, support and grants aimed at reducing production costs, training in good agricultural practices and modern farming techniques to achieve higher yields and increased income, soil analysis help for the cultivation of crops suited to specific soil characteristics, training in pesticide application, fertilization, and maintenance activities, encouragement of the production of alternative and economically viable crops, and collaborative initiatives with universities, academies, institutes, scientists, national and international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and other stakeholder actors to share knowledge to support rural development. To ensure the continuity of agricultural production, international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), European Union (EU), OECD, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) offer various forms of support, grants, and services to individuals, institutions, and organizations engaged in agricultural production worldwide, covering areas such as financial help, academic collaboration, and project development and implementation.

The notion that local governments can better use rural development tools has established them as significant actors in rural development. The emphasis that local administrations place on rural development, along with their collaboration with stakeholders, will contribute to the economic and social advancement of both the local community and the nation (Güven & Dülger, 2016; Güzel, 2020).

Rural development efforts and investments are primarily conducted through provincial special administrations among local government units. In contrast, municipalities, as urban management entities, focus on making investments in urban centers. Provincial special administrations handle various tasks in rural areas outside urban fringes, including urban planning, provision of drinking water, road construction, sewage systems, solid waste management, environmental protection, emergency response and rescue, as well as support for culture, tourism, youth and sports, and the development of forest villages, afforestation, and the establishment of parks and gardens (Yeşilbaş, 2011).

Among the primary objectives of local economic development policies are the strengthening of the economy at urban and regional levels, the creation of new job opportunities, the reduction of unemployment and poverty, and the activation of democratic and autonomous institutions and organizations in the formation of local policies. Local development entails the enhancement and strengthening of economic activities at the local level to encompass all elements of development (Sakinç, 2013; Özden & Olgun, 2017). Undoubtedly, one of the most critical elements among these is the support for agricultural activities.

Agricultural Services of Local Governments to Support Rural Development in the World

Across the globe, numerous international, national, and local institutions are implementing projects and support initiatives aimed at ensuring the continuity of agricultural production and promoting rural development. Organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union, among others, collaborate with central and local governments to provide agricultural support to producers and farmers worldwide. In projects involving many member countries, sustainable agricultural practices are emphasized and supported.

Within the framework of the World Bank's "Enabling the Business of Agriculture 2019" project, local governments particularly emphasized agricultural services aimed at supporting rural development in various countries. These services include providing producers with seed supplies, irrigation equipment, livestock support, necessary materials for plant health, coordination, and support for the sale of agricultural products, cooperative development, training and publication help, grants and financial credit support, facilitation for protecting agricultural lands, and support for the provision of facilities and equipment for agricultural and livestock production. Regulations, restrictions, and record-keeping related to the use of seeds, water, fertilizers, and pesticides, as well as bureaucratic facilitation, are offered. France, Croatia, and the Czech Republic have achieved the highest scores according to these criteria (worldbank.org, 2022).

To support food production at local, national, and global levels, ensure its sustainability, and maintain continuity, agricultural services have aimed to be protective, sustainable, and accessible in the future. In this context, local governments have emerged as active participants alongside multinational and national structures in efforts directed toward food security. Particularly considering the need to prevent global food and water crises, it is essential to protect water and food at their sources—where they exist and are produced—and to ensure their continuity. Therefore, the development of collaborative efforts between local authorities and global and national governments has become increasingly important (Raja et al., 2021).

In line with these objectives, local governments must provide support and facilitating practices for local producers while receiving help from external actors. In this context, local governments worldwide implement agricultural services aimed at ensuring the continuity and sustainability of production. The advancement of agriculture signifies economic development and food supply. Therefore, in services aimed at promoting agriculture, central governments are particularly developing collaborative efforts with local governments (fao.org, 2024).

For instance, the establishment of local markets, the support of local sectors, consultations and training with local experts and producers, and the conservation of local resources (such as water, soil, plants, and animals) are areas where central governments collaborate with local administrations. Thailand, Myanmar, and China provide support to local producers in terms of plant health, irrigation services, the promotion of geographically showed products, and the supply of machinery and equipment. Meanwhile, Vietnam focuses on supporting local producers in animal feed production and grant provision. In Ukraine, grants and support are offered for combating plant diseases, while Kyrgyzstan helps with agricultural machinery, such as tractors. Pakistan and India prioritize initiatives that facilitate the sale of local producers' products in national and global markets, incorporating local governments into these efforts (worldbank.org, 2022).

In Argentina, local governments provide training to ensure the conscious management of trees and grazing livestock operations to protect the country's largest forested areas. They collaborate with farmer associations, financial institutions, and NGOs regarding the training and use of modern agricultural techniques (agroberichtenbuitenland.nl). In many African countries, local governments are developing collaborations with national governments and international organizations to provide seed support to producers alongside educational and advisory services (ccardesa.org). In Norway, both the central government and local administrations offer support to producers in the areas of tools, machinery, and renewable energy (precisionag.no). In Quebec, Canada, local governments provide grants and support to promote the widespread adoption of sustainable, environmentally friendly agricultural practices (capi-icpa.ca). The Nilgen local government in Belgium facilitates collaboration between producers and technical experts by providing necessary equipment and support to prevent bee deaths. The AI-supported "Buzzwatch" project helps address this issue (themayor.eu). Across the United States, local governments offer sustainable agriculture training and practices to producers, particularly providing grants and support focused on environmental impacts (mckinsey.com). In Spain, local governments implement support services for farmers and producers aimed at promoting rural development, including educational activities and advisory services (themayor.eu).

