

1.4 MILLION YOUNG ARE NEITHER AT SCHOOL NOR AT WORK

Seyfettin Gürsel*, Gökçe Uysal-Kolaşın** and Melike Kökkızıl***

Executive Summary

According to the data from 2012 Household Labor Force Survey (HLFS) published by TURKSTAT, 58.4 percent of young females and 61.4 percent of young males aged between 15 and 19 are registered at an educational institution. Even though data indicates an increase relative to 2009; the enrollment rates in Turkey are still much lower than the average score of 83.7 percent of OECD countries. Among the 2.5 million of young who are not enrolled, 2 million of them are at most primary school graduates and the share of those who have not graduated from any educational institution is not negligible. On the other hand, Turkey has made notable progress compared to 2009, especially in educational enrollment of young females. The share of young females who continue their education and do not participate in the labor market has increased from 50 percent to 54 percent, for the young males this share has increased from 50 percent to 51 percent. However, there are no improvements in the number of both young females and males who are neither enrolled nor in the labor force. 1.4 million young who are already out of the education system and still not participating in the labor force at the ages of 15 - 19 indicate that developing relevant policies for our young is urgently needed.

2.5 million young are not enrolled

Data from 2012 Household Labor force Survey recently published by TURKSTAT allows us to examine education and labor market conditions of the young aged between the years of 15 and 19. According to the data, there has been some improvement since 2009; however, the current data is still far away from satisfactory. The research brief entitled to "The Young Lack Human Capital" published by BETAM in May 2010 showed that only 50 percent of young females and 57 percent of young males had continued their education in 2009. These shares have increased respectively to 59 percent and 62 percent in 2012.¹ In other words, the share of young females who are enrolled increased 9 percentage points, the increase in this share for males is 4 percentage points. Therefore, gender gap in educational enrollment has declined. Yet, international comparisons show that education level for young is still too low.

The results of Figure 1 indicate that Turkey is still very far away from the averages of OECD countries and 21 European Union countries in terms of educational enrollment rates in the age group of 15 to 19. While the enrollment rate for Turkey at that age group is 59.9 percent, OECD average is 83.7 percent and the average of 21 European Union countries is 87.4 percent. Data shows that the gap between Turkey and OECD and EU countries in terms of enrollment ratios for the young has been narrowing. From 2007 to 2011, the enrollment ratio for OECD average has raised from 81.3 percent to 83.7 percent with 2.2 percentage points increase while the increase in Turkey was 6 percentage points from 53.9 percent to 59.9 percent. However, closing the gap in a reasonable time frame requires radical policies to increase enrollment rates of the young.

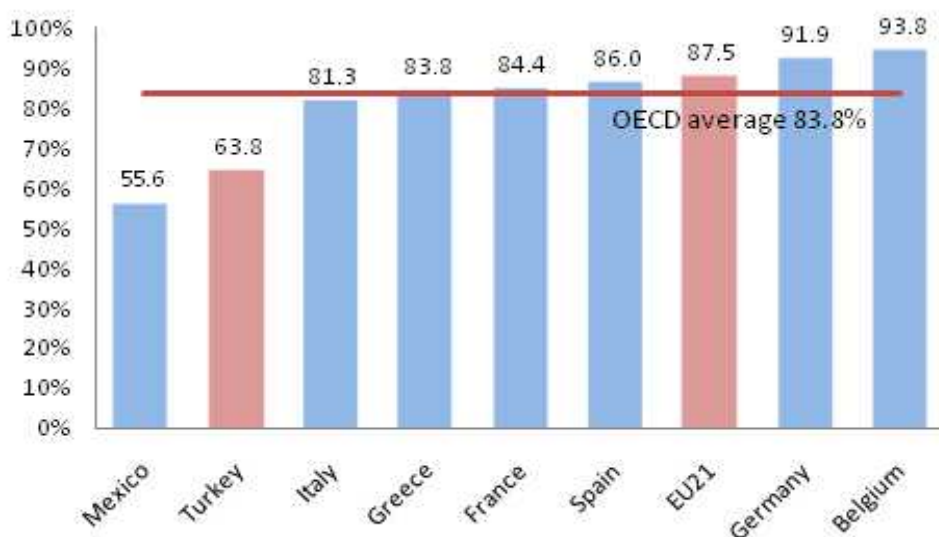
* Prof. Seyfettin Gürsel, Betam, Director, seyfettin.gursel@bahcesehir.edu.tr

