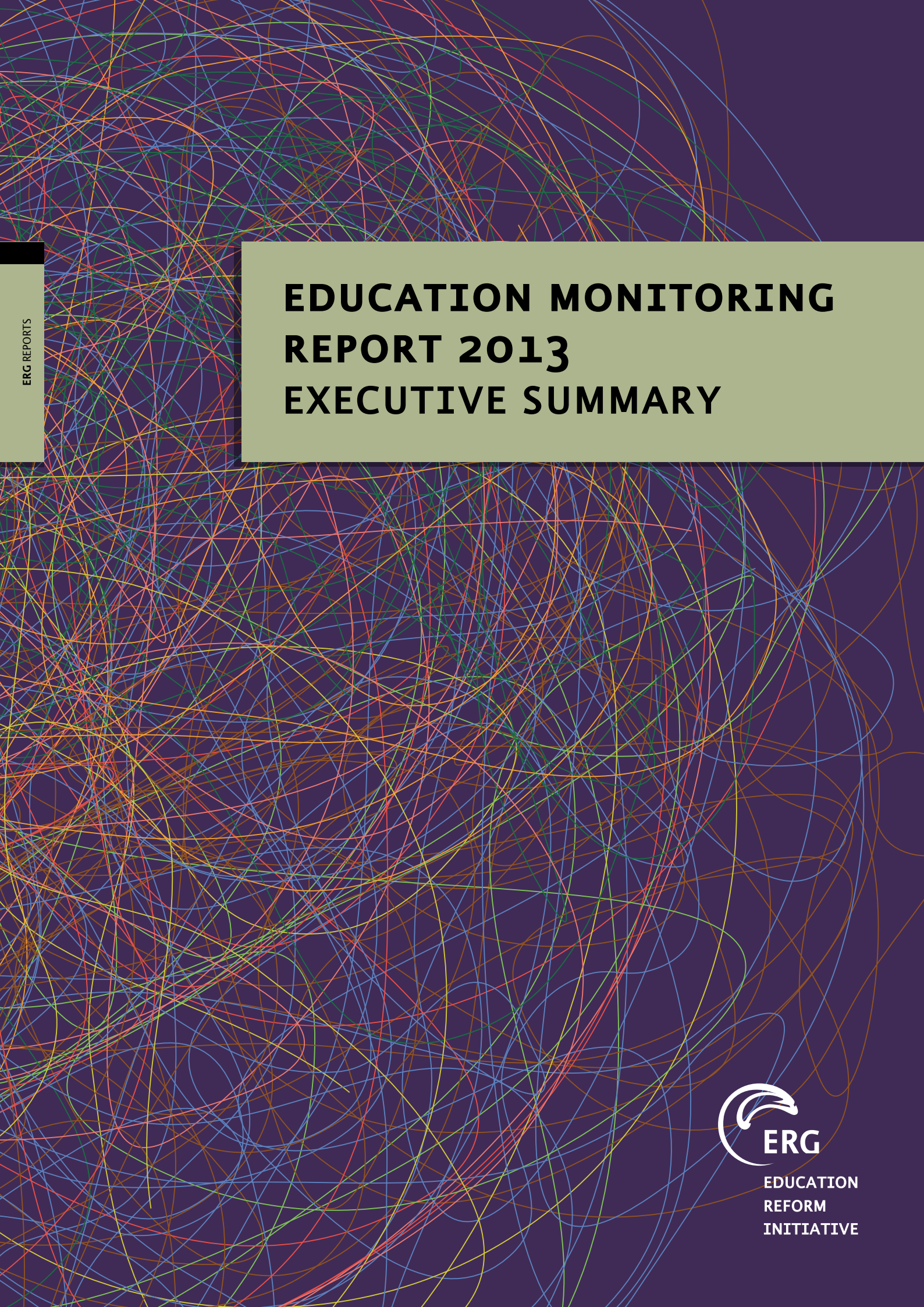
ERG REPORTS

EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2013
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



ERG
EDUCATION
REFORM
INITIATIVE

Education Reform Initiative (ERI), was established in 2003 at Sabancı University 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.

ERI is currently supported by Mother Child Education Foundation, Aydın Doğan Foundation, Bahçeşehir University, Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation, Elginkan Foundation, Enerji-Su, ENKA Foundation, İstanbul Bilgi University, İstanbul Kültür University, Kadir Has Foundation, Mehmet Zorlu Foundation, Murat Vargı Holding, Nafi Güral Education Foundation, Sabancı University, The Marmara Hotels & Residences, Association of All Private Education Institutions, Vodafone Turkey Foundation, Vehbi Koç Foundation and Yapı Merkezi.

September 2014

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The executive summary of this report has been translated into English with financial contributions from Turkish Philantropy Funds.

September 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Reform Initiative (ERI) continues to present a consistent, comprehensive, and critical evaluation of education policies and their implementation through its annual *Education Monitoring Reports*. In *Education Monitoring Report 2013,* the seventh of these reports, the main developments in education are assessed, including the four main components of education (students, teachers, content of education, and learning environments) as well as governance and financing of the education system. The last section of the report focuses on educational outcomes.

The following topics will be addressed in this report: (1) The organizational structure of Ministry of National Education (MoNE), public expenditure on education; (2) participation in education at all levels, developments in special education; (3) the competency and appointment of teachers, including field testing for teacher candidates; (4) changes in the schedule of classes and curricula, elective courses, the distribution of students according to program types, open secondary education, the decline of school types and the transformation of general high schools, the newly applied test Transition from Primary Education to Secondary Education (TEOG); and (5) developments following the passage of "4+4+4" compulsory education , transformed facilities, and dual education. In the final section of the report, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 is analyzed.

The draft of *Education Monitoring Report 2013* has been shared and discussed with representatives of bureaucracy, academia, and NGOs in a meeting held in Ankara in June 4, 2014. Also, numerous experts and institutions sent their comments in written form about the report. All feedback was taken into consideration to finalize the report. The Executive Summary discusses the different sections of the report from a macro education policy perspective and draws attention to the situation of education in 2013.