Agricultural Services of Local Governments to Support Rural Development in Türkiye

Support for the agricultural sector and rural development is essential for the economic progress of nations and for diminishing income inequalities between rural and urban regions. While central governments can supply

such support, implementing Law No. 6360 on December 6, 2012, as published in the Official Gazette, has enabled local governments to help as well. This legislation brought about substantial modifications to Türkiye's local government framework, leading to the creation of 14 new metropolitan municipalities and increasing the total number of provinces with metropolitan status in Türkiye to 30. Under this law, the municipal service areas of these 30 metropolitan municipalities have been broadened to cover the entirety of their respective provincial boundaries (Özden & Olgun, 2017; Gökçe et al., 2022).

As of 2023, Türkiye has 239,417,039 decares of agricultural land. Of this, 167,110,907 decares are cultivated, while 28,143,070 decares are left fallow and not planted. Vegetable production occurs on 7,122,641 decares, and fruit and spice plants are cultivated on 36,982,778 decares. Ornamental plant production takes place on 57,996 decares, with remaining areas used for grain and cereal production (tuik.gov.tr).

The amount of land available for planting and the variety of crops grown vary significantly across the country because of geographical features such as slope, mountainous regions, rivers, wetlands, streams, ponds, and arid areas, as well as climatic factors related to proximity to or distance from the seas (Karagöz et al., 2021). Agricultural production areas and the variety and quantity of products in coastal regions such as the Black Sea, Marmara, Aegean, and Mediterranean regions are greater compared to the inland areas of Eastern Anatolia, Southeastern Anatolia, and Central Anatolia, which are far from the sea. To enhance agricultural production, crop diversity, yield per unit area, and economic contribution, both central and local governments provide the soil and climate characteristics of the regions, grants, and support.

In this context, the central government, through official institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Agricultural Credit Cooperatives (TKK), and the Agricultural Development Support Institution (TKDK), offer support, grants, and financing for investments, facilities, and business establishment to all farmers and producers across the country to promote rural development and agricultural production. Within the framework of the EU-supported IPARD (Instrument for Pre-Accession help Rural Development) projects, services are provided in cooperation between the Republic of Türkiye and the European Union to supply support and grants to individuals, institutions, and organizations engaged in production and activities in agriculture and animal husbandry throughout the country (ipard.tarimorman.gov.tr). A key feature that characterizes rural areas is the dominance of the agricultural sector within their economies. As a result, since 2012, local governments have provided a range of agricultural services to rural areas classified as neighbourhoods, alongside various municipal services. According to Article 7, paragraph f of the law, "Metropolitan and district municipalities may undertake any activities and services aimed at supporting agriculture and livestock" (Official Gazette, 2012). Considering this provision, many metropolitan municipalities have created units dedicated to agriculture and rural development, as well as offering support. For example, the Agricultural Services Department has been established in İzmir and Tekirdağ; the Rural Services and Geothermal Resources Department in Ankara; and the Rural Services Department in Balıkesir, Bursa, and Kayseri. A Rural Development Department has been set up in Samsun (Union of Municipalities in Türkiye, 2016; Gökçe et al., 2022).

The local services provided by municipalities to farmers and producers engaged in agricultural production in rural areas include support and grants for seeds, fertilizers, diesel fuel, seedlings, machinery, and equipment, as well as training in good agricultural practices, modern agriculture, organic farming, and alternative agriculture. Within their budgetary capabilities, municipalities offer financial and in-kind grants and support to local farmers and producers, along with services for the procurement of agricultural tools and machinery. The following sections of this study present the activities and services conducted and planned by metropolitan municipalities selected from seven geographical regions of Türkiye, specifically aimed at supporting rural development and agricultural production in the years 2022 and 2023.

Agricultural Activities Conducted by Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality

Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GMB) collaborates with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye, the GAP Regional Development Administration, the Gaziantep Governorship, district governorships, provincial directorates, civil society organizations, and other national and international stakeholders in its agricultural support and services throughout the province. The GMB is engaged in activities

related to agricultural and horticultural services as outlined in strategic plans, focusing on both planned and ongoing initiatives (GBB 2020-2024 Strategic Plan). To support agricultural development, provide educational activities for those engaged in agriculture, and disseminate information regarding innovations and advancements in agriculture at both national and global levels, an agricultural school has been established within the GBB. The agricultural school conducts training, seminars, informational services, and pilot applications, particularly aimed at enhancing regional agriculture, increasing the unit value of soil, and elevating the economic returns from agricultural activities through scientific and modern methods and innovations (GBB Activity Report 2022).

The Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GBB) offers a variety of agricultural support programs for farmers and producers engaged in agricultural activities in Gaziantep city centre and its districts. To contribute to farmers' and producers' agricultural production and assist with production costs, the municipality provides 100% subsidized diesel support, organic and chemical fertilizer support, and certified seed support for crops such as wheat, barley, lentils, and corn. GBB distributes certified heritage seeds, including Edessa, Havrani, and Taner wheat, as well as vegetable seedlings (such as eggplant, tomatoes, and peppers) and fruit saplings (such as almonds, olives, cherries, pomegranates, pistachios, and Antep pistachios). GBB also distributes saplings of other income-generating fruit trees. In the livestock sector, support includes help for small and large livestock, feed distribution, support for veterinary medicines and spraying materials, vaccination support, and subsidies for modern and smart irrigation system equipment. Additional support is provided for animal vaccinations, supply of milking machines, grants, and irrigation systems through the installation of solar panels in grazing areas, along with specialized production support related to livestock and viticulture. For farmers and producers who cannot retrieve agricultural equipment, materials, and machinery from debris or who have lost them because of earthquakes, GBB provides access to agricultural equipment from its established equipment park. Grant support is also extended to farmers and villagers affected by the earthquake (GBB Activity Report 2022).

Under collaboration protocols with academies and institutes, the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GBB) serves as a bridge between farmers and producers and various stakeholders such as universities, civil society organizations, associations, foundations, chambers, and other official and voluntary institutions. This initiative aims to leverage the knowledge and expertise of qualified individuals to contribute to production. In this context, GBB provides agricultural training support through conferences and seminars focused on topics such as olive pruning, trials for new crop planting, and the teaching of new methods that will enhance quality and yield in agricultural production while reducing product and profit losses. Pilot applications introduce regional producers to the economically added value of alternative products and show practical methods for increasing unit production value of the soil. To promote the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants and provide economic benefits to producers, GBB, in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the GMBH Nature Conservation Foundation, has started a project aimed at preserving the region's natural plant flora. This includes the distribution of saplings such as thyme, sumac, hawthorn, and za'atar, along with training on their production, care, and harvesting. The project specifically targets women producers to enhance their social status and contribute to family economies. It aims to transform the aromatic plants produced into products such as essential oils, increasing their economic returns. The sale of products produced by these women producers through cooperatives is facilitated within the scope of the project (GBB Activity Report 2022).

Within the framework of agricultural and rural development support services developed for contracted production and purchasing supports, special subsidies are provided for products cultivated in compliance with regional characteristics geographically marked agricultural products such as firik wheat, pomegranate, garlic, eggplant, pistachio, and sumac. These also include the distribution of Ataks breed egg-laying hens to women farmers, as well as training, materials, and resources to support the production, sale, and marketing of geographically marked products by local producers. GBB supports the establishment of facilities and warehouses for processing agricultural products with economic returns, such as garlic and mint, particularly focusing on the preservation, packaging, and marketing of high-value but short-lived agricultural products. This is achieved by facilitating coordination between producers and buyers to enable the sale of farmers' products. Services are provided to transition to irrigated agriculture in rural areas, increasing the quantity and capacity of products got from agricultural activities. These services include the construction of irrigation channels, distribution of equipment and medicines for beekeeping and livestock farming (such as feed, protective clothing,

masks, gloves, and bellows), support for spraying machinery, and the improvement of village and field roads (GBB Activity Report 2023).

The Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GBB) has implemented the "Gaziantep Farmer Card" initiative, which includes many advantages and supports for farmers. Under this project, agricultural supports and grants are provided to farmers and producers who engage in farming activities within the GBB service boundaries and are registered in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Farmer Registration System. The support offered by Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality includes grants, the ability to purchase products at discounted rates from affiliated Agricultural Credit Cooperative markets, discounts on products and services from health institutions, supermarkets, companies, and other contracted public/private organizations, as well as access to real-time tracking of agricultural product exchange and market prices. Holders of the "Gaziantep Farmer Card" can access information regarding the locations and contact details of GBB-supported cooperatives, particularly women's cooperatives. These services are available to individuals possessing the digital and physical versions of the "Gaziantep Farmer Card" (GBB Activity Report 2023).

Agricultural Activities Conducted by Konya Metropolitan Municipality

Konya Metropolitan Municipality (KBB) collaborates with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Governorship of Konya, and affiliated institutions, including provincial and district directorates, as well as the KOP (Konya Plain Project Development Agency) and various official and voluntary organizations, associations, foundations, and chambers, to carry out agricultural services and activities throughout the province. To provide services to farmers and producers engaged in agriculture and livestock within Konya, KBB has established the Directorate of Agricultural Services. This unit manages all agricultural services conducted by KBB, offering support, grants, educational seminars, and consultancy services aimed at advancing agriculture and livestock at the provincial level. Online access to agricultural support programs, seedling and sapling subsidies, and agricultural training brochures is available through the KBB Agricultural Services Directorate's website (konya.bel.tr).

KBB provides a wide range of services to farmers and producers engaged in agricultural activities in Konya. Under the seedling and sapling support program, producers are offered lavender, apple, almond, grape, walnut, olive, thyme, aronia, and sage seedlings and saplings with a 50% grant subsidy. Members of the Konya Beekeepers Association receive plastic-bottomed beehives and hive distributions, also with 50% grant support. Distributions of forage crops such as korunga, Hungarian vetch, safflower, and alfalfa seeds have been made, along with small-scale agricultural machinery and equipment support, including grape pressing machines, seed screening machines, stone collecting machines, legume weighing machines, lavender harvesting machines, feed grinding machines, packaging machines, and fertilizer distribution machines. To enhance land use and increase yield per unit area while maintaining production without leaving fields fallow, the sowing of state-supported products such as legumes, canola, safflower, and soybeans has been facilitated. In this context, certified barley, lentil, and chickpea seeds have been distributed to producers with a 75% grant subsidy to bring idle lands back into agricultural production (KBB Activity Report, 2022).

