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REPORT ON ANALYSIS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE NATIONAL POPULATION

TÜRKİYE COUNTRY REPORT

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FOREWORD

Since the inception of the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in 2010, in collaboration with UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, UNICEF has been dedicated to enhancing educational participation globally. Our mission extends beyond mere data collection; it involves fostering actionable strategies to eliminate barriers to education and ensure that every child can access quality learning opportunities.

This report on Türkiye highlights significant challenges that remain in access to education for Turkish children despite substantial progress in primary and secondary education. Vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities, those involved in child labour, victims of early and forced marriage, and those affected by migration and refugee crises, face persistent barriers to education. Since 2011, the influx of Syrian refugees has intensified these challenges adding significant pressure to the education system with the addition of over 1 million school-aged children, underscoring the need for comprehensive and nuanced policy responses.

The insights gained from this study underline the importance of such integrated approaches. By identifying the most critical educational barriers, we can prioritize and target our efforts more effectively. This report offers valuable policy recommendations that emphasise the need for cross-sectoral collaboration to create sustainable and impactful solutions. Thus, bold investments are required to ensure that the next generation of otherwise disadvantaged or vulnerable Turkish children begin on a stronger footing, finish compulsory education, transition to higher education, and acquire the skills necessary to enhance their employability. These efforts will positively change children's life trajectories and set them on a path towards breaking cycles of poverty and disadvantage and increase their chances to realize their full potential.

Our goal is to support Türkiye in developing and implementing strategies that ensure every child, regardless of their background or circumstances, has the opportunity to complete their education. The future of any nation depends on the education of its youth, and by addressing these challenges through a unified and multi-sectoral approach,

I extend my gratitude to all partners, researchers, and contributors who have made this study possible. Your dedication and commitment to the cause of education are inspiring. Together, we can make significant strides toward reducing the number of out-of-school children and ensuring that every child in Türkiye receives the education they deserve.

Paolo MARCHI
UNICEF Representative to Türkiye

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The Study on OOSC in Türkiye is a collaborative product of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) of Türkiye, UNICEF, and Cambridge Education/Mott MacDonald, with technical and operational/logistical support from many stakeholders. The work could not have been completed without the expertise and assistance of government institutions and technical partners. UNICEF wants to thank the people and organizations that made this study a reality and is grateful for Cambridge Education's efforts to provide international institutional consultancy services for their high-quality support in the report's design, implementation, analysis, and drafting.

In the Government of Türkiye, under the overall leadership of MoNE, UNICEF deeply appreciates the collaboration and guidance of the Strategy Development Department in supporting the actualisation of this study. It also acknowledges the technical contributions from the Lifelong Learning General Directorate, Basic Education General Directorate, Secondary Education General Directorate, Vocational and Technical Education and Training General Directorate, Religious Education General Directorate, Special Education and Counselling Services General Directorate and Teacher Training and Development General Directorate. Significant guidance was obtained from the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in reaching the target group and implementing the research by collecting qualitative data. UNICEF wants to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), Support to Life (STL), Development Workshop, Tohum Autism Foundation, the Down Syndrome Association, Association of Dreams Without Disabilities Istanbul, Parıltı Support to the Children with Visual Impairments Association Istanbul, Gap Regional Development Administration (GAP RDA), Concern Worldwide and The Educational Volunteers Foundation of Türkiye (TEGV) who provided significant resources, playing a pivotal role in shaping the study's direction and outcomes.

Furthermore, UNICEF thanks the UN organizations that participated in this study; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have provided valuable insights and expertise.

UNICEF would like to thank its staff members, including the education team, the monitoring and evaluation team, the communications team, and the field office, for their contributions throughout the study.

This study could not have been undertaken without funding from European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) in the United States Department of State. Design and translation of the final study were realized through the efforts of Formato Verde, Boğaziçi Çeviri Hizmetleri Ltd. Şirketi, and Sahra Çeviri Hizmetleri Ltd. Şirketi.

UNICEF is grateful for the many contributors who made the knowledge contained in this study accessible to inform policy and practice. Because of these efforts, UNICEF and collaborators will be better able to advance results for children, especially vulnerable refugee children.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
5DE	5 Dimensions of Exclusion
7DE	7 Dimensions of Exclusion
ASAM	Association for Social Development and Aid Mobilization (ASAM)
BEP	Individualised Education Programme – *Bireyselleştirilmiş Eğitim Programı*
CCTE	Conditional Cash Transfer Education
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CwD	Children with Disabilities
D3	Dimension 3
D4	Dimension 4
D5	Dimension 5
D6	Dimension 6
D7	Dimension 7
DGs	Directorate Generals
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DYK	Support and Training Courses – *Destekleme ve Yetiştirme Kursları*
EBA	Education Informatics Network
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ERG	Education Reform Initiative
EU	European Union
EU-IPA-1	Increasing School Enrolment Rates Especially for Girls Operation-I
EYHGM	General Directorate of Disabled and Elderly Services
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GAR	Gross Attendance Ratio
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GNI	Gross National Income
GRC/RAM	Guidance and Research Centres
HDI	Human Development Index
HUIPS	Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies
IDIs	In-depth interviews
ILO	International Labor Organization
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
İOKBS	Primary and Secondary Schools Scholarship Test
İŞKUR	Turkish Employment Agency

Acronym	Meaning
İYEP	Remedial Education Programme
KG	Kindergarten
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LGS	High School Entrance Exam – *Liselere Geçiş Sistemi*
MERNIS	Central Registration Administration System
MM	Mott MacDonald
MoFLSS	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services
MoFSS	Ministry of Family and Social Services
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
NAR	Net Attendance Ratio
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
OOSCI	The Out-of-School-Children Initiative
PM	Project Management
PNAM	Progressive Non-Attendance Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SE Türkiye CPSWG	Southeast Türkiye Child Protection Sub-Working Group
SES	Socio-Economic Status
TL	Turkish Lira
TRT EBA	Turkish Radio and Television Corporation Education Informatics Network Television Channel
TURKSTAT/TUIK	Turkish Statistical Institute
TUSİAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association
TYT	Basic Proficiency Test
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education
UDEP	National Support Programme
UIS	Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UTP	Under Temporary Protection
VECs	Vocational Education Centres
WHO	World Health Organization
YKS	Higher Education Institutions Examination – *Yükseköğretim Kurumları Sınavı*

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Executive Summary

The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSC), launched in 2010 by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS), is a key component of the global monitoring on educational participation. The OOSC Initiative (OOSCI) supports the interrelated tasks of developing profiles of out-of-school children, linking quantitative and qualitative data with various barriers, and identifying effective policies to address the OOSC problem (UNICEF-UIS, 2015). The initiative has country, regional and global dimensions and aims to achieve action-oriented research and capacity development-related results (UNICEF, Formative Evaluation of the OOSCI, 2018).

Almost all Turkish children complete primary and (lower) secondary education levels, and children who are not in school are concentrated in the upper-secondary ("high school") age range (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2019c). However, across all levels of schooling in Türkiye, vulnerable groups are not enrolled in school or are not attending regularly (UNICEF, 2012, 2019a). These include children with disabilities (CwD), children who are engaged in child labour, child, early and forced marriage, and in contact with the law, among other groups. Furthermore, the intense migration of approximately four million Syrian (and other) refugees since 2011, including just over 1.2 million school-aged children (5–18 years), has affected the OOSC situation in Türkiye for all children (UNICEF, 2019a).

These dual challenges Türkiye is facing related to out-of-school children – addressing problems related to child protection while simultaneously dealing with the intense migration of Syrian children UTP – call for different research and policy responses. Accordingly, these two issues are dealt with separately in different OOSC reports. The present report focuses on out-of-school children and children at risk of leaving school early (referred to as OOSC) among the national population in Türkiye.

The overall objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of OOSC among the national population in Türkiye based on a quantitative and qualitative (mixed methods) research framework. The study focuses on barriers hindering children's access to and completion of compulsory education in Türkiye, which includes a large number of often interrelated factors such as poverty; child labour; child, early and forced marriage; bullying; quality of and access to schools; and cultural norms and language. Cross-cutting issues like gender are also addressed.

The added value of this study is that it provides the most detailed, comprehensive overview of the OOSC phenomenon among the national population of children in Türkiye, emphasizing the 2018–2021 period with references to earlier years to show trends. The quantitative analysis takes full advantage of the considerable data that are available, including the 2018 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the 2020 Ministry of National Education (MoNE) data, while the qualitative analysis is based in part on an extensive data collection that was conducted in November 2020 and May 2021, and which focuses on the underlying reasons that explain OOSC according to the children, their parents, and a range of key informant interviews (KIIs). The level of detail in the mixed-methods analysis makes it possible to present trends in OOSC outcomes and barriers over time, develop more detailed profiles of out-of-school children and the barriers they face, and identify any new and emerging barriers. An additional contribution of this report is to highlight the barriers that appear to be the most consequential. Their identification is especially critical for policy work since the State's counterparts (and other stakeholders) will need to prioritize their actions and resources.

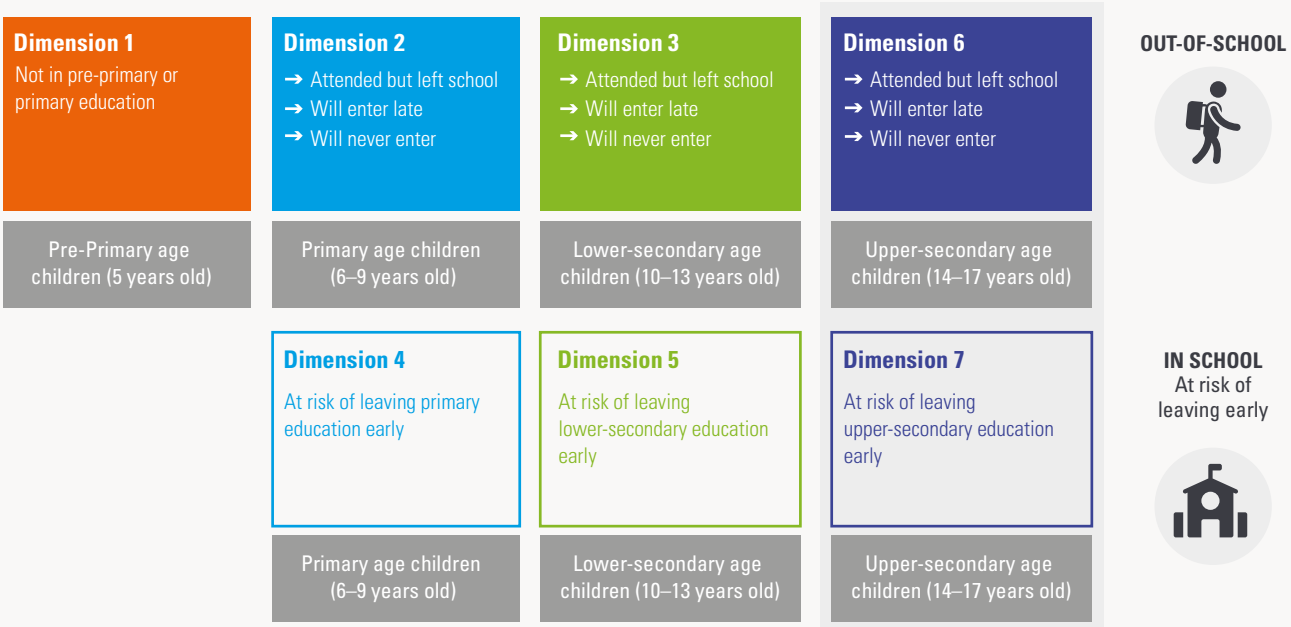
In addition to documenting the current situation with OOSC in the national population of Türkiye and the underlying causes of different categories of OOSC, a core objective of the study is to provide policy guidance. This report provides an integrated analysis that assesses the applicability of current policies based on the main findings from the mixed-methods data analysis, which in turn forms the basis for formulating an updated set of policy recommendations.

THE DIMENSIONS OF EXCLUSION

The Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) incorporates different categories of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out to develop a comprehensive overview of educational exclusion.

The standard OOSCI framework is the 5 Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE), covering pre-primary to lower-secondary levels (UNICEF-UIS, 2015). In the context of compulsory 4+4+4 education in Türkiye, however, it was necessary to extend the framework to include the upper-secondary level ("high school"), which requires two additional dimensions (6 and 7) as shown in Figure ES1.

Figure ES1:
The Out-of-School Children Dimensions of Exclusion Adapted to the Turkish System



Source: UNICEF (2019c).

The seven-dimension framework in Figure ES1 covers four distinct levels of education in Türkiye, including pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. The primary, lower- and upper-secondary levels correspond to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 1, 2 and 3. For the 5-year-olds in Dimension 1 of the OOSC 7DE, the corresponding ISCED level is "02", which includes children ages 3–5 and does not explicitly include 5-year-olds only. It should be noted that pre-primary education is not compulsory at this time in Türkiye, so this level is analysed as an additional dimension but not included in the final calculation of out-of-school children (OOSC) rates or numbers.

Within the general group of out-of-school children, three sub-categories of interest exist. "Attended but left school" refers to dropouts who have enrolled at some point but are no longer enrolled. "Will enter late" mainly refers to primary-aged children who have not yet enrolled in primary school but are expected to do so. "Will never enter" refers to children who have not enrolled in school and are not expected to do so. The quantitative summaries in Section 4 of the report estimate these three sub-categories, subject to data availability. The total number of OOSC in the country is also summed across the OOSC dimensions (1, 2, 3 and 6) and is measured as a percentage (or rate) of the total child population for that age range. Pre-primary is not compulsory in Türkiye, but children in this age category can still be analysed to provide guidance ahead of the anticipated transition to universal (i.e., compulsory) pre-primary.

