



EDUCATION
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EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2008

Extended Executive Summary in English



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Education Reform Initiative (ERI) was launched within the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabancı University with the aim of improving education policy and decision-making through research, advocacy and monitoring.

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From the Preface

ERI continues its work with the belief that the societal importance and role of the education system far exceeds the aim of raising human force appropriate to the conditions of our age. Education is an indispensable tool for the internalization of democratic values. Democracy becoming functional is dependant on the un-prejudiced discussion of different views and proposals in society and the constant questioning of what is considered right. The education system is of great importance towards endowing all individuals with the necessary capabilities and tools for questioning and critical thinking and thereby rooting democracy in the society.

This is exactly why education is a human right. In a democratic society, while individuals determine their own future, they are in great need of the capabilities gained through the education system. This is especially true in our age.

Prof. Dr. Üstün Ergüder
Director, Education Reform Initiative

From the Foreword

Physical accumulation usually accounts for only 30 to 50 % of economic development. More significant are knowledge accumulation and how knowledge is used in the economy. The main factor here is education.

In the first 20 to 30 years of the 21st century, Turkey will go through a lucky demographic process. Based on trustworthy projections, the ratio of the labor force to the total population will reach its peak in Turkey in 2025. However, to be able to actualize the potential benefits of this demographic opportunity, at least four conditions need to be met:

- The population capable of working, in other words, the working age individuals, should be able to find real employment opportunities;*
- The population capable of working should be an educated population (in other words, education should be widespread);*
- Education should be based on the needs of our age (it should be quality education);*
- Resource distribution in the economy should be effective (investment and employment should be continually directed to future-oriented areas).*

This opportunity facing Turkey can unfortunately turn into a threat if the above conditions are not fulfilled.

Dr. Kemal Derviş
Vice-President, Sabancı University International Board of Overseers
Vice-President, Brookings Institute

I. Introduction

Even in countries where access to and quality in education do not constitute significant problems, education needs to be in constant transformation to be able to meet the requirements of the new scientific, social and economic needs and developments. Ministries of education and/or other public institutions are responsible with formulating and implementing education policies to conceptualize this change and create solutions to existing problems. In these processes, it is of critical importance that decisions are based on data and evaluation, and on a transparent and participatory interaction between the state, civil society organizations and citizens.

In the same manner, the monitoring of educational policy decisions and implementation results and their public sharing is an international “good practice.” The Activity Report, which will be released by the Ministry of National Education in line with the Law on Public Financial Administration and Control (No. 5018) that entered into force in 2003, will be a positive step towards the accountability of the Ministry. Another factor that will increase accountability will be the non-public actors monitoring, evaluating and sharing with the public developments in education, and thereby contributing to the discussions.

Education Monitoring Reports, the second issue of which was prepared by the Education Reform Initiative this year, aim to inform the public through an evidence-based comprehensive evaluation and thereby contribute to this interaction and to the target of quality education for all. This report focuses on changes in the pre-university education levels that took place in year 2008 and the new research on education.

II. Governance & Finance

Reform in the Ministry of National Education

Law on Public Financial Administration and Control (No. 5018) endowed public institutions with important tools to be used in the processes of policy formation, implementation and evaluation. The Strategic Plan, which is being developed by the Ministry of National Education, is one such tool and as it will give direction to Turkey's education policy between 2010-2014 it is highly significant. A policy document of such importance must be prepared through deliberations with and by including contributions of stakeholders.

While the restructuring of the Ministry of National Education has been on the agenda since 2004, to date, no concrete steps have been taken. The Capacity Building Support for the Ministry of National Education project, conducted with support from the European Commission, constitutes an important opportunity in this regard. It must be ensured that this project, carried out by the Projects Coordination Center and with the technical support of consultants from the European Union, results in increasing the Ministry of National Education's capacity in analyzing the current problems in education, formulating and evaluating alternative solutions, acting as a leader in the implementation process and utilizing impact assessment methods.

It is a very positive development that the Ministry of National Education started using policy tools such as performance-based budgeting, strategic planning, e-school and e-investment, and that it is planning to develop new tools. These tools can present a systematic conceptual framework and contribute to situational diagnosis and analysis. Yet, the contribution they can make to the solution of the education system's important problems depends on how the Ministry officials employ these tools. The human resources capacity and the fundamental attitude of the Ministry towards making education policies constitute the critical factors of success in the

effective use of the above-mentioned policy tools. It has been observed that it is necessary to focus on these two areas.

