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EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2010
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2010
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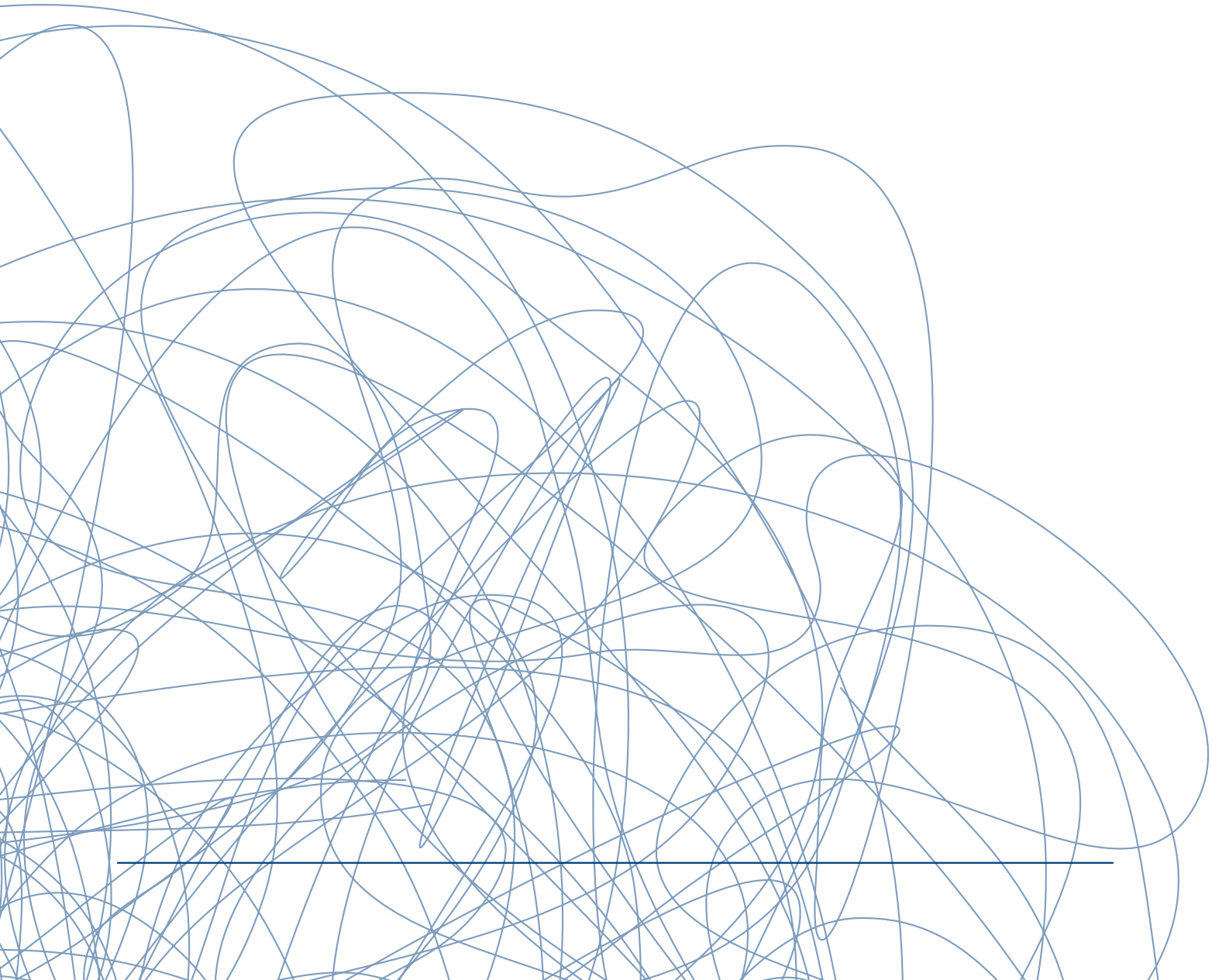
EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Education Reform Initiative (ERI) was launched within the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabancı University in 2003 with the aim of improving education policy and decision-making through research, advocacy and training.

ERI also attempts to serve as an example as to how policy dialogue should be conducted within a contemporary democratic framework by bringing together concerned civil society groups and relevant state agencies to catalyze an innovative collective thought process for education reform policy.

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October 2011

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FOREWORD: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THINKING PROCESSES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Prepared by the Education Reform Initiative (ERI), the Education Monitoring Report evaluates Turkey's education system from different perspectives and continues to serve as an important guide for policymakers. Especially the analyses and discussions related to the need to enhance critical thinking in students are very important, as it constitutes the focus of the education system.

Turkey is a country where tests are frequently used; where important decisions regarding students are taken based on test results; and where students are widely led to resources outside of schools, such as private teaching institutions and private tutoring in order to be successful in these examinations. Despite of the frequent utilization of tests and financial and moral investments made for the success of students, success levels on general tests are rather low. The low percentage of average correctly answered questions in Level Determination Exam (*Seviye Belirleme Sınavı,* SBS) and Access to Higher Education Exam (*Yükseköğretime Geçiş Sınavı,* YGS) frequently surface as a point of discussion. But what is not being discussed is at what stage of their thought process, students fail. In other words, these tests do not provide any information on students' attainment levels of academic programme gains (i.e. thought processes). Still, certain students and schools are announced as having come 'first' in the country without any commentary on what it means to be the first. As a more specific example, there is no information on, in terms of knowledge and thought processes, how students who are able to get into universities are different than those who are not. Therefore, though general exams require substantial effort to administer, they do not provide concrete information on the levels of learning of test takers in the country. Apart from tests that are applied nation-wide to rank and select students, Turkey also participates in international level-assessment efforts such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Although these programs rank countries based on points obtained by students, what should be focused on in these studies is determining which knowledge and thinking processes students were able to attain through education, rather than country rankings. Contrary to national exams such as SBS and YGS, results of these tests provide information on which thinking processes students were able to attain. When evaluated from this perspective, results obtained on these tests are highly troubling. There are many thinking processes in PISA that Turkish students were unable to attain (Çalışkan, 2010). For example, scores on the PISA test that is carried out for 15-year-olds in the area of Turkish literacy indicate that Turkish students have difficulties in developing independent thinking such as making inferences based on multiple criteria, combining information in different texts, suggesting text-based hypotheses, making assessments, etc. (OECD, 2010a). These thinking processes that are given as examples in fact reflect the gains that need to be addressed in countries' teaching programs.

Similar findings were observed in studies conducted by Cito Turkey. Level determination efforts conducted on preschoolers to 8th graders within the scope of the Student Tracking System (*Öğrenci İzleme Sistemi,* ÖİS), show with scientific data that as years pass students have even lesser chance to reach thinking processes in almost all areas. The most remarkable part of this study is that public and private school students start primary education without any problems in terms of basic skills, but as they continue school, they cannot achieve targeted gains determined by the Ministry; on the contrary, they lose those basic skills they had at the beginning (Berberoğlu et al. 2009). ÖİS reveals that students have problems in assessing, observing, criteria setting, comparing situations/events, decision making, going beyond the provided information, making inferences, proposing hypotheses from their observations, etc. Both PISA and ÖİS suggest parallel results that confirm one another with regards to the problems they identify in attaining similar skills.

The question that needs to be asked here is what should be done to improve the thinking skills of students. This question is very much related to the quality of education. An education system covers a complicated process within which various variables should be considered at the family, school, student, and teacher levels. Although in general what needs to be done is known, transfering that knowledge to the school environment is not always easy. However, research conducted in the field of educational sciences provide guiding evidence in general terms on what needs to be done to improve the quality of the system.

In Turkey, there are important barriers to efforts geared towards improving the quality of education. First of all, the education system is unable to facilitate an equal distribution of environments and opportunities among schools and students. Creation of different school types over the years and separation of students into talent groups to be placed in certain schools accordingly due to increasing demand, have had negative effects on the development of students in the system as a whole (Alacacı ve Erbaş, 2010). It is today a known fact that education systems that segregate students based on certain characteristics (such as talents, socio-economic situation, socio-cultural structure, etc.) create a negative impact on the development of basic learning processes (OECD, 2010b). The first thing that needs to be done in Turkey is implementing precautions for the improvement of educational quality in all schools so that the segregationist approach can be eliminated. As per our country-specific conditions, the other obstacle in improving educational quality is the fact that multiple-choice questions which are used in nationwide examinations for student selection are being brought to the school environment as a method of teaching. It is a known fact that this method has no validity in terms of educational sciences and does not make any contribution to learning processes (Berberoğlu, 2010).

It is expressed from time to time that socio-cultural and socio-economic structures are the variables that have the greatest effect on educational outcomes. A lot of research, including PISA, shows a positive correlation between especially the cultural structure of the family and the learning level of the student. It is observed that children, who grow up in families with higher education levels that spend more time and money on cultural activities both in and out of their home are more likely to be successful in school. Increased overall wealth and higher investments in education, however, do not guarantee better results in education despite the above-mentioned correlation (OECD, 2010). It is a known fact that under certain circumstances, students do not reach the expected level of learning outcomes despite living in countries with high national per capita incomes and coming from families higher up on

the socio-economic ladder. Therefore, it is possible to avoid resorting to policies to reduce the impact of socio-economic and socio-cultural background of the student, and to opt instead for measures to improve the quality of education *and* to develop thinking processes of students by eliminating the above-mentioned country-specific barriers to education. These measures are more methodological and include choosing the most appropriate educational program and teaching methods for the target group; working with qualified teachers and school administrators; offering well-prepared textbooks and materials, and building a positive classroom and school atmosphere where individual personalities and needs of students are taken into consideration.

