

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Turkey

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Introduction

In Turkey, career guidance services are carried out in various contexts by the [Ministry of National Education](#) (MoNE), the [Turkish Employment Agency](#) (İSKUR), which is an affiliated institution of the [Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Family](#) (MLSSF), universities, the private sector, and trade unions and employer associations. MoNE and İSKUR provide most of the current services (Euroguidance, 2019).

MoNE is responsible for guidance services for the education system, basic to higher education. The goal of the services is to support the students in better self-awareness, opportunity awareness, making realistic choices and self-actualisation (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2017). These services include:

- a. educational guidance;
- b. career guidance;
- c. personal and social guidance.

İSKUR supports individuals (the young and adults) in finding jobs suited to their qualities and employers in finding employees with suitable qualities for the job (Çalışma, Sosyal Hizmetler ve Aile Bakanlığı, 2003). Namely, İSKUR provides:

- a. career orientation services;
- b. job and employment counselling services;
- c. education programmes aiming at developing job search skills;
- d. psychological counselling services via career counselling centres;
- e. in cooperation with schools, detailed explanations to students about the importance of



choosing a career, its relationship to education choices, and the sources from which career information can be reached.

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Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

A memorandum of understanding has been signed by all stakeholders as a base for the future National Forum. There are provincial employment and vocational training councils which support the development of employment and vocational education/training policies, the determination of employment activities and active employment programmes to attain and develop employment and to prevent unemployment.

The list of representatives consists of:

- a. Ministry of National Education (MoNE);
- b. Turkish Employment Agency (İSKUR);
- c. Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Family (MLSSF);
- d. State Planning Organisation,
- e. Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation,
- f. National Productivity Centre,
- g. Vocational Qualification Authority,
- h. Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen,
- i. Higher Education Council,
- j. Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations,
- k. Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
- l. Confederation of Turkish Trade Union.

A new circular (2018/6) issued by the [DG for Special Education Guidance and Counselling Services](#) (under the Ministry of National Education), has been put into effect to improve the effectiveness and accessibility of the services, as well as to promote better and equal dissemination of the provisions (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı; Özel Eğitim ve Rehberlik Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü Rehberlik Hizmetleri genelgesi, 2018).

In the education sector, the structures which ensure guidance provision are: a) the Provincial Directorate for National Education; b) the Special Education and Guidance Services Branch; and c) MoNE's DG for Special Education Guidance and Counselling Services.

The [Vocation Advisory Commission](#) (*Mesleki Danışma Komisyonu*, MEDAK), whose presidency and secretary is coordinated by İSKUR in the name of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, promotes cooperation and coordination between the related stakeholders and holds

meetings at certain intervals to discuss issues related to career guidance and other related matters (Euroguidance, 2019).

There are also provincial employment and vocational training committees which determine local labour market demand, by monitoring skills dynamics to support the education and employment sectors at local level to develop and tailor their work accordingly. They also set action plans to develop employability and VET programmes at the local level.

In 73 provinces in Turkey, since 2013, İŞKUR has developed a joint venture with the public (85 in number) and private universities' (20 in number) career planning centres. Since then, 170 thousand university students got support from this practice. These are called "İŞKUR campus/contact points" and together with the centres in the universities, they support the career development and job search and placement of the university students. These aim to develop the labour market and opportunity awareness of the students together with the employers.

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Access to guidance

The national education summits, that submit recommendations for the development of the Turkish national education system, first addressed the topic of guidance in 1961; access to guidance has been a topic of interest at all subsequent summits.

National development plans include articles and items related to guidance services addressing lifelong guidance for all age levels. The guidance and psychological counselling services in [MoNE](#) (Ministry of National Education) integrate educational, career and personal/social guidance services. Career guidance services at schools are mainly provided by the school's guidance and psychological counselling service.

In [Skills vision 2020 Turkey](#), information, guidance and counselling and work-based learning are emphasised to actualise the 2020 Turkey vision for a socially cohesive, knowledge-based economy with reduced regional inequalities. This vision relies on a proactive, entrepreneurial workforce in which young people and women can fully participate. It encompasses an agenda for:

- a. high-tech sectors (electronics, automotive, software), low-tech sectors (woodware, food and tobacco), and high-capability;
- b. coordinated and coherent employment;
- c. education and social cohesion policies complementing sectoral skills-related priorities at national and regional level;
- d. anticipating labour demand;
- e. a high-quality supply of required human resources.