The tools used in the restructuring of the Ministry generally increase the monitoring capacity of the central organization. As the use of these tools become more widespread, the autonomy granted to the single educational institutions must also be increased. In this manner, while it is ensured that the Ministry can guarantee quality education, the services provided by the schools can be diversified according to the interests and needs of the students. When the education policies implemented in Turkey are closely examined, it will be seen that the second component of this process has not yet taken place.

It is observed that the empirical impact assessment of many policies, programs or projects is absent. The impact of education policies implemented in Turkey in the recent years is not sufficiently known, especially with regards to educational outcomes.

Public expenditures on education

The public education spending in Turkey has been increasing in real terms from 2004 onwards: The public expenditures amount in 2004 which was 24.4 billion TL (in 2008 prices) went up to 32.1 billion TL in 2008. On the other hand, the increase in the proportion of public education expenditures to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is slower. In other words, even if the national income increases, the proportion of public education expenditure in the national income does not increase. It is a striking finding that there is no preference on the part of the political will to increase the ratio of public education spending to the GDP in the upcoming years, either: The ratio of public education expenditure to the GDP reached 3.38 % in 2008 and the government is planning to pull it down to 3.24 % again in 2011.¹ It can be observed that the resources set aside for public education in Turkey is well below the OECD average of 5.8 %. The ratio of resources to the GDP is a little over half of the 6 % recommended by UNESCO to developing countries.

Public agencies in Turkey do not calculate the resources allocated to education in Turkey on the basis of the number of service-receiving individuals but rather based on the relevant central units (in this case the general directorates in the Ministry). Since the budgets of general directorates are allocated based on the budgets of the previous year, sudden changes in the number of students are not reflected in the budget and hence also not reflected in the amount of spending per student. For the public spending to be made in a fair and effective manner, the budgets should be allocated taking into account the changing number of students and the needs arising from the socio-economic differences amongst students.

III. Components of Education: Students

Access and related policies

There are three components of access to education: School enrollment, attendance and graduation. While there are visible improvements with regards to the registration component, serious worries remain regarding attendance and graduation.

The calculations made based on the number of students coming from the e-school system and the data on the age group derived from the Address-Based Population Registry System show that in the 2008-2009 academic year 220,019 children between the ages of 6 and 13 are still not enrolled in

¹ Calculations are based on data available at the websites of General Directorate of Public Accounts (www.muhasabat.gov.tr) and General Directorate of Budget and Fiscal Control (www.bumko.gov.tr).

the education system.² When the number of students registered at the primary level is investigated based on the year of birth, the lesser number of 6-year-old students, the diminishing numbers from the 6th grade onwards and the distortion of the girl-to-boy ratio starting with 4th grade are striking.

It would not be correct to claim that all students that appear enrolled at the primary stage in the e-school system attend school regularly. However, the kinds and levels of non-attendance have not been defined and classified in ways that enable a statistical evaluation, therefore no relevant data is revealed. Since data on school attendance and leaving school without a diploma are not shared by the Ministry of National Education, the data from the surveys conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute can be used to monitor whether the targets of 100 % attendance and 100 % graduation with regard to compulsory primary education are achieved. Based on the data derived from the Household Labor Force Survey 2006, 14.5 % of the youth between 15-19 years of age did not have a primary school diploma and 70 % of this group was girls.³ Non-attendance and leaving school without a diploma is a much graver risk for female students.

Experiences of poverty and social exclusion manifest themselves in different ways and can have an impact on the student's participation or success in the education system. The available data demonstrate that in addition to the level of income, the irregularity of the income can constitute an important obstacle to participation in education.⁴ Therefore, along with the low level of income, the participation of parents in the informal economy and/or their lack of income security might be factors to take into account while distributing scholarships or aid.

Available research shows that in Turkey income irregularity is a problem frequently encountered by families that live in the urban periphery. According to a research conducted in 2006 in the poorest neighborhoods of six big cities, 54 % of the families that live in these neighborhoods do not have a regular income. This ratio goes up to 84 and 91 % in Gaziantep and Diyarbakır, respectively.⁵ Children who live on the outskirts of big urban centers are a disadvantaged group in need of urgent intervention.