In general, the ultimate aim of a country's educational programs is to develop the necessary learning and thinking processes in students. When looked at from this perspective, the problem seems to be stemming more from inadequate/poor content and teaching methods. Consequently, the Ministry of Education has revised all curricula for primary education. This is a very important development. The most significant feature of the new academic programmes is that they are designed to develop "thinking processes" by using a "spiral" structure. Even though these objectives that are adopted by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) as a starting point are correct, to what extent the new academic programmes serve these objectives is a matter to be discussed. Content analyses have revealed that there are issues in determining program gains (objectives) and in facilitating harmony between these gains and the suggested methods to reach them (Berberoğlu, 2011). Although a student-centred education system is not widely used in Turkey, the effectiveness of student-centred activities in improving thinking processes is directly related to the quality of these activities. The current system, which relies on the new academic content and on the principle of *student-centredness*, raises concerns on what policymakers mean by a "student-centred activity", and whether or not these academic activities really produce the anticipated results. Field studies observe that students who are involved in such student-centred activies do not acquire better thinking or other skills than those who are not involved (Kalender and Berberoğlu, 2009; Yayan and Berberoğlu, 2004). These results indicate that these student-centred activities do not subscribe to the desired quality criteria. At this stage, the quality of teachers is also recognized as being an input to the process and the importance of teachers' knowledge, abilities, and skills for the improvement of students' thinking processes, is revealed once again. However well a teaching program is prepared, the way in which it is implemented will affect its success. In this sense, the quality of school management and teachers, the extent to which curricula focus on thinking processes, the quality of books and teaching materials, and the extent to which they are used effectively, as well as many other variables and processes must be taken into account.

What is most important within the context of measures that need to be taken to develop high levels of thinking and learning processes in students is improving the processes based on recommendations and findings provided by scientific studies. Moreover, monitoring student development within a framework that focuses on thinking processes consistent with the teaching programmes and taking correct measures at necessary points will enable students to gradually acquire the desired skills.

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EDUCATION POLICIES IN 2010 AT A GLANCE

FROM THE EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2009...	WHAT DID MONE DO IN 2010?	ERI'S ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
HUMAN RESOURCES CAPACITY AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE MINISTRY SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED IN A WAY THAT WILL ALLOW FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH.	MONE CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT (MEBGEP) CAME TO AN END AND A DRAFT FOR THE NEW LAW OF MINISTRY STRUCTURE WAS FORMED. BUT NO SOLID STEPS WERE TAKEN REGARDING FACILITATING THE CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION.	• A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS REGARDING GOVERNANCE REFORM SHOULD IMMEDIATELY BE RESTARTED. • A DISTRICT BASED AND PARTICIPATORY MODEL INSTEAD OF A PROVINCE-BASED AND CENTRALIZED MODEL SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS AN OPTION.
THE RATIO OF FUNDS ALLOCATED TO EDUCATION TO NATIONAL INCOME SHOULD BE INCREASED, CONSIDERING THE SIZE OF THE YOUNG POPULATION IN TURKEY	IN 2010, PUBLIC FUNDS ALLOCATED TO EDUCATION AS A SHARE OF GDP STAYED SAME AS 4 %. IT IS PROJECTED THAT THIS RATIO WILL DECREASE DOWN TO 3.8 % IN 2013.	• PUBLIC EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION SHOULD GRADUALLY BE INCREASED TO 6 % OF GDP. • STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS SHOULD BE UTILIZED FOR AN EQUAL AND EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC FUNDS.
INEQUALITIES IN THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN IMPLEMENTING PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION POLICIES NATION-WIDE	25 PROVINCES WERE ADDED TO THE LIST OF PROVINCES WHERE INCREASED EFFORTS TO ENABLE THE ACCESS OF THE 60-72-MONTH AGE GROUP TO PRESCHOOL EDUCATION TAKE PLACE. THEREBY THE NUMBER OF PROVINCES INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT BECAME 57. THE SIX MOST DISADVANTAGED PROVINCES FOR THE 48-72 MONTH AGE GROUP (AĞRI, GAZİANTEP, HAKKARİ, İSTANBUL, MARDİN, ŞIRNAK) WERE AGAIN NOT INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF SELECTED PROVINCES THIS YEAR.	CHILDREN WHO LIVE UNDER THE WORST SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS ARE EXLUDED FROM PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION EXTENSIFICATION POLICIES, AS POLICIES ARE NOT SUPPORTED BY SUFFICIENT PUBLIC FUNDS. • EXTRA EFFORT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO INCREASE THE ACCESS TO PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MOST DISADVANTAGED PROVINCES.
EFFORTS TO INCREASE ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE LEVELS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION SHOULD CONTINUE	GRADUAL ABSENCE MANAGEMENT (ADEY), WHICH WAS DEVELOPED IN 2009, WAS NOT PUT INTO OPERATION. 'FREE ACTIVITIES' CLASS THAT AIMS TO INCREASE STUDENTS' SENSE OF BELONGING TO SCHOOL WAS ADDED TO THE EDUCATION PROGRAM.	• POLICY PRIORITIES SHOULD INCLUDE GIRLS AND OTHER DISADVANTAGED GROUPS AND SHOULD FOCUS ON RETENTION AND GRADUATION. • ADEY SHOULD BE REVISED SUCH THAT IT CAN SOON BE IMPLEMENTED. • SCHOOL AND PROVINCE-BASED STEPS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED SO THAT 'FREE ACTIVITIES' CLASS INCREASES THE SENSE OF BELONGING.

FROM THE EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2009...	WHAT DID MONE DO IN 2010?	ERI'S ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
AN INTEGRATED REFORM THAT DECREASES THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ANSWER THE NEEDS OF THE YOUNG POPULATION	A THREE-YEAR PLAN WAS PREPARED AND IMPLEMENTED REGARDING THE CONVERSION OF GENERAL HIGH SCHOOLS INTO ANATOLIAN OR VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS. EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE SHARE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION WITHIN SECONDARY EDUCATION CONTINUED. NO STEPS WERE TAKEN REGARDING THE CONTENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION.	CURRENTLY, ANATOLIAN HIGHSCHOOLS ARE BEING CONVERTED INTO GENERAL HIGH SCHOOLS. UNLESS SECONDARY EDUCATION GOES THROUGH AN INTEGRATED REFORM PROCESS THAT FOLLOWS A PARADIGM SHIFT, HIGH LEVELS OF ABSENTEEISM AND DROP-OUTS WILL PERSIST. • A HOLISTIC REFORM SHOULD BE CONDUCTED IN SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES WITH THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PROCESS.
EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED	THE FATİH PROJECT THAT AIMS TO IMPROVE TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASSROOMS WAS STARTED.	A STRATEGY THAT DOES NOT PRIORITIZE TEACHERS AND TEACHER POLICIES IN EDUCATION REFORM HAS A VERY LITTLE CHANCE TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES.
THERE SHOULD BE A LONG-TERM PLAN TO DECREASE THE EFFECTS OF SELECTIVE EXAMINATIONS ON LEARNING PROCESSES	THE NATIONAL SBS THAT STUDENTS TAKE AT THE END OF 6TH AND 7TH GRADES WAS CANCELLED PERMANENTLY.	EXAMINATION SYSTEMS SHOULD BE HANDLED AS THE SYMPTOM OF A PROBLEM RATHER THAN ITS SOURCE. • A LONG-TERM ACTION PLAN THAT REDUCES QUALITY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION SHOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Reform Initiative (ERI) continues to present a consistent, holistic, and critical evaluation of the policies and implementations in the education system by sharing the fourth Education Monitoring Report with the public. Education Monitoring Reports are highly-recognized, acclaimed and referenced among members of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) community, and other public institutions and non-governmental organizations. ERI hopes to contribute to a more inclusive and informed policy-making process by providing the stakeholders within the education community with trustable data and information.

In accordance with Education Monitoring Report 2009, this report discusses the education system under its four main components and the policy environment in which these components are shaped. All changes that occurred in the past year with respect to governance and financing, policy and implementation level are handled as a whole and critically. Education Monitoring Report 2010 deals most predominantly with the critical changes and developments recorded in the past year on the formal basic education system. The 18th National Education Council, recent developments in the area of access to education, recent modifications in learning programmes, pilot applications of nationally-administered projects, and Increasing Opportunities and Improving Technology Movement (*Fırsatları Artırma ve Teknolojiyi İyileştirme Hareketi,* FATİH) project are among those changes and developments addressed in the 2010 report.

The 2010 Report includes an extra section titled "Teachers Today" in order to attract more attention to the need for more research and comprehensive policies regarding the "teacher" factor, which may be considered the primary determinant of learning outcomes. Also, the section "Education Monitoring Indicators", added to the report series in 2009, have been updated and expanded in collaboration with colleagues from Galatasaray University Economic Research Center (*Galatasaray Üniversitesi İktisadi Araştırmalar Merkezi,* GİAM). We would like to thank MoNE for generously sharing up-to-date student data with ERI.

HOW WAS THE REPORT PREPARED?

Education Monitoring Report 2010 has gone through various processes of preparation. Apart from ERI's visits, observations, evaluations and policy work, MoNE periodicals such as Monthly Journal of Announcements (*Tebliğler Dergisi*), Budget Report and Performance Programme were reviewed in a detailed way. Also, a review of national and international literature was conducted as a preparation for the "Teachers Today" section. Data and sources used for various sections were subjected to desk review. Qualitative methods such as focus groups, school visits and interviews were employed for an effective evaluation of modifications in teaching programmes. Draft report was discussed in advisory meetings that were organized in Ankara and İstanbul with the participation of different stakeholders in the education system, and the discussion process continued with the presentation of written comments of stakeholders.

Ministry of National Education is the biggest stakeholder in the Turkish education system as well as its regulator. The need for a governance reform becomes ever more pronounced so that the Ministry best identifies the problems in the system; allocates its resources accordingly; and implements policies which are formulated through a representative and highly participatory process.

However, Ministry's reform and restructuring process came to a halt in 2010 and the requirements for strategic management have so far not been fulfilled. The 18th National Education Council may be of critical importance for the involvement of stakeholders in policy processes. But due to the changes that were made in the Council's composition and the methods that are adopted, contributing to a participatory and data-based policy making process seem out of the way.