MoNE's guidance and research centres (*Rehberlik ve Araştırma Merkezleri*) in cities undertake coordination responsibilities to support access to guidance services. One of the main target groups is children, and parents of children, with special needs. These services offer specialist diagnostics for students with special needs, deliver individual and group guidance services in schools which do not have a guidance practitioner, and offer a more general support resource to guidance services within schools. These centres also support the students for career guidance, review the school guidance reports, and produce a synthesis report which is submitted to the Ministry.

Career development is considered as one of the priority areas in the MoNE [VET strategy paper](#). In the near future, each TVET school in Turkey will have a career counsellor. Misperception of managers, teachers, students and parents in TVET institutions about guidance and counselling services negatively impacts the provision of vocational guidance and counselling services. TVET managers and teachers lack up-to-date knowledge about the business sector, which they should duly use in provision of vocational guidance and counselling services to TVET students. TVET is within MoNE and entitled to provide the guidance services defined with the [regulation on guidance services](#).

In the National strategy on vocational education and training (2014-18), the basic priority is to provide young people with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences by structuring vocational and technical education in accordance with the expectations of the local, national and international labour markets. The Vocational and technical education Strategy document and action plan (2014–2018) has been formulated at the axis of three main policies aimed at developing the VET system in Turkey: a) increasing access, b) capacity development and c) employment. Employment with VET includes providing VET students, trainees and graduates – including groups requiring special policies – with key competences; workplace-based training; opportunities for creativity, innovativeness and entrepreneurship; occupational health and safety; and national and international mobility (European Training Foundation, 2014b). The strategy paper has a subsection on career guidance and career development.

MoNE has drafted an [Action plan to strengthen the link between education and employment](#) (İMEİGEP) which aims to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (*Türkiye Yeterlilikler Çerçevesi*, TYÇ). It also seeks to revise education programmes in compliance with the national occupational standards (NOS), offering vocational guidance and counselling services, labour force training courses, and ensuring accreditation of VET

institutions. The services are jointly provided by MoNE and İSKUR and the provisions are ICT-based and face-to-face. Schools have guidance services to support the students. The [Vocational Education Law](#) puts an obligation on enterprises with more than 20 employers to take on interns (apprentices or students) so that these make up 5 to 10% of the workforce. Most apprentices are in the 14 to 20 age group. Only 10% of former apprentices are jobless and 90% start their own businesses (European Training Foundation, 2014b). Guidance in VET is described in the MoNE [regulation on guidance services](#). This regulation specifies the career information, educational guidance and career guidance.

The [Tenth development plan](#) (2014–18) has recommended policies to improve teacher training, abandon the current centralist structure of the education system, extend the use of technology in secondary education, promote competition among higher education institutions, focus on practical courses in vocational training, and harmonise education curricula with the demands of the business world.

Orientation in vocational and technical education may be carried out by the assistant principal, class teacher, guidance practitioner, or others. Orientation supports students by providing information about programmes and work prospects, and may also involve work-shadowing for students so that they can make relevant choices. Students are guided to fields/branches in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades according to the level, type and properties of the programmes implemented in vocational and technical schools and institutions. Employers are encouraged to provide in-service and on-the-job training to improve the vocational competences of their employees.

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Coronavirus Update

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has prepared [three booklets](#) as part of the psycho-social support interventions. In specific:

- a. the first booklet is addressed to parents providing information on the pandemic and suggestions on how to cope with it
- b. the second is addressed to adults referring to feelings and reactions during this period and offers suggestions and
- c. the third booklet is addressed to the youth.

These booklets have been available online for the target groups since the end of March. Further interventions to support parents during this process is underway. Moreover, MoNE also established a [Special Education and Guidance Call Centre](#) to support students, youth and parents in 81 provinces. It aims at providing help, counselling, psychological and social support to residents by phone. Furthermore, a digital informative brochure has been prepared on "*11 simple health suggestions on how to protect ourselves from coronavirus*". In addition, provincial offices have been informed to promote and set the stages for online guidance interventions and communications of students with guidance practitioners.