Various efforts are undertaken to ensure continuous access to education. The e-school system, the preparatory works of which had been continuing for a long time, has been launched at all primary schools in the 2007-2008 academic year. The system enables the formation of a constantly updated and comprehensive data set on the characteristics and educational participation of students. The easy access to data on students made possible by the e-school system is an important step towards monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system and the formation of evidence-based policies. The fact that attendance levels of students can be monitored through the e-school system until the end of the compulsory educational level will make it easier to determine the state of primary school attendance and will enable immediate interventions by the school administration in the case of non-attending students or students at risk of non-attendance. However, the e-school should not be expected to solve the registration and attendance-related problems on its own. For the effective use of the system and the data produced, it should be ensured that the evidence feeds the processes and decisions of formulating education policies.

² Data from Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Primary Education (May 2009). The numbers only include children who are already registered in the Population Registry System. It is known that there are children in Turkey who do not have any registration with the public agencies, although, as expected, the exact number can only be estimated.

³ Alper Dinçer and Gökçe Kolaşın, "Türkiye Genç Neslini Kaybediyor", Research Note, 2008. Available at betam.bahcesehir.edu.tr.

⁴ Ozan Bakış et al., "Türkiye'de Eğitime Erişimin Belirleyicileri", 2009. Available at www.erg.sabanciuniv.edu.

⁵ Fikret Adaman and Oya Pınar Ardıç, "Social Exclusion in the Slum Areas of Large Cities in Turkey", *New Perspectives on Turkey* (38), 2008.

One of the most significant measures initiated in 2008 and targeting children in adverse circumstances is the Compensatory Education Programs (CEP). This scheme aims to be a source of solution for students who have never been registered in primary school or who are, for one reason or another, unable to attend the regular grade for their age. In the 2008-2009 academic year, 5500 children in 46 provinces were provided with education services within the scope of the CEP.⁶ When the preparatory works and targets of CEP are taken into account, this number is not adequate. This scheme, which has a limited time frame, needs to diagnose the problems encountered in 2008-2009 and solve these prior to the start of the 2009-2010 academic year in order to be able to reach its targets. As the program entails an unforeseen workload for province, district and school administrations as well as teachers, it must be effectively and continuously supported by the Ministry's central organization. The provincial and district administrators should be especially encouraged to claim ownership of the program.

Pre-school education

2008 witnessed positive developments regarding pre-school education. There has been an increase of 100 thousand students participating in pre-school education between the ages of 36-72 months. As a result, the total number of students exceeded 800 thousand and the enrolment rate rose to 33 % in the 48-72 months age group and to 23 % in the 36-72 months age group.⁷ In the 60-72 month age group which is prioritized by the Government to increase the enrolment, half of the age group is attending pre-school education.

Another positive development was the Ministry of National Education's decision to start implementing compulsory pre-school education in 32 provinces, starting with 2009-2010 academic year, to follow up on the momentum created in this sphere. The Ministry aims to ensure 100 % school attendance in the 60-72 months age group and 50 % in the 48-72 months group in the upcoming three years.

Another factor that needs to be taken into account with regards to promoting pre-school education is inter-regional differences. These differences do not exactly parallel the socio-economic development status of the regions. However, it is worrisome that the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian regions, which are the last two regions in terms of socio-economic development, have the lowest rates of enrolment in pre-primary education.

It is frequently mentioned that the persistent attitude of the local governors and administrations in the provinces are highly effective in pre-school education becoming widespread. This should be kept in mind as a factor that can explain the differences amongst the cities.

Economic crisis and students

The most visible difficulty brought on by the crisis is the decrease in the household income and thereby in the consumption expenditures. In Turkey, where the 35-37 % of education expenditure is made by the household members,⁸ a decrease in the resources set aside by households for education will constitute a major problem and can lead to a distortion in the quality of education. A more significant consequence of the fall in household income could manifest itself in the increase in school drop-out rates. Families who cannot afford the educational expenses and/or who expect their children to work for an income can withdraw their children from school.

⁶ Data from Ministry of National Education Strategy Development Presidency (May 2009).

⁷ Data from Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Pre-School Education (April 2009).

⁸ World Bank, *Turkey Education Sector Study*, Report no: 32450-TU, 2005.

It has been established that in conditions of poverty, numerous families withdraw their children from school and direct them to finding jobs to provide additional income. However, the economic crisis which is currently experienced in Turkey and the most adverse outcome of which concerns the rates of unemployment, limits new possibilities of employment as well. Therefore, the risk of children leaving schools and working in informal, risky and illegal sectors arises.