The fact that MoNE's current central and local organizational structure causes many problems in terms of the quality and effectiveness of its services is an observation that is agreed on by all stakeholders and stated in planning documents. The 3-year Mid-term Programme of the Government that was published last year stated the restructuring of MoNE and the Board of Higher Education (YÖK) as one of the important goals of 2010. This has lead to an increase in expectations within the education community regarding the renewal of the Law on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education. Reinforcing this expectation, the Ministry ended the EU-funded MoNE Capacity Building Project (*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın Kapasitesinin Geliştirilmesi Projesi,* MEBGEP) which was seen as one of the most important projects within the Ministry, after producing a Green Paper that also included a draft law.

The new governance model that was suggested in the Green Paper offered to reduce the number of Directorate Generals within MoNE from sixteen to five, decrease in the size of the central organization that would have the role of policy making and monitoring, and bolster provincial directorates for national education as administrations with special budgets thus putting forth a province-centered model. ERI criticizes this governance model for not being presented with enough information regarding its operation in the Green Paper, for not being child-centered and for not projecting the strengthening of schools in a way that can meet the different needs of children. On the other hand Green Paper is an important document, as it suggests a model through which governance reform can be discussed.

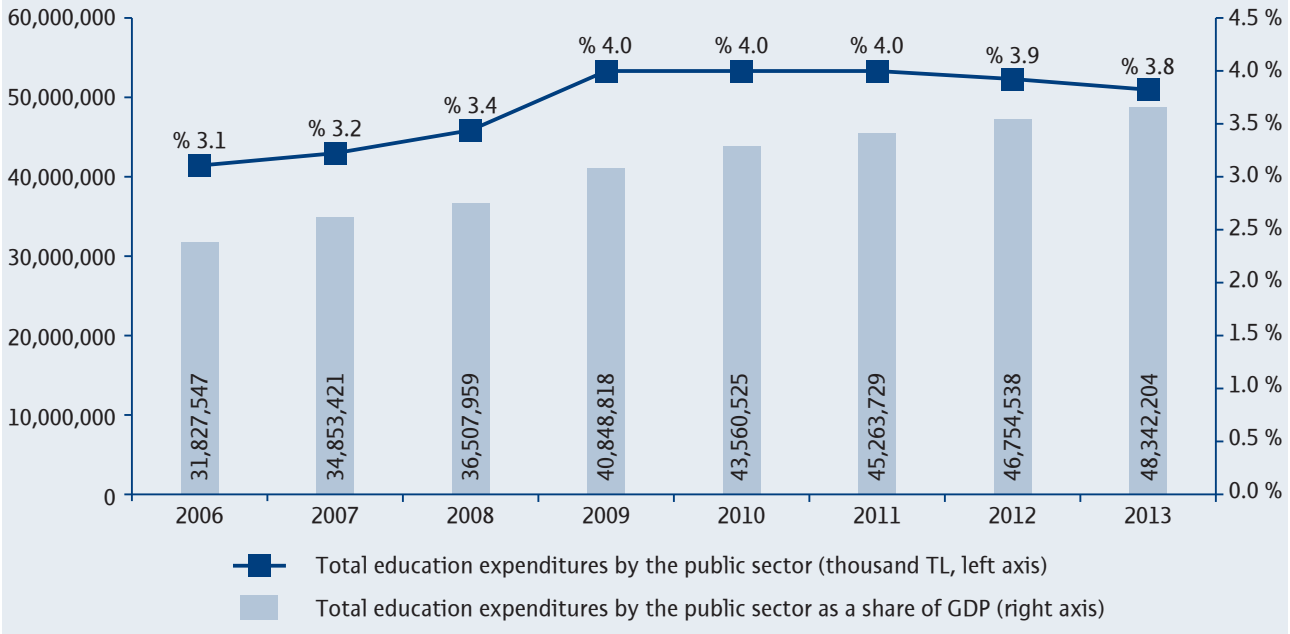
No solid steps were taken in 2010 regarding the restructuring of the Ministry. After the sharing of Green Paper with the public in March 2010, MEBGEP project was ended and the Green Paper took its place on the shelves of the Ministry. Yet restructuring and capacity building of MoNE is a critical success factor for education reform in Turkey. One of the priorities of the 61st Government in the area of education is preparing, enacting and implementing a new organizational law for MoNE by restarting a participatory process.

On the other hand, MoNE does not fulfill the requirements of strategic management as projected in the Public Finance Management and Control Law. Which data and evidence was utilized in determining the aims and goals that are listed in the Strategic Plan, and which strategies would be used to reach those stated goals are not included in the Plan. There are also important deficiencies in facilitating the compatibility between the Strategic Plan and

the budget of the Ministry, which is one of the most important requirements of the Public Finance Law. The most important deficiency is the allocation of the budget not according to goals of the Strategic Plan but rather based on previous allocations to the sub-units of the Ministry. Furthermore, the Performance Program, which is a tool that could facilitate compatibility between the Strategic Plan and the budget, only covers a very small part of the budget: For example, when 2010 and 2011 MoNE performance programs are compared to the budget documents of MoNE, it is observed that only 5-6 % of subsidies allocated to primary education services and Directorate General of Primary Education are explained by performance programs. This proves that strategic management tools are not used effectively within the Ministry.

Apart from the fact that the Ministry is unable to utilize the tools that will allow for an effective, efficient, and equal spending of its financial resources, it is also not possible to say that the funds allocated to education services in Turkey are sufficient. Even though the total allocated amount was increased to 43.6 billion TL in 2010, the ratio of this amount to GDP has remained the same as 4 %. What is worse is that the Government and especially the Ministry of Finance plan to decrease the share of public resources allocated to education in GDP: It is predicted that in 2013 public funding allocated to education will make up 3.8 % of GDP. This planning is not realistic as pre-school education, secondary education and higher education schooling rates are rapidly increasing and the quality problems in education are becoming ever more apparent. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of National Education need to start a realistic financial planning process for the education sector and include other stakeholders in the process.

GRAPH 1: DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS ALLOCATED TO EDUCATION (2010 PRICES)

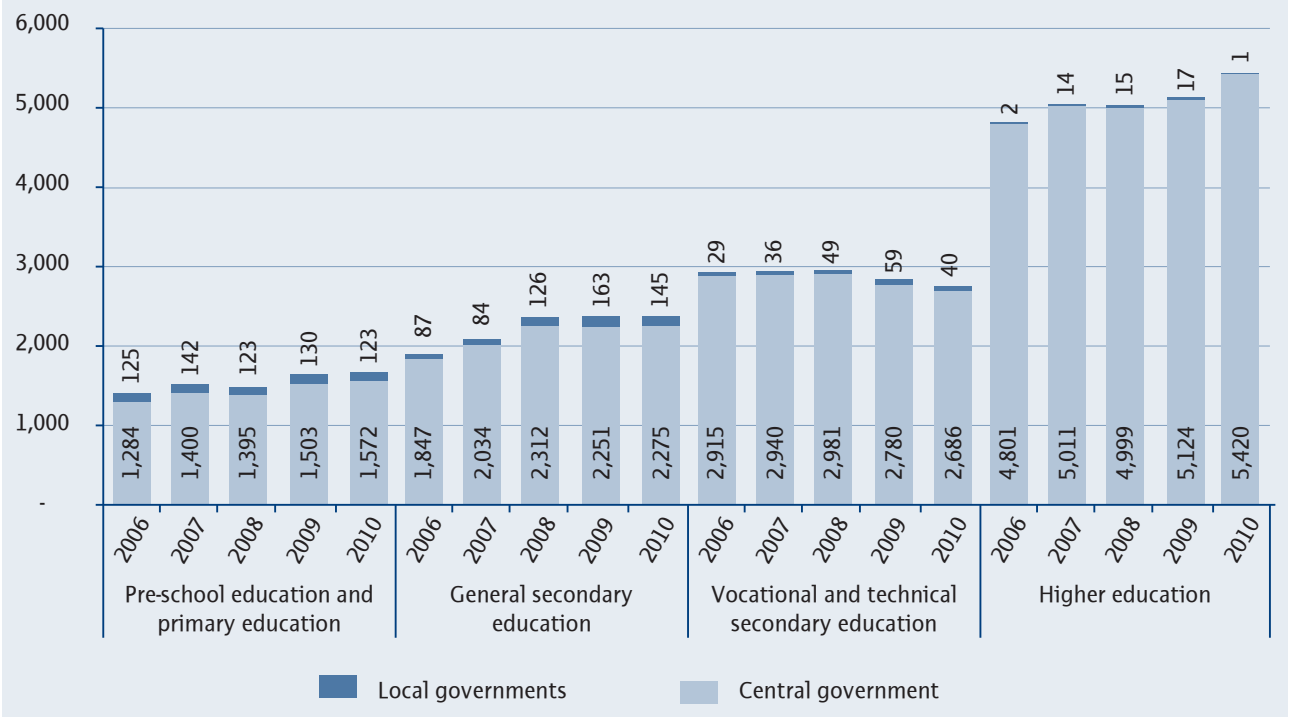


Sources: Website of the Directorate General of Public Accounts; 2011 Budget Report published by the Ministry of Finance.

Rapid increase in the number of students in Turkey bring about another problem regarding per student spending of public resources as the Ministry allocates budgets on the basis of Directorate Generals instead of calculating the public spending per student. Especially the extension of education to four years in secondary education, rapidly increasing schooling

rates and number of students have caused a decrease in per student spending in both general and vocational secondary education. Considering that per student spending is already low, the possibility of a continuation of this tendency is frightening in terms of the quality of the provided education. Positive efforts made towards increasing schooling rates should be supported with financing plans that will prevent per student spending from decreasing.