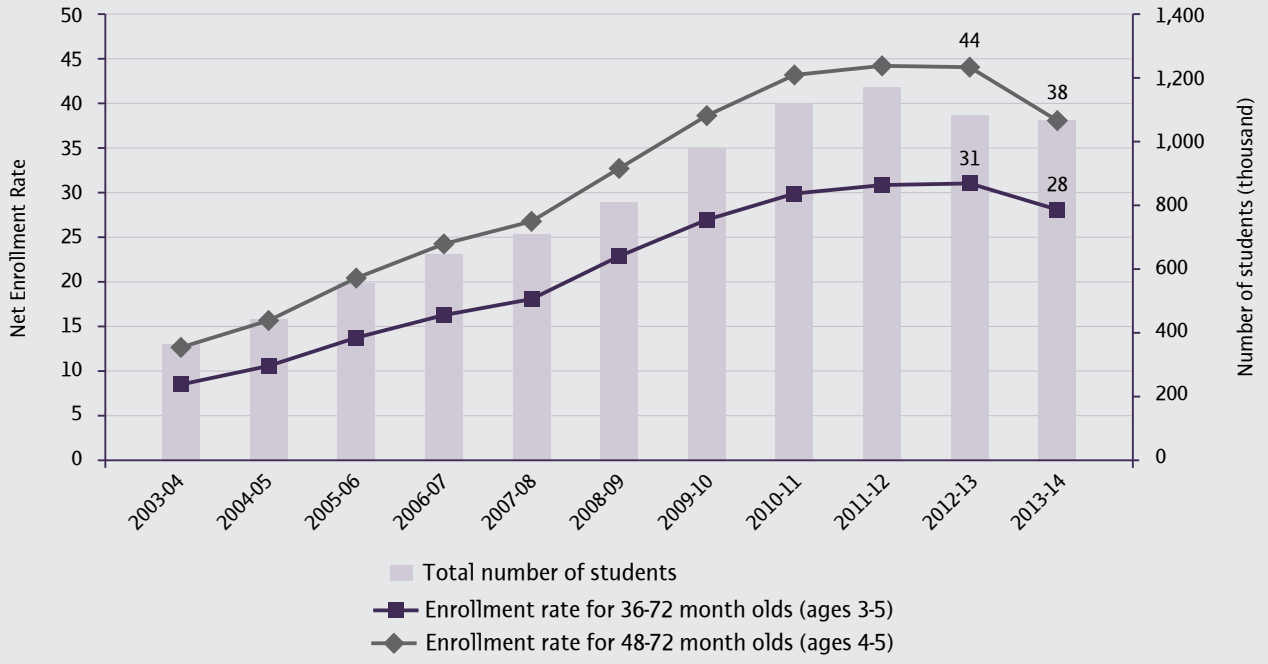
In Turkey students continue to start primary school without at least one year of pre-primary education, thereby jeopardizing the possibility of their academic progress and leading to social inequality.

Early childhood education continues to be one of the most important education policy priorities in Turkey. Despite some focus and progress on this issue, the targeted level of participation in pre-primary education is yet to be achieved. The schooling rates for pre-primary education have been further affected when pre-primary education was not made compulsory while starting age for primary education was lowered in the course of the"4+4+4" process. The fact that pre-primary education is still not compulsory and/or free of charge as of 2013 is a major shortcoming.

In the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan of the Turkish Ministry of Education (MoNE), the pre-primary schooling rate target was 70%. In line with the updated starting age for primary education in 2012-13, the priority age group in pre-primary education was set to include children who were 48-66 months old; the target net schooling rate for this age group was 55% for 2013 and 70% for 2014. In 2013, the *Tenth Development Plan* set goals for pre-primary education, specifically setting a target of having 70% of children who were 4-5 years of age in school by the end of 2018. When different policy documents are evaluated together, it can be observed that none of the targets for having a certain number of children in pre-primary education have been realized since 2009.

Despite the emphasis on pre-primary education in the policy level and the targets to increase pre-primary education participation, pre-primary education was not made compulsory with "4+4+4". As a result, with the primary school starting age changing twice in two years, the increased schooling rates for pre-primary education since 2009 started to decline over the last two years. According to the data shared by MoNE, net schooling rates in the 2013-14 school year declined from 30.9% to 28% for the 3-5 age group and from 44% to 37.9% for the 4-5 age group (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND ENROLLMENT RATES IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION BETWEEN 2003-04 AND 2013-14



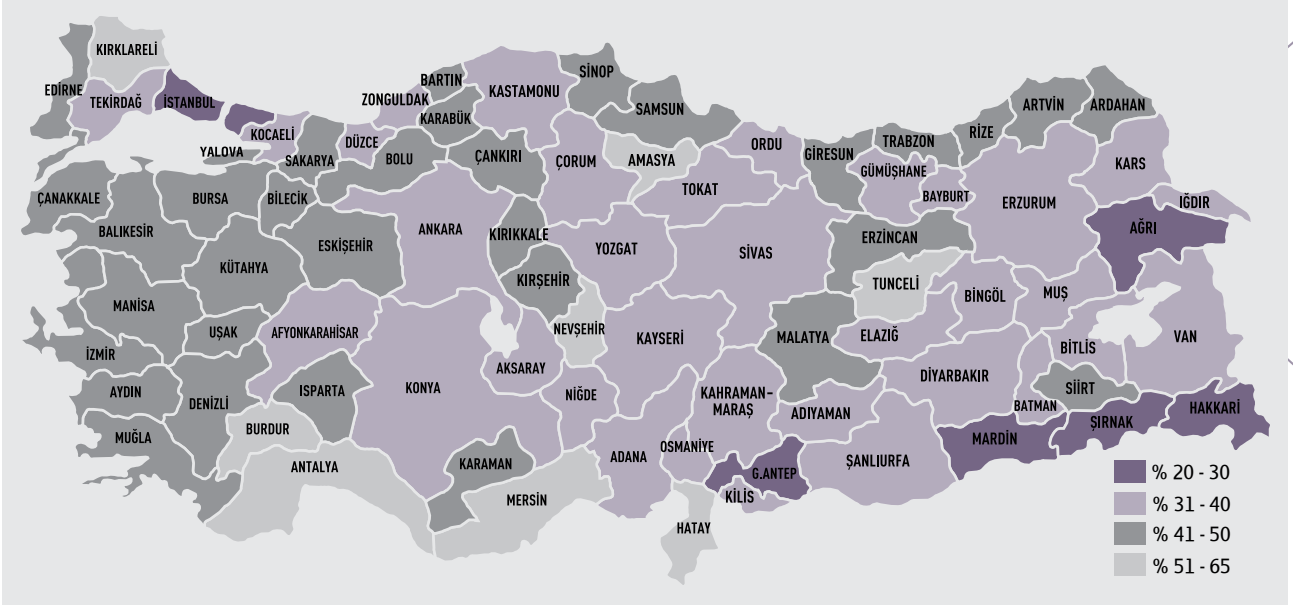
Source: MoNE, National Education Statistics.

In the first year of the new system (2012-13), there has been a 17.8 percentage point drop in the enrollment rates of 5-year-olds. Schooling rates increased for 5-year-olds in the 2013-14 academic year; the pre-primary level education schooling rates of children born in 2008 increased from 48% to 59.6%.[1] Faced with the problems of school children who are pre-primary education age but instead enrolled in primary education in the 2012-13 education year, MoNE made some changes to the regulations regarding the starting age of primary education in August 2013. In relation to this, the fact that children who are 60-65 months old are eligible for pre-primary education was emphasized during the registry period of the 2013-14 academic year. The increase in the enrollment rate of 5- year-olds in the education system can be seen as a reflection of the new regulation.