UNDERSTANDING WHY CHILDREN ARE NOT IN SCHOOL

This study has developed a comprehensive overview of barriers and bottlenecks derived from supply and demand factors based on the available literature and previous OOSC studies prepared by UNICEF in different countries. In this context, the basis of the systematic approach for analysing the risk factors for the out-of-school phenomenon

is adopted and adjusted from the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative Operational Manual of UNICEF (2015). The demand-side barriers refer to the determinants linked to the demand for education, i.e., the factors related to the target population using education services. The supply-side barriers refer to the determinants linked to the supply of education services, i.e., the factors stemming from and within the education system. From the available literature and studies, demand-side barriers are identified as socio-cultural, human capital, health-related and economic barriers; supply-side barriers are identified as school administrative regulations-related barriers; school supply, quality and relevance-related barriers; and governance, finance and institutional barriers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

There are three main research objectives.

Research Objective 1: Updating and deepening the analysis of quantitative indicators of OOSC and school participation among Turkish children.

One of the core activities in OOSC reporting is to present detailed summaries of the dimensions of exclusion across different school levels, ideally with comparisons over time to assess recent trends in these core indicators. As noted before, the OOSC issue in Türkiye is concentrated among young children who are not in pre-primary (not yet compulsory) and upper-secondary- (high school) aged children who have dropped out. Nevertheless, official statistics indicate OOSC at every schooling level, requiring careful analysis to provide a complete quantitative summary. More specifically:

- How many Turkish children (in numbers and percentages) are currently out of school by level, divided into the never enrolled and dropout categories?
- How have the raw numbers and percentages (rates) evolved? Examining the evolution of OOSC numbers since moving towards compulsory upper secondary is necessary. Adding upper secondary to the official (e.g., compulsory) OOSC framework means there are more potential out-of-school children, and the overall OOSC total may increase over time due to the inclusion of additional grades in the calculation. However, looking at trends within other levels to assess progress is still possible. The trends analysis also benefits from the availability of the DHS survey data from 2013 and 2018.
- How do estimates of OOSC compare across the MoNE and DHS data sources in common school years?
- How many Turkish children enrolled in school are in the correct grade for their age? Does this data vary based on gender?
- How do estimates of the number of Turkish children at risk of dropout (Dimensions 4, 5 and 7) vary by risk dimension (over-age, number of absences, low achievement levels, etc.)?
- Are any new indicators or data collection modalities required to better measure and monitor OOSC among Turkish children?

Research Objective 2: What barriers prevent Turkish children from going to school?

Despite the small numbers of OOSC in primary and lower secondary, there is still a need to identify barriers to participation in these levels, and in upper secondary (where more children are out of school), this is especially true. As noted above, one of the main goals of the barriers analysis is to provide a comprehensive, updated list of barriers that helps fill in gaps in the existing knowledge base regarding OOSC in Türkiye.

While not a barrier that prevents Turkish children from going to school, the school enrolment-related regulation and enforcement mechanisms are a potentially important feature of the OOSC panorama in Türkiye. Therefore, one potential outcome of the study is updated information on implementing these regulation and enforcement mechanisms and showing how they interact with OOSC outcomes.

In addition, across the analysis of barriers, four cross-cutting issues require additional attention, including the identification of how (i) barriers differ by schooling level and the child's age, (ii) the different effects of barriers vary between boys and girls, (iii) the barriers evolved, and (iv) barriers are different across provinces and regions.

The final set of questions about barriers addresses an issue of fundamental importance for OOSC research, policy and programming in Türkiye: What are the most critical barriers that explain OOSC? There is an existing literature on Turkish OOSC (UNICEF, 2012) that addresses key barriers like economic barriers, including poverty and families' reliance on child labour. Therefore, the analysis is intended to categorize better and understand the "hierarchy" of

barriers and their relative importance instead of simply summarising the present barriers.

Research Objective 3: What are the implications of the main findings for Turkish OOSC policy?

Within this objective, two related topics are significant: policy-related regulations on school enrolment and enforcement mechanisms for 4+4+4 compulsory schooling in Türkiye, and policies and policy measures that address Turkish children's schooling barriers.

For each topic, the basic policy analysis sequence has four stages of understanding gaps, effectiveness, and improvement areas of the policies: (i) establishing the existing policy measures related to school administrative regulations, (ii) assessing local official understanding of policy and programme features, (iii) analysing the actual implementation of the official policy and regulations, and (iv) assessing the overall policy implementation and making recommendations for improvement.

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative analysis takes advantage of the enormous wealth of data on the national children population and their families' experiences in Türkiye. The data make it possible to assess OOSC trends over time and focus on specific sub-categories of OOSC using a range of statistical techniques. The bulk of the quantitative data comes from the MoNE's official statistics. The MoNE provides very detailed annual summaries on enrolment across the entire system. This information is necessary for establishing overall trends and enrolment rates and is also available by province. The MoNE has also provided detailed data on student absences that are incorporated into the analysis of dropout risk (*see Dimensions 4, 5 and 7 in Figure ES1*).

The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) are the second primary source of quantitative data. The focus is on the most recent DHS survey (from 2018), but comparisons with earlier survey years (e.g., 2013) are also helpful in establishing trends. The DHS data are representative at the national and regional levels but not at the provincial level, so they do not have the same geographic reach as the MoNE data.

The quantitative analysis relies primarily on basic descriptive statistics and frequencies using the MoNE and DHS data. The DHS data are based on a clustered sample design that uses sampling weights, which must be incorporated in all analyses. The DHS data are also used in multivariate analysis of school attendance outcomes like current enrolment and grade attainment by age groups and gender. However, given the limited number of barriers available in the DHS data, this analysis is not presented in detail in the report's main body; the main findings are presented in Section 5's discussion about barriers. A more detailed description of the multivariate analysis methods, research objectives, limitations and results are provided in Appendix B.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative research explores why children in Türkiye are out of school or at risk of dropping out. The qualitative research aims to analyse the relationship between the causes, i.e., bottlenecks and barriers, and effects, i.e., being out of school or at risk of dropping out. The method applied aims to complement the quantitative analysis, which reveals the degree and extent of challenges related to OOSC, to deepen its findings by analysing the underlying bottlenecks and barriers hindering children's access to and completion of compulsory education in Türkiye.

The qualitative research focuses on a general analysis of the barriers and bottlenecks for children: children at risk of dropping out (Dimensions 5 and 7) and out-of-school children (Dimensions 3 and 6). In addition, the qualitative research provides four separate case studies on four sub-categories of out-of-school children who have been or are exposed to multiple vulnerabilities identified in line with the special interest and priorities of UNICEF: children with disabilities; child labour; children in conflict with the law; and child, early and forced marriages.

The thematic framework of the qualitative research is developed based on four major dimensions of barriers. These dimensions are based on the existing literature and draw on the guidance provided by the OOSCI, with some adaptation to the Turkish context. The four dimensions of barriers presented in the report are as follows:

i. Socio-cultural, social capital and health-related barriers (demand side)

ii. Economic barriers (demand side)

iii. School administrative regulations-related barriers (supply side)

iv. School supply, quality and relevance-related barriers (supply side)

Different from the existing literature, a fifth dimension is added concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education on the demand-side and supply-side factors. The "governance, finance and institutional set up" dimension is considered part of the enabling environment for the children's educational prospects and is separately structured for the policy analysis of educational governance in Türkiye.

This thematic framework guides the collection of new and extensive qualitative data on the barriers and bottlenecks and their qualitative analysis. The dimensions are developed from an extensive literature survey, which also informs and complements the qualitative analysis. In addition, the existing or missing policies relevant to those barriers and bottlenecks are explored as part of the qualitative research in the policy analysis section.

Qualitative analysis in this study aims to provide an evidence-based overview of all possible barriers to education for children in Türkiye by analysing a wide range of possible risk factors leading to those barriers. It should be underlined that the findings of the qualitative analysis cannot be generalized, nor are they experienced to the same degree by the overall population of children in Türkiye because the qualitative data collected and analysed for this study were collected from only a segment of the population of children who are specifically at risk of dropping out or who were out of school at the time of the interviews. In addition, the qualitative analysis presents the perceptions and experiences of those in the research sample, another factor preventing generalization. Still, the qualitative data help identify a comprehensive list of barriers classified under the demand-side and supply-side factors to inform policy measures through recommendations.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: MAIN FINDINGS

Table ES1 summarizes gross and net enrolment ratios (or rates) based primarily on the MoNE official Figures, augmented in 2013 and 2018 with calculations using the DHS data. The net enrolment rate pattern is quite similar for pre-primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary children: steady progress between 2012 and 2020, although the improvement between 2012 and 2020 is relatively small in lower secondary. For primary education, the pattern is different, showing declining net (and gross) enrolment rates since the 2013–2014 school year. This somewhat surprising finding appears to be caused by fewer 5- and 6-year-olds entering primary school, most likely due to pre-primary participation (which has expanded considerably in recent years).

Table ES1:
Net and Gross Enrolment Rates by School Year and Schooling Level (2012–2020)

Level/ Indicator	Enrolment Rates by School Year									
	2012–2013	2013–2014		2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019		2019–2020
		MoNE	DHS					MoNE	DHS	
Pre-primary (5-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	55.4	43.5	42.3	66.0	70.2	73.9	83.8	85.2	62.9	75.5
Net (NER)	39.7	42.5	37.9	53.8	55.5	58.9	66.9	68.3	50.7	71.2
Primary (6- to 9-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	107.5	111.9	116.0	101.1	99.2	96.0	96.9	98.4	102.3	97.4
Net (NER)	98.9	99.6	94.8	96.3	94.9	91.2	91.5	91.9	93.1	93.6
Lower Secondary (10- to 13-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	107.6	108.8	88.8	107.1	107.1	105.3	102.5	100.3	96.9	106.0
Net (NER)	93.1	94.5	83.6	94.4	94.4	95.7	94.5	93.3	88.7	95.9
Upper Secondary (14- to 17-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	93.8	100.3	89.9	104.8	107.3	103.7	104.5	108.9	92.8	110.6
Net (NER)	69.3	76.1	72.9	79.3	80.2	82.4	83.4	84.2	77.3	85.0

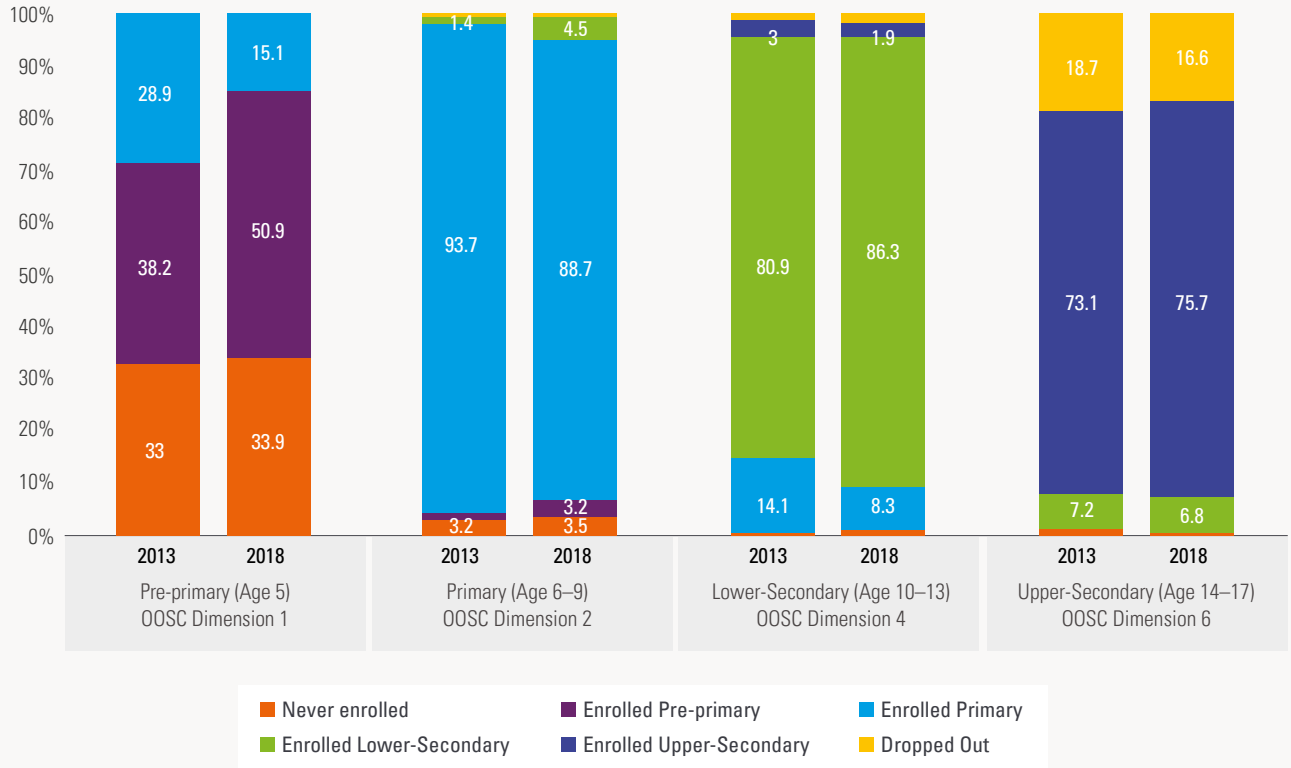
Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education, various years; DHS Surveys (2013, 2018).