GRAPH 2: PER STUDENT PUBLIC EDUCATION SPENDING (TL, 2010 PRICES)



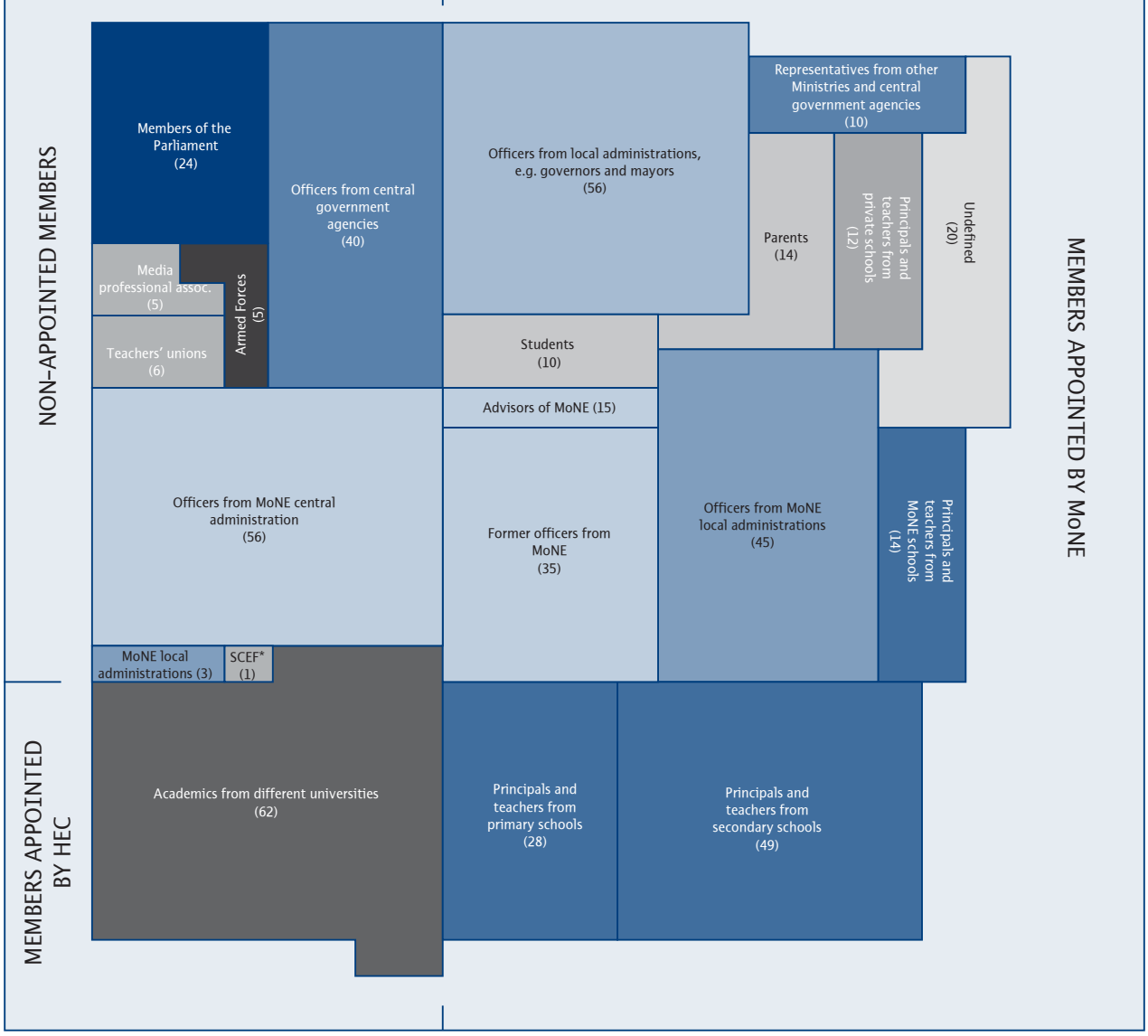
Sources: Web page of the Directorate General of Public Accounts; data compiled from the Ministry of National Education.

Certain mechanisms that will render MoNE's policy-making processes more inclusive currently exist in the legislation. One of the most important of these mechanisms is the National Education Council. At the National Education Council that convened for the 18th time in 2010, various topics from teacher training to values training were discussed and decisions were made in the form of recommendations for the Ministry.

As MoNE's official consultancy body, it must be expected that the Council has an important level of legitimacy and that the decisions it makes, even though they are in the form of recommendation, shed light on the course that the education system will take. However, the Council does not have any qualities that support this legitimacy neither in its composition nor in its decision-making process. By changing the regulations a short time before the 18th Council meeting, the Ministry has significantly increased the control that MoNE has over Council participants: Whereas before 60 % of Council members were being determined by the Ministry, after the change was made in the regulation this ratio increased to 75 %. Unfortunately, it is not highly possible that an institution with 75 % of members determined by the Ministry and almost 50 % made up of members that belong to the Ministry will be able to act as an independent consultant for the Ministry. Also, the decisions that are made at Council meetings are made with an simple majority vote by the participants without being based upon evidence. Draft decisions that are prepared during intensive commission work before the Council and the proposals put forward by Council participants go through the same processes. Moreover, there are no mechanisms that will monitor how decisions

made by the Council are implemented by the Ministry, or in other words there are no mechanisms that will increase the Ministry's accountability. All these make the Council's contribution to a participatory and data-based policy-making process questionable.

FIGURE 1: COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL (BEFORE CHANGE IN 2010)



*SCEF: Solidarity Council of Education Foundations

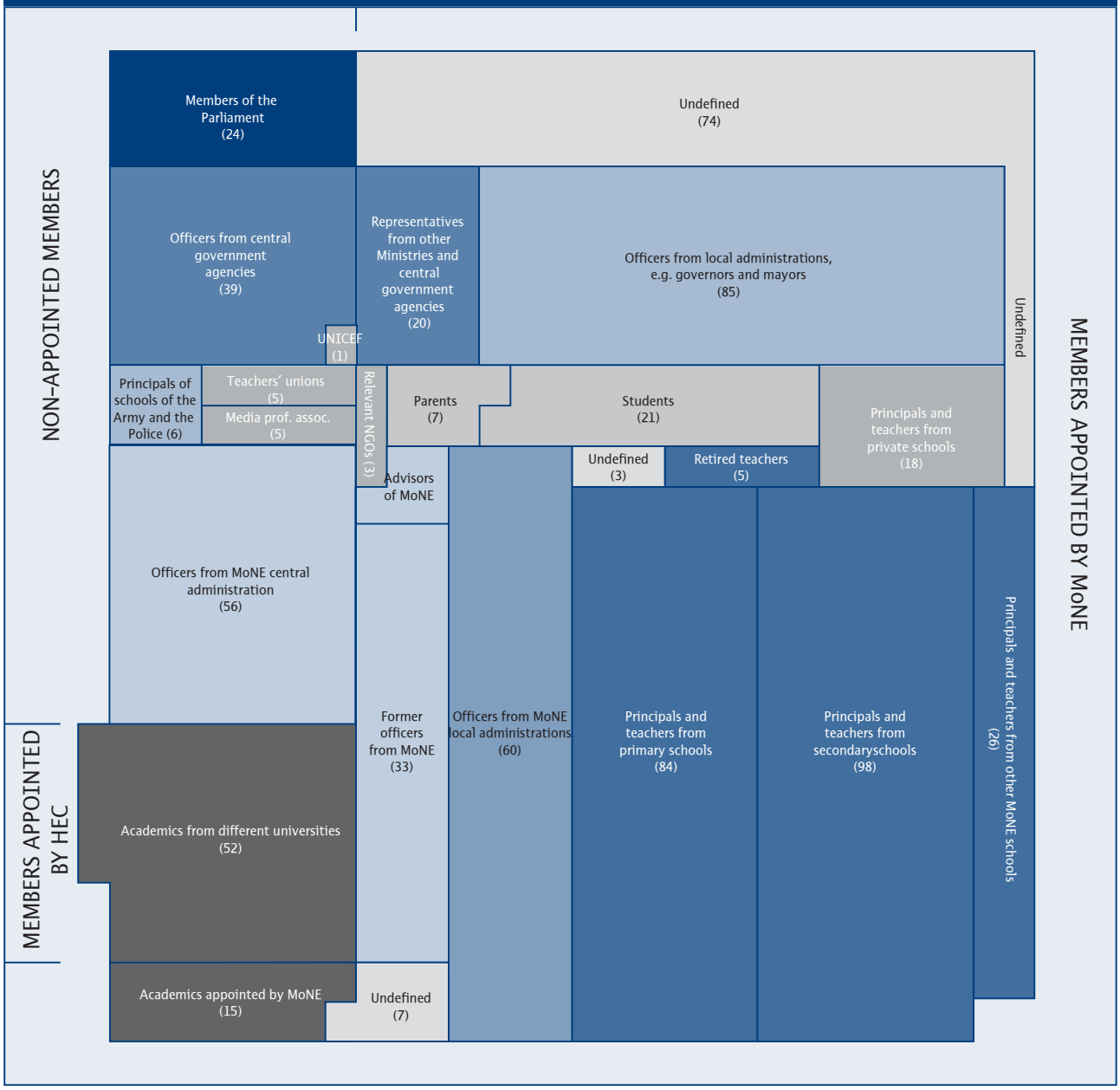
Total: 500 members

1 member

Members of the Parliament	4.8 %	Non-appointed members	27.8 %
Representatives of public administrations	22.2 %	Members appointed by Higher Education Council	12.4 %
Academics	12.4 %	Members appointed by MoNE	59.8 %
Non-governmental	7.2 %		
Private schools	2.4 %		
MoNE	47.0 %		
Undefined	4.0 %		

Source: Compiled by ERI from Regulations regarding the National Education Council.

FIGURE 2: COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL (AFTER CHANGE IN 2010)



Total: 752 members

1 member

Members of the Parliament	4.8 %	Non-appointed members	27.8 %
Representatives of public administrations	22.2 %	Members appointed by Higher Education Council	12.4 %
Academics	12.4 %	Members appointed by MoNE	59.8 %
Non-governmental	7.2 %		
Private schools	2.4 %		
MoNE	47.0 %		
Undefined	4.0 %		

Source: Compiled by ERI from Regulations regarding the National Education Council.