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Quality assurance

The [Ministry of National Education](#) (MoNE) has put in place a [framework](#) to monitor the developments and performances for students, teachers, school administrators, province and local levels from 2015. This has a set of indicators and activities which include:

- a. quality management;
- b. human resources management;
- c. education/training;
- d. measurement and evaluation;
- e. student management, infrastructures;
- f. information management;
- g. health and security.

Evidence-based guidance policies and provisions are also envisaged in the near future as indicated in the MoNE [Education Vision 2023](#).

The [Regulation on the quality assurance of the qualifications](#) (dated 25 March 2018 and numbered 30371) is included in the Turkish qualifications framework and has the purpose of regulating the principles to ensure the quality assurance of the qualifications. This regulation covers all qualifications, the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and determines the institutions responsible of the quality assurance, roles and responsibilities and the quality assurance criteria.

The criteria to ensure quality are determined by the [Vocational Qualifications Authority](#) (VQA) and updated when needed. VQA is also responsible for setting up, managing, monitoring and

improving the system for quality assurance. When doing this, VQA coordinates and works together with the related organisations specified in the regulation.

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Career management skills

Online and face-to-face interventions are conducted within MoNE (Ministry of National Education), in different departments in relation to the regulations. A web-based [career information system](#) has been established to support CMS development. The web-based system supports self-awareness and provides information on employment and educational opportunities. Interventions are carried on in relation to career development within the guidance and research centres.

A new system and major changes in the high school curricula have been embedded by strengthening the self-awareness of the students for a better and more realistic career plans. The system will be effective in 2020. The new model is geared around the career education and guidance within the educational system. The main philosophy of the model is to support the individuals to develop holistically with a better understanding of their potential and interests and to decide and act accordingly. Every school will have a “Career Office” as a pivotal part of this new revised curricula. This is to promote the students for better self-understanding and awareness and to develop their potentiality and skills for further stages of life. Starting by the 9th grade, these offices will support the students for a better self-understanding, self-exploration and awareness to develop a career profile based on values, competences and interests.

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

An e-module has been developed for this purpose and in use in the system. The e-portfolio system is an innovative practice in MoNE based on the 2023 vision in education revealing that “A developmental monitoring report, based on an e-portfolio, will be used for monitoring and evaluating children in primary and lower-secondary schools”. The e-portfolio has a developmental perspective, covering the development of the students from preschool to university. This module has three sections. One covers the academic performances, records and developments, the second one is on the personal, social and career development of the individuals. This part also has the scores/results of the assessments tools administered. The third section is on the extracurricular activities, including the Social Activities module.

Career information, ICT in guidance

According to the [Tenth development plan](#) (2014-18), the importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) has been increasing in terms of enhancing the competitiveness of countries, increasing the level of welfare and qualified employment. Activities for the transformation of Turkey to an information society should be accelerated, while effective use of ICT must be provided to promote growth and to create employment.

There are various sites serving career guidance. For instance, the following web-based career information sites are actively used by the audience:

- a. [E-non-formal](#) which contains available LLL programmes and delivered by [DG of Lifelong Learning](#) (*Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Genel Müdürlüğü*);
- b. Vocational Information System Scales (Priorities in areas of interest, ability and career choice) web-based career information system (further information can be found [here](#));
- c. [Vocational Qualification Authority](#) website;
- d. [ISKUR](#) website, provides a matching engine for employers and employees;
- e. [MoNE LLL](#) website, supports individuals on their career development, by offering assessment tools for self-awareness, LM information and information on education/training
- f. VET Portal: “[My Career and My life](#)” is another example from MoNE as part of the 2023 vision in education. This portal has been designed to assist the vocational technical education students in their programme choice providing 54 videos for the 54 fields and success stories of different occupations. Moreover, this portal provides information on VET education abroad, training of trainees, career opportunities, interview techniques, occupations of the future and the overview of the developments of VET in Turkey. This portal also serves as an important link between the graduates of VET schools and the employers, provides information about job opportunities.