Notes: All rates are directly taken from the MoNE official data except for 2013 and 2018 DHS summaries, which the authors calculate. DHS sample sizes for 5- to 17-year-olds were 10,183 (2013) and 8,086 (2018).

Detailed comparisons by gender across the same 2012–2020 period by education level show virtually identical enrolment rate patterns for boys and girls. The lone exception is for pre-primary, where 5-year-old boys are marginally more likely to be enrolled than girls, although this difference has narrowed to only about 2 per cent in 2019–2020. For primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary children, there is a very high level of gender parity.

Figure ES2 provides the estimates of out-of-school children (OOSC) rates by school level based on the DHS data from 2013 (the 2013–2014 school year) and 2018 (the 2018–2019 school year). Additional summaries are provided in Appendix A, Figure A3, using the MoNE national education statistics formal education summaries for the 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 school years.

Figure ES2:
Out-of-School Children Summaries by Age Category



Source: DHS (2013, 2018).

Notes: DHS sample sizes for 5- to 17-year-olds are 10,183 (2013) and 8,086 (2018).

The OOSC dimensions from the official framework include Dimensions 1 (pre-primary), 2 (primary), 4 (lower secondary), and 6 (upper secondary); the remaining dimensions (3, 5, and 7) are related to the risk of dropping out and are detailed in a separate section. Pre-primary is not a compulsory level of education in Türkiye for the period covered in this study, and therefore, it is not part of the official OOSC count. A decrease in early-age enrolment in primary school has accompanied the increase in 5-year-old enrolment in pre-primary. Based on the DHS data, however, the overall OOSC rate for 5-year-olds has changed very little between 2013 and 2018, and the MoNE data summaries confirm this pattern, especially in the most recent school year (*see Appendix A, Figure A3*). Therefore, The main takeaway is that the expansion in pre-primary enrolment has not substantially reduced the number of 5-year-olds out of school. Reducing early-age primary enrolment in favour of right-age pre-primary enrolment is a positive development, but there is still a sizeable segment of 5-year-olds that do not appear to be enrolled in any level.

For primary-aged children (ages 6–9), the OOSC comparison between 2013 and 2018 shows a slight increase in the percentage of children who are out of school, consistent with the decline in the net enrolment rate for the primary level detailed in Table ES1. Overall, the Dimension 2 summary shows that very few children aged 6–9 are not in school, and the 6- to 9-year-olds who are not in primary school are either pre-primary or out of school but are likely to enter primary eventually. The summary using the

MoNE data (*Appendix A, Figure A3*) reveals a very similar pattern between 2013 and 2019, with a decline in the share of 6- to 9-year-olds who are in primary and an increase in the percentage who are enrolled in pre-primary (over-age) or lower secondary (early entry or "underage").

In lower secondary (ages 10–13), very few children (1% or less) have never entered school, according to the DHS, and the percentage of children who have enrolled previously but are no longer enrolled is also very small (less than 2%). The remaining children are enrolled in school, and both the DHS and MoNE summaries show an increase over time in the percentage of 10- to 13-year-olds enrolled in lower secondary and a decrease in the percentage enrolled in primary school. These percentages are consistent with a slight increase in the net enrolment rate for lower-secondary schools between 2013 and 2019.

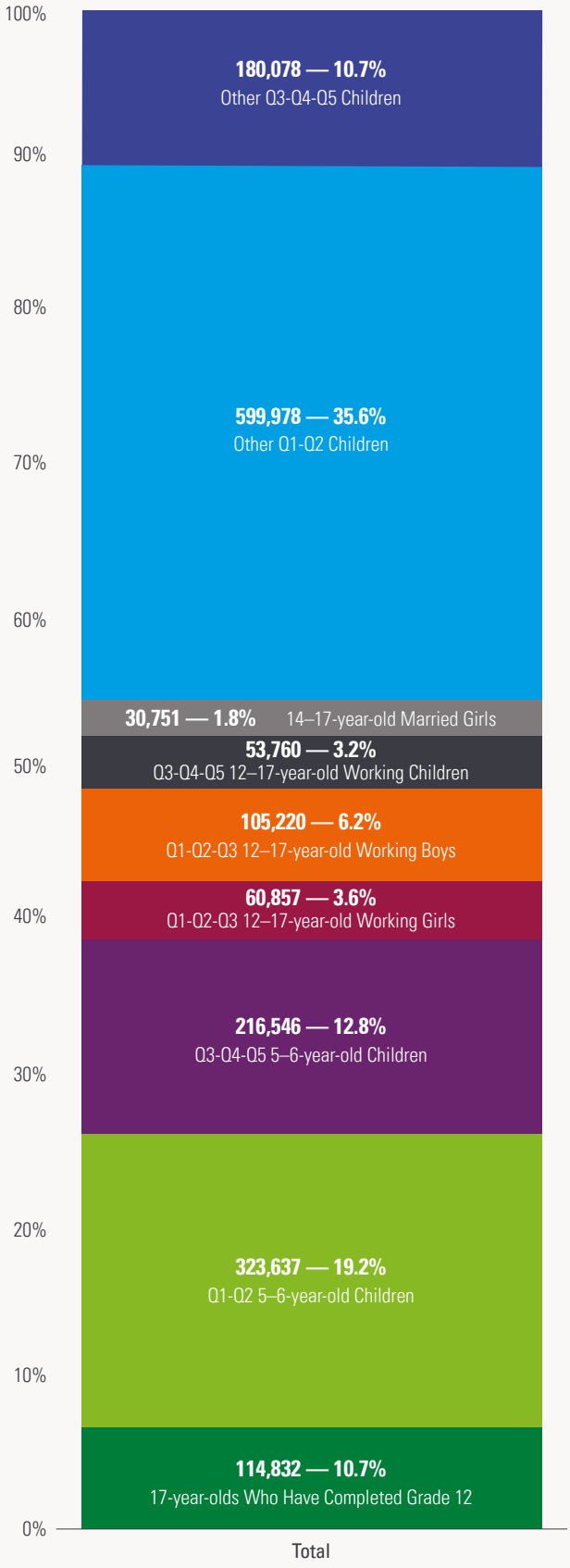
Dimension 6 concludes with upper-secondary-aged children (14–17 years). In both the DHS- and MoNE-derived summaries, there is a clear pattern of improvement over time. In each data source, the percentage of children enrolled in upper secondary has increased, while the percentage of over-age enrolment in lower secondary has decreased. Again, these percentages are consistent with an improving net enrolment rate during this period (*see Table ES1*) and mean fewer children are out of school.

One significant disagreement between the DHS and MoNE data for upper-secondary-aged children is the percentage who are out of school. In the 2018–2019 DHS, 16.6 per cent of 14- to 17-year-olds indicated they had enrolled in school previously but were no longer enrolled (or "did not attend" during the current school year in the DHS question format). In the MoNE, this proportion of 14- to 17-year-old children who are unaccounted for, which suggests they are out of school, is only 8.6 per cent in 2018–2019 (down from 9.7% in the 2013–2014 school year).

This discrepancy is significant for this study because upper-secondary-aged children likely make up the majority of out-of-school children, especially when considering that most of the primary-aged OOSC will eventually enter school, so it is crucial to estimate the size of this group accurately. Various possible explanations for the discrepancy between the DHS- and MoNE-derived figures for OOSC among upper-secondary-aged children are discussed in more detail in the main body of the report.

Figure ES3 concludes the OOSC summary among the national Turkish population with a detailed breakdown of out-of-school children by category. The disaggregation of the OOSC population is a counterpart to the overall total OOSC summary in Figure ES1. The summary is based on the roughly 1.6 million children out of school in the 2018–2019 school year, according to the DHS estimation, which ignores over-age enrolment.

Figure ES3:
Detailed Disaggregation of Out-of-School Children Aged 5–17, 2018–2019 DHS



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: Q1–Q5 refer to socio-economic status (SES) quintiles created by the DHS based on household possessions and access to services. The five quintiles include equal numbers of households and are ordered from lowest SES (Quintile 1) to highest (Quintile 5). Working children refers to children aged 12–17 who indicated they are engaged in paid labour.

Nearly 115,000 out-of-school children in 2018 were 17-year-olds who have completed Grade 12 and are no longer enrolled (or 10.7% of the total; see the purple bar at the bottom). In terms of out-of-school children categories, child labour and child, early and forced marriage are considered. Nearly 10 per cent of the OOSC in 2018 were 12- to 17-year-olds working in paid labour, with males making up the larger share. Another 31,000 girls aged 14–17 (or 3.2%) report being married and are out of school. Those aged 5–6 who are not (yet) in school comprise 32 per cent of the total OOSC, although this is weighted towards the poorest families (Quintiles 1 and 2). Finally, almost 600,000 "other" children from Quintiles 1 and 2 families are not in school and do not fit into any other categories (e.g., they are not working, unmarried, etc.). This group alone accounts for 35.6 per cent of the total. In contrast, the "other" OOSC from Quintiles 3–5 (middle and highest socio-economic status [SES] families) only account for 10.7 per cent of the total OOSC.

Overall, three groups of OOSC stand out in Figure ES3. First, there are the children who are reporting a specific barrier in the form of child labour and child, early and forced marriage: this group makes up about 15 per cent of the total or 240,000 children. The second group includes 5- and 6-year-olds likely to enter primary school at some point, so they can mostly be filtered out of the summary. The final group is mainly children from lower-income families (Quintiles 1 and 2) who are out of school, but no discernible barrier has been identified in the DHS. This final group is a critical group due to its size, and the barrier analysis in the remaining sections of this report will attempt to explain the main reasons why these children are not in school.

BARRIER ANALYSIS: MAIN FINDINGS

The demand-side factors are socio-cultural, human capital, health-related (*see Section 5.1*) and economic (*see Section 5.2*). The supply-side factors are grouped as school administrative regulations (*see Section 5.3*) and school supply and quality (*see Section 5.4*). In addition, although the qualitative field research did not include any specific questions on the COVID-19 pandemic – the research was designed before the pandemic outbreak – the effects of the pandemic on children's education still emerged from the qualitative data. These effects are analysed in Section 5.5 and include both demand-side and supply-side factors. As a result of analysing all those factors, some barriers could be observed from the respondents' statements in the qualitative research sample. It should be underlined that the qualitative data findings cannot be generalized to the overall population and only reflect the perceptions and experiences of the respondents in the research sample.

Among the **socio-cultural factors, gender-based norms** emerge as the most relevant factor affecting the children's educational prospects in Türkiye, according to the respondents' statements (*see Table ES2*). Although a considerable number of parents in the qualitative research sample only expect their children to get an education and to study, gender-based norms are still visible in terms of children's domestic responsibilities. For children with heavy domestic responsibilities, the older boys may be expected to work (outside or as family workers) and contribute to the family budget. Likewise, older girls are expected

to deal with domestic chores, mostly the caregiving of their siblings, particularly in crowded households or households where the mothers also work or have serious illnesses. Respondents reported irregular attendance, non-attendance and school dropout in both cases.

The qualitative data show that patriarchal, conservative or traditional norms seem to negatively affect girls in rural settings more, mainly starting from the lower-secondary level but primarily by hindering their access to education at the upper-secondary level. Even in cases where parents with strict conservative viewpoints were reported to send their daughters to school, the girls were still reported high parental pressure, which could result in forced school dropouts in case of problems at school.

From the qualitative data, a severe barrier stemming from gender norms is observed in child, early and forced marriages, especially for girls at the upper-secondary level. The analysis of the qualitative data shows that child, early and forced marriages are likely to occur in rural settings, but there were also instances in the qualitative data where the girls themselves decided to escape from home and marry, mostly in urban areas. In almost all cases of child, early and forced marriage, it was possible to observe that the educational prospects of the children were negatively affected.

Table ES2:
Gender-Based Norms-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Family expectations from children shaped by gender norms	**		*	***	**
Children's domestic responsibilities	**	*	*	***	**
Childhood, early and forced marriages (mostly girls)	*		*	***	**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Human capital as a demand-side factor includes different elements (*see Table ES3*). The qualitative data show that although many children and parents acknowledge the value of education for their children, it is mainly perceived to benefit the economic expectations of their future. Not valuing education, particularly by the children and their parents, depends on several reasons also conditioned by various economic concerns, such as education not being worthwhile regarding economic returns or disbelief in the benefits of university education, etc. As a result, it was interesting to observe among the out-of-school and at-risk children in the qualitative data that they aspired to professions that mainly did not require a university diploma.

Limited Turkish language skills for the children who stated that Kurdish or Arabic was the language spoken at home are reported to create risks for the children. However, the qualitative data show that the impact is more indirect, as it was usually the parents, mainly mothers, who were not competent in the Turkish language compared to the children.

Poor academic performance created serious risks for irregular attendance, non-attendance, or school dropout, particularly at the beginning of the upper-secondary level (mostly starting from Grade 9) and at particular school types, namely, vocational schools. In contrast, the qualitative data indicate that good academic performance has the potential to decrease non-attendance and school dropout, even among children from lower-income households.

Table ES3:
Human Capital-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Not valuing education	**		**	***	***
Limited language skills	*			*	
Low academic performance	**	*	**	***	***

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Qualitative data show that **family structure** is an essential factor that could affect children's education in Türkiye (*see Table ES4*). Living in crowded families, living in fragmented families with single parents, living with members of the family other than parents, or living with stepparents seem to have influenced the daily education routines of the children for reasons such as child labour, increasing domestic responsibilities or low motivation and academic performance at school, which could all act as reasons for irregular attendance or dropping out of school. An important aspect of family structure as a barrier to children's education is that it affects all children of all ages, school levels and school types. Gender differences in terms of the consequences of family structure can lead to disadvantages for girls (e.g., increasing domestic responsibilities) or boys (e.g., increasing risks of child labour).