The governance reform that will take place within MoNE in 2011 should to be constructed in an integrated manner. Reform should both develop the strategy making, implementation and monitoring capacities of the central organization, and strengthen local organizations and schools so that they can answer to the differentiating needs of children. Resources allocated to education services should gradually be increased after precautions are taken for their equal and efficient utilization. Budget allocated to education should reach 6 % of GDP in the next couple of years. MoNE should generate and implement participatory mechanisms that will allow it to be close to stakeholders.

The primary issue the Turkish education system faces today is that "learning" is not taking place at the desired level. This situation is proved by both anectodes that come from within and outside the education system and the results received on international tests. The most important step that needs to be taken to overcome this issue is to conduct a comprehensive review of teacher policies.

In 2010, the most noteworthy step taken by MoNE regarding the learning problem was the FATİH project, which aims to improve technological infrastructure in schools and encourage usage of technological tools in education by providing schools with electronic content. But these steps were taken without comprehensive research on how technological tools support learning and without the utilization of international evidence.

OECD organizes the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) once every three years with the participation of over 60 countries including all OECD countries. PISA measures to what extent 15-year-olds were able to achieve the life skills that they should have at their age and thus reveals and compares the outcomes of national education systems. The results of the PISA application that took place in 2009 were published in 2010 and exposed the problems that students from Turkey face in learning and acquiring life skills and the deficiencies of the Turkish education system. In PISA 2009, Turkey received 454 points on science literacy and was ranked at the 32nd place out of 34 OECD countries. Turkey's ranking within OECD countries has not changed despite important point increases. At the same test, only 1 % of students in Turkey showed "superior" achievement, whereas 30 % remained below the basic achievement level. When assessing these results, it must not be forgotten that at least 35 % of 15-year-old children in Turkey are not students and therefore not included in the evaluation. When these outcomes are taken together with results from other international examinations such as TIMMS and PIRLS, it is clearly seen that Turkey faces a critical problem with regards to learning.

One of the most important steps taken by the government in 2010 to overcome the learning problem was the FATİH project. It is predicted that this grand project will be completed in three years and cost between 1.5 and 3 billion TL. Project covers the improvement of technological infrastructure in all schools that are under MoNE, content and software support for the effective usage of the infrastructure in teaching programs, and provision of in-service training to teachers. Within the scope of improving technological infrastructure, all classrooms (620,000) in all pre-school, primary and secondary schools

will be provided with a laptop and a projection device, and each school will have a "smart" class with at least one multi-purpose copy machine, a smart board, a digital camera and a microscopic camera.

During pilot implementations of the project, teachers mostly reported that the electronic content of teaching programs did not support teaching and learning, there was not enough electronic content, and that they did not feel themselves competent to prepare more electronic content. Even though students mostly state that technological tools make the classes "more fun", not adequate data have been collected which would show the impact of technological tools and content on learning outcomes, although usage of technology is a variable that could have been comparatively easily observed by creating experiment and control groups. Planning a project with a cost as high as 3 billion TL without having collected any substantial data on the effects on learning outcomes during pilot implementations is a deficiency that is a cause for concern.

Before the actual implementation of the FATİH Project in 2011, there is a need for more research evidence regarding the impact of effective use of technology in classrooms on education outcomes. Current international research does not show a direct improvement in education outcomes through solely the use of technological tools. Technological tools can become effective and improve learning outcomes only when used within a consistent philosophy of education and in the hands of conscious individuals.

The component that will use both technological tools and other teaching methods and tools effectively and thereby help remove the obstacles in front of learning, are teachers. The existing teacher profile in Turkey and the gaps that exist in various areas of teacher policies show that the most important contribution that can be done to the education system would be through teachers.

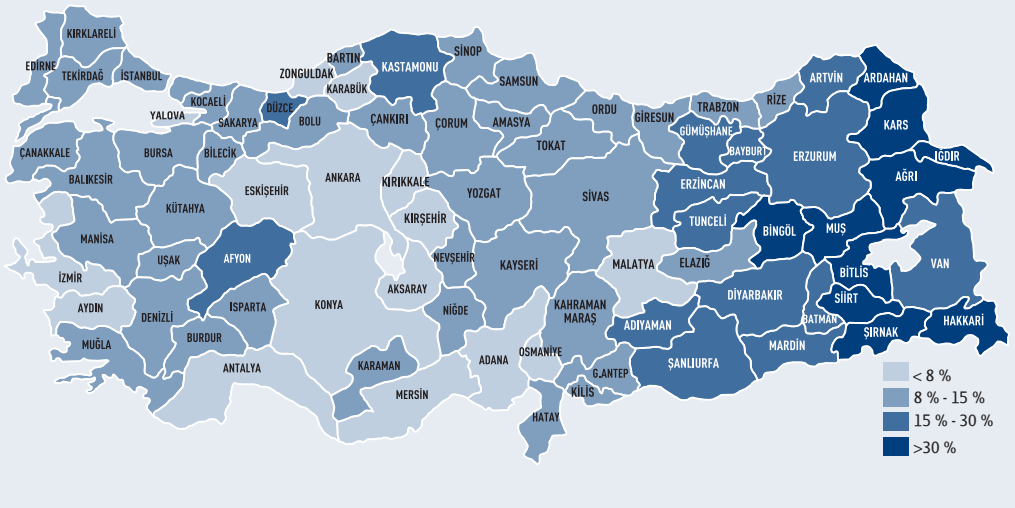
According to the Teacher Competency research that was conducted by Turkish Education Association in 2009, 76.2 % of teachers are under 40 years old and 52.6 % have less than 10 years of experience in teaching. Also, only 8.8 % of teachers were placed in the same school for more than 10 years. Whereas 3.8 % of teachers who took part in the study held a postgraduate degree, 21.7 % were working in an area outside of their own branch. When the role of these, compared to OECD countries, much younger and less experienced teachers is considered in affecting learning processes, improving teacher policies in Turkey becomes even more important.

However, teacher policies are far behind in strengthening teachers in face of increasing and changing needs of students. In Turkey, future teachers, or in other words those who will be placed in faculties of education, are selected through a central multiple-choice exam. Contrary to increasing trends in the rest of the world, methods that are employed in the selection of teacher candidates for evaluating whether or not individuals are suitable for the occupation are not used in Turkey. This centralized and standardized method is only diversified through Anatolian Teacher High Schools (*Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi,* AÖL). These institutions that are supported by MoNE and which were founded with the aim of supplying qualified candidates to faculties of education, have deviated from their purpose in the recent years: Whereas in 2006 70 % of AÖL graduates that were placed in universities were placed in faculties of education, in 2010 this rate had regressed to 51 %.

The approach that is applied in pre-service training in Turkey may seem to contradict with the current demands of the education system. Even though there is limited research regarding this approach, it can be said that teachers in Turkey are generally brought up with a focus on knowledge of the teaching subject/material and with limited school experience as part of the "academic tradition". This model that is applied in pre-service training institutions is unlikely to form teachers who can fulfill the requirements of constructivist teaching programs and guide students during learning processes.

The problem of centralization and a misplaced faith in multiple-choice examinations resurfaces during the hiring and appointment of teachers. Qualification problem is deepened by the appointment of teachers only through Public Personnel Selection Examination (*Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı,* KPSS), which is limited in measuring vocational knowledge, and gives no regard for the necessities of regions. Increased use of contracted and paid teachers in recent years has reinforced differences in the status of teachers. MoNE does not share any data on paid teachers. But observations from provinces suggest that persons who are not qualified to be teachers teach under the category of "paid teacher" especially in the disadvantaged regions. Moreover, there are striking regional inequalities in provinces in the ratio of contracted teachers who are generally younger and less experienced.

MAP 1: RATIO OF CONTRACTED TEACHERS IN PROVINCES AT THE PRIMARY EDUCATION LEVEL



Source: Data provided by the Ministry of National Education.

With a decree that was published in June 2011, around 70,000 contracted teachers working in Turkey were given the opportunity to become part of the permanent staff. This steps towards abolition of the categorization of teachers is a positive development. However, the reasoning behind the abolition of this practice was not specified, potential qualification problems of directly appointing teachers with relatively lower KPSS scores without putting into effect any support mechanisms was ignored, and no solid steps were taken towards the elimination of the status of paid teachers.

TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) research contucted by the OECD in 2007-2008 collected data from around 4,000 teachers and principles employed in Turkey at the secondary education level. According to results of TALIS, Turkish teachers have been involved in much fewer vocational development activities compared to their

colleagues in other participating countries. Furthermore, Turkish teachers on average feel less need for professional development in 11 areas related to the teaching profession that include student evaluation, class management, teaching in multi-cultural environments etc., compared to their colleagues in other TALIS countries. TALIS data also reveal the importance of "school leaders" in the professional development of teachers. It is observed that policies towards vocational development and in-service training include centralized practices that adopt a seminar model and do not allow for dialogue and inter-colleagual learning. There is an urgent need for the development of practices that emphasize the importance of vocational development in lifelong learning, allow teachers to learn from each other, and consider needs at the local level.

Increase in the participation rates in both preschool and primary education in 2010 is a positive development. However, despite the fast growth of preschool participation, there are shortcomings in prioritizing disadvantaged groups and regions and facilitating effective transfers to primary education. Rates of absenteeism in primary education are highly worrisome.