1 This rate is the pre-primary enrollment rate assumption of ERI. According to MoNE statistics, the schooling rate of 5-year olds is 43.5%; however, we estimate that the 349,491 children who are in primary school although they are in pre-primary education age were added to the student population and number of students. If the children who are primary school age and children who go to primary school are removed from the calculation, the schooling rate for children who are in pre-primary school education and who are in pre-primary education is 59.6%. This rate was generated on the basis of the statistical data provided by MoNE for gross and net schooling rates and the number of 5-year-olds who are in pre-primary and primary school; because the overall student population data was not shared, it was assumed that the number of 3- and 4-year-olds are the same. The number of children who are in pre-primary age but have instead started primary education or the number of children who are in primary age but have been sent to pre-primary education by their parents are unknown.

When we analyze the schooling rates for pre-primary education at the provincial level, the inequality of access to pre-primary education in different parts of Turkey is revealed. Despite setting the target of net schooling rate 55% for 48-66 month olds,[2] this rate was met only in three provinces (Amasya, Hatay, and Tunceli) for the 4-5-year-olds. The net schooling rate is 61.1% in Amasya and 60% in Tunceli for the 4-5 age group. However, these rates are 19.9% in Hakkari, 27.5% in Mardin and 28.4% in İstanbul. It was striking that all six of the provinces where schooling rates for 60-72-month-old children were lowest, except for Ağrı, were provinces which had neither been included in the 100% pre-primary access for 60-72-month-olds scheme, nor selected as pilot provinces for the Project to Strengthen Pre-Primary Education (Map 1).

MAP 1: NET ENROLLMENT RATES BY PROVINCE IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION (AGES 4-5), 2013-14



Source: MoNE, National Education Statistics.

It is crucial to ensure that pre-school education is extended to areas which display low levels of enrollment by cooperating with local institutions. In this context, the Project to Strengthen Pre-Primary Education—a cooperation between MoNE and UNICEF—was an important step in developing and society-based service models. The aim of the project was that 1,853 children would make use of these society-based services in 2013 and that this number would increase to 3,000 by 2014.[3]

Many scientific studies conducted in Turkey and throughout the world illustrate the importance of pre-primary education and its positive impact on an individual's future. In this context, making early childhood education compulsory and free of charge in order to extend access to preschool education service should be put on the agenda of any education reform. In the following period, pre-primary education should be available for the most disadvantaged regions and groups. Developments in this area should be supplemented with comprehensive policies and sustainable practices.

2 MoNE (2014). 2013 Activity Report. Ankara: MoNE.

3 MoNE Strategy Development Directorate (2014). Performance program of fiscal year 2014. Ankara: MoNE.

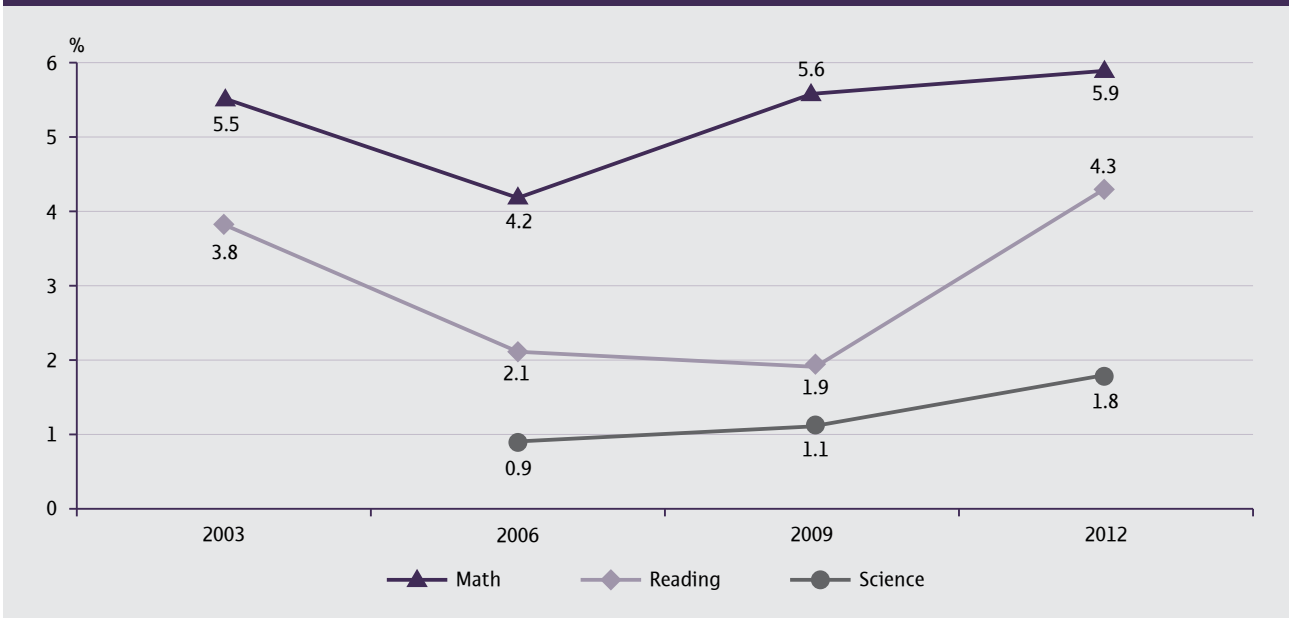
In Turkey, education continues to be of relatively poor quality and millions of young people risk completing formal education without having achieved proficiency in fundamental areas.

In 2013, the importance assigned to educational access was not equally given to increasing the quality of education and teaching. The results of international assessments demonstrate that students do not acquire sufficient skills in the course of their educational lives and raise questions regarding the quality of education as a whole.

Increasing the duration of compulsory education paves the way for more students to be enrolled in secondary education. However, without increasing the quality of education, the questions of how and what students learn, whether they are able to interpret what they learn, and to what extent they use their knowledge from school in real life will remain unanswered. The 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) demonstrated that a quarter of 4th and 8th graders in Turkey cannot display basic proficiency in math and science. In this context, as a complement to the existing efforts to increase access to education, nationwide efforts to increase the quality of education should be prioritized.

According to PISA 2012, 15.5% of 15 year olds in Turkey lack basic math proficiency. This rate is generally 8% in most OECD countries. In Turkey, a build-up of students in the lower proficiency levels can be observed while only 1.2% of students in Turkey demonstrate the highest proficiency in math (Level 6) and only 5.9% are in the 5th and 6th levels of proficiency combined.