Table ES4:
Family Structure-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Family structure	*	*	*	*	*

Note: The number of ***** refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Qualitative data show that when they exist, **health-related factors** can act as barriers to children's education, even though education services can be provided at home or in the hospital (see *Table ES5*). The most prominent barrier from the qualitative data is having disabilities, a significant reason for non-attendance and leaving school at a certain level of education. The attitudes of the families towards their children, school registration and school supplies for children with disabilities, and their adaptation to the school environment, particularly within the context of full-time educational practices through inclusion/integration, are important aspects. Illness can also affect the education routines of the children, mainly due to prolonged treatment processes, as a result of which the children with illnesses miss some school semesters. The gaps in their education create concerns, such as the need to overcome adaptation problems and compensate for lost learning.

An important observation is that disability and chronic illness among household members may also negatively affect the school attendance of children without disability or illness. In these cases, the children, both older boys and girls, could assume some care or economic responsibilities that can affect their schooling routines.

Based on the qualitative data, another aspect of health-related factors is the psycho-social effects, mostly due to poverty, and visible among some children who refrain from attending school due to a lack of basic educational equipment, clothing, or shoes. Traumatic experiences of children, as another component of health-related factors, can be observed to create serious psychological effects on children, which may considerably affect their school attendance and well-being at school. In this regard, the role of the school as a support mechanism for protecting the well-being of children is very significant. Pregnancy appears as a barrier for girls in the 14–17 age group, which results in school dropout.

Table ES5:
Health-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Disability of the children	***	**	**	***	**
Illness of the children	**	**	***	**	***
Psycho-social effects: the stigma of poverty	*	*	*	*	*
Traumatic effects	**	*	**	***	***
Pregnancy (for girls only)	*			**	*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

The qualitative data show that **social cohesion** is a relatively less risky barrier to children's educational prospects (*see Table ES6*). Most children in the qualitative research sample seem to have friends and enjoy spending time with them, which could also support their educational progress because they seem to study together and learn from each other. However, the children with few friends in the qualitative research sample, mostly the girls, seem to be negatively affected in terms of their social development and participation in social life and education, mostly due to the overly protective attitudes of their parents. Moreover, particular friendship types that are perceived to influence children towards education appear as a prevalent reason for school dropout, either by the children's will or by their parents. Security concerns are mostly relevant to girls, particularly in big cities or new environments, bringing a risk to children's school attendance. Last, peer bullying in the local community was not reported often.

Table ES6:
Social Cohesion-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Friendship circles	**		*	***	***
Difficulties in integration into local community and social life	**	*	*	**	*
Security concerns	*	*	**	**	**
Peer bullying					

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

The qualitative data highlight the **lack of resources and poverty**, which are **economic barriers**, among the most prevalent and serious barriers, with adverse effects on school attendance and enrolment of children in Türkiye (*see Table ES7*). The education of children of all ages living in low-income families with many household members seems to be negatively affected by economic deprivation. More specifically, the high cost of living and difficulties in affording regular living costs (including school expenditures) tend to pull mostly the boys of those households out of school, primarily due to the need to contribute to the family budget through working.

Based on statements from the qualitative research sample, child labour can be observed as a serious barrier, particularly for older boys (aged 14–17 and, to a lesser extent, for those aged 10–13) who are out of school, but it also affects the at-risk boys in both age groups. School-related expenses, which increase at upper education levels and in particular types of schools, can be observed as another economic barrier that affects girls and boys, regardless of whether they are out-of-school or at-risk children. Combined with other economic problems in households, but also due to family-related reasons, such as being in a single-parent household, having numerous siblings, not believing in the value of education, and being enthusiastic about earning money as soon as possible, most older boys leave school to work and contribute to family income. Even when they continue studying, they are still observed to have irregular or non-attendance or are enrolled in open schools.

Table ES7:
Economic Barriers: Lack of Resources and Poverty

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
High cost of living	***	*	**	***	**
School-related expenses	***	**	***	***	***
Child labour	***	*	**	***	**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

From the analysis of the factors leading to **migration and family mobility**, it is possible that high family mobility, mainly due to economic reasons, may create barriers to children's education (*see Table a8*). Specifically, seasonal family mobility seems to create irregular attendance or non-attendance for all sub-groups of children because it risks not being able to register at a school or risks school dropout (particularly at the upper-secondary level) due to irregular schooling and being subjected to seasonal child labour. Another barrier due to family mobility appears to be difficulties in adapting the children to a new city and school setting. Particularly for the children moving from rural areas or villages to bigger cities, they were reported to have poor academic performance and might need some time to catch up with their peers.

Table ES8:
Economic Barriers: Migration and Family Mobility Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
High levels of household mobility, particularly due to seasonal work	**	*	***	**	***
Difficulties in adaptation to a new school due to family mobility		*	**		**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

School enrolment issues are aspects of **school administrative regulations** that can present barriers to children's schooling in Türkiye (*see Table ES9)*. A positive observation from the qualitative analysis is that a majority of parents are informed about the enrolment procedures at the primary and lower-secondary education levels, mainly due to the facilitation of the address-based school enrolment system. However, as discussed above, there are concerns about this system, particularly the challenge of changing the children's schools.

At the upper-secondary level, the risk of dropping out is reported to be more associated with OOSC rather than school non-enrolment. A significant concern is the lack of awareness and in-depth information about particular types of schools, which could be supported through further guidance for the parents and children at the lower-secondary level to help them identify and better match the needs, capabilities and future aspirations of the children at the upper-secondary level. In addition, at times, the local placement system at the upper-secondary level was reported to create issues such as placement of the children in schools other than their actual preferences.

Over-age enrolment is mainly observed to stem from the gap years that the children had due to some reasons such as health, child labour, child, early and forced marriages, or family mobility. The qualitative data show that although short breaks are less likely to create school dropout, longer breaks (one year or more), which seem more prevalent from Grade 9 onwards, could create high risks for children to drop out of school.

Table ES9:
School Enrollment-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Lack of information by the families	*			**	**
Lack of information about Vocational Education Centres	**		*	**	*
Inflexibility of address-based school enrolment system (primary and lower-secondary levels)	**	*	*		
Local placement system (upper-secondary level)				**	**
Student transfer system (upper-secondary level)				**	**
Over-age enrolment	***		**	***	**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

The second component of school administrative regulations is **non-attendance** (*see Table ES10*). High levels of non-attendance or irregular attendance can be observed, starting from the lower-secondary level, particularly for the at-risk children (Dimension 5), but become a serious problem for at-risk children at the upper-secondary level (Dimension 7).

The quantitative data show how fragile those categories of children are, with high levels of unexcused non-attendance.

Non-attendance is more prevalent among boys as compared to girls. It is also possible to observe that although there are some common reasons for non-attendance at all education levels and types, there are also some specific reasons for different school types. The analysis shows that while non-attendance-related regulations were implemented flexibly at the lower-secondary level, more severe consequences of non-attendance-related regulations, namely class repetitions and school dropout, are likely to occur at the upper-secondary level.

Table ES10:
Non-Attendance-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Non-attendance	**		*	***	***

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Grade transition is the third component of school administrative regulations (*see Table ES11*). Qualitative analysis shows that it could act as a barrier, particularly for the at-risk children aged 14–17 and, to a lesser extent, for the out-of-school and at-risk children aged 10–13. Grade repetitions could end up with the referral of the children to open schools. Students' educational status, graduation, and diploma transactions can be followed via the Open Education Schools Information Management System.

Table ES11:
Grade Transition-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Grade Transition	**		*	***	***

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

School supply includes a variety of barriers in Türkiye, both in public and private schools and different types of schools, particularly at the upper-secondary level (*see Table ES12*). Regarding pre-primary, it is possible to observe an increasing trend in school enrolment. However, lack of school supply (mostly in city centres) and pre-school-related costs (although public ones are free) appear as reasons to limit pre-school enrolments.

Most of the school dropouts were observed to occur at the upper-secondary level, although there could be some instances at the lower-secondary level. From the qualitative data, some school supply-related factors that make non-attendance and dropout more prevalent at the upper-secondary level could be considered negative perceptions about vocational schools and some characteristics of open education. To the extent that vocational schools were associated with low academic success, parents and children were reported to refrain from enrolling in those schools, creating a risk for children to remain out of school. In addition, students studying in those schools were reported to face more risks of non-attendance and dropping out due to poor academic success or gender imbalances.

Regarding open schools, the qualitative data point out mainly two categories of students at those schools: students in the formal education age and students outside the formal education age. Although open education, in general, provides an education option for both categories, increasing the transfer of the children in the former category from regular schools to open schools was reported to necessitate further efforts to trace or support the educational progress of those children.

Table ES12:
School Supply-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Pre-school-related costs		*			
Negative perceptions about vocational schools				**	***
Commuting time/distance to school	**		*	**	**
Lack of transportation to school (including school services and education with transport)			**	**	***

Note: The Number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Another school supply-related factor is the distance to school and commuting times. The qualitative data show that there could be different barriers for children living in city centres to rural settings. Appearing as a problem starting from the lower-secondary level, but more prominently at the upper-secondary level and more for girls, distance to school brings together the need for transportation and lack of transportation to schools due to limited provision of school services, high costs of transportation, or security concerns for the children. These factors could act as reasons for irregular attendance, non-attendance, and school dropout. Although there are some support measures, such as education with transport or schools with boarding facilities for children living in rural settlements, it is not always possible to observe from the qualitative data that they were fully effective in ensuring the children's access to education, particularly that of the girls at the upper-secondary level. Education with transport is mainly observed to be restrained by the geographical difficulties or limitations in its actual practice, and the parents might not prefer schools with boarding facilities, given concerns about the girls' safety.

Teachers are observed to be an essential factor, which could either help children establish a strong bond with education or cause demotivation towards education and studying, mainly through healthy communication with the students (*see Table ES13*). Limited communication between teachers and children was reported to be influential in non-attendance, school changes, and school dropout due to their psychological or pedagogical impact on the children, which could often be reflected in low academic performance or problems at school. The qualitative data show that the teacher factor positively influenced all levels, particularly at the primary and upper-secondary levels. More importantly, it becomes an issue for the older age groups as the children become more sensitive during adolescence. Teachers' level of educational competence was reported to affect children's academic performances at all levels rather than creating risks for school dropout.

Table ES13:
Teacher Characteristics-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Limited communication between teacher and children	**	**	**	***	**
Teachers' attitudes	***	**	**	***	**
Teachers' educational competencies	*	**	*	*	*

Note: the number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Security in school and on the way to school, as the fourth component of school supply and quality, expresses itself in the form of bullying and the existence of "gangs" and emerges as a prominent barrier for all age groups and both sexes and more prominently at the upper-secondary school level (*see Table ES14*). The types of bullying seem to differ for girls and boys, with the boys being more engaged in or exposed to physical bullying. Exposure to bullying at school, depending on the extent of exposure, is usually observed to result in irregular attendance, non-attendance or school changes, and in some cases, in school dropout. Although few security threats on the way to school are reported, they are also observed to create barriers for children, mainly for girls at the lower- and upper-secondary levels.

Table ES14:
Barriers Related to Security in School and on the Way to School

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Bullying/school environment	**	*	**	***	***
Bullying/on the way to school	**	*	*	**	**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

With regards to the COVID-19 pandemic and demand-side barriers, the qualitative data show that throughout the pandemic, distance education as a measure against the challenges of the pandemic did not benefit all students equally (*see Table ES15*). In general, the adverse effects of the pandemic were more evident for at-risk children. Although some children could follow online courses, many children and their parents stated that their children's participation was either irregular or impossible.

In Türkiye, where approximately 18 million students entered the distance education period, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) established fixed and mobile EBA Support points for students with access and device support. EBA could access up to 8 GB via GSM operators, and tablets with webcam and GSM internet support were distributed. In addition, EBA Live Course services were provided to make it possible to attend TRT EBA and synchronous courses. Although students could follow their courses thanks to these tools and supports, some students and families stated that participation in the mentioned courses was somewhat irregular or impossible.

Lack of equipment was observed to be the major barrier for all age groups of at-risk children. Although the abovementioned TRT EBA was observed to be a helpful distance education alternative, it was observed that there were children who were not able to follow the synchronous courses. It is also observed that the loss of income for families during the pandemic increased their dependency on child labour and labour in the context of both wage labour and domestic work. Here, it is possible to see that due to the pandemic, at-risk boys aged 10–13 became more likely to enter the labour market, a factor likely to affect their educational prospects negatively after the pandemic. For the at-risk girls, it was the increasing domestic responsibilities that were observed to create obstacles to attending distance education.

All children were observed to have experienced some socio-emotional stress, restricting their chances of socialization and well-being. Not being able to attend online courses seems to considerably decrease children's motivation for studying. Thus, even the children who were already successful and regularly attended school before the pandemic were observed to lose their motivation, also being concerned about their chances of obtaining good scores at school placement exams such as the LGS. Lack of support from the parents was also riskier for the children who recently started a new level of education, such as the Grade 1 or Grade 5 children.