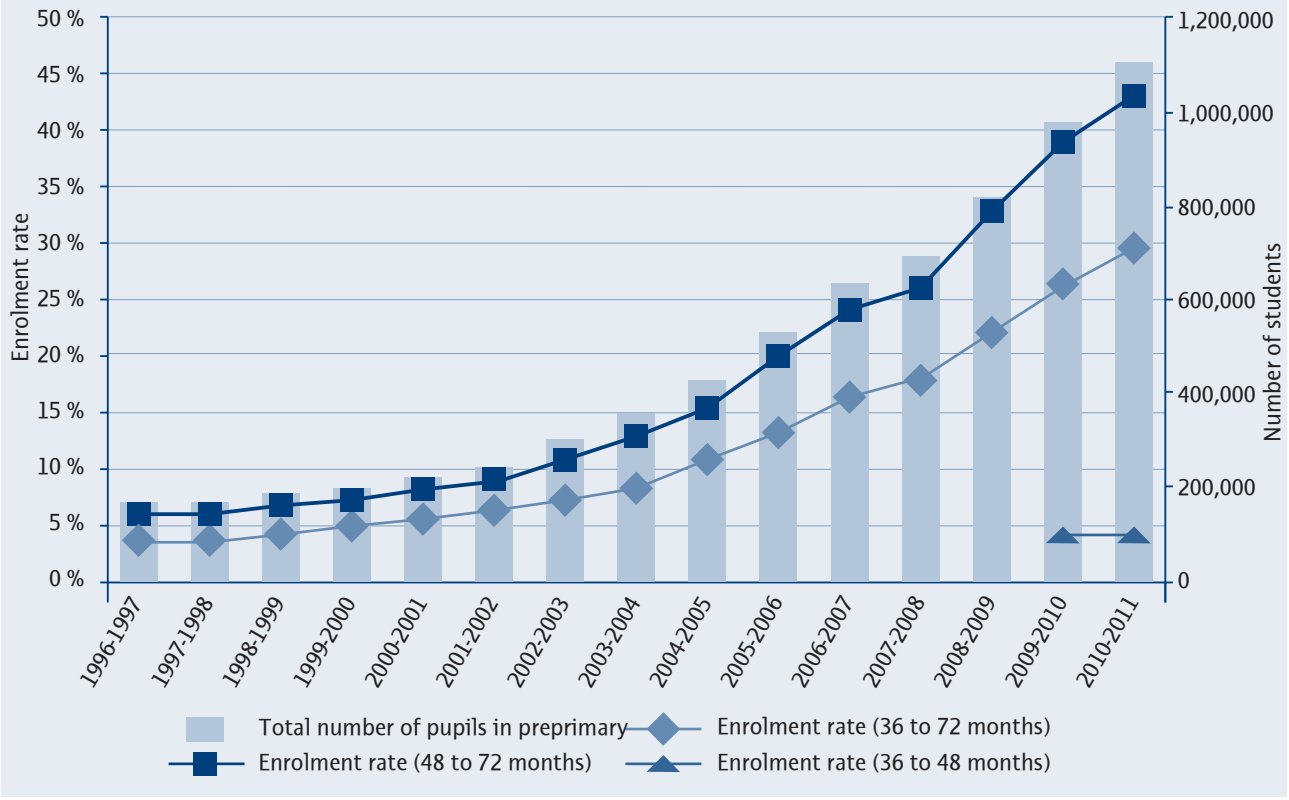
There is a need for the Gradual Absence Management (Aşamalı Devamsızlık Yönetimi, ADEY) to be put into effect as a mechanism that will monitor absenteeism and enable necessary precautions to be taken. The "Free Activities" class that was added to the primary education curriculum this year could have a positive effect on absenteeism and quitting school without a diploma while it increases all children's sense of belonging to school.

MoNE has continued its efforts to improve preschool education in 2010 with various initiatives. 25 provinces were added in 2010-2011 to the already existing 27 provinces where increased efforts are given to enable 100 % access to pre-school education is made compulsory, bringing up the total number of provinces to 57. Schooling rates for preschool education have increased from 38.5 % to 43.1 % for the 48-72-month age group, and increased from 26.9 % to 29.9 % for the 36-72-month age group. In other words, one in every three children between the ages 3 and 6 has access to pre-school education. Net schooling rates have steadily been increasing for both the 48-72-month and for the 36-72-month-age groups. This points to the preservation of the rate of increase in the recent years.

On the other hand, regional and provincial disparities have not been eliminated. Strengthening of Pre-school Education Project that is supported by the European Union can serve as an example in this regard. Out of the six provinces that were most disadvantaged in the schooling rates of the 48-72-month age group in 2009-2010, only Ağrı is among the project's pilot provinces and the other five (Hakkari, Gaziantep, İstanbul, Mardin, Şırnak) were not selected as one of the prioritized 57 or as one of the ten pilot provinces. This condition is a sign that the steps taken are insufficient in prioritizing disadvantaged groups and regions.

The widely accepted personal, social, and financial benefits of early childhood education can be increased to the highest level only through the prioritization of disadvantaged groups. Following this approach, it is essential that efforts to facilitate access of all children with different characteristics in different states be supported by efforts towards improving

GRAPH 3: NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND ENROLMENT RATES IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION



Source: Data supplied by the Ministry of National Education.

quality. Accordingly, there is a need to review current monitoring practices and to establish a holistic definition of quality standards that go beyond materials and equipment to include numerous other factors such as interactions between the child and his/her environment and processes.

With the increase in access to pre-school education, another topic that needs to be emphasized is the way in which children experience the period of transitioning to primary education, especially during the first two years of primary education. Making this a positive experience for children in terms of emotional well-being and cognitive development requires going beyond the existence of an adaptation and preparation period and adopting a holistic view on various components of education. The transition period is not limited to preparing the child for primary education and also includes getting the components of primary education ready for the child.

The previous Education Monitoring Report had emphasized that the efforts that have been made in recent years in facilitating access to primary education are highly positive both in terms of construction of policies and obtained results. Net schooling rate in primary education has increased to 98.4 % in 2010-2011 from 98.2 % in 2009-2010. Also, the girl/boy ratio for students enrolled in formal education has increased from 0.94 to 0.95 nationwide. Likewise, with the addition of children, who are in secondary education although they are at the primary education age, the "net adjusted schooling rate" increases to 99.1 %. Accordingly, in 2010-2011 there were a little over 90,000 children who were between the ages 6-13 and not enrolled in school.

Net schooling rate by itself is unfortunately not an indicator of whether or not a child is sufficiently involved in the education system. A more important indicator of participation in education is a child's regular attendance in school. In this regard, the increase in the rate of absenteeism in primary education is a cause for concern. Whereas 10.4 % of students were absent for 20 or more days in 2009-2010, 11.6 % were already absent for 10 or more days in the first semester of 2010-2011. When we look at the gender distribution of absenteeism, we see a 1 % increase in boys and a 1.4 % increase in girls, which means that the difference is growing to the disadvantage of girls.

TABLE 1: DATA REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

	NET SCHOOLING RATE					RATE OF ABSENTEEISM		
	TOTAL	GIRL	BOY	GIRL / BOY RATIO (AGES 6-13)	GIRL / BOY RATIO (ALL STUDENTS EXCLUDING OPEN UNIVERSITIES)	TOTAL	GIRL	BOY
2009-2010	98.2 %	97.8 %	98.5 %	94.0 %	94.0 %	10.4 %	8.9 %	11.7 %
2010-2011	98.4 %	98.2 %	98.6 %	94.5 %	94.9 %	11.6 %	10.3 %	12.7 %

Source: Data provided by the Ministry of National Education.

We have expressed in the Education Monitoring Report 2009 the need to investigate the reasons behind absenteeism at the national level, to monitor student participation at the provincial, district and school levels, and to develop tools for policy-making. With this goal in mind, MoNE and UNICEF are still working on the ADEY mechanism through which absenteeism can be constantly monitored and interventions can be made individually to students. As absenteeism makes it difficult for children to achieve the highest benefits from the education system and accelerates the process of dropping out, this system should be put into practice as soon as possible.

An important factor in a child's regular attendance is the child's sense of belonging to school. In this regard, MoNE has started the "Free Activities" class in the 2010-2011 academic year by removing the elective course for grades 1-5. Through educational and fun activities, this class aims to increase the sense of belonging that students have to their school, to make it easier for students to express themselves freely, and to increase their sense of safety.

Even though a variety of activities were suggested by the Board of Education, it was seen during a focus group conducted with classroom teachers and guidance counselors in Istanbul that in general the most practiced activities in the Free Activities class are "Istanbul" class, reading class, computer class, and counseling/club activities. Therefore, it is observed that the content of education has become slightly more adaptable thanks to Free Activities. However, under current conditions the main determinants of the implementation of Free Activities are the capacities, incentives, and the equipment of the school and the teacher. Especially in public schools it does not seem possible to implement Free Activities effectively without creating an environment that will increase cooperation between teachers. On the other hand, it can be said that this practice has so far yielded positive results since its start in the 2010-2011 academic year in terms of strengthening students' sense of belonging and increasing the adaptability of education.

High rates of absenteeism and drop-outs recorded in secondary education point to the facts that secondary education in Turkey is unable to fulfill the expectations of the young population, does not strengthen their personal development and social inclusion to the extent that it should, and that insufficient public services are provided for children at the age of secondary education.

Significant progress has been made in the secondary education school enrolment rate. Whereas the net schooling rate was 65 % in 2009-2010, this rate has increased to 69 % in 2010-2011. Despite this increase, gender disparities have remained. As of the 2010-2011 academic year, 72 % of males and 66 % of females at the age of secondary education were enrolled in an institution of secondary education. Regional disparities in net schooling rates are also considerably deep. In some western provinces of Turkey the net schooling rate is around 90 % whereas it drops to around 30 % in some eastern provinces.

TABLE 2: DATA REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

	NET SCHOOLING RATE			GIRL/BOY STUDENT RATIO			RATES OF ABSENTEEISM IN OFFICIAL GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION			RATES OF ABSENTEEISM IN OFFICIAL VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SECONDAY EDUCATION		
	TOTAL	GIRL	BOY	TOTAL SECONDARY	GENERAL SECONDARY	VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL	TOTAL	GIRL	BOY	TOTAL	GIRL	BOY
2009-2010	65.0 %	62.2 %	67.6 %	84.7 %	95.4 %	73.1 %	44.4 %	39.5 %	49.1 %	49.0 %	39.3 %	56.2 %
2010-2011	69.3 %	66.1 %	72.3 %	83.6 %	93.6 %	73.3 %	28.0 %	22.6 %	33.1 %	35.7 %	26.6 %	42.4 %

Source: Data supplied by the Ministry of National Education.