Starting to work decreases the possibility of returning to school and consolidates the state of dropping out. This, in turn, decreases the chances of eradicating the risks of poverty and social exclusion through education. According to the findings of a recent research carried out in the poorest segments of six major cities, the perception of social exclusion in Turkey increases with the decrease in age and education level.⁹ In other words, uneducated young people and children feel excluded from the society and worry about their futures. The increase in drop-outs and the decrease in education quality in the context of economic crisis can lead to a strengthening of the perception of social exclusion.

IV. Components of Education: Learning and Teaching Processes

Number of teachers

In terms of the numbers of students per teacher, Turkey is behind the OECD standards, especially at the level of primary education. Whereas the OECD average for the number of students per teacher is 16.2, this number goes up to 23.6 in the case of Turkey.¹⁰ 80 thousand teachers are needed to pull down the nationwide number of students per teacher to 20. On the other hand, a significant improvement has taken place with regards to this indicator in recent years. The developments in Istanbul and Southeastern Anatolia, both of which are disadvantaged regions, are positive. However, inter-regional equality has not been established yet.

Teacher competencies

Towards the strengthening of teacher qualifications and their abilities with regards to the new curricula, the General Directorate of Teacher Training has recently defined teacher competencies and developed the *School-Based Vocational Development (SBVD)* guidebook. Teacher competencies are defined as the general information, ability and attitudes necessary to possess in order to effectively and efficiently fulfill the requirements of the teaching profession. These comprise a totality of standards that complement the revised curricula, ensure the development of teacher qualifications in line with the requirements of a student-centered education system and enable better career planning. In addition to basic vocational competencies, competencies in specializations at the primary level have also been determined and published.

The methods suggested in the texts of teacher competencies are usually traditional ones, such as individual research and seminars. The emphasis on teacher collaboration, learning from one another and the production of common outputs is rare. However, internationally, the emphasis is placed on working together and "peer coaching" in teacher's vocational development activities. In this context, practices that urge teachers to collectively design, monitor and evaluate teaching-learning processes towards acquiring a certain skill by students should be closely investigated. These methods are also better suited to the aim of developing the overall quality of the school.

General Directorate of Teacher Training expects these tools to be used in a wide array of contexts from determining teacher training policies to selecting and recruiting the teachers and from

⁹ Adaman and Ardic, op. cit.

¹⁰ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2008*, 2008; Ministry of National Education, *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri, Örgün Eğitim, 2008-2009*, 2009.

determining in-service training needs to the evaluation of teacher performances. This requires multiple institutions within and outside of the Ministry of National Education to work in sync: The effective collaboration of institutions such as universities responsible for pre-service training of teachers, the Board of Higher Education, general directorates responsible with the provision of education services, units that meet teacher needs is the main factor that will determine the successful outcome of the process.

System for Transition to Secondary Education

Examination for Secondary Educational Institutions (ESEI), which is used to determine the students that will earn the right to attend high schools that can apply academic selectivity in the transition from primary to secondary education, was abolished. The basis of this decision has been expressed as the stress ESEI induced in the students and families, the students' turn towards resources and institutions outside the classroom, the diminished importance of schools and teachers and the dissonance of the system with the requirements of the revised education programs. The ESEI was used for the last time in 2008, and System for Transition to Secondary Education (STSE) was planned to be fully implemented in its place starting with 2009. As different from the ESEI, STSE includes grades 6, 7 and 8. At the end of each grade, students take the centrally administered Placement Test.

One of the aims of STSE, often articulated by the Ministry, is to decrease the stress created for the students by a single exam and a competitive system of elimination. Competitive education systems are known to put the needs and desires of children in the background and violate their right to rest, leisure and play. As such, lessening the competitiveness created by the transition system between the levels is one of the most important aims of the new system. However, STSE and the yearly Placement Tests cannot be said to eradicate competitiveness. Students still compete with one another based on the grades they receive in school and their exam results, and they are eliminated based on the ranking. Eradicating competitiveness can only be possible through ameliorating the quality differences between the schools.

It has been claimed that administrating three central tests instead of one within the scope of STSE results in turning to other institutional resources at an earlier age and in greater numbers. The impact of STSE in this sphere must be evaluated within the scope of comprehensive researches.