The Saraçoğlu Agricultural Campus, established on approximately 14 million m² in the Saraçoğlu neighbourhood, has been made available to farmers by the Konya Metropolitan Municipality (KBB) for informing producers about agricultural innovations and modern production methods and conducting practical production activities. KBB also offers various training programs to farmers and producers including safe food education, field crop training, garden plant training, animal husbandry training, beekeeping and honey production training, as well as training in modern irrigation systems and fertilization techniques. As part of its social responsibility projects, the "Local Seed National Agriculture Project" has been implemented to introduce elementary school students, particularly youth, to seeds and soil and to engage them in agricultural activities. This project has reached 3,926 students across 37 schools in 31 districts. Additional initiatives include the "No Barrier to Agriculture Project", aimed at students in need of rehabilitation; the "Local Product Project," which facilitates direct interaction between local producers and urban citizens, and the Akşehir Geothermal R&D Greenhouse Project, along with activities such as safflower and wheat planting on municipal lands. The "ÇİTEP" project enables farmers to communicate with each other and share their experiences while also

providing support and training activities related to the establishment, planning, and operation of mushroom production facilities (KBB Activity Report, 2022).

Because of low rainfall, Konya is a region that requires the cultivation and support of alternative crops that demand less water. In this context, the Konya Metropolitan Municipality (KBB) has distributed subsidized seeds of products suitable for the local soil, such as aronia, black cumin, anise, cumin, safflower, and canola, and has provided cultivation training for these crops. To combat drought, training on the proper use of water and irrigation methods, along with the provision of moisture measurement tools, fertilization and spraying training and support, as well as soil tillage training, are also offered. To enable women producers to sell their products at higher prices, sales points for their products are being established in suitable locations throughout the city, encouraging women's active participation in agricultural production and ensuring continuity in production (KBB Activity Report, 2023).

KBB also conducts agricultural fairs in collaboration with internal and external stakeholder actors throughout the province, provides support and training for fishing, pest and disease control and equipment procurement, and establishes milk collection and storage facilities in the districts and neighbourhoods where they are needed, along with a farmer consultation hotline. Additional services and activities can be accessed at konya.bel.tr/kbb/kbb/dosyalar/faaliyet_raporlar/ (KBB Activity Report, 2023).

Agricultural Activities Conducted by Antalya Metropolitan Municipality

The Antalya Metropolitan Municipality (ABB) is engaged in rural development and local agricultural activities across the province, focusing on several key areas. To facilitate the collection and disposal of environmentally harmful agricultural waste, the environmentally friendly farmer card program allows farmers to bring hazardous agricultural waste to designated points, earning points that can be loaded onto their cards. This project, implemented by ABB, was recognized as one of the top ten projects among 193 cities and 274 projects at the 6th Guangzhou International Urban Innovation Award Competition in 2023 (Guangzhou, China) (ABB Press Release, December 2023). To raise environmental awareness, training on environmental issues, food safety, and hygiene has been provided to producers and farmers. The International Antalya Gastronomy Festival (Foodfest) has showcased agricultural food products produced throughout Antalya Province (ABB Activity Report, 2022).

Facilities for the disposal of greenhouse waste in Kumluca, fresh vegetable and fruit drying facilities, fruit concentrate plants, irrigation facilities, and cold storage units have been established. Support has been provided for transitioning to irrigated agriculture by bringing water to arid lands through irrigation channels, increasing yield and profitability per unit area. The distribution of milk cooling tanks has also occurred, alongside agricultural fairs, workshops, symposiums, and events aimed at revitalizing uncultivated lands for agricultural production, cultivating high-value crops for increased profitability, and promoting the production and dissemination of heritage seeds. Seedling and seed distributions (including mulberry, sage, rosemary, aronia, lavender, carob, walnut, raspberry, blackberry, chestnut, olive, bay laurel, freesia, cultivated mushrooms, saffron, daffodil, thyme, safflower, Antep pistachio, tomato, pepper, eggplant, etc.) have been made available at no cost, as grants, or at discounted rates. Besides providing equipment and pesticides for pest control, technical support has been offered, and greenhouse plastic support has been provided to economically disadvantaged producers affected by natural disasters. To promote silkworm farming, silkworm rearing kits have been distributed to elementary and middle school students accompanied by practical training sessions. Farmers and producers engaged in cattle and sheep husbandry have received animal care services, training on practices to enhance efficiency in meat and milk production, seminars, grants for small livestock distribution, free vaccinations, hoof care for animals, and support for alfalfa and hay. Other services include technical teams, equipment, and veterinary services (ABB Activity Report, 2022).

The construction of medicinal herb gardens, flower bulb production and storage facilities, the distribution of organic production products through biological pest control, free soil analysis support for producers, the distribution of kaolin clay for pest management to olive producers, and the distribution of temperature/humidity measurement devices to farmers engaged in greenhouse production under the digital agriculture project have all been undertaken by ABB. Support which includes training, equipment, and machinery procurement has also been provided to beekeepers to increase honey production and brand Antalya

honey. Agricultural tools and machinery owned by the municipality have been made available for farmers through the "Municipality-Farmer Hand-in-Hand" project, and the maintenance and pruning of orchards have been conducted collaboratively with trained personnel. Plant production support and grants have been extended to farmers.

