

ONE THIRD OF YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT PURSUE THEIR EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

This research brief evaluates the education and labor market status of young people aged between 15 and 19 in Turkey by using the 2013 and 2014 Household Labor Force Survey data. According to the data, one third, i.e. 2 million 175 thousand young people do not pursue their education. 73.6 percent of young people who do not pursue education are at most primary school graduates. Unusual proportions of dropouts do not enter to labor market, either. Almost 900 thousand young people are neither in education nor in the labor market and 73 percent of them are women. Even though 12 years compulsory education provides higher enrolment rates, the absenteeism remains unaddressed. Investing in youth's human capital and increasing labor productivity by reintegrating the youth back into the education system are crucial if Turkey aims to escape the middle income trap.

2 million 175 thousand young aged between 15-19 do not pursue education

Young people constitute a significant part of Turkey's population. Almost one fourth of the total population is between the ages of 15 and 29 and 8.1 percent between 15 and 19.¹ Since the young population is relatively dense, it creates an important opportunity for economic transformation. Yet labor productivity will only increase in parallel with the human capital accumulation of youth. Therefore investment in the human capital stock of the young is essential in terms of economic growth and development.

In this research brief, we investigate the education status of young people aged between 15 and 19 by using 2013 and 2014 Household Labor Survey (HLFS) micro data. Within the scope of the HLFS, respondents provide information on their attendance to official education institutions and their latest completed education level. Hence, individuals declare school attendance rather than school enrolment. On the other hand, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) statistics monitor school enrolment rates. It should be carefully considered that HLFS and MoNe statistics measure different notions.

According to the HLFS data, 65.3 percent of young aged between 15-19 continue their education in official institutions. On the other hand, nearly 2 million 176 thousand young (1 million 81 thousand young women and 1 million 95 thousand young men) do not pursue education. In other words, one third of young people do not continue to their education during a period in which they need to focus

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¹ 2014 Household Labor Force Survey and 2014 Address Based Population Registration data, Betam calculations

on their human capital development. We observe a slight increase in school attendance rates when compared to 2013 data. School attendance rate among individuals aged between 15-19 increased by 0.5 points and reached 65.3 percent in 2014 while it has been recorded as 64.8 percent in 2013. Correspondingly, we observe 0.5 percentage points decrease in absenteeism. Data in Table 1 shows that the reason behind this decline is the increase in school attendance of women. Within this period, we do not observe any changes in male school attendance rates. On the other hand, female school attendance rate increased from 63.3 percent to 64.4 percent. The decline in educational gender gap is good news for women employment in long run.

Table 1: School attendance rates

		Male	Male(%)	Female	Female(%)	Total	Total (%)
2014	Attending	2,136,637	66.1	1,956,494	64.4	4,093,132	65.3
	Not attending	1,094,848	33.9	1,081,670	35.6	2,176,517	34.7
2013	Attending	2,115,677	66.2	1,923,165	63.3	4,038,842	64.8
	Not attending	1,078,933	33.8	1,114,027	36.7	2,192,961	35.2

Source: 2013 and 2014 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

More than half of the dropouts are primary school graduates

It is well known that dropouts face with various difficulties when they return to the regular education system. Therefore their education level is substantial in terms of young human capital and country's labor productivity. Table 2 shows the highest education level reached by the unenrolled young people aged between 15-19.

Table 2 Highest education level reached by the unenrolled young people aged between 15-19

		Male		Female		Total	
		Number of individuals	Share (%)	Number of individuals	Share (%)	Number of individuals	Share (%)
2014	Not completed school	133,933	12.2	262,324	24.3	396,257	18.2
	Primary	673,643	61.5	532,116	49.2	1,205,759	55.4
	General High School	152,454	13.9	171,516	15.9	323,970	14.9
	Vocational or Technical High School	132,210	12.1	111,136	10.3	243,346	11.2
	Higher education	2,608	0.2	4,578	0.4	7,186	0.3
	Total	1,094,848	100	1,081,670	100	2,176,517	100
2013	Not completed school	141,709	13.1	257,111	23.1	398,820	18.2
	Primary	674,159	62.5	594,389	53.4	1,268,548	57.9
	General High School	155,510	14.4	160,932	14.5	316,442	14.4
	Vocational or Technical High School	105,830	9.8	98,288	8.8	204,118	9.3
	Higher education	1,726	0.2	3,307	0.3	5,033	0.2
	Total	1,078,933	100	1,114,027	100	2,192,961	100

Source: 2013 and 2014 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

262 thousand young women and 133 thousand young men aged between 15-19 (396 thousand young in total) declared that they had not completed any level of education. Also, there are 532 thousand young women and 673 young men (1 million 295 thousand) who only graduated from

primary school. Thus, 73.6 percent of young, in other words more than 1.6 million young people abandoned their official education at the primary school level. Again in the same age group, 323 thousand young graduated from general high schools, 243 thousand young completed vocational or technical high school. Only 0.3 percent of young (nearly 7.200 individual) in this age group stated that they completed higher education.