A university and an online job search website initiated the joint project [I am ready for work](#), to support university students and graduates in a better transition from education to work and to promote their employability. This certificate programme is designed based on the interviews conducted with the employers and the world of work to have a better grasp of the skills and personal developments in demand. With the certificates rewarded at the end of the training, when individuals apply for work via the online job search using the *I am ready for work* code, they will be highlighted by the system. Namely, the system will be able to detail the skills and the personal developments of the individual related to that job.

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Training and qualifications

To become a guidance practitioner in the educational sector –[MoNE](#), Ministry of National Education– a bachelor's degree diploma in psychological guidance and counselling is required. Students choose these programmes upon entry to the university. In order to become a job and employment counsellor, a bachelor's degree diploma and a vocational qualification certificate are required.

Guidance practitioners must have at least a bachelor's degree in guidance and psychological counselling or in psychology. Courses in guidance and psychological counselling are offered by universities; they include some attention to career guidance but focus, mainly, on psychological counselling. In recent years, graduates of other branches of educational sciences have also been appointed as guidance counsellors after taking the courses required for the guidance programme. The desirability of this practice is disputed. Guidance counsellors can decide whether or not to pursue graduate education. Those who have completed graduate studies are preferred in some special projects, depending on the nature of the activity (Euroguidance, 2019). For example, if specialised in parent counselling, they work with parents in guidance and research centres; if they acquired skills in ICT tools, they may work in the development of such tools. All public and private universities in Turkey offer undergraduate programmes in the related fields. Additionally, almost all universities offer master's degree programmes, coordinated by the [Higher Education Council](#). Occupational standards and qualifications have been developed for job and employment counsellors and their competences could be validated and certified.

In MoNE, guidance practitioners have training on secondary and higher education examination systems, career counselling, test anxiety and stress management. MoNE offers continuous training programmes for guidance practitioners. Furthermore, as part of the

Education vision 2023, class teachers will be able to become guidance practitioners through the certification process when the procedures are finalised.

The job and employment counsellors in İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency) are trained and empowered to work more effectively with the migrants and refugees. They have training programmes as part of the project “Supporting Labour Migration Management in Turkey Phase II” with International Organisation of Migration (IOM), to develop their micro counselling skills, their knowledge on legal aspects and validation in relation to the LM integration of migrants and refugees.

İŞKUR envisages to improve the quality and effectiveness of the services by implementing a target focused intervention. This target focused intervention could support the individuals for better self and opportunity awareness to make more effective and realistic decisions and acting for their future. Due to heavy workload, the job and employment counsellors have constraints to develop individual action plans for the jobseekers. Based on the demographics, educational background, previous work experience, motivation and specific interests, they have focused on specific areas and target groups. The job and employment counsellors have been trained intensively for this new model and based a comprehensive needs analysis, new training programmes have been designed to empower the job and employment counsellors. By 2020, all the standards and modelling of this new system will be completed.

Counsellors in Turkey belong to professional organisations. One such organisation is the [Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association](#) (*Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Derneği*, PDR-DER). The association was established in 1989 with the aim of setting up communication and coordination among the members, to develop the profession in the country, to support the scientific work and to support the rights of the professionals.

At İŞKUR, the job and employment counsellors also have continuous training on topics related to assessment, job mediation and career guidance; recently, they have undertaken training to become more empowered in working with the refugees and migrants. Their occupational standards and qualifications are defined as part of the Turkish qualification framework.

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Funding career guidance

Career guidance funding is included in the education budget; therefore, there is no specific reference in the budget for career guidance. At İŞKUR, funding is from the unemployment insurance fund and the national treasury.

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Career guidance for school pupils

Schools at different levels provide individual and group activities to support personal and career development. Class teachers also provide information about the world of work. In the [2023 vision for education](#), the development of a specific programme/module on career guidance for schools is envisaged.

Career education is included as part of class guidance programmes in all types of school, integrated with personal and social education. Within the curriculum, there is time allocated for a guidance programme supporting students in educational, personal, social and career guidance. Teacher handbooks were introduced to guide teachers through in-class activities in their courses; support is also offered by the school's guidance practitioners. In basic education schools, there is currently no national policy regarding class time or MoNE resources for group guidance, though some schools make regular class time available. MoNE is developing a web-based module to facilitate further access to guidance. This will provide a better, faster and continuous coordination and collaboration of related parties within MoNE: students, teachers, parents, school administrators, local MoNE officials and the [Directorate General](#). This also aims to increase access to services via continuous interaction.