To reduce irrigation costs for farmers in regions with high sunlight exposure, ABB has established solar energy facilities, providing financial help for irrigation costs of electricity generated from renewable energy sources. To facilitate the production and trade of agricultural and livestock products, ABB has established the ANTEPE and ANÇET companies. Support is provided to producers and farmers as feed, plants, and fertilizer, along with training and projects related to soap making, organic farming, biological and biotechnical pest control, good agricultural practices, and modern production techniques and applications (ABB Activity Report, 2023).

Agricultural Activities Conducted by Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality

The Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality (EBB) provides certified seeds such as wheat, barley, alfalfa, and oats to farmers and producers. Seedlings for crops like tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers, melons, watermelons, gourd, pumpkin, arugula, parsley, purslane, spinach, lettuce, green onions, dill, corn, and beans are distributed for planting in greenhouses and fields. To enhance fruit production and yield, EBB also distributes improved fruit saplings of walnuts, almonds, and grapes. Training services are provided to farmers and producers regarding proper soil preparation, planting, pesticide application, fertilization, and other production processes, with technical support from stakeholder partners (EBB Activity Report, 2022). To increase yield per unit area in local agricultural activities, training in good agricultural practices, modern farming techniques, and innovative agricultural activities is provided by technical personnel to farmers and producers. As part of its agricultural projects, EBB has made portable digital soil analysis devices available for free use by farmers and producers. These devices can conduct real-time analysis of soil conditions in the field, providing immediate reports on various parameters (pH, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and other nutrients, as well as soil temperature and characteristics). This allows farmers to identify the elements for their soil and determine which organic or inorganic materials should be used. Farmers can avoid excessive and unnecessary fertilization and reduce irrigation costs while applying the correct amounts of fertilizer and pesticide. The analyses show the crops are suitable for cultivation in the area and the measures needed to achieve higher yields. EBB plans to increase the number of these devices for broader farmer and producer utilization (EBB Activity Report, 2022). EBB also conducts planting of agricultural products such as barley, wheat, oats, triticale, vetch, corn, and alfalfa to enhance basic beekeeping education, improve recreational fishing, and increase fish populations in lakes, streams, and rivers, as well as to bring unused agricultural lands back into production. Planting operations are carried out using equipment from the EBB agricultural machinery park, which includes 56 agricultural machines such as tractors, seed drills, plows, stone crushers, stone collectors, potato harvesters and sorters, sugar beet and corn silage packaging machines, solid fertilizer distribution trailers, liquid fertilizer tanks, rotavators, and cultivators (EBB Activity Report, 2023). To increase agricultural production and enhance yield per unit area, EBB and stakeholder partners are planning seminars, grants, and support for modern farming practices and the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants as alternatives to traditional production methods and products. The aim is also to plant alternative crops suitable for the region's climate and soil characteristics. Pilot applications are planned on municipal lands or the lands of volunteer farmers and producers, involving Erzurum Atatürk University, NGOs, agricultural platforms, and volunteer citizens to integrate such products into the regional economy and agricultural production.

EBB is actively involved in providing financial and in-kind help to producers based on identified brand agricultural products across the province, supporting the production of organic products, facilitating the sale of these products through municipal companies, establishing organic markets, and increasing support for greenhouse activities, all aimed at bolstering rural development for farmers and producers (EBB Activity Report, 2023).

Agricultural Activities Conducted by Samsun Metropolitan Municipality

The Samsun Metropolitan Municipality (SBB) has implemented various initiatives to support rural development and enhance agricultural activities. In Samsun, there are specialized facilities such as an agricultural high school in Atakum district, the Terme Agriculture-Based Ornamental Plants Specialized Organized Industrial Zone (covering outdoor ornamental plants, flowers, and medicinal and aromatic plants), the Bafra Agriculture-Based Specialized (Greenhouse), Organized Industrial Zone, and the Havza Agricultural Product Operation, and Agricultural Machinery Specialized Organized Industrial Zone. The province is significantly involved in aquaculture and fishing activities. In this context, SBB offers training, materials, equipment, and other support to individuals and organizations engaged in this sector (SBB Activity Report, 2022).

SBB distributes various seeds and seedlings including medicinal and aromatic plants (such as sumac, cut flowers and mushrooms), saplings (such as kiwi, walnut, blueberries, aronia, and grapes), and seedlings (such as strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, eggplants, melons, and watermelons). Support is provided for seeds of barley, wheat, chickpeas, potatoes, and beans. To meet the rough feed needs of livestock producers, subsidized seeds of peas, triticale, brom grass, Italian ryegrass, clover, and corn are also distributed. Agricultural irrigation support includes the construction of water channels and ponds in regions facing water access difficulties, facilitating the return of rural areas to agricultural production and enhancing soil unit productivity. Activities are conducted throughout the province in areas such as Vezirköprü, Aşağınarlı, Yukarınarlı, İncesu, Ladik Ahmetsaray, Bafra İkizpınar, and Havza Güvercinlik, among others. To support the efficient use of water in greenhouse and plant production, drip irrigation systems are also subsidized.

