

INTERVIEW WITH GÜNEŞİN OYA AYDEMİR, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF BUGDAY ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPORTING ECOLOGICAL LIVING, April 2013

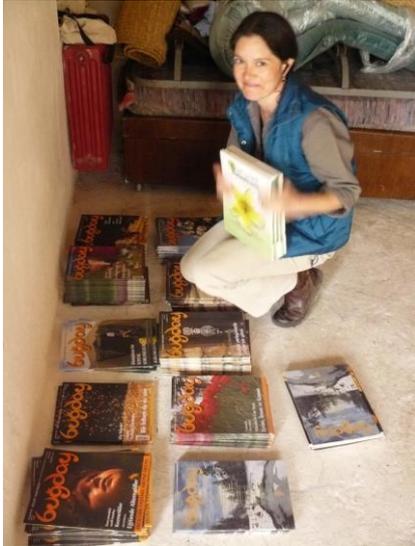
<http://bugdayglobal.org/>

Q = Hello Güneşin, can you tell us a bit about yourself? How long have you been in the Bugday movement and what have you done so far?

A = Hello, I met Buğday in 1996 before it's establishment. At that time Buğday was a vegetarian restaurant in a town on the South Aegean coast of Turkey. Than in 1999, our paths crossed again in Istanbul. In this period Bugday was an ecological lifestyle magazine. I've been working full time for Buğday since it transformed into an association for supporting ecological living in 2002. Until Buğday I had been working with NGOs that supported nature protection. I studied biology and worked in the nature conservation field.

Q= Buğday's headquarter is in Istanbul but you are living in the Kaz Mountains region. Why did you choose to live in a rural area?

A = Yes, Buğday's headquarter is in Istanbul and there is an important reason for that. Istanbul is the center of consumption. It is a city of rampant consumption. The people who live in Istanbul have to be consumers due to conditions imposed by the city. The city's set up involves people who constantly consume the resources and thus have to earn money in order to keep consuming. All of their time is used in this exchange of money. For this reason the Istanbul in particular provides much more work that needs to be done in order to change consumption habits. One of the main objectives of Buğday's work is promoting production that respects nature as well as humans. We create environments where these people can come together and learn from each other and thus are encouraged to use these eco-friendly products and make this a life philosophy. In short, forming an ecological community and enlarging this community constantly. We are setting up ecological open air markets, arranging meetings and exchange events in a huge metropolis like Istanbul. But we have to create ecologic cycles in rural areas also. Buğday defends a lifestyle. We want to prove that it is possible to achieve this in rural areas. We support the people who support this lifestyle in some way. Therefore I work at a rural office with a part of Bugday crew but I often commute to Istanbul.



Güneşin at [Çamtepe Rural Center for Ecological Education and Research](#)



One of the 100% Ecological Open Air Markets in Istanbul.

Q=Until recently Turkey has been mostly an agricultural country but it is rapidly becoming a consumer society. Where do you think that the world is heading to?

A= Of course mankind is in a big dilemma. A lot of tools have been developing to ensure a more comfortable life. However, this kind of life is due to constant consumption of petrol and natural resources which are both limited. The situation is similar everywhere in the world, not only in Turkey. Much of Turkey's natural resources are being destroyed due to Turkey's constant economic growth. The land that is inhabitable by our civilization is decreasing because as I said before the necessary resources are being used up. When these resources are finished - many resources are running short already- there will be a new civilization established and it will be ecological. There is no other choice. Today, in many places small communities have started to develop their own closed-loop ecological systems. These seem like small inconsequential efforts in the face of these growing destructive

systems but when we come to the point when our resources have been completely depleted and a chaotic period ensues these alternative communities will be vitally essential. Think about how it would be if you were living in a neighbourhood where everybody was dependant on the electricity grid and you were not. Who would be the safest one during a power shortage in that case? Bottom line, I believe that this depletion of natural resources that is happening at such a fast rate is causing an awakening for people and more and more are thinking about nature conservation. If we do not make a change most of us will not even be able to see the situation because we won't be alive.

Q = What does the concept of sustainable consumption mean to you? Can it be an alternative?

Buğday does not prefer to use the word "consumption". Consumption means depleting a resource/product/material. We prefer to use the word usage. The word usage means using the tools which make our life easier, to continue using them and to transform them. Thus I think sustainable consumption is not a right term. The people who promote the constant consumption support the sustainability of consumption. Whereas you use a tool and when it is not possible to use it in the way it is, it is transformed into something else and you keep using it in another form or if you are done with it, you give it to someone else as a gift and thus it continues to be used. It doesn't fill a dump that you don't have to see. Before buying something ask yourself "How much do I need this?", "How long I will use it?" or "How will I dispose of it after I am done with it?". If you do not you can't be a sustainable user. The day you start to ask these questions you open the door slightly for the salvation of the world.

Q = For nearly 20 years Buğday has been sharing the knowledge and the experiences for the development of eco friendly consumption habits. What has changed in Turkey in this process? Has Buğday been able to create large scale changes in individual habits?

A lot has been changed since the day Buğday was founded. Early on, there was not much awareness as there is today. In the villages the natural production of food was going on but the signs of disintegration started to appear. Food production that used chemicals became widespread. The customer did not understand the difference between products grown naturally and products that were grown with the use of chemicals. Diseases related to food consumption started to increase but it wasn't communicated to people that the reason was related to food grown using chemicals. These policies only recently began to be spoken about. Buğday was aware of the situation at that time but it was very hard to convince the people about it. The problems are more clear and easier to see today. Only recently we are becoming fully aware of the results of our studies from that time. Now there are many people, groups and organizations who are working on these issues, whether big or small. Of course it would be very assertive to depend only on the changes that Buğday's work

has brought about but I guess everybody can accept that we do create much awareness about these issues. I confidently and proudly can say that Buğday, the organization I work for, has created awareness in people and they have begun to change their ways as a result. Apart from that we also help people to create a common ecological culture. This community is growing day by day.