

DRIVING FORCE FOR THE SUCCESS OF TURKEY: LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY PAPER

Labour Market Team SVET, 2006. Available at

<http://svet.meb.gov.tr/svet/general/Labour/LifelongLearningPolicyPaperOct06.pdf>

Rationale of the policy

The policy paper has been drafted in the context of the SVET (Strengthening Vocational Education and Training) work plan. The purpose is to assess the current role of lifelong learning in Turkey and to make recommendations for policymakers in stakeholder organizations on how to improve lifelong learning policies. It is expected that by 2020 almost 70% of Turkey's population will be of working age. Turkey's labour market is characterized by high unemployment and very little investment in human resources. Newly created jobs tend to be concentrated in the small and medium-sized enterprises and informal sectors and are generally low-skilled and poorly paid. Turkey needs to invest in human resources development through adequate investment in education and training.

Concept of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is defined as all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment context. It encompasses formal, non-formal and informal learning and there are no restrictions in terms of age, socio-economic status or educational level. Learning is lifelong and life-wide, as it not only takes place in schools, but also in other areas of life, for example at work and in civic, political, cultural and recreational life.

Main challenges

- **Risk of exclusion from the education system** for children, especially those working in agriculture or industry and living or working on the streets
- **Underdeveloped system of legally licensing professional associations** in the field of education or guidance
- **Lack of systematic and regular identification of sectoral needs** for demand-driven training and lack of feedback mechanisms to monitor the effects of such training
- **Lack of effective working relationships** between the Vocational Education Board and the Provincial Education Boards, which form the main social dialogue mechanism
- **Lack of flexibility in the education system:** horizontal transfer of students between school types (particularly between general secondary education and vocational-technical secondary education) is restricted or not allowed at all
- **Insufficient career guidance and counselling services** regarding services for adults, for women who are not involved in education or the labour market, for immigrants and for adults requiring special education; guidance services in non-formal education are hardly available

Main targets and measures

The policy includes all phases of learning, from early childhood family learning and learning at preschool, through all the stages of formal initial education and throughout life into the post-retirement third age. There are seven key areas for the development of a lifelong learning policy in Turkey:

- System, infrastructure and funding of lifelong learning
- Collection and use of data for monitoring and decision-making
- Decentralization and devolution, civil society and collaboration

- Information, advice and guidance to learners
- Development of staff capacity
- International cooperation
- Quality assurance and accreditation

The following programme areas are priorities of lifelong learning stakeholders in general and of the new Lifelong Learning Council in particular:

- Basic life skills and literacy training for adults
- Rural development programmes for lifelong learning
- A comprehensive basic skills and key competencies development strategy
- Involving and supporting civil society in implementing lifelong learning
- Enterprise training
- Standardization and certification of skill levels and wider provision
- Comprehensive training and retraining of practitioners
- Information and awareness campaign
- Media and lifelong learning

Particular feature of the policy

The policy includes a section on **decentralization and devolution** of lifelong learning administration. An important factor in managing educational policy is the division of responsibilities among national, regional and local authorities as well as schools. Placing more decision-making authority at lower levels of the education system has been a key aim in educational restructuring and systemic reform in many countries since the early 1980s. The major benefits of a less centralized system include redefinition of structures, procedures and practices of governance; provision of more relevant responses to locally expressed needs; increase in efficiency, effectiveness, quality and flexibility of services; and ensured accountability and transparency of local governance. Decentralization of services by definition carries an expectation of some devolution of power, and a shift of responsibility from the central administrative level to the lower level in the hierarchy. SVET is strongly involved in preparing vocational education and training institutions to take up new roles under a decentralized educational system by training school management and institutions' new support staff. Furthermore, school autonomy can be seen as the focal point for decentralization policies. It is believed that school autonomy can foster responsiveness to local requirements. Setting centrally determined frameworks within which individual schools make decisions is a possible alternative to complete school autonomy.

Relevant documents that the strategy refers to:

- The Grand National Assembly of Turkey. [Constitution of the Republic of Turkey](#)
- Turkey. Ministry of National Education. *National Education Basic Act*
- Turkey. 1986. *Vocational Education Act*
- Turkey. 2006. *Non-Formal Education Institutions Decree*

Stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy:

- [Labour Market Team SVET](#)

Stakeholders responsible for implementation of the strategy:

- Turkish National Council of Lifelong Learning
- Lifelong Learning Centre of Turkey
- [Ministry of National Education](#)

Further readings and web links:

- [Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper 2009](#)
- [National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education](#)
- [Scientific and Technical Research Council](#)

- [Law on Higher Education](#)
- [Reforming Turkish Vocational Education and Training](#)
- [Ninth Development Plan 2007-2013](#)
- [National Information Society Strategy 2006-2010](#)