** Asst. Prof. Gökçe Uysal, Betam Vice Director, gokce.uysal@bahcesehir.edu.tr

*** Melike Kökkızıl, Betam, Research Assistant, melike.kokkizil@bahcesehir.edu.tr

¹ 266 thousand young who graduated from a high school and who are not enrolled any school state that they continue their education. We think that these individuals are preparing for the Higher Education Examination (YGS). When we take this group that continues their education as enrolled, the enrollment rate for Turkey increases by 3.8 percentage points.

Figure 1 Enrolment ratios for age group 15-19, 2011

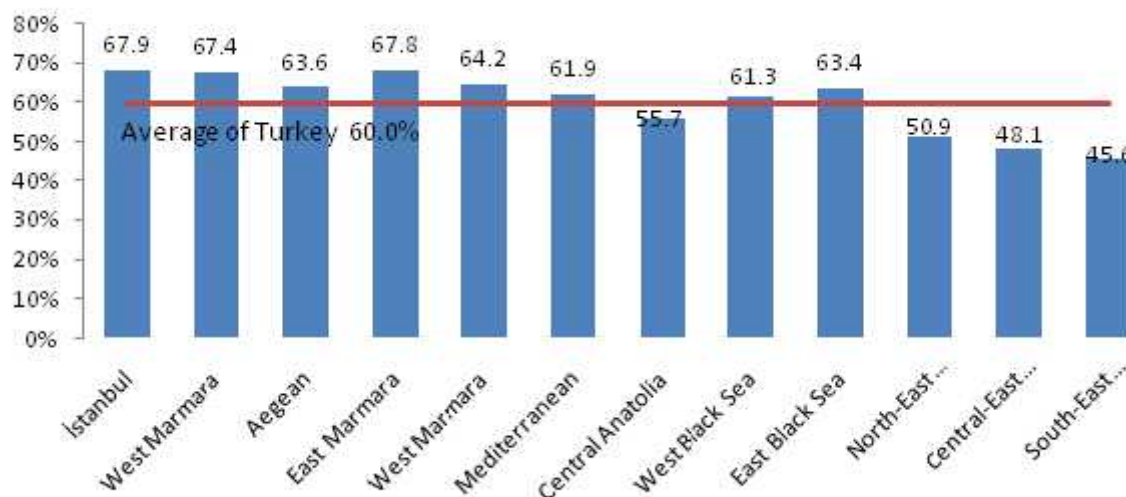


Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2013

Half of young in East and Southeast Anatolia are not enrolled

On the other hand, an acute and persistent problem in Turkey, i.e. regional differences remain a serious issue in enrollment rates as well (Figure 2). In this age group, the highest enrollment rate is in Istanbul with 67.9 percent. The enrollment rate in the most developed region in terms of various aspects is less than its OECD average by 15.8 percentage points. The enrollment rate declines to 45.8 percent in South-East Anatolia region with a 38.1 percentage points gap compared to the OECD average. These results clearly indicate that policies to increase enrollment rates require additional supportive policies to address regional differences.

Figure 2 Enrollment ratios by region, 2012



Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

There is no significant change in educational levels for who not registered to school

According to the results of 2012 Household Labor Force Survey (HLFS), there are 6 million 191 thousand young between the ages of 15 and 19. Unfortunately, 1 million 260 thousand young female (41.6 percent) and 1 million 220 thousand young male (38.6 percent) are out of the educational

system. In Table 1, the education levels of young who are not enrolled are provided. The young who have not graduated from any educational institution constitute 17.5 percent of young females and 12.5 percent of young males. In total, three out of four young persons who are not enrolled at any educational institution have at most graduated from primary school.