Table ES15:
COVID-19 Pandemic and Demand-Side Barriers

Domain	Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
		D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Economic barriers	Lack of equipment and internet		*	**		***
	Loss of income	**	*	***	**	***
	Child labour	**		***	**	***
Socio-cultural barriers	Increasing domestic responsibilities	**	*	***	**	***
Social cohesion	Socio-emotional stress	*	*	***	*	***
Human capital	Lack of support from parents		**	**		*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and supply-side barriers, at the time, it was observed that many students had difficulties regularly attending and following distance education (*see Table ES16*). As a supply-side intervention, one of the support measures was providing technical equipment to students. However, it could be observed from the qualitative data that it did not quantitatively meet the actual amount of demand among children and parents. Although many schools acted and developed mechanisms to keep in contact with the children and parents, such efforts were not always sufficient to keep all children in the system, and lack of communication with parents, usually due to the indifference of parents, resulted in irregular attendance or non-attendance for distance education.

The interruption of face-to-face theoretical education activities in vocational education centres has diminished the educational opportunities for children. The suspension of student transfers during the pandemic also appeared as a reason hindering children's access to distance education. In addition, interruption of the schools' extracurricular activities, their cooperation with other education stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, and the projects implemented at the central level appeared as factors that could affect efforts towards ensuring school enrolment and attendance of children during and after the pandemic.

Table ES16:
COVID-19 Pandemic and Supply-Side Barriers

Domain	Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
		D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
School supply	Inadequate amount of equipment and internet		**	**		**
	Lack of communication with the parents		*	**		**
	Interruption of apprenticeship opportunities in VECs			**		**
	Freezing school transfer operations			**		**
	Suspension/delay of activities and projects	*	*	*	*	*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Such a multidimensional and evidence-based analysis enabled the identification of a set of barriers and bottlenecks to children's education in Türkiye. These are classified as demand-side and supply-side barriers and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. The analysis has also identified factors in the enabling environment regarding education governance and policies in Türkiye by following the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative Operational Manual (UNICEF, 2015) and adapting it to the case of Türkiye. As a result of this exercise, it is possible to present some significant observations, some main findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis, and policy recommendations to overcome the barriers to children's education in Türkiye.

The **first observation** is that the out-of-school phenomenon has been prominent for the last four years of 12-year compulsory education in Türkiye. The quantitative and qualitative data show that boys and girls usually stay at school until the end of the lower-secondary level. However, the last four years of compulsory education, the upper-secondary level education, are undermined by various factors and sometimes by a combination of those factors. Some of the prominent factors in this regard are the misperception of parents and children about compulsory education; traditional/conservative gender norms that could hinder girls' education after the lower-secondary level; factors such as child labour and child, early and forced marriages that cut the ties of children with school and education; and school supply-related factors, particularly at the stage of transition into the upper-secondary level.

The **second observation** is that the out-of-school phenomenon is related to the misperceptions of the value of education among parents, particularly for children at the upper-secondary level. It is found that the value of education is mainly associated with socio-economic benefits rather than education as a right and essential for every child's well-being. Thus, many children and sometimes their parents underestimate the overall benefits of education for children by believing that education does not guarantee a job or income, even for university graduates, referring to the high levels of youth unemployment in Türkiye. A consequence is that (mostly) boys, particularly those from lower SES quartiles, become engaged in income-generating activities, mostly in low-paid or informal jobs, rather than studying, as early as 13–14 years; girls could be married, which considerably limits their opportunities to obtain an education at the upper-secondary level.

A **third observation** is that the out-of-school phenomenon is not equally prevalent among school types at the upper-secondary level. Some factors that affect such an observation are seen with the rather pessimistic perceptions of the parents and children about those schools and their academic success levels, which admit students without any exam; children's lack of interest in the discipline that they study at those schools; and other factors such as economic deprivation, poor academic performance, or security concerns at school.

The **fourth observation** is that regional differences still exist in Türkiye regarding school access and education provision at all levels—both demand-side and supply-side factors related to school administrative regulations and supply. In rural settings and villages, the conditions for accessing education seem to be different and more challenging compared to the city centres in terms of the (un)availability of all types of schools and different education levels, particularly at the upper-secondary level; the distance to school and transportation to school; the engagement of children in seasonal or unpaid family work; and the wider prevalence of gender norms that hinder girls' education.

The **fifth observation** is that it is a combination of different barriers that cause school dropout, which is to say that children may face multiple risks, making it challenging to disentangle various factors when determining how much importance to assign to a particular barrier and its effect on pulling (or pushing) children out of school. Many of the barriers, on both the demand and supply sides, are interrelated in that they can be observed as each other's causes or consequences, requiring a relational and multidimensional overview before producing policy measures to eliminate the barriers. For example, poor academic performance affects the educational prospects of children in some school types at the upper-secondary level, but if the socio-economic level of the parents is high, it may not act as a reason to drop out of school. So, in addition to measures to increase children's academic performances at school, other measures should be considered, such as supporting the children's school costs or eliminating gender-based norms to ensure girls' school attendance.

The **final observation** is that some barriers seem more systemic, structural or circular in that they are not only related to one particular aspect of life but also expand into different spheres of life. A consequence is that some factors observed in the qualitative analysis may act as causes and consequences for the out-of-school phenomenon. Examples include child labour; child, early and forced marriage; and children in contact with the law. A better term for these factors may be bottlenecks, as they tend to be the product of multiple influences that eventually have a two-way relationship with children's education. For example, children may not attend or leave school due to the need to engage in income-generating activities in the labour market. In that sense, the capacity of education or school, in a more specific sense, to protect children from the negative impact of such bottlenecks becomes even more evident.

From the findings of this study, it is possible to develop a set of policy recommendations for education policy stakeholders based on evidence to assist them in enhancing the educational opportunities for children in Türkiye, increasing their school attendance rates, and contributing to the elimination of the out-of-school phenomenon among children. The policy recommendations below are categorized under separate domains of policy action, sometimes referring to more macro policies strengthened with some recommended policy actions developed to overcome the identified barriers to children's education in Türkiye. It should, of course, be noted that recommended policies and policy actions necessitate active cooperation and coordination among a variety of policy actors, including public institutions, civil society organizations, international organizations and the private sector to pool their respective resources at the policymaking, implementation and monitoring stages to ensure a better future and the well-being of children in Türkiye.

The policy domains for recommended policy actions are presented in the report under seven headings, namely awareness raising and information, socio-economic support, skills development, capacity development, school supply and resources (including school supply, vocational education, open education, curricula, teachers, and education provision during and after the COVID-19 pandemic), data collection and monitoring, and advocacy and collective action.

Chapter 1
Introduction

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All United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. The agenda provides a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future."[1] The Agenda is operationalized through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address global poverty, inequality and climate change challenges.

SDG 4 focuses on "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all," including universal primary and secondary education.[2] Despite steady progress in recent decades to expand educational access at all levels, much work remains to reach universal participation at the primary and secondary levels. In 2018, nearly 260 million children, youth and adolescents were out of school, equivalent to one-sixth of the global population of primary- and secondary-aged persons (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019).

Monitoring is critical for achieving the various goals that are part of SDG 4. A key component of these efforts is the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSCI), which was launched in 2010 by UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS). The OOSCI supports the interrelated tasks of developing profiles of out-of-school children, linking quantitative and qualitative data with various barriers, and identifying effective policies to address the OOSC problem (UNICEF-UIS, 2015). Using innovative statistical methods, the OOSCI also supports countries in their study and analysis of OOSC and children at risk of dropping out. The initiative has country, regional and global dimensions and aims to achieve action-oriented research and capacity development-related results (UNICEF, Formative evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative [OOSCI], 2018).

OOSC research is usually carried out in countries where large numbers of primary- and secondary-school-age children are not currently in school, and in some cases, a sizeable group of pre-primary school-age children has never entered school.[3] The OOSC situation in Türkiye is very different since the compulsory education in Türkiye covers three education levels, i.e., primary, lower- and upper-secondary education. In Türkiye, education is compulsory for children with special education needs once children are 36 months old. Almost all Turkish children complete primary and (lower) secondary education levels. The children who are not in school are concentrated in the upper-secondary ("high school") age range, which is not officially part of the OOSCI framework (MoNE, 2019c). However, across all levels of schooling in Türkiye, vulnerable groups are not enrolled in school or are not attending regularly (UNICEF, 2012, 2019a). These include children with disabilities (CwD); children engaged in various forms of child labour; child, early and forced marriage; and children in contact with the law, among other groups. Furthermore, the intense migration of approximately four million Syrian (and other) refugees since 2011 – including just over 1.2 million school-aged children (5–18 years) – has affected schooling rates in Türkiye (UNICEF, 2019a).

These dual challenges facing Türkiye that are related to out-of-school children – addressing problems related to inclusion while simultaneously dealing with the massive and intense migration of Syrian children UTP – call for different research and policy responses. Accordingly, these two issues are dealt with separately in different OOSC reports. The present report focuses on OOSC among the national population in Türkiye.

The overall objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of OOSC among the national population in Türkiye based on a quantitative and qualitative (mixed methods) research framework. The study will focus on barriers hindering children's access to – and completion of – compulsory education in Türkiye, which includes a large number of often interrelated factors such as poverty; child labour; child, early and forced marriage; bullying; school quality and access; cultural norms; and language. Cross-cutting issues like gender are also emphasized.

1 Please see https://sdgs.un.org/goals.

2 Ibid.

3 Türkiye is one of only three countries (out of 71) that were classified as having Very High Human Development on the Human Development Index (HDI) scale (see UNDP, 2019) at the time of a recent formative review of completed (or under preparation) OOSC studies (UNICEF, 2018). Sevently per cent of the countries with studies were classified as Low or Medium on the HDI Index.

The added value of this study is that it provides the most detailed, comprehensive overview of the out-of-school children issue among the national population of children in Türkiye, emphasizing the 2018–2021 period with references to earlier years to show trends. The quantitative analysis takes full advantage of the considerable data that are available, including the 2018 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and 2020 Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Data, while the qualitative analysis is based in part on extensive data collection that was conducted in November 2020 and May 2021, focusing on the underlying reasons that explain OOSC according to children, their parents, and a range of key informant interviews (KIIs). The level of detail in the mixed-methods analysis will make it possible to present trends in OOSC outcomes and barriers over time, develop more detailed profiles of out-of-school children and the barriers they face, and identify any new and emerging barriers. Another contribution is highlighting the barriers that appear to be the most consequential, which is especially critical for policy work since the State's counterparts (and other stakeholders) will need to prioritize their actions and resources.

In addition to documenting the current situation with OOSC in the national population of Türkiye and the underlying causes of different categories of OOSC, a core objective of the study is to provide policy guidance. This report provides an integrated analysis that assesses the effectiveness and applicability of current policies based on the main findings from the mixed-methods data analysis, which forms the basis for formulating an updated set of policy recommendations.

Finally, the study's findings will be used by UNICEF Türkiye to support the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in evidence-based education policymaking, programme design, and implementation to ensure that the national population of children in Türkiye access their right to education. This is consistent with the framework of the Türkiye-UNICEF Country Programme, the Global OOSCI 5 Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE), and Türkiye's Education Vision 2023. In this context, the results of the study will be helpful to the MoNE and UNICEF; related ministries and their relevant divisions, units and provincial-level representatives; educators, planners, civil society groups/non-governmental organizations (NGOs), development partners, both national and international; and the donor community.

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Chapter 2
Türkiye: Country Context

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The Türkiye context overview addresses five core topics:

1. Population and economy
2. Public finance and education spending
3. Education policies and policy priorities
4. Education system
5. Educational measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic

These contextual features provide an important background for the analysis of out-of-school children. Recent economic, demographic and public spending trends, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, all potentially affect the State's ability to address the OOSC situation. The Turkish education system and the policies for education in Türkiye set the stage for the quantitative and qualitative analysis of OOSC among children in later sections.

2.1 Population and Economy

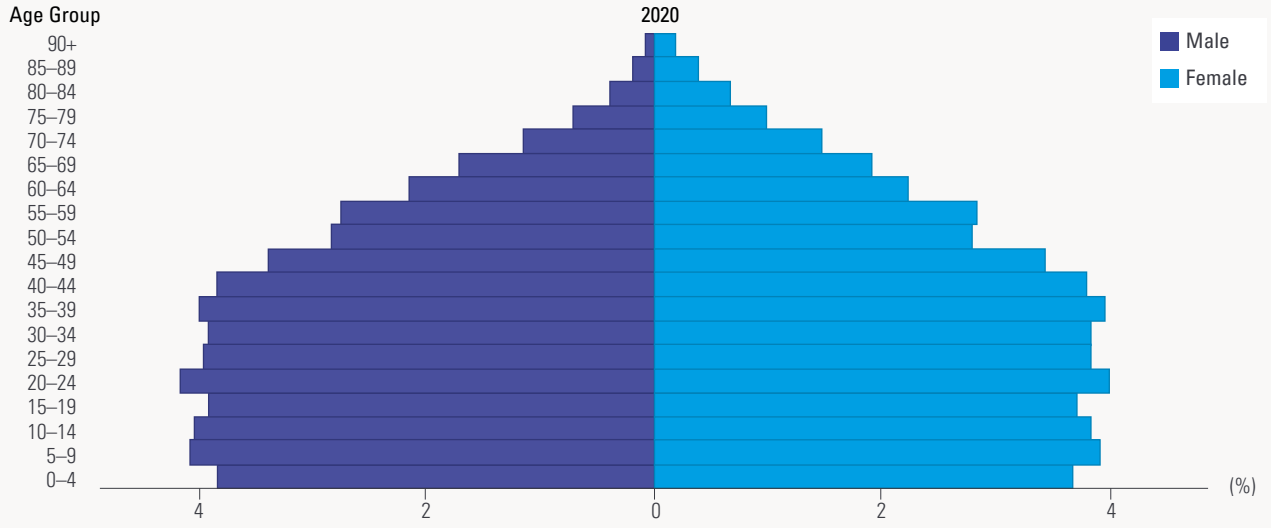
2.1.1 Population Dynamics

Türkiye's 2020 population was 83.6 million (Turkish citizens only), with annual population growth rates roughly decreasing to 5.5 per thousand in 2020. Türkiye is the seventeenth largest country in the world (by population), with an average age of 32.7 years. In 2020, the child population (ages 0–17) was 22,750,657 (27.2 % of the entire population). The ratio of children between the ages 0–4, 5–9, 10–14, and 15–17 between 2015 and 2020 is shown below:[4]

- 0–4 Age Group: from 27.9 to 26.9 per cent
- 5–9 Age Group: from 27.7 to 28.7 per cent
- 10–14 Age Group: from 27.0 to 28.2 per cent
- 15–17 Age Group: from 17.4 to 16.2 per cent
- Türkiye's annual population growth rate, birth rate, and 0- to 14-year-old population share are significantly higher than OECD country averages.

