Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Turkey

Introduction

In Turkey, career guidance services are carried out in various contexts by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR), 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 ISKUR 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.

ISKUR 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, ISKUR 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.
Sources

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, İSKUR 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 “İSKUR 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.

Sources


Özel Eğitim ve Rehberlik Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü Rehberlik Hizmetleri genelgesi (DG for Special Education Guidance and Counselling Services)
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 (İMIEİGEP) 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.

Sources


**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:

- quality management;
- human resources management;
- education/training;
- measurement and evaluation;
- student management, infrastructures;
- information management;
- 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.

Sources

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Meslekî Yeterlilik Kurumu (Vocational Qualification Authority). https://www.myk.gov.tr/


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, self-exploration and awareness to develop a career profile based on values, competences and interests.

Sources


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.

**ICT in lifelong 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.

**Sources**


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 İSKUR (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 İSKUR, 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.

Sources


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 İSKUR, funding is from the unemployment insurance fund and the national treasury.

Sources
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).

Sources


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.

**Sources**


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**Guidance for unemployed adults**

The Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) 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.

İŞKUR 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).

Sources


Sources

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