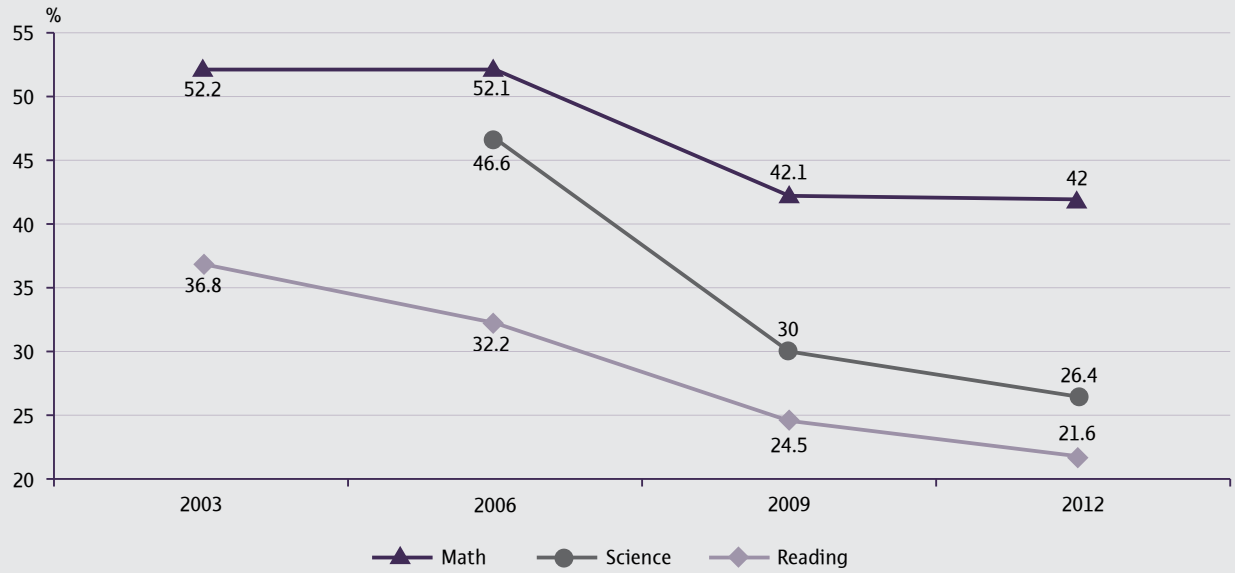
FIGURE 2: HIGH LEVEL PROFICIENCY (LEVELS 5 AND 6) TRENDS OF TURKISH STUDENTS IN PISA, 2003-2012 (%)



Source: OECD, 2013.

As of 2012, the ratio of students who are at the lowest level of proficiency (Level 1 and below) is 21.6% for reading and 26.4% for science. In math, this ratio is 42%. In other words, approximately half of the students in the 15-year age group only have basic-level skills or below in math. Between 2009 and 2012, no improvements have been recorded in this ratio.

FIGURE 3: LOW LEVEL PROFICIENCY (LEVEL 1 AND BELOW) TRENDS OF TURKISH STUDENTS IN PISA, 2003-2012 (%)



Source: OECD, 2013.

The improvement in overall PISA test scores since 2003 can be explained by the improvement of the students who perform at lower levels. Economic growth and social aid policies (conditional cash transfers, distribution of free textbooks, etc.) targeted the most disadvantaged children in Turkey and enabled progress on educational outcomes. However, it is not possible to observe any concrete development in the learning-teaching processes over the last ten years because of the general neglect of teacher policies.

This would suggest that Turkey is struggling to raise productive human capital, despite the confident rhetoric displayed in the government's development plans for 2023. It is vital to ensure that all individuals are provided with the required skills for sustainable development in the 21st century, as analytical and social skills are growing in significance, and sectors that require creativity and innovation are flourishing. Education is the tool to achieve this. The situation of students who could not acquire basic skills is an obstacle to reach individual potential and to experience social mobility in Turkey.

Teachers and teacher policies are still not prioritized and as long as this is the case, it is unrealistic to expect an improvement in educational quality.

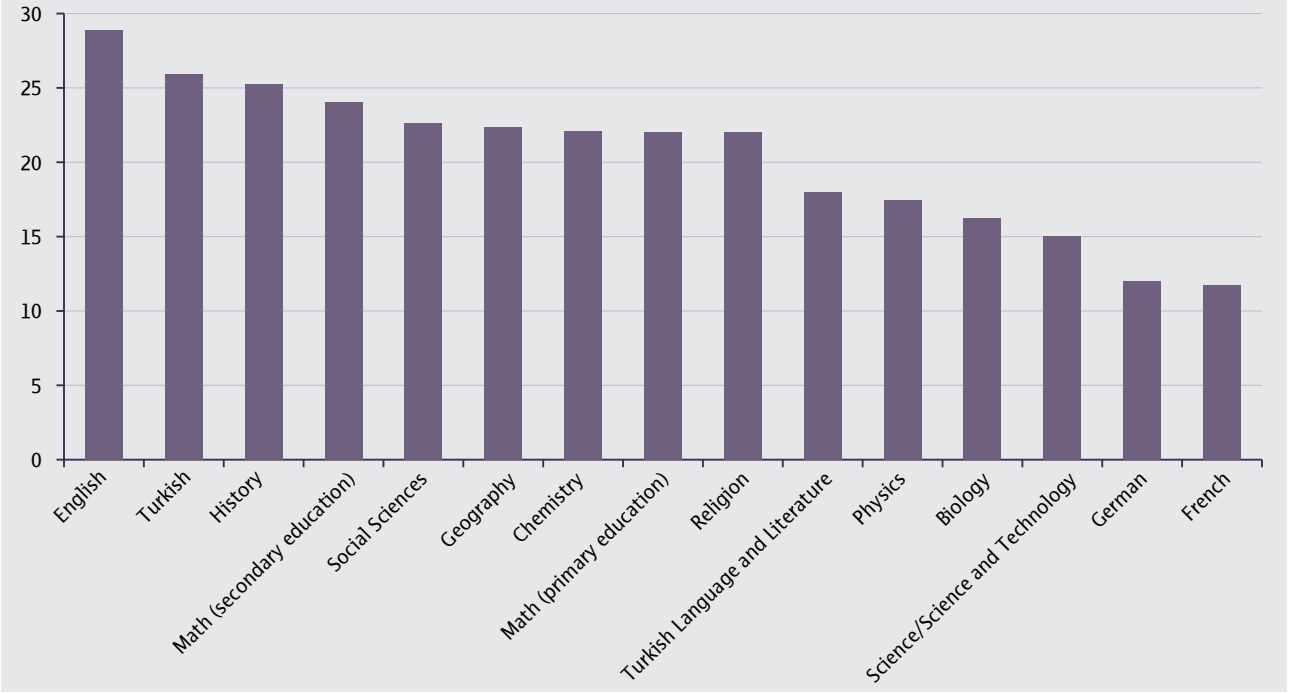
The number of teachers in pre-university education increased from 504,479 in 2002-03 to 801,975 in 2013-14, which is an important achievement. However, in the 2013 Teaching Field Knowledge Test (ÖABT), no candidate from any field could correctly answer 30 out of 50 questions. The pre-service teacher training programs that were introduced in 1994, the Teacher Sufficiency project that was introduced in 2002, the School-Centered Career Development program that was introduced in 2006, and the National Teacher Strategy presented in 2011—all of which are crucial to increase the quality of teaching—have not been implemented. The policies and practices that have been studied and developed for many years aiming to increase teacher quality should be enacted as soon as possible.