ISKUR, in cooperation with schools, provides detailed explanations to students about the importance of choosing a career, its relationship to educational choices, and the sources from which career information can be accessed. These are supplemented by videotapes and films. ISKUR also has a 'library/resource centre' where students can make use of career files, which include information about the definition of careers and their tasks, qualifications required to perform these tasks, work environments and working conditions, vocational training, fields of work, employment opportunities, income, and promotion opportunities during and after training. There are also printed documents (books, articles, pamphlets) which give detailed information about opportunities for vocational training and the labour market (Kırşehir Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, 2011). ISKUR also organises class and group discussions in both general and technical/vocational secondary education schools. Class discussions, which take at least one class hour, address topics such as the importance of choosing a career, points to consider when choosing a career, and the job and career counselling services provided by ISKUR. Group discussions focus on vocational training alternatives after graduation, careers and working life. Conferences or sessions aim at developing job search skills. Interview techniques and some tools of testing and assessment are used in individual counselling sessions. Another activity is meetings with parents, aiming at enabling parents to adopt more conscious approaches in helping their children in career choices (Akkök & Watts, 2003).

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"Career conversations' were organised and carried out online by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), for gifted 11-15 years olds: academics, musicians (an internally well-known piano player, an opera singer) and high-level bureaucrats had career conversations with the teenagers to support them with personal career explorations and the world of work.

Guidance for higher education students

The action plans on developing the career services as well as psychological counselling and guidance services in universities are rooted in the strategic plans of the universities. These services are managed by university administrations and supported by the related departments in the universities. Several universities have items in their strategic plans to promote work on career guidance services and also psychological counselling and guidance services. For example, in the strategic plan of [Middle East Technical University \(METU\)](#), under strategic programme *Workforce*, there are goals indicating the development of these services, with concrete actions:

- a. increasing the capacity (staff, activities, sustainability) of the [Career Planning Centre](#) to meet individual's career development needs;
- b. offering students, the necessary environment for them to make use of the counselling services offered.

Several universities have their action plans for comprehensive services. These universities have models and activities that offer good practice for the newly developing ones:

- a. career education, developing students' career management competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes);
- b. career evaluation, helping students acquire and apply knowledge about personal features relevant for career development;
- c. career counselling, helping students to solve career problems;
- d. career opportunities exploration, helping students acquire and apply knowledge about career opportunities in the career development process;
- e. job search, helping students acquire job search skills and seek employment which meets their personal needs (ELGPN, 2012).

In addition, they offer:

- a. close communication, coordination and collaboration of universities with employers, career fairs;
- b. 'walk-in' sessions, brief encounters with the staff in the career centres to review the CVs or cover letters;
- c. self-exploration and self-assessment;
- d. career planning;
- e. job search skills and strategies;
- f. CV and cover letter writing;
- g. job interview skill development.

A university and an online job search website initiated the joint project title [I am ready for work](#), to support university students and graduates in a better transition from education to work and to promote their employability. The *I am ready for work* certificate programme is based on interviews conducted with employers and the world of work to have a better grasp of the skills and personal developments in demand. Certificates are awarded at the end of training, when individuals apply for work via the online job search, with the code *I am ready for work*, they will be highlighted by the system.

Another university established an online network for its alumni, the [network of METU graduates](#), to promote the interaction of the graduates in job search, start-ups, career development opportunities and further interactions for development (further information can

be found [here](#)).

Universities cooperate with İSKUR, in organising career fairs. Many universities have career centres with provisions and research on career guidance. Some have online graduate (alumni) information databases.