To combat social inequality in rural areas and increase the participation of women in agricultural activities, the "Women's Hand in Ornamental Plant Production Project" aims to train women and disabled farmers, enabling them to secure employment. This project supports high-income ornamental plant and greenhouse production, resulting in the establishment of six greenhouses and one cold storage facility by SBB (SBB Activity Report, 2023). Besides soil and leaf analysis support, SBB provides farmers and producers with traps, pesticides, organic products, equipment, and technical personnel/training support to combat pests that negatively affect plant production and quality. Beekeepers receive support with beehives, pesticides, and application equipment, as well as gloves, smokers, and protective clothing. Furthermore, projects are being implemented in collaboration with stakeholders such as SBB, local and district directorates, and DOKA to increase chestnut honey production. Materials that greenhouse producers need, such as mulch plastic and greenhouse plastic, are provided. Efforts are also underway to promote local foods and increase their visibility by obtaining geographical indications for these products, while SBB facilitates market access for local producers to connect with the community. Activities are conducted within SBB to disseminate training on organic farming, alternative agriculture, good agricultural practices, and modern agricultural techniques and applications (SBB Activity Report, 2023).

Agricultural Activities Conducted by Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality

The Izmir Metropolitan Municipality (İBB) provides the prominent agricultural initiatives for farmers and producers throughout the province including the "Tarım İzmir" mobile application. This application allows farmers and producers to access all relevant information regarding their cultivated lands online. Through this application, they can effectively plan their fertilization, pest control, and irrigation activities thanks to algorithmic analyses. Users can access analyzed soil characteristics, identify which crops should be planted, and view supported products. The application also provides remote access to data on air temperature, soil values, wind intensity, and humidity levels, while the "Early Warning Module" alerts users against severe weather events in advance. The Open Market module enables farmers and producers to showcase and sell their products. A project started under the slogan "Produce Locally, Consume Locally" aims to support local production and consumption by distributing market stalls to farmers and producers with limited resources, enabling them to sell their products in their local areas (İBB Activity Report, 2022).

To combat diseases and pests affecting citrus and greenhouse plants, İBB provides support such as pesticides, equipment, machinery, and training. Distribution of seedlings for alternative crops, such as stevia and pistachios, has also taken place, alongside support for beekeepers with hives, equipment, and training. Producers engaged in small ruminant livestock farming have received livestock grants and feed subsidies. Producers in the

aquaculture sector have been provided with epoxy putty, paint, and other boat maintenance materials, while fishery cooperatives have received ice machines to prevent spoilage and economic loss during the transportation of aquatic products. Farmers and producers are offered support and grants for seeds, fertilizers, organic pesticides, trapping equipment, and soil analysis, along with certified training in good agricultural practices, soilless farming, and organic farming. Agricultural workshops focusing on "good, clean, and fair food, environment, soil, plants, and food" have been established in some kindergartens and primary schools, allowing students to engage with agriculture, food, and soil through practical applications. 2,529 students have taken part in these activities. Seed exchange festivals have been organized as part of the project.

To support agricultural irrigation and ensure the efficient use of water, ponds and water channels have been constructed, and the "Another Agriculture is Possible" project has been implemented using electricity generated from solar energy systems (GES) to supply water for agricultural irrigation, assisting farmers with irrigation costs (İBB Activity Report, 2023). To facilitate access to agricultural lands and fields, İBB provides road construction and maintenance services. İZTARIM focuses on investments and services related to seedling production, agricultural irrigation services, and the establishment of agricultural schools, along with the provision of agricultural training and practical applications. The activities of İBB also encompass the processing and storage of agricultural products, the development of production plans, the establishment of an organized industrial zone specialized in agriculture, and the support and marketing of strategic and endemic products (İBB Activity Report, 2023).

Agricultural Activities Conducted by Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality

The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İMM) undertakes a variety of activities to support rural development and local agricultural practices under the following headings. To promote agricultural activities and rural development, the İMM established the İSYÖN company under the umbrella of its Department of Agricultural Services in May 2016. Within İSYÖN, services such as vegetable seedling production, aquaculture operations, processing, sales, marketing, and evaluation of aquaculture products, as well as the sale and marketing of products produced by cooperatives through e-commerce platforms and designated marketplaces reserved for these cooperatives, are carried out (İMM Activity Report, 2022).

Research and activities related to "Rural Areas, Agricultural Policies, and Access to Healthy Food" are conducted, along with practical agricultural training, workshops, and symposiums. In this context, modern agricultural production training is provided to producers on topics such as strawberry cultivation, vegetable growing techniques, and pest/disease management. Soil and environmental laboratories offer wastewater, peat, mushroom compost, irrigation water, and soil analyses. As part of promoting urban agriculture, agricultural protection and production plans are prepared, and the production of organic, healthy, and safe food is supported. Various agricultural equipments including soil tillers, atomizers, tree-shaking machines for easier fruit collection for walnut and almond producers, walnut peeling and drying machines, pruning machines, water tanks, tractors and trailers, grain seed drills, silage harvest and packaging machines, pneumatic seeders, hay balers, seed cleaning and treatment machines, and biotechnical pest control equipment are distributed. Greenhouse covers, mulch nylon, diesel, fertilizers, seeds (such as wheat, barley, corn, safflower, rice, canola, sunflower and oats), seedlings (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, watermelons and strawberries), and saplings (walnuts, almonds) are provided to farmers (İMM Activity Report, 2023).