For STSE to contribute to a decrease in turning to outside sources, it should fully overlap with the educational programs and measuring-evaluating methods offered in schools. The Ministry is currently undertaking efforts to make Placement Tests' questions compatible with the skills included in curricula. However, evaluations on the questions asked to date demonstrate that the question-skill compatibility is not at the desired level both within curricula and the Placement Tests.¹¹

For the Ministry of National Education, STSE is not only a transition system between educational stages. As one of the main elements of the education system, it is conceptualized as a tool that can ensure the monitoring of the success levels of students in the class, classes within the school, and schools within the education system and that can enable the teachers and administrators to take the necessary precautions as a result. For Placements Tests' results to be able to successfully reflect the development of students, classrooms and schools throughout the years, it should openly demonstrate whether students have gained the targeted skills and it should enable the compiling of detailed reports on these developments. At the same time, the approach of

¹¹ Giray Berberođlu, Milli Eđitim Bakanlıđı Seviye Belirleme Sınavı Uygulamalarının Deđerlendirilmesi, *Cito Eđitim: Kuram ve Uygulama* (2), 2009.

evaluating Placements Tests' results by comparing students or schools (comparative evaluation) should be replaced with evaluation based on criteria that enable seeing how much of the skills have been gained.

V. Components of Education: Content of Education

New curriculum

The gradual transition to new curricula at the primary level will reach completion with the graduates of the academic year 2008-2009. The process of revising secondary education curricula is ongoing. Comprehensive studies on the new primary school curricula and textbooks must be undertaken to evaluate the changes and to determine the components that need to be strengthened.

In the revised education programs, the aim is to endow students with the ability to think at a higher level and to apply this to all areas of knowledge rather than knowledge accumulation through memorization. Towards this aim, the programs are built on the cognitive abilities to be gained and developed by students through activities. These skills and abilities are repeated and expanded at each grade. The student-centered and restructuring-based philosophy of the programs as well as the skill-based spiral structure has been met with approval of teachers in various researches.¹²

Evaluations of the applicability of curricula can be carried out by taking into account the opinions of teachers, administrators and inspectors responsible with the monitoring of the implementation. According to a current study, inspectors, administrators and teachers have articulated a "high" level of agreement with the philosophical aspect of the new primary education curricula. However, in light of the revised education programs, the human and material resource adequacy has been deemed as "low" and the effectiveness of teaching-learning processes as "medium."¹³

An all-encompassing evaluation of the revised education programs requires a comprehensive investigation of the programs' effects on the outputs. The available data on design and implementation show that there might be problems regarding the levels of skills acquisition.

Reform in secondary education

Among the medium and long-time priorities of both the Ninth Development Program and the Ministry of National Education's secondary education strategy are expanding compulsory education to 12 years including primary education and bringing levels of school attendance to 90 % at the secondary level. Thus, secondary education is conceptualized as a minimum level of education to which all citizens should have access.

The three year-long duration of general, vocational, and technical high schools have been gradually raised to four years starting with the 2005-2006 academic year. The educational duration of high schools with a prep year were also reorganized on a four-yearly basis. Four-year long secondary educational institutions will have their first graduates in the academic year 2008-2009. The responsibility brought on the decision makers by this situation is to increase the

¹² Education Reform Initiative, *Öğretim Programları İnceleme ve Değerlendirme – I*, 2005; Giray Berberoğlu et al., İlköğretim 1.-5. Sınıflar Arasındaki Öğretim Programlarının Kapsam ve Öğrenme Çıktıları Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, *Cito Eğitim: Kuram ve Uygulama* (1), 2009; Kemal Kayıkçı and Ali Sabancı, Yeni İlköğretim Programlarının Değerlendirilmesi, *Milli Eğitim* (181), 2009.

¹³ Kayıkçı and Sabancı, op. cit.

resources of secondary education to compensate for the increase in student numbers. However, the increased number of students at the secondary level has not been reflected in the resources allocated to secondary education.

The ninth grades of general high schools and vocational and technical high schools have been turned into a common grade where within-school and across-school transitions are possible. Revisions to the curricula of other grades are still ongoing.

The previously existing 79 types of educational establishments have been reduced to 15 to become effective starting with the 2009-2010 academic year and the 9th grade.

Within the scope of the Vocational Education Development Project, implemented in pilot schools since academic year 2004-2005, a new structure to vocational and technical secondary education is built. The new approach foresees designing vocational secondary education based on the outputs needed by the labor market, greater cooperation with the private sector to that end and transitioning to a “modular program” in the vocational education curriculum. In the modular program, rather than a traditional curriculum of subjects, students will enroll in modules organized around a more flexible program towards self-development. This design, along with a decrease in the type of vocational educational establishments, will result in institutions offering programs geared towards different vocations. Thus, the student's decision to specialize in a certain vocation would be based on a more flexible framework.