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One [private university](#) has initiated some good practices that could be inspirational for other institutions. The university has a programme titled “*Interview adventure with talent hunters*”. This face-to-face intervention is now carried on via Zoom. Moreover, students could make online appointments for interviews that are carried online via Zoom. The career activities with different employers that were conducted face-to-face, are now organised online and will be carried on digitally. The career centre of the university is in the preparation of a series of online seminars on Personal Attributes, Competencies, Knowledge and Experience based on a recent research conducted on “*Recruiting new graduates*”. Furthermore, online seminar/seminars on Interview techniques will be performed in April. The career centre will be facilitating all these activities.

One of the leading universities in Turkey, Middle East Technical University, has a new initiative coordinated by the Career Planning Centre of the university. To serve the students online, during the pandemic, a new course was started for all freshmen students, entitled “*Career planning course*”. This course aims to support students by developing their employability skills, by providing opportunities to explore their career development (national and international exchange programmes, inviting speakers from the world of work etc.), self-awareness, soft skills, entrepreneurship and alumni stories.

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Guidance for unemployed adults

The **Turkish Employment Agency (İSKUR)** provides career orientation services in accordance with the **Law on the Establishment and Duties of the Turkish Employment Organisation**. No.4904 Article 3 paragraph (i) establishes that the services will '*perform career orientation services, provide job and employment counselling services, implement education programmes aiming at developing job search skills, to provide psychological counselling services via career counselling centres...*'. Article 10 further decrees that services will '*...expand and enlarge [the] career orientation system gradually, to provide and improve guidance service, to offer employment and counselling services, to implement educational programs towards developing job search skills*' (Kırşehir Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, 2011).

Paragraph (i) of article 6 of the Career Orientation Letter of Recommendation No.88, approved by the International Labour Organization (ILO), includes provision '*to register job applicants; to note their occupational qualifications, experiences and inclinations; to ask them questions for job placement; to examine their physical and occupational qualifications, if necessary; to help them in career orientation, career development and career re-adjustment, if necessary*' (Kırşehir Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, 2011).

Article 3 of the Agreement on the Place of Career Education and Orientation in Assessment of Human Resources, No.142, states that '*career guidance services, including continuous supply of employment information, should gradually be made available in order to ensure that guidance is as accessible as possible and to provide extensive information to all children, youth and adults, including special programmes for all people with disabilities. This information and guidance shall include levels of responsibility in career choice, career education and learning opportunities, expectations of employment, promotion opportunities, working conditions, occupational security, hygiene, economic, social and cultural activities and other aspects of the various sectors of working life*' (Kırşehir Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, 2011).

The **National Employment Strategy (2014-2023)** lays great emphasis on resolving structural problems in the labour market, bringing strong solutions to unemployment through the impact of increasing growth on employment in the medium and long term.

Education Vision 2023 includes the analysis of the provincial labour force in terms of its ability to meet labour force demand with regard to required skills, number of workers and sectors. In total, 25 primary transformation programmes are under way to implement Vision 2023. A number of these are of direct and immediate relevance to education, training and LLL in the sense that they address the HRD system and its capabilities. Those actions of direct relevance include improving the effectiveness of the labour market, reducing the informal economy, developing the statistical information infrastructure, developing basic and occupational skills, attracting qualified human resources from abroad, and developing institutional capacity at local level.

İSKUR also provides vocational training to the unemployed to develop their skills for employability. Training is based on employer demand and participants are informed about the opportunities and are provided with job and employment counselling (further information can be found [here](#)).

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All the job and employment counselling interventions, i.e. face-to-face interventions, group activities, school visits, workplace visits and related activities are reduced/postponed due to the pandemic. Plans and preparations for e-guidance provision are in progress by making all the materials and documents accessible online via İŞKUR website and mail, setting the infrastructure for e-guidance in the mid and long term.

The [Vocational Qualifications Authority](#) has postponed the validation processes and exams till the end of April 2020. Moreover, the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) initiated a [practice to support the employability of the workers](#) by encouraging the employers to apply for a “limited work allowance”. The employers who must stop working due to the pandemic could apply online for this allowance for their workers. Moreover, flexible work modalities are encouraged within public and private sector. The job and employment counselling interventions, i.e. face-to-face interventions, group activities, school visits, workplace visits and related activities are reduced/postponed due to the pandemic. Plans and preparations for e-guidance are in progress by making all the materials and documents accessible online via the İŞKUR website and mail, setting the infrastructure for e-guidance in the mid and long term. The citizens are encouraged to use the [online versions of the services of İŞKUR](#) provincial offices/service centres, i.e. registration, job search, CV preparation and the application to the unemployment allowance.