To make agricultural land in arid regions more productive, reservoirs and irrigation canals have been built to provide free irrigation support to producers. Producers involved in aquaculture and fishing have received support for boat maintenance, including waterproof raincoats, epoxy putty, and protective paint. Livestock producers engaged in small-scale and large-scale farming are provided with feed, vaccinations, and animal care training. Beekeepers are offered support in the form of bee feed, equipment, and grants. Under circumstances where producers face challenges in selling their agricultural products directly to the public, such as the sale of lemons produced in Mersin, the İMM has purchases and distributes these products. In the earthquake-affected regions, the İMM provides feed, seeds, and seedlings to support farmers and producers in continuing their agricultural activities. Additionally, producers involved in cultivating medicinal and aromatic plants such as sage, raspberries, blackberries, and lavender are given seedlings, equipment, and technical training. Roads leading to fields and agricultural production areas are also improved to ensure easier and more convenient access for

producers and farmers (ibb.istanbul). In the long run, supporting small-scale producers, women farmers and entrepreneurs socially and economically, and connecting the urban periphery and nearby rural areas will ensure the continuity of healthy food supply. When the activities of IMM for urban agriculture are evaluated in the light of all these data given above, it is seen that the creation of systems that provide incentives and support will improve urban agriculture (Söylemez et al., 2023).

Discussion and Conclusion

As briefly outlined above, since the founding of the Republic of Türkiye, many programs and projects have been continuously developed regarding rural development. In this context, many plans and programs have been prepared, and various model projects have been designed and implemented to ensure their realization (Yeşilbaş, 2011). In recent years, particularly across the country, increasing importance has been placed on agricultural support to promote the development and sustainability of agriculture, much like the trend observed globally. Around the world, global organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union, in cooperation with central governments and increasingly significant local governments, are implementing projects aimed at rural development. These projects provide support and grants to individuals engaged in agriculture focusing on areas such as education, finance, and consultancy. Depending on the geographical characteristics of different regions worldwide, support is directed toward forests in some areas, aquaculture in others, and cereal and legume production in others. Within the framework of environmental protection, efforts are made to promote renewable energy as a substitute for fossil fuels, as well as to expand water-saving irrigation systems in place of traditional irrigation methods. To enhance financial returns, cooperative formation is encouraged. Producers and farmers are offered both technical-expert support, training, and consultancy services in various fields, as well as access to suitable credit and grants.

Because of central governments providing factors such as legal obligations or political-administrative cultures, services aimed at supporting rural development worldwide, with local governments acting as secondary stakeholders. However, it can be observed that, particularly in recent years, this trend has changed, albeit slightly, with local governments being given more roles in these services, projects, and initiatives as their importance increases. As the administrative units are closest to the areas of production, local governments should assume greater responsibility in delivering these services and act as key implementing agents. Where central governments play an active role and are granted broad authority, such as in agricultural services aimed at supporting rural development, much more productive and effective initiatives can be undertaken, as seen in the specific case of Türkiye.

With the enactment of Law No. 5216 on Metropolitan Municipalities in 2004, local governments have been granted authority over rural areas, allowing metropolitan municipalities to gain jurisdiction in rural areas where agricultural activities are concentrated. A 2012 amendment to the law has enabled metropolitan and district municipalities to engage in all kinds of activities and services aimed at supporting agriculture and livestock. This allowed local governments to operate in these areas and undertake projects related to agriculture and rural development.

Globally, agricultural services related to rural development are primarily carried out by central governments, but in Türkiye, these services are more frequently implemented by local governments. While the central government undoubtedly holds greater authority and capacity in this area, a comparison with practices in other parts of the world shows that local governments in Türkiye play a larger role in agricultural services aimed at rural development than their counterparts elsewhere do. The scope and variety of these services in Türkiye demonstrate a distinctive approach to rural development, differing from other countries in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency. While these services align with global efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable agricultural practices, they differ in terms of the range and content of services provided. For example, nearly every metropolitan municipality in Türkiye offers farmers and producers a wide range of services, such as seeds, fertilizers, irrigation systems, seedlings, saplings, equipment, education, consultancy, and technical-expert support. In contrast, the local governments examined in the study from other countries do not provide all these services together.

In Africa, Asia, and Europe, central governments collaborate with international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union to secure grants, loans, and support in areas such as finance, technical help, expertise, education, and consultancy services. It is anticipated that Türkiye could further benefit from expanding its cooperation with international organizations in a similar manner to increase the scope and effectiveness of agricultural services aimed at rural development. While partnerships such as IPARD and EU collaborations are already in place in Türkiye, it would be beneficial to enhance the scale of these partnerships and to make greater efforts to secure larger amounts of United Nations and World Bank funding for local governments. Such initiatives are expected to further elevate the agricultural services provided by local governments in Türkiye, particularly those focused on rural development.