The population pyramid in Figure 1 shows a relatively balanced population by age group across the 0–40 range. Males make up a marginally more significant proportion – just over 50.1 per cent – of the overall population and new births.

Figure 1:
Population Pyramid Turkish Population (2020)



Source: TURKSTAT (2021a).

4 https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Istatistiklerle-Cocuk-2020-37228#:~:text=Adrese%20Dayal%C4%B1%20N%C3%BCfus%20Kay%C4%B1t%20Sistemi,7'sini%20k%C4%B1z%20%C3%A7ocuklar%20olu%C5%9Fturdu.

Population projections for children are relatively stable and show a continuation of the declining trend in the child-to-total population ratio (TURKSTAT, 2021a). Table 1 shows that the population of children aged 0–17 will grow moderately until around 2030 and is forecast to decline steadily. Because the adult population will grow more over this period, the projected ratio of children to the total population will steadily decline to roughly 25 per cent in 2030 and eventually to 19 per cent in 2080.

Table 1:
Projections of the Child Population (Turkish Citizens)

Year	Total Population	Child Population (Age 0–17)	Ratio of Children to the Total Population (%)
2023	86,907,367	23,484,561	27
2030	93,328,574	23,863,565	25.6
2040	100,331,233	23,366,571	23.3
2060	107,095,998	21,862,293	20.4
2080	107,100,904	20,333,232	19

Source: TURKSTAT, 2021a.

Türkiye's annual population growth rate, birth rate and proportion of the total population, children, are significantly higher than OECD country averages. For example, in the European Union, children (ages 0–17) comprise about 19 per cent of the total population, compared with 28 per cent in Türkiye (UNICEF, 2019a).

One important demographic feature not considered in "national" population summaries and projections is the population of Syrians UTP. As of March 2021, there were 3,664,873 Syrians UTP in Türkiye (MoI, 2021), and the Syrian UTP population is the largest single population of refugees anywhere in the world (UNHCR, 2019). The Syrian UTP population includes 1,235,789 school-age children (aged 5–18 years) (MoI, 2021), which makes their integration into the Turkish education system a critical policy issue. In addition, the birth rate among the Syrian UTP population is higher than in the Turkish population (UNICEF, 2019a).

2.1.2 Turkish Economy

According to the World Bank, Türkiye is classified as an upper-middle-income country with a gross national income (GNI) of US$ 808.7 billion, translating to a per capita GNI of US$ 9.690 in 2019.[5] Recent economic performance has been mixed. Between 2010 and 2017, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged more than 6 per cent per year, but the economic situation has deteriorated significantly in recent years. Growth has declined, and in late 2018, the economy entered a recession, with negative growth in 2019. As a result, unemployment increased from roughly 10 per cent in 2017 to nearly 14 per cent in 2018, where it has remained (through early 2020). The employment ratio in 2018 was 47.4 per cent, which is lower than in developed countries and is due, in part, to relatively low workforce participation among women (UNICEF, 2019b).

Macroeconomic indicators further deteriorated with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020. GDP per capita fell to US$ 7,225 in 2020.[6] TURKSTAT (2021b) announced the unemployment rate for the same year as 13.2 per cent. However, unemployment can be expected to rise with the end of short-term wage allowance and the end of the banning of dismissal in 2021. Compared to the last reference year, the employment rate decreased by 2.9 per cent and was 42.8 per cent in 2020 (TURKSTAT, 2021b). Overall, macroeconomic balances seem vulnerable, especially when the rising inflation rate, a potential rise in unemployment and contracting investments are considered. The Consumer Price Index was announced as 15.61 per cent in February 2021 by TURKSTAT (rate of change compared to the same month of the previous year).[7]

5 https://data.worldbank.org/country/Türkiye (accessed on 3 April 2021).

6 https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/Türkiye/overview#1.

7 https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Tuketici-Fiyat-Endeksi-Subat-2021-37380 (accessed on 3 April 2021).

Furthermore, according to a report by TÜSİAD (2021) on the Turkish economy, in 2020, the budget deficit was TL 172.7 billion (3.5% of GDP); the primary deficit was TL 38.8 billion (0.8% of GDP); the exports declined by 6.1 per cent (US$ 170 billion); the imports increased by 4.4 per cent (UD$ 220 billion dollars); and the foreign trade deficit was nearly US$ 50 billion. Imamoğlu (2020) suggests that possible consequences of the pandemic include, but are not limited to, loss of income, imbalanced growth, an increase in the current account deficit and pressure on the currency, which might be expected to hurt unemployment trends.

Against this background, poverty and income distribution appear to be persistent problems in Türkiye. The latest official Income and Living Conditions Survey of TURKSTAT/TÜIK for 2019 shows that up to 17 million people live below the poverty line in Türkiye (Sönmez, 2021); Türkiye's GNI coefficient is 0.395, and the poverty rate (those with an income less than 60% of the median income) is 21.3 per cent.[8] As for child poverty, according to the OECD data for 2018, 25 per cent of children aged 0–17 in Türkiye were identified as living in low-income families (Ministry of Development, 2018). Such income inequality and poverty in Türkiye can also be expected to intensify with the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank projects that the poverty rate will hover around 8.5 per cent in 2021 and 2022 due to the negative labour income impacts of the pandemic, particularly affecting those households that lost jobs or stopped actively seeking work.[9] Accordingly, child poverty is likely to increase, creating considerable risk for school dropouts seeking to access the labour market as child labour.

2.2 Public Finance and Education Spending

According to the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020 (MoNE, 2020a), the budget of the MoNE was TL 125,396,862,000 (US$ 14,708,964,247[10]) for 2020. Its ratio to GDP and the central government budget were 2.57 and 11.45, respectively, and there has been a trend of a decrease in both ratios in the last three years. Personnel expenditures constituted 72.9 per cent of this budget, whereas the investment budget of the MoNE was only 4.7 per cent (TL 5.8 million). There has been a dramatic decrease in this investment budget in the last three years (2018 value: 8.4%). Out of this investment budget, the projected percentage for 2020 for the Primary and General Secondary Education Sector was 64.7 per cent and 33.1 per cent for the Vocational and Technical Education Sector. The support of the Special Provincial Administrations and individuals to education was TL 1 billion and TL 232 million in 2019, respectively.

As noted in the Country Note of the OECD on Türkiye in 2021,[11] Türkiye spent more on educational institutions compared to the average of OECD countries in 2018, and expenditure on educational institutions (including tertiary education institutions) constituted 5.4 per cent of GDP (the average of OECD countries is 4.9%). The difference mainly depended on high expenditures on tertiary education. In 2019, this percentage increased to 6.0 per cent, which is 4.4 per cent of the state's expenditure on education (TURKSTAT, 2020a).

The total expenditure on educational institutions (except for tertiary education institutions) as a percentage of GDP by the source of funds is given in Figure 2. The Figure shows that Türkiye was above the average of OECD countries but would be below the OECD average without private expenditure on education. Private expenditure in pre-primary institutions constituted 26 per cent of total spending on these educational institutions, higher than the OECD average (17%). In 2019, household education expenditure was 20.8 per cent (TURKSTAT, 2020a).

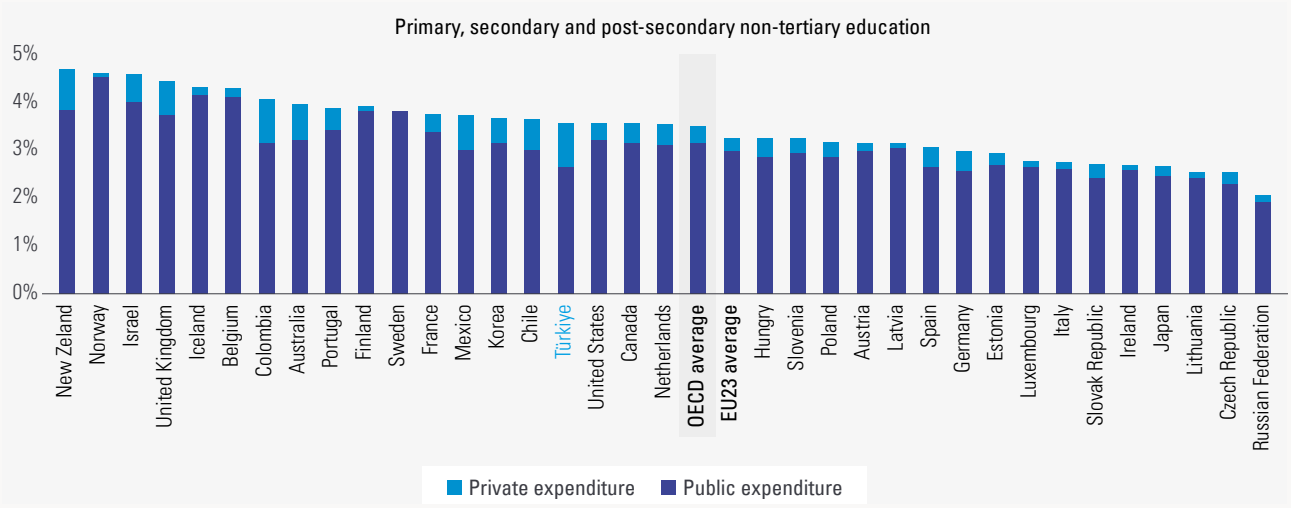
8 https://tuikweb.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=33820 (accessed on 3 April 2021).

9 https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/Türkiye/overview#3.

10 Based on the exchange rate dated 16 July 2021 of the Central Bank of the Turkish Republic (https://www.tcmb.gov.tr).

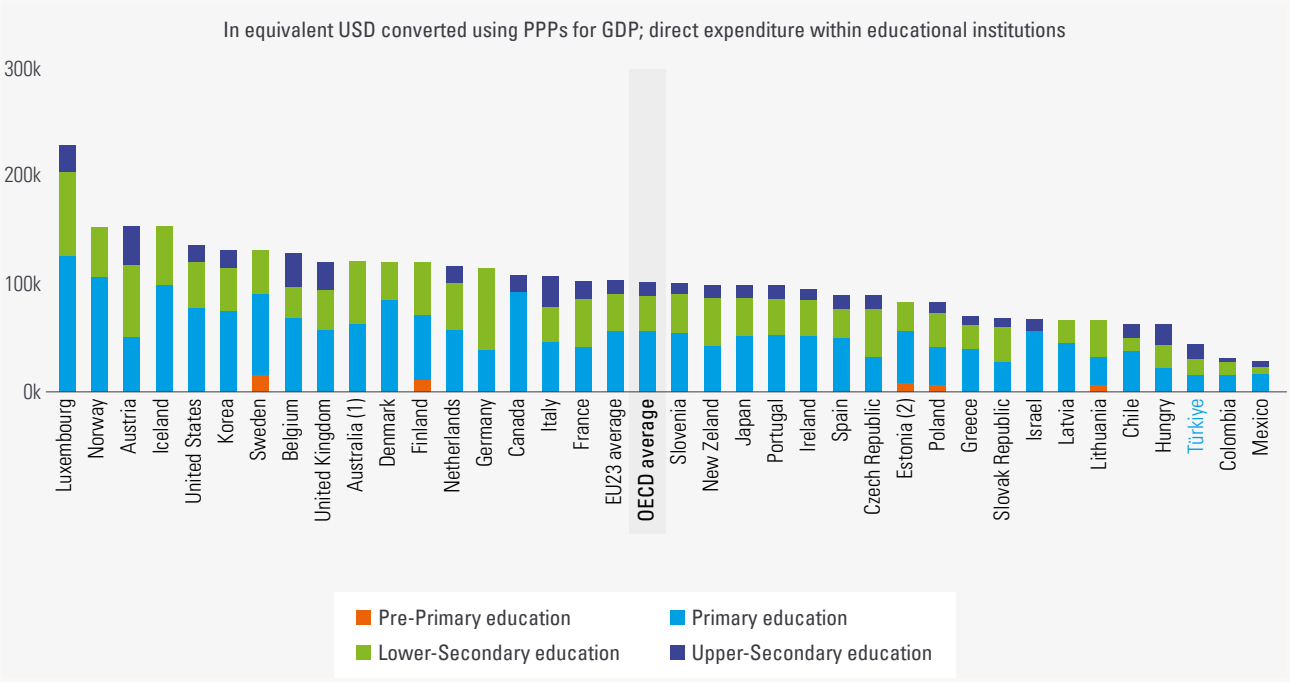
11 https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/bf1a85fe-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/bf1a85fe-en#section-d12020e21708.