The single concrete step that was taken in teacher policies in 2013 was the introduction of ÖABT in addition to the Public Personnel Selection Test (KPSS). Teacher candidates took this test as well as the KPSS in 15 separate fields of study on July 14, 2013. Teacher appointments were done on the basis of the KPSS121 score in summer 2013. 50% of the KPSS121 score is based on General Ability, General Culture and Educational Science Tests (KPSS10) and the remaining 50% of the points are allocated on the basis of the candidate's score in the new ÖABT.

The ÖABT, while open to improvements, can act as a beacon in improving the overall quality of teacher candidates and serving as a guide for the measuring and evaluation of pre-service teacher training programs. For this reason, the implementation of the ÖABT is a positive step.

The most successful teacher candidates were those in English, Turkish, and History. In these fields, candidates on average answer more than 25 out of 50 questions correctly. Candidates are least successful in Science/Technology, German, and French. In these fields candidates answered less than 15 out of 50 answers correctly. Candidates did not answer more than 30 questions correctly in any field. Assuming that ÖABT scores illustrate the proficiency of teacher candidates, it is possible to suggest that the average success level of teacher candidates is rather low. However, it is worth remembering that candidates had only three months to prepare for the test, in addition to the fact that they were not familiar with the test.

FIGURE 4: AVERAGE NET CORRECT ANSWERS (BY ÖABT FIELDS), 2013



Source: ÖSYM, 2013.

A study looking at the KPSS121 scores of the candidates found that, with the exception of the field of Turkish Language and Literature, candidates who had graduated from education faculties performed better than candidates who had graduated from other faculties. The success gap between education faculty graduates and others sharpens in the fields of Math and Science. On the other hand, there were no significant differences in the base points for appointment between candidates who were graduates of the education faculties and others. In this context, comprehensive studies need to be conducted to understand the extent to which pre-service training models have contributed to the quality of teachers in Turkey.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE KPSS121 SCORES BY FIELDS AND FACULTY OF GRADUATION, 2013

FIELD	EDUCATION FACULTY	OTHER FACULTIES
PHYSICS	59.68	55.36
CHEMISTRY	61.24	57.04
BIOLOGY	62.62	58.77
MATH	63.27	61.08
HISTORY	62.55	61.47
GEOGRAPHY	63.44	62.09
TURKISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	60.36	62.58
ENGLISH	61.98	59.42
GERMAN	59.1	59
RELIGION	63.27	55.35

Source: Safran, Kan, Üstündağ, Birbudak and Yıldırım, 2014.

Over the last decades, a number of policies seeking to comprehensively transform teacher policies have been implemented in Turkey. The first steps to restructure and accredit pre-service teacher training programs were taken in 1994. In 2002, the Teacher Competencies project was initiated; in 2006 the General Competencies for Teaching Profession were completed and the final stage was reached in terms of determining the skills required for different branches of teaching. In order to support teacher proficiencies with career development, the School-Based Vocational Development (OTMG) model was introduced, a manual for the model was prepared, and the pilot application of the project was completed in 2011. Therefore, the characteristics of proficient teachers were defined and a career development model informed by these characteristics was developed. However, the staff reshuffling that occurred at MoNE, the changes that were made to the curriculum, and the constant changes that are being made to different education levels and the means for transferring from one level to another have prevented the implementation of changes in teacher policies.

The publishing of the National Teacher Strategy Document, the first draft of which was prepared in November 2011, is currently of critical importance because of how it could pave the way for further reforms such as the accreditation of the Teacher Proficiency, OTMG, and pre-service teacher training programs. On the other hand, despite that 2.5 years have passed since the publishing of the first draft and that feedback has been received from MoNE, other ministries, and a number of civil society actors, the final version of the National Teacher strategy has not been published. Given that Turkey is now entering a new electoral cycle, it may not be until the second half of 2015 that the National Teacher Strategy Paper once again becomes a priority topic in the agenda.

In Turkey, the persistent inequalities in education are on the rise and the practice of grouping students to program types of differing quality in secondary education contributes to these inequalities.

Another important area to prioritize in Turkey is equality in education. Pre-primary education in Turkey is not free of charge even though higher education is free. This combined with the current

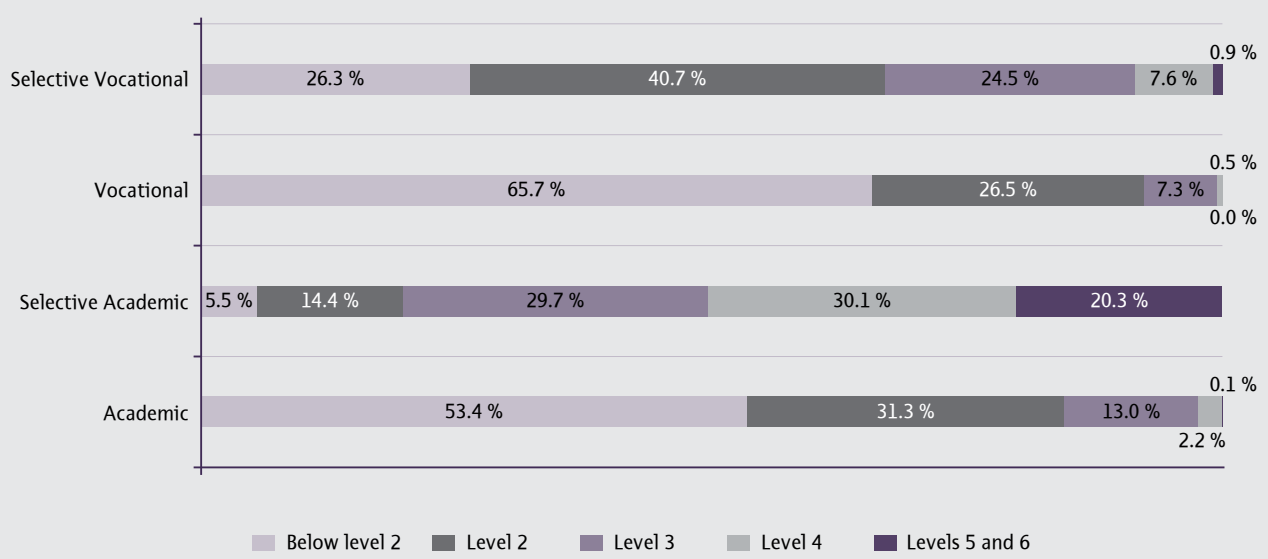
system of selection and allocation of students into secondary school programs, as well as dual education being very widespread in big and crowded provinces, points to a lack of equality in education. Although it was expected that a comprehensive reform of secondary education would be implemented in 2012, the developments of 2013 and afterwards are questionable from an equality perspective.