Comparing to 2013, we observe a slight amelioration in unenrolled young people's education levels in 2014. Number of individuals who have not completed any school declined from 399 thousand to 369 thousand. Moreover, the number of primary school graduates decreased from 1 million 269 thousand to 1 million 205 thousand. On the other hand, there is an increase of high school or higher education graduates. In 2014, 324 thousand young people among those who are not pursuing their education, are general high school graduates whereas it was 316 thousand last year. Also there is a significant increase in vocational or technical school graduates from 204 thousand to 243 thousand. Therefore, the proportion of high school or more graduates increased from 23,9 to 26,4 percent. However, human capital accumulation of those who dropped out are still very low. Introducing compulsory education remains a limited solution in order to keep those young people in the education system. Turkey should aim for more sustainable solutions to tackle absenteeism in order to increase the productivity of the labor force.

Almost 900 thousand young are neither in education nor in labor force

Table 3 summarizes the education and labor market status of young aged between 15-19. Considering this age group, 897 thousand young are neither in education nor in the labor force in 2014. In terms of gender, 655 thousand young women and 241 thousand young men are not in the labor force or in the education system. This problem is more serious for women even though the proportion of young women who are neither in education nor in the labor force recorded a limited decrease from 10.3 to 9.8 percent in 2014.

Table 3 Education and labor market status of young aged between 15-19

		Male		Female	
		Number of individuals	Share (%)	Number of individuals	Share (%)
2014	Not in labor force or in education	241,581	7.5	655,399	21.6
	Employed but not in education	726,430	22.5	298,316	9.8
	Not in labor force but in education	1,768,204	54.7	1,863,674	61.3
	Employed and in education	495,271	15.3	220,776	7.3
	Total	3,231,485	100	3,038,164	100
2013	Not in labor force or in education	259,915	8.1	688,417	22.7
	Employed but not in education	703,964	22.0	312,219	10.3
	Not in labor force but in education	1,807,774	56.6	1,843,766	60.7
	Employed and in education	422,957	13.2	192,792	6.4
	Total	3,194,610	100	3,037,193	100

Source: 2013 and 2014 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

The proportion of young men who are in education but not in the labor force decreased from 56.6 to 54.6 percent. As a result, the proportion of young men who are in the labor force but not in

education increased from 22 to 22.5 percent. The share of young men both studying and working increased by 2 percentage points compared to last year. Young women who are both employed and in education also increased by 1 percentage point. This situation might be related to the increase in the number of young people attending vocational or technical high schools.

Referring to Table 3, we calculate the proportion of young people neither in education nor in the labor force as 14.3 percent. The question of whether this group is socially excluded or not should also be investigated. It is remarkable that one fourth of young women are neither in education nor in the labor market. Education, marital status and childbearing are important determinants of female employment decision. As young women get older, they progress in their life cycles, get married and have children. Thus their reintegration to education system or to the labor market becomes more difficult. The fact that even young women aged between 15-19 remain distant to education and the labor market gives negative signals about female labor force participation which is currently low and hence constitutes an important structural problem of the Turkish economy. Note that the labor force participation among young women who are not currently pursuing education increased from 28.8 percent to 31.3 percent in 2014. This is a pleasant development in female employment (Table 4).

Table 4 Labor force status of young

	Male	Female	Total
Labor force participation (%)	75.0	31.3	53.3
Unemployment rate (%)	19.1	17.0	18.5

Source: 2014 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

Majority of women not seeking a job are busy with housework or child-eldercare

Table 5 shows the reasons of not looking for job for young individuals who are neither in education nor in the labor market by gender. 33.1 percent of young men stated that they are no longer active job seekers because they could not find an available job or they believe that there are no available job opportunities for their skill set. The proportion of discouraged young women is 3.3 percent. In total there is 80 thousand discouraged young men and 21 thousand discouraged young women.