Figure 2:
Total Expenditure on Educational Institutions as a Percentage of GDP by Source of Funds (2018)



Source: OECD (2021).

Figure 3:
Cumulative Expenditure on Educational Institutions per Full-time Equivalent Student Between the Ages of 6 and 15 (2018)



Source: OECD (2021).

Regarding the expenditure per student, in 2018, the Republic of Türkiye spent US$ 4,707 per student on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which was about half the OECD average of US$ 10,454 (OECD, 2021; *see Figure 3*). Education expenditure per student was US$ 2,071 in 2019 (TURKSTAT, 2020a).[12]

12 It is hard to explain this dramatic decrease by the exchange rate as US$ 1 was equal to TL 5.2810 and TL 5.2109 at the end of 2018 and 2019, respectively (for Exchange rate: https://www.tcmb.gov.tr/wps/wcm/connect/tr/tcmb+tr/main+menu/istatistikler/doviz+kurlari/gosterge+niteligindeki+merkez+bankasi+kurlarii).

The share of households in education expenditures in Türkiye (20.8%) and the considerable difference in the expenditures made by households on education seem to be among the factors preventing equal educational opportunities. The education expenditures of households differ significantly according to their level of income. In 2019, the education expenditures of the quintile with the highest income constituted 4.4 per cent of their consumption expenditures, whereas this allocation was only 0.9 per cent of the quintile with the lowest income. Furthermore, 64.5 per cent of the household expenditure on education was made by the quintile with the highest income, and the quintile made 3.2 per cent with the lowest income (TURKSTAT, 2020b).

In addition to the MoNE budget allocated for education, the Republic of Türkiye intended to reduce poverty and increase access to education via social welfare provision. The expenditure for family and education aids by MoFSS[13] for the last three years is presented in Table 2. The expenditures increased from TL 4,133,860 million in 2018 (MoFLSS, 2019b) to TL 5,323,853 million in 2019 (MoFLSS, 2020). In 2020 (MoFLSS, 2021), the expenditures decreased, but the lack of data for Aid for Lunch should be considered. On the other hand, this expenditure is expected to be too low since the schools were closed most of the year as a measure against the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the expenditures in 2020 can be expected to be higher due to high inflation. Overall, the economic recession seems to have also affected the budget for social support.

Table 2:
Expenditure for Family and Education Aids (MoFSS)

		2018	2019	2020
		(million TL)		
Family Aids	Aid for Food	350.78	343.22	629.30
	Aid for Housing	83.66	80.12	88.39
	Aid for Fuel	29.22	20.28	18.52
	Aid for Women Whose Spouses Have Died	737.2	376.9	340.7
	Aid for Families of Soldiers	178.2	121.2	125
	Maternity Aid	506.4	477.4	450.9
	Aid for Children of Soldiers	8.9	4.2	2.7
	Aid for Orphans	58.4	52.2	64.1
	Aid for Electricity Consumption	0	686.5	1.254.9
Education Aids	Aid for Basic School Needs	11.86	11.45	14.51
	Conditional Education Aid	643.10	614.46	730.26
	Aid for Lunch	805	962	No data
	Aid for Schools Books	350	881	430
	Aid for Transportation, Boarding and Food	1.12	0.75	0.34
	Aid for Transportation of Children with Disabilities	368.75	692	322
	Other	1.27	0.17	0
Total		4,133,860	5,323,853	4,471,620

Source: MoFSS (2019, 2020, 2021).

The expenditure for supporting children to live with their families instead of under institutional care was TL 1,096,121,923 in 2018, TL 1,389,135,169 in 2019 and TL 1,639,908,593 in 2020.

13 Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) name was changed to Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) as of 21 April 2020. A note for the readers that for the reference documents dated before April 2021, the Ministry is referred as MoFLSS.

2.3 Education Policies and Policy Priorities in Türkiye

2.3.1 11th National Development Plan (2019–2023)

In Türkiye's 11th Development Plan covering the period 2019–2023 (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye-Department of Strategy and Budget, 2019), there are 95 policies and measures on education.

The policies related to basic and secondary education are as follows:

1. Access to education will be provided at all levels based on opportunity equality.
2. Educational environments that consider children's mental and physical development will be established.
3. The performance gap among schools will be reduced at all levels by increasing the quality and opportunities of schools.
4. Educational content and curricula will be prepared per global developments and needs and based on national, moral and universal values.
5. Human and physical resources will be strengthened so that individuals in need of special education can benefit from educational services.
6. The motivation and professional development of teachers and school administrators will be enhanced, and the social status of the teaching profession will be strengthened.
7. Policies will be determined based on data, and an impact analysis of policy implementations will be done to build an efficient and effective education system.
8. A lifelong learning approach aiming at the continuous development of individuals' personalities and abilities will be spread to all segments of society.
9. A School Development Model will be established in which all stakeholders actively participate in the educational processes.
10. The guidance and counselling system will be strengthened to carry out the educational and non-educational process efficiently and to increase the readiness of children.
11. An effective measurement, monitoring and evaluatio system will be established to diversify and increase students' achievements.
12. Structural transformation and employment mobilization for production will be initiated in vocational and technical education.

According to the Plan, "the sector with the highest increase in public investments will be the education sector in the plan period. At the same time, as of the 2020–2023 school years, the education sector will have the largest share in total investment programs," two of which can be accepted as the concrete indicator of the policy to prioritize education in Türkiye.

In the Plan, the target for pre-primary education enrolment and full-time schooling rates at primary-, lower- and upper-secondary education levels is 100 per cent by 2023. This target is set based on one of the policies defined for education (*Enrolment and completion rates will be increased at all educational levels, and absenteeism rates will be reduced*). It can be deduced that this policy indirectly covers children who are at risk of dropping out of school and who are out of school.

2.3.2 Ministry of National Education Strategic Plan (2019–2023)

In the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of National Education (2019–2023; MoNE, 2019a), there are seven educational goals, which are listed below:

1. It will be ensured that all our students acquire **knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours** appropriate to the values of our civilization, the common values of humanity and the requirements of the era.
2. Effective and productive **management, organizational structure and processes** will be dominated in accordance with contemporary norms.
3. In **pre-school and basic education**, our students' multidimensional (cognitive, emotional and physical) development will be sustained.
4. Students will be raised through a **secondary education** system that prepares them for life and higher education in line with their interests, abilities and capacities, that they bring solutions to social problems and contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of the country.
5. The physical, emotional and cognitive development of individuals will be supported by increasing the effectiveness of **special education and guidance services**.
6. **Vocational and technical education and lifelong learning** systems will be designed in accordance with the needs of the society and the requirements of the labour market and information age.
7. **Private education** system will be restructured in line with international standards.

The objectives under these seven goals cover targets mainly related to an educational approach, access to education, quality of education, curriculum development, special education, guidance and psychological counselling, and educational and school management.

The performance indicators, base values, and target values in the Plan related explicitly to the scope of the study are given in Table 3.

Table 3:
Performance Indicators, Base Values, and Target Values in the MoNE Strategic Plan (2019–2023)

Performance Indicators	Base Value	Target for 2023
3- to 5-year-old schooling rate	44.02	55
Rate of first-grade students who completed at least one year of pre-primary education	63.25	100
Enrolment rate of 6- to 9-year-old children	98.35	100
Rate of primary school students with absence of 20 or more days	6.2	4
10- to13-year-old schooling rate	98.62	100
Rate of lower-secondary school students with absence of 20 or more days	13	5
14- to 17-year-old schooling rate	88.22	99.99
Rate of upper-secondary school students with absence of 20 or more days	34.4	20
Number of students in vocational and technical upper-secondary education receiving scholarship	1.400	8.400
Participation rate in lifelong learning	5.8	8

These performance indicators can be accepted as reflections of the policy: "Enrolment rates in primary and lower-secondary schools will be increased, and absenteeism rates will be reduced." A similar policy is defined for the upper-secondary school level: "Efforts will be made to increase the participation of all students in upper-secondary education, especially girls and groups that require special policies, and to reduce absenteeism and class repetition." School completion is mentioned in the Products and Services section as "Ensuring that students attend and complete educational institutions."

2.3.3 Türkiye Education Vision 2023

The second document the Ministry of National Education published in 2019 is Türkiye's Education Vision 2023 (MoNE, 2019b). The document underlines the Strategic Plan with the educational philosophy and policy provided in detail. The main goal for 2023 is "to raise science-loving, skilled, and ethical individuals who take an interest in culture and are willing to use present and future skills for the well-being of humanity." The efforts to reach this goal will be based on the philosophy that "the primary subject and object of education is the human being." The prominent issues in the document are education from a holistic perspective, learning as a lifestyle, the significance of teacher and school manager roles, learning occurring outside of schools, the combination of national and universal values and norms, establishing Design-Skill Labs, and building a School Development Model.

Türkiye's Education Vision 2023 is made up of the following components:

Data-Based Management with Learning Analytics Tools	Special Education	Secondary Education
Measurement and Evaluation	Special Talents	Natural Sciences and Social Sciences, Upper-Secondary Schools
Human Resources Development and Management	Foreign Language Education	Imam Hatip Lower- and Upper-Secondary Schools
School Finance	Digital Content and Skills-Backed Transformation of the Learning Process	Vocational and Technical Education
Inspection and Institutional Guidance Services	Early Childhood	Private Education
Guidance and Psychological Counselling	Basic Education	Lifelong Learning

For all the components above, 44 goals have been set to be reached by the end of 2023. **The three-year targets of the Educational Vision document can be summarized as follows:**

1. The difference in quality among the schools will diminish.
2. Schools will be transformed into a context where students take part in happily.
3. Vocational secondary schools will become a point of attraction.
4. The pressure of high stakes examinations will diminish.
5. Children will display skills of the contemporary era.
6. Teachers and school heads will experience professional satisfaction.
7. Early childhood education will become pervasive.
8. Children with special needs will be catered with opportunities for high-quality education.

> In the document, there is no specific attribution to children who are at risk of dropping out of school and who are out of school except for the construction of boarding schools in order to reduce "the school dropout rate among disadvantaged students."

2.3.4 Teacher Strategy Paper (2017–2023)

As a consequence of the policy to improve the competencies of teachers and the status of the teaching profession, the MoNE published its Teacher Strategy Paper (2017–2023) (MoNE, 2017), which provided a roadmap to realize the policy.

There are six fundamental components defined in the document:

The document defines three goals with eight specific objectives and 35 actions to be taken between 2017 and 2023. **These objectives are the following:**

1. Ensuring the employment of highly qualified and well-trained teachers who are most suitable for the teaching profession

2. Ensuring the continuous personal and professional development of teachers

3. Ensuring a positive perception towards the teaching profession and strengthening the status of the profession

The policies and actions in the documents mentioned above are mainly developed to address supply-side barriers. There are also efforts regarding demand-side barriers. In order to overcome the economic barriers, many other interventions, such as Conditional Cash Transfers for Education, have been given by the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) to families who cannot send or who have difficulties sending their children to school due to financial difficulties since 2003.[14] Payments are made every two months so children do not exceed four days of unexcused absence per month. The financial support at the basic education level is TL 55 for boys and TL 60 for girls per month. The support is TL 70 for boys and TL 90 for girls per month at the upper-secondary education level. In addition, in the MoFSS Strategic Plan for 2019–2023, the target set for girls' school attendance rates benefiting from Conditional Cash Transfer for Education Aid is 96 per cent for 2023, of which the base value is 91 per cent for 2018 (MoFLSS, 2019a). According to the 2021 Annual Report of MoFSS, the cost of this financial support reached TL 898.61 million in 2021[15] for the citizens of Türkiye.

14 "The aim of the CCTE programme is to encourage school enrolment and improve 'pupils' attendance to support them on their path to a brighter future. Families receive financial support through debit cards when their children regularly participate in classes. When children stop attending classes, case workers reach out to their families to find out the reason and help them find solutions to keep their children in school and refer them to other services and support they may need." https://ec.europa.eu/echo/field-blogs/videos/conditional-cash-transfer-education-ccte-programme-refugee-children-Türkiye_en.

15 https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/100242/2021-yili-faaliyet-raporu.pdf.