Even though net schooling rate in secondary education is improving, rate of absenteeism is also high. According to data obtained from administrative records, 44 out of every 100 official general secondary education students and 49 out of every 100 official vocational and technical secondary education students were absent from school for 20 or more days in the 2009-2010 academic year.

Dropping out continue to constitutes important problems for secondary education. In the 2009-2010 academic year, 10.2 % of male students and 5.9 % of female students studying at official and formal institutions of secondary education dropped out from their school for reasons other than death or leaving the country. The act of dropping out differentiates depending on the school type. Highest rates of dropouts are in vocational high schools, high schools for preachers and prayer leaders, and official general high schools. Important findings surface when data is compared to the 2008-2009 academic year. Whereas dropout rates almost halved for vocational and technical high schools and high schools for preachers and prayer leaders, it has remained the same in general high schools. Dropout rates in academically selective high schools have increased from 0.3 % to 4.4 %.

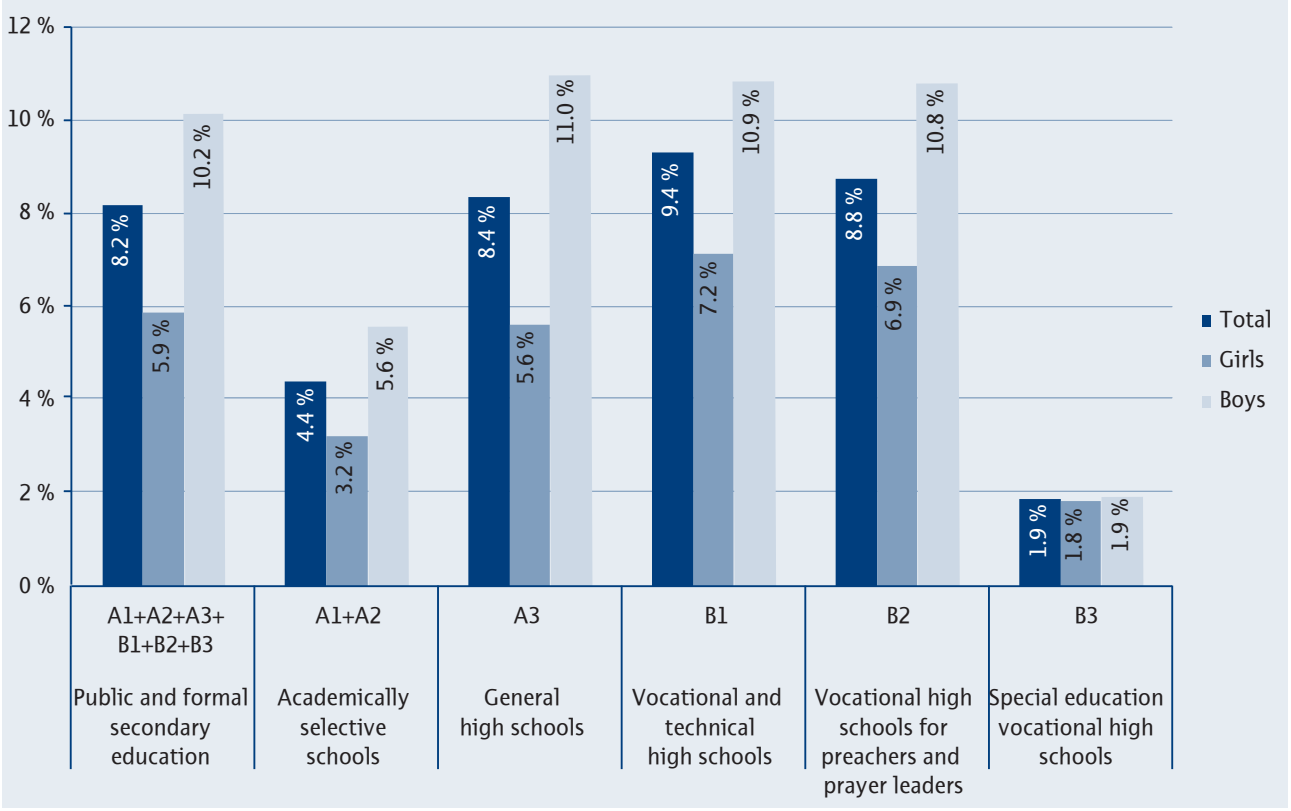
MoNE tries to resolve the issues that secondary education has by converting general high schools into Anatolian or vocational high schools and by increasing the share of vocational

and technical secondary education. As a matter of fact, reform efforts and transformation in secondary education were sustained with equal importance in 2010. Programme differences between Anatolian high schools and general high schools were mostly eliminated. With a circular that was published in May 2010, it was set forth that all general high schools would either be converted into Anatolian high schools or be transferred over to directorate generals responsible for vocational education to be converted into vocational high schools by the end of 2012-2013. Indeed, the drop in the weight of general high schools within secondary education from 38 % in 2009-2010 to 29 % in 2010-2011 and the increase in the weight of academically selective (Anatolian) high schools from 12 % to 20 % show that the transformation period has already begun.

An important point regarding the transformation in secondary education is the amount of financial resources that are allocated to the process. According to the 2011 Performance Programme, only 40,000 TL has been allocated from the MoNE budget for the conversion of general high schools to Anatolian or vocational high schools. As the conversion of general high schools requires more qualified and comprehensive efforts, there are doubts as to whether the transformation will be limited to a change in the schools' outdoor signs with such an inadequate budget.

Increasing the share of vocational and technical education within secondary education to at least 50 % is listed as a strategic goal in the MoNE 2010-2014 Strategic Plan. In this area a point that needs scrutinization is how and according to what the increase in the weight of vocational and technical education is determined. In most cases, this policy choice is supported by the claim that such a distribution between general and vocational secondary

GRAPH 4: DROPOUT RATES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION (2009-2010)



Source: Data supplied by the Ministry of National Education.

education exists in OECD and EU countries and that their policy choice is directed towards popularizing vocational and technical education. However, OECD and EU countries are greatly differentiated with regards to the share of vocational and technical education within secondary education.

At the same time, in a lot of countries policies that try to smoothen the bountries between general and vocational education are preferred, structure and content differences are decreasing, and the number of common programmes that are geared towards basic skill achievement are growing. It is thus aimed that all individuals that complete either general or vocational secondary education to have attained basic skills (literacy and numerical skills; main competencies in mathematics, science and technology; problem solving; critical thinking; good knowledge of a foreign language; information and communication technology skills; general knowledge) for lifelong learning. Besides, it is widely accepted that in its current state vocational and technical education does not enable students achieve the competencies that are demanded by sectors and also does not contribute to the resolution of the unemployment problem. In this case, prioritizing an increase in the share of vocational and technical education within secondary education as an education policy becomes even more disputable.

One of the most deeply rooted problems of the Turkish education system is the pressure that examination systems between educational stages apply on learning-teaching processes. With the effect of the intense competition that is present when transferring to secondary and to higher education, both teachers and students focus on test solving skills instead of what they should be learning and teaching, thus moving away from literature, art, sports, and the street. Instead of focusing on the results rather than on the process, or encouraging students to gain deep knowledge in areas of their interest and teaching them to learn, our education system creates individuals that repeat a minimum amount of superficial knowledge in all areas. It can now be observed that a quiet but substantial reaction is being formed, especially on the parents' front, vis-à-vis this issue. At the end of the 2009-2010 academic year, MoNE decided to terminate the Level Determination Examinations that were taking place at the end of 6th and 7th grades. This abolishment took place after a consensus was maintained on the facts that these examinations which were taking place after 6th, 7th and 8th grades was obliging students and parents to rely on outside-of-school resources for learning and thereby causing the school to lose its central position in the education system. It is hereby hoped that the intense pressure that the examination system applies to children will be reduced to some extent. However, an important point that escapes policy-makers is that examination systems are a result of quality differences between institutions especially in secondary education. When the scope and the budget of MoNE's "abolishing general high schools" action are considered, it can be said that there is no possibility of eliminating this issue.

Enacting children's rights in educational environments and processes and teaching students a right-based approach are crucial in supporting children's wellbeing and facilitating contribution of the education system to the formation of a democratic society. In 2010, there were various developments in the teaching of human rights values as well as in the religion and education dimensions. However, developments in neither of these dimensions nor in others are sufficient to be able to say that a right-based approach is being reinforced in the education system.

The discussion of to what extent and how religion will be a part of education in Turkey has been going on for a long time. Alevi Workshops, National Education Council, and the law suits brought against Religion and Ethics class were important developments of 2010, which made the religion and education debate remain on the agenda.

It was among the suggestions at the 18th National Education Council that Religion and Ethics course, which is claimed to play an important role in the teaching of values, should be taught more effectively in all institutions of education. Furthermore, the need to form regulations to be able to offer religious training as an elective course so that parents can be supported in developing their children's ethical and moral values was also among the listed suggestions. Despite the emphasis on keeping with the principle of pluralism in religious teaching, the fact that both Council suggestions press for the increase in the intensity of religious teaching and training is an inclination that needs to be discussed.

Revisions made in 2005 and in 2006 on Religion and Ethics teaching programmes were not enough to create a societal consensus in Turkey on religion and education, and complaints against a compulsory Religion and Ethics course and its content have been increasingly carried to courtrooms especially in the last ten years. In 2010, Sivas Administrative Court recognized the plea of a family who wanted their child to be exempted from religion course with the justification that the theoretical and practical applications of the Religion and Ethics course were not the same and that the education provided in this course was against the philosophical and religious beliefs of the family.