Table 5 Main reasons of not looking for job, individuals neither in education nor in labor market

	Male		Female	
	Number of individuals	Share (%)	Number of individuals	Share (%)
Found a job and waiting for it to start	9,734	4.0	6,433	1.0
Discouraged	79,915	33.1	21,542	3.3
Continuing education	53,702	22.3	57,955	8.8
Busy with housework or caring for adults/kids who require care	145	0.1	506,063	77.2
Other family or individual reasons	47,28	19.5	32,053	4.9
Disabled or ill	42,559	17.6	29,270	4.5
Other	7,989	3.3	1,927	0.3
Total	241,173	100	655,241	100

Source: 2014 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

Table 6 indicates the level of education of discouraged workers by gender. We observe that 13.6 percent of discouraged young men have not completed any school and 73.1 percent of them are primary school graduates. This situation is similar for young women as well. Social policies supporting and facilitating young people’s adaption and accession to labor market are as important as policies promoting their reintegration into the education system.

Table 6 Education level of discouraged workers

	Male		Female		Total	
	Number of individuals	Share (%)	Number of individuals	Share (%)	Number of individuals	Share (%)
Not completed school	13,590	13.4	5,041	14.3	18,631	13.6
Primary	75,806	74.5	24,336	68.9	100,142	73.1
General High School	5,852	5.8	3,503	9.9	9,355	6.8
Vocational or Technical High School	5,720	5.6	2,224	6.3	7,944	5.8
Higher education	752	0.7	234	0.7	986	0.7
Total	101,720	100	35,337	100	137,057	100

Source: 2014 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

Table 5 results point out how gender roles and traditional labor division keep young women away from labor market. According to Table 5, 77.2 percent of young women do not seek for a job because they are busy with housework, childcare or eldercare. Even though this proportion slightly declined in comparison to 2013 (1.1 percentage points), once again it shows that gender roles are persistent throughout the society. To summarize, three quarters of young women who are neither in education nor in labor market do not participate in the labor force because of their domestic responsibilities.

Regional differences between East and West persist

As in the majority of statistics, school attendance rates shows stark regional differences. In 2014, school attendance rate in Southeast Anatolia region is 50.8 percent while it has reached up to 73.2 percent in West Marmara region. Put differently, approximately half of the young living in eastern regions attend school regularly whilst three quarter of young people living in western regions continues regular education.

Compared to 2013, school attendance rates across Turkey increased from 64.8 to 65.3 percent in 2014. Difference between regions with highest and lowest attendance rates declined from 22.7 to 22.4 percent. Considering regional school attendance rates, we observe certain fluctuations between regions. According to .

Table 7, highest increase has been observed in Central Anatolia region (4.4 points) whereas highest decline occurred in Istanbul region (2.3 points). Southeast Anatolia and West Marmara, regions with lowest and highest school attendance rates in 2014 respectively, showed declines compared to 2013. In Istanbul, the proportion of young people attending to school declined from 70.8 percent to 68.5 percent, which is a worrying.

As a consequence, even though we observe a general increase in school attendance rates throughout Turkey, regional fluctuations are sizeable. Note that the current education policies remains limited in terms of overcoming regional gaps in school attendance rates.

Table 7 School attendance by regions

	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	Difference(% point)
Southeast Anatolia	51.0	50.8	-0.2
Central East Anatolia	52.3	54.3	1.9
Northeast Anatolia	52.8	52.5	-0.3
Central Anatolia	65.2	69.6	4.4
Mediterranean	66.0	66.7	0.7
West Black Sea	66.3	69.1	2.8
Aegean	68.3	68.7	0.5
East Black Sea	70.5	74.0	3.5
West Anatolia	70.7	72.0	1.3
Istanbul	70.8	68.5	-2.3
East Marmara	72.4	73.5	1.1
West Marmara	73.7	73.2	-0.6
Turkey Average	64.8	65.3	0.5

Source: 2013 and 2014 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

Appendix 1 Main reasons of not looking for job, individuals neither in education nor in labor market, 2013

Reasons	Male	Male (%)	Female	Female(%)
Found a job and waiting for it to start	4,752	1.8	3,749	0.6
Discouraged	72,108	27.9	17,737	2.6
Continuing education	61,747	23.9	62,766	9.1
Busy with housework or caring for adults/kids who require care	452	0.2	509,698	74.2
Other family or individual reasons	45,319	17.5	41,737	6.1
Disabled or ill	44,896	17.3	37,546	5.5
Other	29,638	11.5	13,671	2.0
Total	258,912	100	686,903	100

Source: 2013 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam

Appendix 2 Education level of discouraged workers, 2013

	Male	Male(%)	Female	Female(%)	Total	Total(%)
Not completed any school	14,616	17.3	3,779	17.2	18,395	17.3
Primary (8 years)	63,109	74.6	14,714	67.1	77,823	73.1
General High School	4,617	5.5	2,401	11.0	7,018	6.6
Vocational or Technical High School	2,239	2.7	1,032	4.7	3,271	3.1
Total	84,581	100	21,926	100	106,507	100

Source: 2013 Household Labor Survey Data Sets, Turkstat; Betam