According to PISA 2012 results, Turkey is one of the countries with the highest performance gaps between schools in math. The school that the student attends determines 61% of the variation in math performance. In this context, the investment families make to prepare students for the secondary school transition exams is justified in terms of targeting more prestigious and high-performance Anatolian and Science high schools. However, in countries with insignificant performance differences between schools such as Albania, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway, students can perform at the same level as their peers regardless of the type of school they attend.

Figure 5 shows the math proficiency levels between different program types in the secondary level. The programs that select students on the basis of their exam results have fewer students of a lower proficiency level. 21% of students who are in academically selective programs have an advanced level of proficiency. This proficiency level cannot be observed in higher than 1% of students in any other category. The concentration of advanced level students in selective academic schools to such an extent suggests that there exists an inequality in access to quality education. A majority of students in non-selective academic and vocational schools performed below level 2 and almost none of the students in vocational high schools (0.04%) performed at levels 5 and 6.

90% of students in vocational high schools performing in levels 1 and 2 shows that there are significant problems with the math skills taught in these schools and the capacity of the student to use this skill. Students in programs other than the selective academic ones appear grouped at the lowest proficiency levels. Even in selective vocational programs, 30% of students remain at a low proficiency level. In addition to inequality of access to quality education, there are also risks posed by the grouping of students into different program types and the adverse effects of these risks.

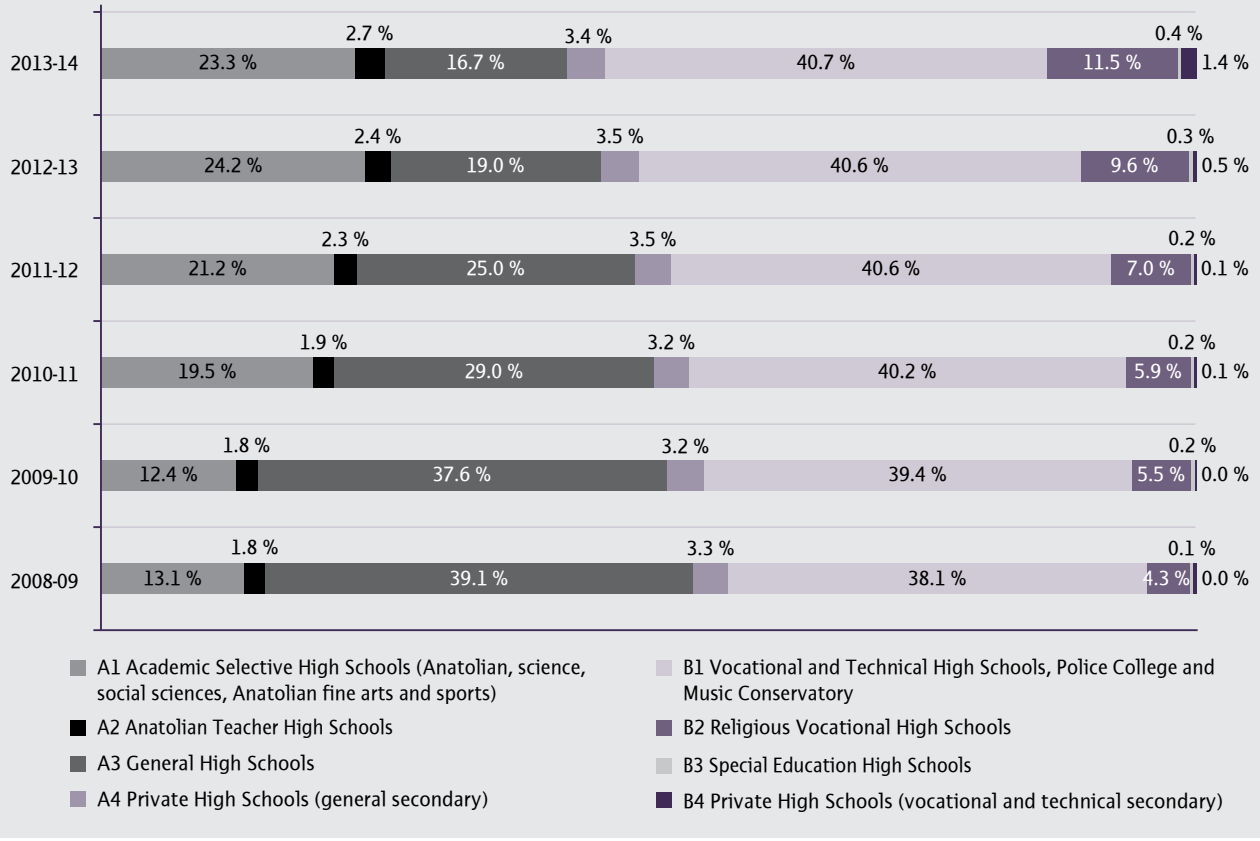
FIGURE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BETWEEN PROFICIENCY LEVELS BY PROGRAM TYPE, 2012 (%)



Source: ERI calculation using OECD, 2013a data.

It is necessary to trace the distribution of students into different schools and programs, bearing in mind how there are differences in terms of school and program type, the socioeconomic characteristics of students and the educational outcomes, as well as the presence of an important transition phase in relation to school and program types. Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of data over a 6 year period.

FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN FORMAL SECONDARY EDUCATION BY SCHOOL TYPE, BETWEEN 2008-09 AND 2013-14



Source: MoNE, National Education Statistics.

The distribution of students in secondary education seems to be strongly correlated with socioeconomic status (SES). The data from the PISA evaluation carried out by the OECD in 2012, which shows the relationship between SES, program type, academic success and distribution were consistent with previous findings. The data also illustrates the different situations that can lead to the emergence of inequalities. For instance, when the distribution of 15-year-olds to different program types is examined from the perspective of their SES, it is revealed that the students hailing from the highest socioeconomic quintile are mostly in science high schools or Anatolian high schools.