The policy leaning observed especially in vocational education and in secondary education as a whole, towards “limiting and delaying specialization, endowing all students with a minimum level of common, inter-disciplinary knowledge” corresponds with the world-wide policy trends in secondary education. However, the question of which national actions can be taken as good practices should be answered based on a detailed investigation of the countries' educational systems and socio-economic structures. The success of secondary education reform depends on formulating programs that endow individuals with choice-making capabilities and increase their options and the compatibility of the system with the social and economic structure desired for the future of Turkey. For these aims to be fulfilled, it is of critical importance that the reform process continues with the participation of stakeholders and especially the young people that will benefit from this stage.

VI. Components of Education: Educational Settings

Number of classrooms

The number of students per classroom has improved in all regions of Turkey in the recent years. The Government Program aims to decrease the number of students by classroom to 30 in primary education. In provinces where this number is greater than 30, around 55-60 thousand classrooms additional classrooms are needed to reach the target. At the secondary level, a visible improvement has taken place with regards to students per classroom in high schools. However, in vocational secondary education, in almost all regions, the physical infrastructure is struggling to meet the demand. The Government Program aims to increase the school attendance level to 90 percent and bring the number of students per classroom closer to 30. It is estimated that when the school attendance level reaches 90 percent, 75 to 80 thousand additional classrooms will be needed to keep the number of students per classroom to a maximum of 30.

The number of computers per student has been at an increase in the recent years. The “Computer-Supported Education” campaign of the Ministry tries to get philanthropic support to develop school's information technology infrastructure. However, regional inequalities in the

number of computers are striking as well as the surplus supply in some small provinces.¹⁴ For information technologies to be adequately utilized in education, certain lessons should be given with the aid of computers. Towards this end, clear guidelines for the use of information technologies in educational programs should be developed and teachers should be supported in the use of information technologies.

New policies regarding acquisition of school structures

An important change with regard to the acquisition of learning environments took place in 2008. A revision to Basic Law of National Education (BLNE) made it possible for school structures to be sold by the Treasury or the Privatization Administration. The revision, defended as a means to the Ministry to dispose of structures that no longer serve as educational environments and acquire more effective school structures with this income, lacks objective criteria on the structures that can be sold, which creates an accountability problem. Another criticism from a good governance perspective is that the revision brings exceptions to the Law on Public Financial Administration and Control (No. 5018) and damages transparency of public administration. The Ministry should expeditiously share with the public the aims of this revision and its plans regarding buildings to be sold.

Another important development in 2008 was the inclusion of Housing Development Administration (HDA) in the school structure acquisition process. Within this framework, 250 million TL has been allocated to HDA from the Ministry's 2009 budget for the construction of schools. It should be revealed to the public why HDA, a public establishment specializing in the construction of residences, has also partially taken on the responsibility of constructing schools and how this process will unfold. It is highly important that school structures, which require special conditions, are planned and acquired through transparent and participatory processes.

¹⁴ Ministry of National Education, *Rakamlarla İl İl Türkiye*, 2009.

From the Epilogue

Education can fulfill its aim of teaching to be selective by directing individuals to a few narrow spheres. In this case, what is expected of education is not raising a multi-dimensional person. For instance, the education system can be designed to make sure that individuals take their place in the division of labor necessitated by working life and to endow them with the required discipline. When this is achieved, the road is paved to a mass segment that does not have an idea on the majority of life's spheres. (...) On the other hand, if education directs individuals to take an interest in a wider area and to thinking/research; it will be easier to reach outputs to the contrary. In this case, the education will better equip individuals and allow them to know their choices better and thereby become liberated.

Society should be made up of thinking and evaluating individuals who trust in their own intellect. In this respect, the situation in Turkey has equally positive and negative elements. The negative element stems from the level and quality of education in Turkey. The formal education provided by the schools and the direction shown to young individuals of the society are far from endowing them with the above-mentioned characteristics. The positive element is that the democratization process and greater openness to the world inspires individuals to fit themselves into the requirements of this new context. The process of democratic reforms should be Turkey's fundamental priority as it will contribute to both the strengthening and the fulfillment of these demands. However, by definition, this process cannot take place without widespread participation. Therefore, education in Turkey should expeditiously be transformed to develop the critical thinking capacity of the future generations.

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