Comparing the data of Table 1 to 2009 HLFS results, note that there is some improvement in the educational levels of both young males and young females. The numbers of young males and females who have graduated at most from primary school has declined. The number of males who have not graduated from any educational institution has declined from 194 thousand to 153 thousand, for females, it has declined from 425 thousand to 282 thousand. The number of young males who are recently graduated from primary school has declined from 825 thousand to 774 thousand, while the number for young females in the same category has decreased from 742 thousand to 688 thousand. Despite of these progresses, the ratio of young who have recently graduated from a primary school has increased. The ratio of young male in that class has increased from 60.3 percent to 63.4 percent, for female it has again increased from 50 percent to 54.6 percent.

On the other hand, it shows that the number of young who graduated from general high school has declined, but nonetheless the number of young who graduated from vocational high school has increased for both females and males. It is possible to attribute these progresses to increase in the number of vocational high schools.

Table 1 Education levels of those who are not enrolled

	Female	Female (%)	Male	Male (%)	Total	Total(%)
Not graduated from any school	281,579	22.4	152,924	12.5	434,503	17.5
Primary school	688,448	54.6	774,084	63.4	1,462,532	59.0
General high school	180,925	14.4	172,602	14.1	353,527	14.3
Vocational or technical high school	106,700	8.5	118,050	9.7	224,750	9.1
Tertiary education	2,415	0.2	2,657	0.2	5,072	0.2
Total	1,260,067	100	1,220,318	100	2,480,385	100

Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

1.4 million young are neither at school nor at work

Between the ages of 15 and 19, 1 million 356 thousand young are neither going to school nor participating in the labor force. In other words, 21.9 percent of young people in the age group are idle. Idleness is more common among the females. 922 thousand of young females, that is, one third of young females in this age group are already out of the educational system and not in the labor force. One third of females who have just entered adulthood have already taken on the role of housewife as a life style. The high share of females in this group indicate that low female labor force participation rates in Turkey will continue to be discussed for a long time in Turkey. Furthermore, note that idleness among young males is not negligible, either. 434 thousand young males, that is, 13.7 percent of males in this age group are neither continuing their education nor participating in the labor market. Unfortunately idleness rates in this age group have not shown any recovery since 2009. Although the ratio of idle young female in young female has declined, there is no change in their number.

In Figure 3, education and labor market status are indicated separately for young males and females. The data shows that more than one-half of the young females continue their education and they do not participate in labor force. The share of young females who are enrolled and do not participate in the labor market is 54 percent. The share for young males is just 51 percent. The fact that the females' share is higher than that of males' is an important development. On the other hand, the share of young females neither at school nor at work is 30 percent while this share for young males is just 14 percent. In this age group, the share of males in the labor force is 35 percent (the share of males enrolled is 10 percent, not enrolled is 25 percent), for female it is just 16 percent. These ratios seem consistent with gender roles in Turkey.

Compared to 2009 HLFS, there are significant improvements especially for young females. The share of young females who are enrolled and who are not at work increased from 47.4 percent to 50 percent.

Moreover, the ratio of female neither at school nor at work declined from 35.3 percent to 30 percent. For young males, there is an important increase in the share of those who are both enrolled and participating in the labor market from 7.1 percent to 10 percent. The increase in the number of students in vocational and technical high schools may be the reason behind this increase.

Figure 3 Education and labor market status of young



Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

Gender roles are still playing an important role

Among 1 million 353 thousand young who are neither enrolled nor in the labor market, 325 thousand young state that they continue their education or training. 81.9 percent of the latter are high school graduates. We assume that these young individuals are preparing for the university entrance exams.