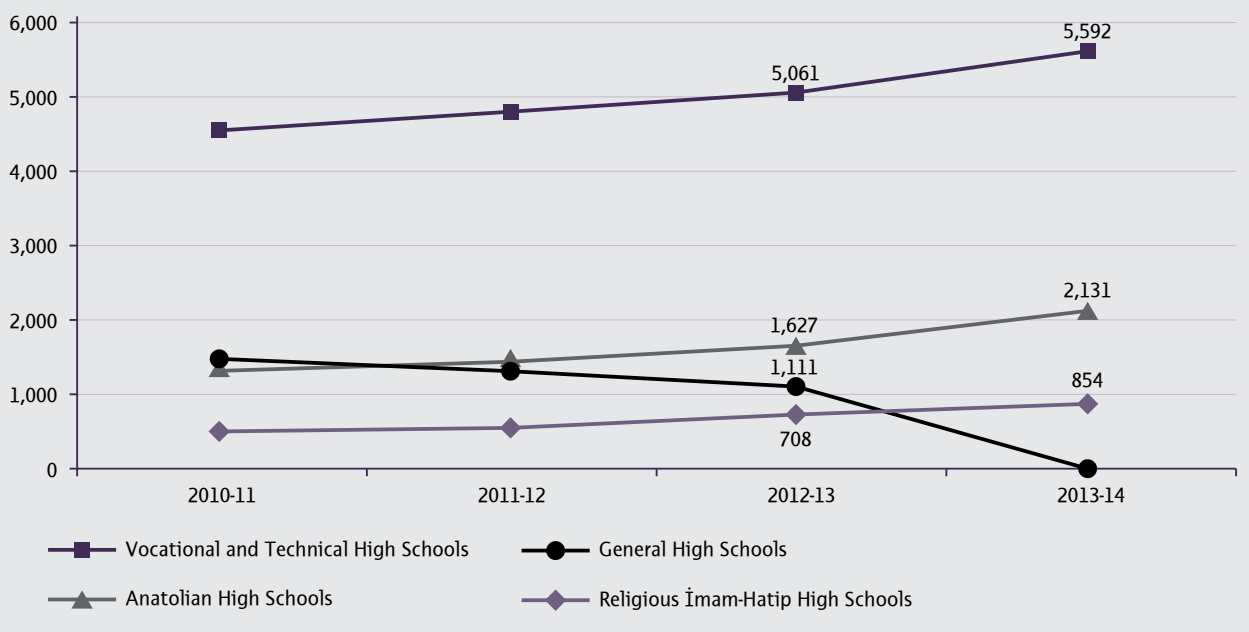
These two program types select students through a centralized exam and they are known for providing the highest quality education in Turkey. 52% of students in science high schools and 42% of students in Anatolian high schools come from families with the highest SES. On the other hand, 24% of students in vocational high schools and 30% of students in other secondary schools are in the lowest SES quintile. The most important conclusion is that students from socioeconomically disadvantaged households tend to go to schools that are poorer in terms of performance and quality. Therefore, the cycle of inequality and poverty has the risk of becoming perpetual.

Through making decisions regarding the supply of different types of schools in the process of transformation of general high schools, MoNE actively interfered in school selection based on students' needs and desires.

Since the 2010-11 school year, MoNE has transformed 1,477 general high schools into other types of high schools and completed this process in the 2013-14 school year. As a result, the ratio of vocational and technical high schools increased by 23%, Anatolian high schools increased by 57%, and religious vocational schools (Imam Hatip and Anatolian Imam Hatip high schools) increased by 73%. These figures are important in illustrating the options available to students in public secondary education. In addition, starting with the 2014-15 school year, all middle school students will be placed in high schools based on the results of the TEOG (Transition from Primary to Secondary Education) exam.

The distribution of students among different school types and programs, the reduction in secondary school types, and the changes done to the transition to secondary school via a new exam all suggest that Turkish education system is in a highly dynamic phase. In secondary education, primarily in vocational and technical schools, a number of active policies have been adopted in order to direct students to certain school and program types.

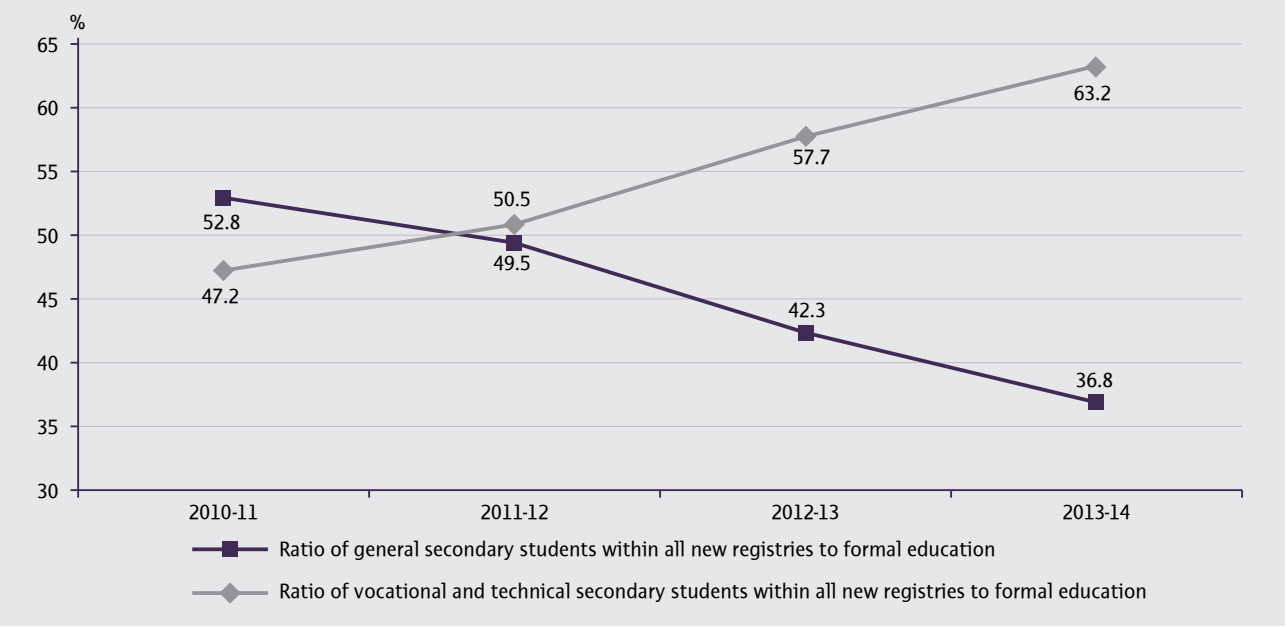
FIGURE 7: CHANGE IN NUMBER OF SCHOOLS BY SELECTED PROGRAM TYPES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION, BETWEEN 2010-11 AND 2013-14



Source: MoNE, 2011; 2012; 2013a; 2014.

New registry data is instrumental in providing valuable information that can illustrate the way the general-vocational school balance will be affected. According to new registry data by MoNE, there is a steep increase in the number of students registered in vocational and technical high schools (Figure 8). Amongst newly-registered students, the percentage of students registering for general programs has decreased from 49.5% to 36.8%. In conjunction with this, the ratio of students who have registered for vocational and technical high schools has increased from 50.5% to 63.2%. 58.9% of women and 67.1% of men in formal education prefer vocational programs.

FIGURE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF NEWLY REGISTERED STUDENTS INTO DIFFERENT PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION



Source: MoNE, 2011; 2012; 2013a; 2014.