Following the Alevi workshops, it was decided that the programme of the Religion and Ethics course would be reconstructed and its pilot would be implemented in the 2011-2012 academic year. New teaching programmes were announced in January 2011. A detailed analysis of this programme, of its contribution to the period of change, and of the ways in which it could be further developed is an important and imminent step that needs to be taken.

Resolution of this issue will be an important step in overcoming the problems associated with children's rights in education. As the discussions regarding religion and education continue, children's rights are one of the most ignored topics. Critical issues such as the "best interests" of the child, his/her "right to develop" in all aspects, his/her "right to participate" and "religious and conscientious freedom" are rarely brought to the table within the scope of ongoing discussions.

Existence of a consensus on the need for Religion and Ethics course to teach objective, pluralistic, unbiased, non-sectarian, scientific, and research-based information that is

child-centered and consistent with human rights principles, is gratifying. Still, the facts that these concepts are not clearly defined and that their criteria are vague may result in practices that fall away from this theoretical framework despite its conciliatory appearance. Therefore, concrete requirements of principles should be defined rather than what the principles of Religion and Ethics course need to be.

"Citizenship and Democracy" course on the other hand, is returning under the "Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Project" with the approach that in-class teaching of democracy and human rights is important but inadequate as students need to experience these concepts in their own lives. Within the scope of the project, pilot implementations took place at selected schools in the provinces of İstanbul, Edirne, Konya, Manisa, Sakarya, Mersin, Mardin, Elazığ, Yozgat and Samsun, where a weekly hour-long course was taught to 8th grades.

Although the methodogical difference is very clear when the new course is compared to the previous citizenship course, and its design is student-centered with a constructivist point of view, pilot implementations did not go without problems. It was observed that teachers have a tendency to use the allocated hour to complete topics from Atatürk's Principles and the History of Turkish Revolution course that they could not finish on time as the hours allotted to this course have been reduced. Student did not take the course seriously as it was only one hour per week and as they would not be asked questions on this topic in Level Determination Exam at the end of the 8th grade. General opinion of teachers is that it is not possible for students to adopt democracy as a general approach with only one hour per week of class unless a democratic environment exists at home, in the family, in the student's environment or in general.

Teachers implementing the pilot program sent weekly evaluations directly to the Board of Education. But just as they were expecting the activities in the textbook to be shaped in light of the evaluations they provided, the textbook was prepared and brought to the commission in April 2011. This greatly damaged expectations that a participatory process exists.

In sum, despite positive developments that took place in 2010 with regards to participation in the education system, important shortcomings stand out regarding the quality of the education system, reconstructing of the education system with a right-based approach, and attainment of life skills. As mentioned in the beginning of this evaluation, resolution of these problems that hinder the advancing of the education system depend on the realization of this right-based approach in the Ministry through an effective governance reform.

AFTERWORD: FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE

In the Education Monitoring Report, prepared and published yearly by the Education Reform Initiative, four components of education (student, teacher, content, environment) are analyzed within the framework of governance, financing and learning outcomes, fulfilling an important function for education. A large part of the report summarizes the state of education and the rest includes suggestions. In the afterword of the 2010 report, teaching as a profession and the importance of innovation in improving education I will emphasize.

Teacher policy evaluations both in Turkey and in the world start with a statement on the importance of teachers. It would not be wrong to say that even though teacher competencies are determined in detail, teacher training is guided by a point of view that stems from a lack of analysis on the foundations of the teaching profession. Yet, try to picture a profession where the person practicing the profession is together with at least twenty individuals at once every day for the same number of hours. This person needs to get to know each one of them, discover their interests and abilities, identify their shortcomings and support their physical, mental, and emotional development; and at the same time organize the environment, be an information technologies expert, and a design specialist. On the other hand, the individual also needs to be an expert on assessment and data analysis. He/she constantly needs to be in the role of a decision-maker, make the best decision for that moment and implement it while managing to be fair and ethical. He/she needs to have very strong convincing capabilities and communication skills together with an expert-like knowledge on a certain discipline. Not only will the person know his/her subject well but he/she will also present and create activities on the principles, rules and approaches regarding that knowledge.

This is what being a teacher is. Teaching is an area beyond disciplines. It is a synthesis of social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, and managerial sciences. In other words, teaching is a profession that benefits from many other professions and applies, evaluates, constantly develops a harvest of those other professions, creating and renewing itself. Teaching contains many elements and more importantly the interaction between these elements, affecting the behaviour of the system more than that of elements. A teacher is expected to use a synthesis of psychology, sociology, development, material development, communication, knowledge of theories and rules, management, technology, language, class design, personal differences, etc. in class, at one time. Therefore teaching is a multi-faceted and complicated profession that is difficult to classify. This complication is related to opportunities that result from the interaction between these elements. A teacher considers potential consequences of all these elements with every decision he/she makes. Therefore, a teacher's cognitive and emotional skills are very important. A teacher's mission is to simplify this complication to a manageable level. A teacher is a person who reduces complications, obscurity ve ambiguity. While fulfilling this mission, a teacher has to keep the students in the foreground.

"Human" and "learning" constitute the basis of teaching. Therefore, a teacher is first of all expected to have a knowledge base on what learning is, for which learning sciences will

be a guide. Learning sciences contain other areas such as: cognitive sciences, neuroscience, educational psychology, computer science, sociology, and anthropology, and presents us with research on the cognitive, sociological, and neurological dimensions of learning. In addition, it contains the processes of design, operation, and evaluation of learning environments. Along with these, merging of theories, structures, rules, and principles related to a certain discipline makes teaching a multi-dimensional and complicated profession.

In light of these, it is time to talk about network and connection models in teacher training programmes instead of taxonomic models such as "vocational knowledge", "area knowledge", "cultural classes", and "pedagogic area knowledge". For this to be done, different models should be worked on at a platform where all stakeholders come together. How students will develop the skills that we expect them to develop under the concept of "information society" when teacher trainings and schools do not fit the "information society processes", is also a point that needs to be discussed. It would be appropriate that we start developing critical thinking from here.

Sustainable support of teachers is also an issue that needs to be handled. Educational sciences have gained momentum especially in the last ten years with basic research conducted in the area of learning and the coming years will be a period when routines in education will be broken. System's ability to be modified needs to be increased so that scientific developments and findings can be reflected onto the system and system can maintain its effectiveness, which is only possible through sustainable support. Therefore, there is a need for regulations through which teachers will constantly be supported, and efforts towards forming the building stones for these regulations should already start now. Most important of these building stones is research and development activities on education.

ERI's report emphasizes the need for a rapid increase in educational spending. However, the budget allocated for research and development within the overall budget on education is frequently ignored. In this report, resources that were allocated to educational research and development in 2010 are shown in related tables. However this budget shows research budgets within the education system that especially belong to various disciplines in higher education, rather than resources allocated for research and development for the "development of education system". In such a table, the budget allocated to "educational research" should also be specified. Even though it has been emphasized numerous times that competitiveness of a country is directly connected to innovation, and that innovation can only be possible through research and development, unfortunately such an awareness does not exist for the education sector. But, just when there is a need for research and development, and especially for basic research and modeling for the development of a sector that concerns millions of individuals and is constantly criticized, the sector is solely thought of as "passive", the costs of which are borne by all.

It is seen that not only is the education system unable to gain control over itself, but it is also very weak in having an effect on other systems. Going from a passive state to an active state should be handled strategically. Whether or not a system becomes active depends on its innovation capabilities. Therefore, new regulations should be created to conduct research and development in education. For example, with the development of the technopark concept, regulations and incentives could be implemented for the creation of "eduparks". The education sector can thereby go from a passive to an active state and create additional value for the country. In other words, the question of "How can we use technologies developed for other purposes in education?" should be replaced by "How can we develop technologies that can be beneficial for education processes?"

As pointed out in this report, six goals have been determined in MoNE's Information Society Strategy Document. Only one of these goals is related, indirectly, to research and development. This connection is expressed in the following way: Forming appropriate structures and developing e-content for the lifelong learning approach of individuals and their self-development through e-learning.

On the other hand, innovations in information and communications in education are progressing in two axes: One of them is development in environments where interaction and sharing between individuals is facilitated, and the other is development in individual learning environments independent of time and location. Research and development efforts on these two topics include innovations will be exemplary not only for Turkey but also for the world. However, this requires basic and interdisciplinary work. Especially basic research conducted in the areas of cognitive processes, learning, and individual differences, will both be reflected on learning-teaching processes, and will form a basis for environments to be created on virtual platforms. The FATİH project that is mentioned in this report can only be effective in the long run if it includes such research and development activities.

One of the basic research topics is classification of skills and competencies that students are expected to attain, which is the focus of programme development especially in primary and secondary education but since recently also concerns higher education in the EU and the USA (Aşkar ve Altun, 2009), and displaying connections between these in relation to learning resources. Relating these to assessment and evaluation systems is by itself an area to be worked on. Efforts made on diversification and automatization of data obtained especially during process, product, and value evaluations will serve as guides in getting to know students better. Giving feedback to students only in the form of scores and points has no meaning in terms of development. The fact that such little information is provided by test results on learning and achievement in a country that is so much focused on tests, is a matter that needs to be carefully tought about. Therefore, every evaluation of education relies on PISA results. Although, for example, information regarding to what extent a student has learned the skill to "compare" or the reasons behind why he is not successful in comparing could easily be obtained through conducted examinations; and this information would serve as a guiding light. It is time to restructure our assessment and evaluation systems in a way that will support learning. Information regarding how a concept that is learned with difficulty is affected from the disconnection between that concept and others could only be acquired by a meaningful display of concepts that make up the topics, and the connection between them. This kind of work is as important as "space" research and in the long run people will see that it is even more important than that.

Education is not able to find solutions for these problems and keeps its passive state both because of the way it views "teaching" and also due to its weak base for "research and development" used in decisions and applications. Yet, whether or not we create solutions for our problems, become an example to the world with innovations, or form an active sector together with long-term regulations and incentives, is in our own hands.

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