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Coronavirus Update

At the outset of the Covid-19 crisis, MoNE established a series of policy actions to maintain educational services and meet the wider needs of society as a whole. When schools closed on 17 March 2020, Turkey relied on a strengthened distance education environment to provide teachers, students and parents with a variety of solutions for pedagogical continuity. The solutions covered all classes from primary to secondary education (including VET) and partly consisted in a package of academic, social and psychological support delivered through online teaching, radio, TV broadcasts (such as TRT Okul) and telephone. As early as 23 March 2020, Turkey was able to provide distance education nationwide to its 18 million students through the Educational Information Network (EBA), the country's official platform for online education.

Supported by Turkey's top three mobile operators that offered all students 8 gigabytes of free data, 12 million K-12 students and 900 000 teachers could access the 1 600 lessons and 20 000 interactive contents on the platform. This made it the second largest state-owned platform for online education at that time, behind China's. EBA served as a generic hub for distance learning. It hosted several TV programmes, integrated psychological support centres and allowed up to 2.7 million users to hold virtual classrooms at the same time. In June 2020, Turkey further invested in a project on Safe schooling and distance education with support of the World Bank. This long-term strategy will finance the development and roll-out of a New Digital Education System (NDES) and the expansion of EBA to enhance the capacity, reach and resilience of Turkey's education system during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic and future shocks (Vidal, 2020).

MoNE has prepared three booklets as part of psychosocial support interventions. One is to inform parents about the pandemic and provide suggestions on how to cope with it. The second is for adults and it discusses the feelings and reactions during this period and offers suggestions. The third is for youth. These booklets have been available online for the target groups since the end of March 2020. Further interventions are underway to support parents during this process. Moreover, MoNE has established a Special Education and Guidance Call Centre to support students, youth and parents in 81 provinces. A digital informative brochure has been prepared entitled '11 simple health suggestions on how to protect ourselves from coronavirus'. Provincial offices have been informed to promote and set the stage for online guidance interventions and communication between students and guidance practitioners. A parents' programme has been launched on MoNE's digital platform, to guide parents on the pandemic which will include videos to support parents and students. Since March 2020, school guidance services and Guidance Research Centres (GRC) have carried out individual and group interventions to support the well-being and resilience of students and parents. A total of 9 818 326 students participated in group interventions and 108 855 students received individual support. School counsellors conducted informative meetings and training sessions for students, teachers, administrators and parents. MoNE has focused on providing guidance and counselling services to help people cope with the pandemic. In research and guidance centres in 81 provinces, 10 168 910 parents and 794 768 teachers and administrators received guidance and counselling from the GRCs. Since March 2020, 20 890 859 students, teachers and parents have been supported and the interventions are still continuing.

İSKUR initiated a practice to support the employability of workers by encouraging employers to apply for a 'limited work allowance'. Employers who stopped their activity due to the pandemic could apply online for this allowance for their workers. Flexible work modes have been promoted within the public and private sector. Citizens are encouraged to use the online services of İSKUR's provincial offices and service centres for registration, job searches, CV preparation and application for unemployment allowance. Job and employment counsellors provided online interventions from their homes. During the pandemic, 41 123 301 online services have been viewed in İSKUR. To maintain social distancing, fewer face-to-face

activities have been carried out. Job clubs continued online. Students received online assistance with university entrance procedures and decisions about programmes.

Due to the pandemic, the use of digital tools has been perceived as a necessity by teachers, guidance practitioners, students and parents. These tools will be used and disseminated extensively in the system after the pandemic. Moreover, the system recognises the great need to help guidance practitioners to develop their digital skills and through digitalised services students' socioemotional, academic and career development can be supported. The present situation promotes capacity building for professionals on digital skills and a change in attitude to achieve digital transformation in career interventions.

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See also dedicated sections below:

- [Access to guidance](#)
- [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)
- [Guidance for school pupils](#)
- [Guidance for higher education students](#)
- [Guidance for unemployed adults.](#)