At this stage, it is important to bear in mind a limitation. Examining the newly enrolled by vocational and general programs prevents us from seeing the religious imam-hatip high schools in the graph. In order to examine the impact of policies more extensively, it is vital for this information to be collected and shared in a more detailed and clear manner.

The need to improve the quality of vocational and technical education has been articulated by many public and civil society organizations and a number of important steps have been taken towards achieving this goal. The Vocational and Technical Education Strategy Document and Action Plan for Turkey (2014-2018) is highly significant in improving the continued difficulties faced in vocational and technical education.

All of these changes require a holistic approach. This approach should focus on "having a transformation program that reduces the number of schools, that allows for flexible transitions between different programs, that places a greater importance on enabling the spiritual and physical development of students through athletic, artistic, and cultural activities, that involves a curriculum which is integrated with information and communication technologies, that is not focused on exams, and that respects the presence of individual differences" as was stated in the 10th Development Plan. In addition to this, the process should be based on a discussion of the goal of secondary school education that is as participatory and transparent as possible. The extent to which these changes will contribute to lifting the walls between general and vocational education by eliminating the quality discrepancy between different types of schools and by enabling all students to gain basic competencies while striving to reduce the fixation on examinations is not clear. By ensuring that the debates on restructuring of secondary education focus on students and that policy suggestions stemming from these debates are constructed in a manner which does not consider general education separately from vocational education, Turkey can move closer to achieving its goal of making sure that everyone has access to a quality education.

BOX 1: PLANNED HIGH SCHOOL TYPES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION STARTING IN 2014 – 15

- ANATOLIAN HIGH SCHOOL (HS)
- SCIENCE HS
- SOCIAL SCIENCES HS
- FINE ARTS HS
- SPORTS HS
- PRIVATE TURKISH HS
- MINORITY HS
- INTERNATIONAL HS
- FOREIGN HS
- POLICE COLLEGES
- MUSIC AND STAGE ARTS HS

- VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL ANATOLIAN HS
- MULTI PROGRAM ANATOLIAN HS
- ANATOLIAN IMAM-HATIP HS
- PRIVATE TURKISH HS

- OPEN EDUCATION HS
- VOCATIONAL OPEN EDUCATION HS

- BASIC HS (TRANSITION MODEL FOR PRIVATE TEACHING INSTITUTIONS; OPEN EDUCATION SCHOOL WITH 20 HOURS OF FACE TO FACE INSTRUCTION)

Open high schools, a valuable channel intended to provide lifelong learning to adults, have a different significance for youths who are engaged in education. Young people in formal education age should aim to be enrolled in formal education and consider enrolling in open education as a secondary option. There is a high probability that graduates from open high schools will not share the prospects of those who graduate from formal education institutions. In the last few years, particularly as of the 2012-13 school year, along with the introduction of mandatory secondary school education, there have been concerns that many students are being directed to open high schools instead of being encouraged to be enrolled in formal education. Some of the groups of students that do so include young women, students who are employed, and individuals with special needs. On the other hand, these concerns need to be examined in light of the data and contemporary trends need to be comprehensively analyzed. However, only limited data regarding open education have been shared and therefore it is difficult to undertake such analyses. In the following years, it is crucial to determine the number of young people in formal education age who are instead registered in open education.

The changes to the organizational structure and the personnel of MoNE continue; senior managers at the central and local offices have lost their jobs twice in three years and have been "pooled."

Frequent changes in the field of education hinder the capacity of MoNE to determine the urgent problems of education, to perform analyses, and provide solutions on the basis of data for policy change. The manner in which policies are designed and implemented suggests that the problem of the absence of a holistic strategy and long-term plan in education governance is likely to persist past 2013.

The most important development of 2013-14 in terms of the governance of MoNE was the introduction of law no. 6528. The law ended the terms of senior managers employed at the central and local offices of MoNE, as well as school principals that had been employed for four years. The law also started the process of the transformation of private tutoring centers (private teaching institutions) into private schools, introduced a number of provisions enabling the public sector to purchase education services from the private sector, changed the criteria for the appointment of school principals, introduced performance ratings for teacher candidates, organized all education inspectors under a single roof, and limited the power of the Board of Education and Discipline (TTKB) by transforming it into an advisory body instead of a regulatory body.

The governance approach adopted by the law stresses accountability in terms of decision-making and performance. However, it has overlooked accountability with regards to participation and educational outcomes. In the period until the introduction of the law, many MoNE executives were appointed in proxy as acting managers in the central and local offices, thereby raising doubts regarding the functionality of MoNE. Following the passage of the law, there is an increasing need for the appointments of principal senior managers in the local offices to be completed, as well as for the vacancies which will emerge at the end of the 2013-14 academic year to be filled. In addition, an efficient management, policy implementation, and observation infrastructure must be established at the local level. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the responsibilities and the accountability of MoNE offices in the central, provincial, municipal, and school levels. It is, therefore, highly important for the MoNE Task Definitions Document, prepared in 2013, to be used in order to achieve these goals.

MoNe, which has failed to develop its governance system and its organizational structure, needs to prioritize the potentially quality-raising projects it had planned in the previous years. In addition to the structural changes in the central organization of MoNE, the policy priorities of the current bureaucracy since 2011 seem to have been the FATIH project, the transition to the "4+4+4" system, the selection of students for secondary education, and the transformation of the private teaching institutions. It is important to note the burden all these changes put on MoNE, which in turn delays progress in crucial areas such as pre-primary education and teacher policies. Decision-makers should make assessments bearing this in mind and take the necessary steps.

Secondly, it is important to discuss the institutional priorities of MoNE on the basis of available data. It is important for MoNE to increase the information it makes public concerning the important reforms that it is intending to pass; the information that is currently shared is limited to the brief presentations given in press conferences. The fact that the communication between MoNE and other education stakeholders is done through the media makes it more complicated and fails to pave the way to a participatory process. There is a great need to include students, teachers, and education managers in the decision-making processes and to ensure that MoNE advances its policies while bearing this in mind.

Finally, it can be said that MoNE's priorities include changing the structure of the organization and personnel of the ministry, granting the technological subsidies of the FATIH project, implementing the changes in the "4+4+4" legislation, closing/transforming private teaching institutions, and increasing the share of the private sector in education. ERI's evaluations, based on national and international data, research, and literature, suggest that the potential of these five goals are not sufficient to ensure that the quality of education is increased and that inequalities are reduced. It appears that in some cases, such as the swift implementation of "4+4+4", the actions of MoNE have had negative effects on the well-being and academic success of the students.

In Turkey, the problems of providing students with basic skills and proficiency, the continued impact of SES on academic success and chances of accessing education, the way in which students become segregated into program types as a result of lack of alternatives, and stagnation of projects to improve teacher quality persist. The priority of MoNE and all other public institutions should be to provide quality education for all.

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