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EXTENDED SUMMARY

Ulusal kalkınma, bölgesel kalkınma, yerel kalkınma birbirlerini tamamlayan, birinin eksikliğinde diğerinin de olumsuz etkileneceği kavramlardır. Özellikle son yıllarda hem ulusal hem de uluslararası kurum kuruluşlarca yerel kalkınmanın, kırsal kalkınmanın önemi birçok platformda dile getirilmekte, bu alanlarda kalkınmanın sağlanması için, özel kuruluşlar, projeler, hibe programları gerçekleştirilmektedir. Kırsal kalkınmanın, ekonomik, sosyal, kültürel birçok boyutu bulunmaktadır. Özellikle içinde bulunduğu bölgenin, yörenin ekonomik ve sosyal geleceğinin planlanmasında, belirlenmesinde etkili olmaktadır. Kırsal kalkınmanın önemli bir boyutunu da ekonomik faktörler oluşturmaktadır. Burada da kırsalın potansiyeli, farklılıkları, tarımsal alanları, üretimi önem taşımaktadır. Özellikle tarımsal alanların etkili kullanılması, uygun ürünlerin seçilmesi, ilaçlama, sulama, gübreleme imkanlarının gelişmesi ile sezonda alınacak ürünün miktarının ve kalitesinin artırılması, kırsal kalkınmanın gerçekleşmesine etki etmektedir (Güzel, 2020).

Kırsal kalkınma ile ilgili çalışmaların ve desteklerin ana sebepleri arasında kent ve kır arasında oluşan sosyal, ekonomik, altyapı, sağlık, eğitim hizmetleri, kültürel faaliyetler gibi başlıklarda büyük uçurumun ve eşitsizliğin varlığı öne çıkmaktadır. Kentte yaşayan bireylerin faydalandıkları bu hizmetler kırsal alanda yaşayan insanlara eşit ölçüde sunulmadığından kırsal alanlarda yaşamını sürdürmek isteyenlerin sayısı her geçen gün azalmakta ve buralarda yaşayan kişiler de daha yüksek standartlarda bir hayat yaşamak amacıyla kentlere göç etmektedirler. Bu sebepler de kırsal alanların boşalmasına ve kırsal alanlarda yoğunlukla yürütülen zirai faaliyetlerin azalmasına sebep olmaktadır. İnsanların yaşamlarını sağlıklı bir şekilde devam ettirebilmelerini sağlamak yani karnını doyurmak ve hayatta kalmak en büyük gereksinimi olduğu düşünüldüğünde aslında kırsal alanlarda üretimin devam ettirilebilmesinin ve desteklenmesinin dünya üzerindeki tüm insanlar için ne kadar önemli olduğu açıkça görülmektedir. Yerel yönetimler kırsal kalkınma araçlarını daha etkili biçimde kullanabilmektedir. Bu durum, yerel yönetimlerin kırsal kalkınma konusunda önemli birer aktör olmalarını sağlamıştır. Yerel idarelerin de kırsal kalkınma konusuna önem vermesi, paydaşlarla iş birliği yapması hem yerel anlamda hem de ülke çapında ekonomik ve sosyal anlamda kalkınmaya katkı sağlayacaktır. Yerel kalkınma, yerel düzeyde ekonomik faaliyetlerin kalkınmanın tüm unsurlarını kapsayacak şekilde geliştirilmesi ve güçlendirilmesidir. Bu unsurlar arasında en kritik öneme sahip olanlardan birisi de şüphesiz tarımsal faaliyetlerin desteklenmesidir.

Türkiye'de kırsal kalkınmayı desteklemeye yönelik olarak yerel yönetimlerin sağlamış olduğu tarım hizmetlerini mercek altına alan bu çalışmada, dünya genelinde yerel yönetimlerin kırsal kalkınmayı desteklemeye yönelik tarım hizmetleri ile kıyaslanarak benzerlik ve farklılık bulunup bulunmadığı incelenmektedir. Bu amaçla Türkiye'de yedi bölgeden seçilen yedi büyükşehir belediyesi konu özelinde örneklem olarak seçilerek tarımsal hizmetler sunmakta olan dünyanın farklı bölgelerindeki yerel yönetimler ile karşılaştırılmaktadır. Çalışmada dünyanın değişik ülkelerindeki yerel yönetimler ile Türkiye'deki örneklem olarak seçilen yerel yönetimlerin kırsal kalkınmayı desteklemeye yönelik yerel hizmetleri kıyaslandığında Türkiye'de bu amaçla yapılan hizmetler çeşitlilik ve miktar bakımından dünyadaki diğer örneklerinden pozitif yönde farklılık göstererek ayrılmaktadır. Yine dünya ülkelerindeki yerel yönetimlerle kıyaslandığında Türkiye'deki yerel yönetimlerin kırsal kalkınmaya

yönelik tarımsal hizmetlerinde tarım, hayvancılık, çevre, finansal destek çeşitleri, kooperatifleşme, eğitim, ilaçlama, aşılama, ekipman, araç, teçhizat vb. temini, uzman-tekniik personel destekleri, tohum, gübre, su kullanımı ve korunması, fide, fidan desteklemeleri ve hibeleri gibi birçok başlıkta daha etkin rol aldığı ve daha fazla çalışmalar sunduđu görölmektedir. Bu durum birçok ölkede tarım hizmetlerinin merkezi yönetimler tarafından uygulanmasını gerekli kılan yasal düzenlemeler bulunmakta olup yerel yönetimlerin bu alanda hizmet sunmaları çok fazla önemsenmiyor olabilir şeklinde açıklanabilir. Ancak yerel yönetimlerin artık küresel sistemlerde bile önemli birer paydaş aktör oldukları dikkate alındığında Türkiye’de olduğu gibi yerel yönetimlere yasal yetkiler verilerek bu hizmetleri sunmaları mümkün hale getirilebilir.