Table 2 Main reasons of not looking for a job, individuals neither enrolled nor in the labor market

	Women	Women(%)	Men	Men(%)
Found a job and waiting for it to start	4,674	0.5	8,232	1.9
Discouraged	22,483	2.5	102,916	23.8
Continuing education	160,737	17.5	164,848	38.1
Busy with housework or caring for adults/kids who require care	623,628	67.8	106	0.0
Other family or individual reasons	48,606	5.3	52,427	12.1
Disabled or ill	33,308	3.6	55,920	12.9
Other	26,977	2.9	48,045	11.1
Total	920,413	100	432,494	100

Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

In Table 2, data clearly indicates that traditional gender roles are the reason behind low female labor force participation rates in this age group as well. 67.8 percent of the females in this group state that they do not take part in the labor market because they are busy with housework or are care providers for children and adults in the household who need care. The share of females in this group in 2012 is similar to those in 2006 and 2009. Therefore, these shares are supporting evidence for gender roles creating a systematic problem in female labor force participation. Research on how to integrate the young females who have already stepped away from education and the labor market, back into the economic life, is dire for the future of this generation and those that follow. Previous studies show that economically empowered women spend a higher share of household income on children's education and health, and the households they live in have higher saving rates.

125 thousand young in 15-19 age group are already discouraged

23.8 percent of males not participating in the labor market state that they had looked for a job many times but either they fail to find it or they do not think that there are jobs that match their qualifications. This group is entitled as "discouraged" in Table 2. Note that the vast majority of discouraged youth (92.7 percent of them) graduated at most from primary school. There has been no significant change in the share of discouraged young since 2009. The existence of such a young group who are already discouraged about the labor market paints a bleak picture. The labor market conditions for the young, who still have a long life ahead of them, will gradually worsen because of the skill biased technological change.

Table 3 Education level of the discouraged workers

	Female	Female (%)	Male	Male (%)	Total	Total (%)
Not graduated from any school	4,841	21.5	22,813	22.2	27,654	22.1
Primary school	13,730	61.1	72,581	70.5	86,311	68.8
General high school	1,594	7.01	5,657	5.5	7,251	5.8
Vocational or technical high school	2,318	10.3	1,866	1.8	4,183	3.3
Higher education	22,483	100	102,916	100	125,399	100

Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

Low levels of education among the youth point to an immense weakness

The youth in Turkey have lower enrollment ratios than their peers in other countries. Even though there has been some improvement since 2009; more effort is needed to narrow this gap. Data shows that the average education level of the working age population will not increase rapidly enough in the upcoming years. Low education levels constitute a significant weakness in terms of rapid economic development as the increases in labor productivity will stay relatively modest and will negatively affect the growth rates.

Furthermore, there are 1.4 million young in the age group 15-19 who are neither enrolled nor in the labor market. There has not been any change in the number of idle youth since 2009. In other words, Turkey could not develop the essential policies to include the idle youth in education or economic life. Given that they are already out of education and out of the labor market, it will be increasingly more difficult to break from a vicious circle as they get older. Therefore, it is essential to integrate the youth in the economic sphere before it is too late.

Additional Table 1 Education levels of those who are not enrolled in school, but who are in training

	Trainee	(%)Trainee
Not graduated from any school	4,432	1.4
Primary school	53,155	16.3
General high school	187,424	57.6
Vocational or technical high school	79,082	24.3
Higher education	1,491	0.5
Total	325,585	100

Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

Additional Table 2 Youth and overall unemployment rates (%) for the years of 2006-2012

	Overall unemployment rate	Youth unemployment rate (15-19)	Difference
2006	10.2	17.0	6.8
2009	14.0	24.3	10.3
2012	9.2	14.9	5.7

Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

Additional Table 3 Labor force status of young

	Age 15-19	Age 15-19 (%)
Inactive in labor force	4.618.640	74,6
Employed	1.338.201	21,6
Unemployed	234.471	3,8
Total	6.191.313	100

Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam

The numbers in Additional Table 2-3 are calculated disregarding educational status for young

Additional Table 4 Unemployment rates and labor market status for young not enrolled in any educational institution

	Female	Male	Total
Employed	287,661	656,739	944,400
Unemployed	50,899	129,551	180,450
Inactive	921,505	434,027	1,355,532
Total	1,260,065	1,220,317	2,480,382
Labor force participation rate	26.9%	64.4%	45.3%
Unemployment rate	15.0%	16.5%	16.0%

Source: HLFS 2012. TURKSTAT; Betam