



# Annual Community Development

## Report

### Elite Naturel/Organic & FairTSA

**2019-2023**

*Small farmers and workers are at the heart of FairTSA Fair Trade certification. Through community development projects and capacity building we are facilitating a direct impact on the agricultural communities that grow and process our food.*

## Elite Naturel

Elite Naturel is an organic juice producer based in Ankara in Turkey. Providing a wide variety of juices. Fruit purees and healthy snacks, Elite works with hundreds of Turkish farmers and wild collectors to source ingredients such as oranges, cherries, plums, pomegranates, tomatoes, apricots and many more. Elite has been engaged in its producer communities for many years and has provided them with technical knowledge regarding organic farming, fertilizers and other resources for organic farming.

## 2019: Planning for a High School

During a need assessment session in the village of Aksaray in Central Anatolia where most of the villagers were present, a high school was identified as the most pressing need. The nearest high school was in another village, and it was really hard for the students to go to school every morning due to the long ride, and sometimes unreliable bus connections. This would save them time, secure their transfer to school, comfort the families, decrease the financial burdens and most importantly maintain the high school education opportunity for farmers' and villagers' children.

It was also discussed and agreed that a sport complex should be built in order to afford the students the opportunity to spend time on basketball, volleyball, football, Gymnastics and other sports. This sport complex would give kids more ways to stay healthy, it would also contribute to the parents' peace of mind as their children would have a safe place to spend time while their parents are working on their farms.

Since this is a complex project, it was determined that a school committee needed to be put in place. It was decided that a civil engineer, Mr. Dikici, and Mr. Ahmet Yasar and Mr. Cagri Esmekaya, Chairman and General Manager of Elite Naturel, should be part of the committee, together with 8 farmers of the village.

## 2020: Building a High School

After more than half a year of planning, the foundational stone was laid down in February of 202, in the presence of the whole FairTSA committee, the many farmers and representatives of the school district.



This exciting endeavor will make it possible for over 200 of the farmers' children to attend school and create a safe space for social and sporting activities after school hours. This project is not only about creating a safe space for children, but also fostering their future. Wanting to bring modern opportunities and literacy to its children, the project includes buildings that will use new learning models, including a computer lab, science lab, conference hall, music hall, and art hall. These facilities will provide an important opportunity for students to experience new approaches that support their learning needs and interests, and provide authentic application of knowledge, critical thinking, and solving complex problems.

## 2021 - 2022: Ongoing Construction

While initially the construction time was about 12 months, this proved to be overly optimistic. In addition, construction was severely slowed by the Covid 19 crisis that hit Turkey like many other countries. It is expected that construction will be completed in early 2023. The facility will be named "Ahmet Yasar Esmekaya" in honor of the Elite Naturel Chairman of the Board. The high school is constructed with a view on being easily expandable for more students and other facilities serving the community. We look forward to this completed project reflecting the

future of the community, promoting education and creative collaboration. The students will learn how to work collaboratively; communicate effectively, be self-directed and incorporate feedback to grow as students. All of this will help them develop the academic mindsets necessary for learning, which will have a long-lasting positive impact on future opportunities for students.

This project demonstrates the impact that communal collaboration can have, and it's a testament to the FairTSA philosophy to facilitate long-term solutions to challenges faced by agricultural communities.



## 2023: Finishing High School Construction

In 2023, the AHMET YAŞAR EŞMEKAYA ANATOLIAN HIGH SCHOOL in Aksaray was finally completed. The picture below depicts the Grand Opening with many community members celebrating the happy event.



The project that took almost 4 years and several hundred thousand dollars from planning to completion is a testament to the power of communal collaboration and FairTSA's philosophy of facilitating cooperation in rural communities to improve the lives of all villagers and contribute to a bright future for the children.