2.4 Education System in Türkiye

2.4.1 Overview

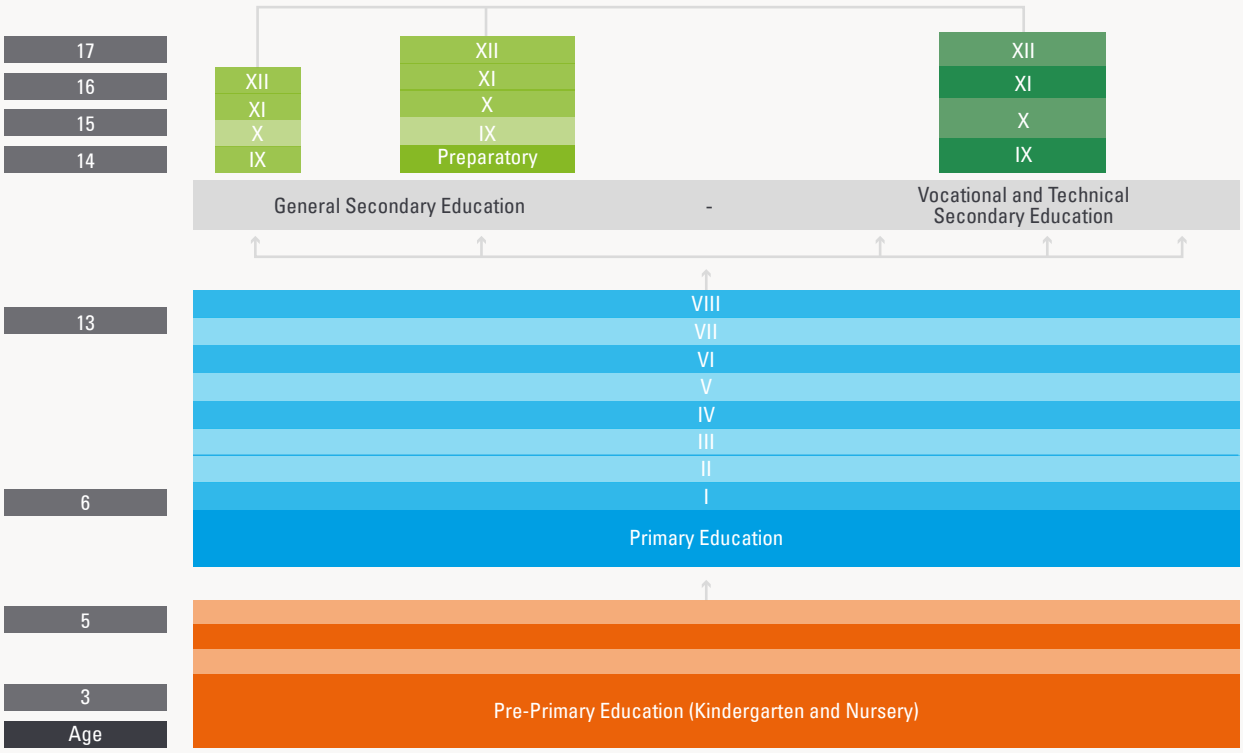
In Türkiye, the National Education System is structured by the National Education Basic Act No. 1739[16] and is divided into formal and non-formal education components. Formal education includes pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary, and higher education levels. As stated in Regulation No. 30388 on Lifelong Learning Institutions,[17]nonformal education institutions of the MoNE include public education centres and advanced technical schools for girls.

A key feature of the education system in Türkiye is the 4+4+4 compulsory education system that was approved in April 2012 and has been operational since the 2012-2013 school year. The 12 years of compulsory education correspond to four years of primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary, which replaces the previous eight-year requirement (through to the end of lower secondary).

Figure 4 provides a basic system schematic from the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.[18] The three compulsory levels are briefly described. The first eight years are considered "basic education," which covers "primary and lower-secondary school" levels, and the last four years cover the "upper-secondary" level.

According to the Primary Education Law No. 222,[19] there is a legal obligation and sanction for the parents/caregivers for the children not sent to school at primary and lower-secondary education levels. There is no sanction in the regulations for children not sent to school at the upper-secondary education level.

Figure 4:
Education System in Türkiye (Pre-Primary Through Upper Secondary)



Source: OECD (2021).

16 https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.1739.pdf.

17 Published in the Official Gazette on 11 April 2018. https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=24507&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5.

18 http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2020_09/04144812_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2019_2020.pdf.

19 https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.4.222.pdf.

For primary and lower-secondary education levels, the procedure starts with informing the *mukhtar* in villages or the local authority (*mülki idare amirliği*) in other places about the situation. In the following three days, the *mukhtar*/civilian authority notifies the parent/caregiver about the administrative fine for the child not being sent to school (except for a valid excuse accepted by the school management). If the parent/caregiver still does not send the child to school despite the notification of the *mukhtar*/ the civilian authority, s/he gets an administrative fine of TL 15 for each day of absence. The parent/caregiver who insists on not sending the child to school or not informing the school management about the reasons for not sending the child to school is given an administrative fine of TL 500. If the parent/caregiver refuses to answer the questions of the *mukhtar*/the civilian authority or makes false statements, s/he receives an administrative fine of TL 100. Although the procedure is clearly defined above, there is not much data on implementing administrative fines.

Pre-primary education is not compulsory in Türkiye. On the other hand, pre-school education is compulsory for children with special education needs who are 36 months and older. Depending on the development and characteristics of children, the pre-school education period can be extended.[20] The State has committed to a universal one-year (compulsory) pre-primary programme, which has not been implemented yet, but the number of children attending pre-school education increased to 1,629,720 in the 2019–2020 academic year, compared to 1,077,933 in the 2012-2013 academic year, and the 5-year-old enrolment rate has increased to 71.22 per cent, as opposed to 39.72 per cent in the 2012-2013 academic year. According to the Vision 2023 document of the MoNE,[21] piloting for a compulsory pre-primary programme was planned for the second semester of the 2019–2020 school year, and countrywide implementation was supposed to start at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. However, this has not yet been achieved. Based on the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020,[22] the overall pre-primary enrolment of 1.6 million is divided fairly and equally between kindergarten and nursery classes. Across the sector, there are four broad categories of pre-primary institutions.

Over 80 per cent of enrolments are in public schools, with the largest share in kindergarten and nursery classes affiliated with the MoNE. In addition, community-based institutions also provide pre-primary or care services.

Nearly 80 per cent of the private pre-primary enrolment is in kindergartens and nursery schools affiliated with the MoNE. The remaining private institutions include crches affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Services or were opened per the Labour Law, no 4857.[23]

Primary education spans four years, covering first, second, third, and fourth grades. Nearly 95% of overall primary enrolment (in the 2019–2020 school year) was in public primary schools, and 5% was in private primary schools. Overall, private education enrolment is the largest category in private pre-schools and general secondary schools (*see Figure 5*). In addition, international and minority students have additional enrolment opportunities.

Lower-secondary education continues upon completion of primary education and has a four-year duration (Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8). There are general lower-secondary schools and religious (Imam Hatip) lower-secondary schools at the lower-secondary education level. Once again, the largest segment of the enrolled population is in the public lower-secondary school category that is part of the General Directorate of Basic Education, which makes up roughly 75 per cent of the students. The other main public lower-secondary category is the Imam Hatip secondary schools, under the Directorate General of Religious Education umbrella, accounting for nearly 15 per cent of enrolment. The remaining lower-secondary students are enrolled in private and open education secondary schools.

Upper-secondary education has been compulsory for four years (covering Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12) since the 2012-2013 school year. At the upper-secondary education level, students have more options compared to at the lower-secondary education level; there are Anatolian, Anatolian vocational and technical, Anatolian religious (Imam Hatip), multi-programme Anatolian, science, social sciences, fine arts, sports, music, and performing arts upper-secondary schools. In addition, students in Vocational Education Centres can achieve an upper-secondary diploma and a mastership certificate if they pass the compulsory courses determined by the MoNE. According to the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019-20, 24.2 per cent of the population is enrolled in open education secondary schools. Accordingly, out of the remaining 75.8 per cent, the enrolment is the highest in Anatolian, vocational and technical, and religious (Imam Hatip) upper-secondary schools, at 34.4 per cent, 21.9 per cent, and 8.9 per cent, respectively.

20 https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=24736&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5.

21 http://2023vizyonu.meb.gov.tr/doc/2023_EGITIM_VIZYONU.pdf.

22 http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2020_09/04144812_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2019_2020.pdf.

23 https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.4857.pdf.

Special education programmes are available at all levels (from pre-primary through upper secondary).[24] Although it is essential for individuals with special education needs to continue their education at all types and levels through inclusive/special education, special education schools and special education classes can be opened for these individuals. In addition, home education services are offered to students of the compulsory education age who have special education needs and cannot benefit from formal education institutions due to health problems; classrooms are opened within hospitals for these students. According to the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020, 2.3 per cent of pre-primary, primary, lower- and upper-secondary education students have special needs. They are in special education schools, special education classes in regular schools, or regular classes with their peers.

Open education consists of education and training activities that are carried out using face-to-face and distance education methods and techniques. Open education schools apply the same curriculum as formal education institutions. Individuals can complete their education through formal education or open education. Open schools provide diplomas for students equivalent to those in the formal education system. The students registered in open schools are included in the national formal education statistics of the MoNE, and 9 per cent of the students (1,583,805 students) are enrolled in open education.

There is no upper age limit for registering at open education schools. Open education schools provide opportunities to individuals who have not completed their education for various reasons. Students who have reached the age of 14 and are outside the compulsory primary education age (Primary Education Law No. 222) are directed to open education secondary schools to complete their education (Pre-School Education and Primary Education Institutions Regulation No. 29072).

Open education schools at the upper-secondary level are provided through Open Education High School, Vocational Open Education High School, and Open Education Imam Hatip High School. These schools offer distance and face-to-face educational opportunities to secondary school graduates, high school dropouts, and individuals with high school or higher education levels (individuals who want to receive education in different fields). In addition, students excluded from the formal education system for various reasons are directed to open education schools under the Regulation on Upper Secondary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education.

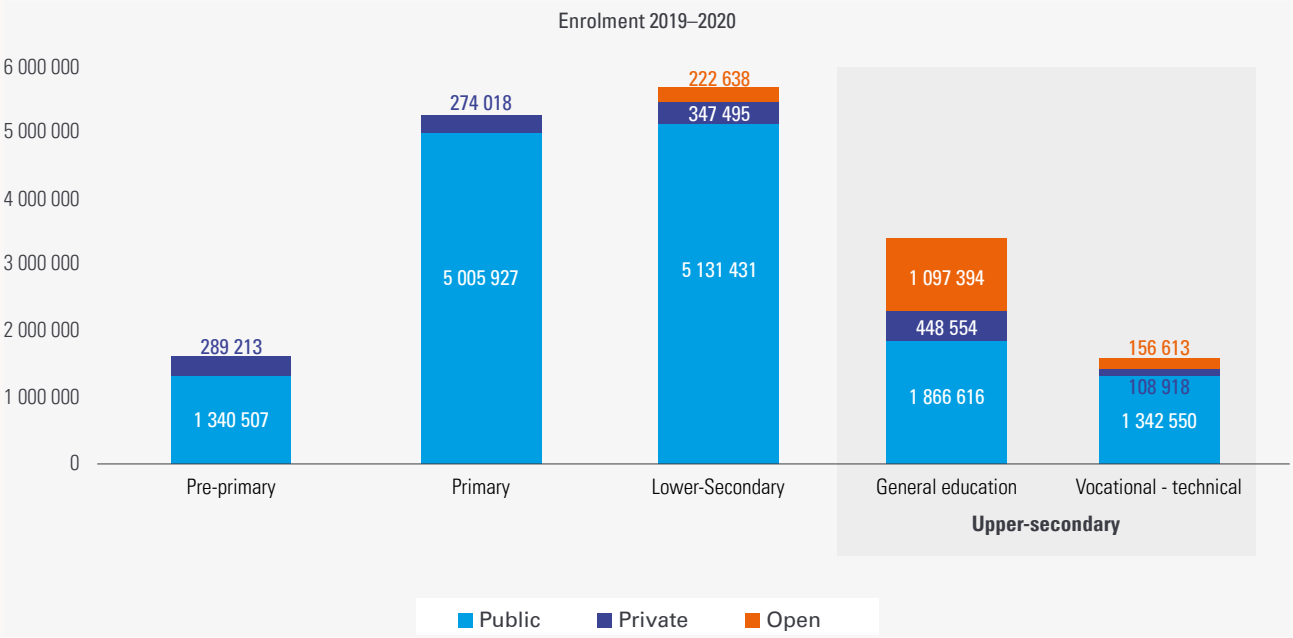
Because there is no formal education institution where students in open-education high schools who are outside the formal education age can continue their education, there is no time limit for such students to complete their education. For the 2020-2021 school year, students paid a fee of TL 55 every semester for both open lower and upper-secondary education. Students registering for the first time paid TL 60 for the first semester.

Figure 5 summarizes total enrolments by schooling level and type for the 2019–2020 school year. Across the primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary levels, total enrolments are relatively similar at over five million, consistent with the 4+4+4 compulsory education requirement. Enrolment rates are the highest in pre-primary education (17.7%) and the lowest in primary education (5.2%).

The MoNE established an education management information system (e-School/*e-Okul*) in 2007 to carry out administrative transactions and keep records of students starting from pre-school enrolment until graduation from Grade 12. The system also allows students and parents to access academic achievement and absenteeism information.

24 Published in the Official Gazette on 07 July 2018. http://orgm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2020_06/24163215_ozel_eYitim_yonetmeliYi_son_hali.pdf.

Figure 5:
Summary of Enrolment by School Level and Category (2019–2020)



Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

2.4.2 School Supply

According to the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020,[25] there were 18,241,881 students, 1,160,293 teachers, 762,174 divisions, and 68,589 schools in the 2019–2020 school year. The distributions according to education level and average number of students per teacher, section and school are given in Table 4.

The average number of students per teacher is the highest in primary schools (17.1), whereas the average number of students per school is the highest in upper-secondary schools (327).

The MoNE provides accommodation at schools for vulnerable children at lower and upper-secondary education levels to enhance access to education. These boarding schools embody boarding houses on their premises. During the 2019–2020 school year, 328,141 students (2.9% of the population) stayed in boarding houses, using 60.1 per cent of the capacity. The distributions among the Directorate Generals (DGs), the average number of students per boarding house and capacity use are given in Table 5. The gender balance regarding the use of boarding houses was remarkable; girls constituted 50.4 per cent, and boys constituted 49.6 per cent. These similar percentages could show an equal demand from society for education based on gender. On the other hand, according to Regulation No. 2016/9487 on Boarding, Scholarship, Social Aids and Boarding Houses in Public Schools,[26] only citizens of the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are allowed to stay in boarding houses.

25 http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2020_09/04144812_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2019_2020.pdf.

26 Published in the Official Gazette on 25 November 2016. https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/3.5.20169487.pdf.

Table 4:
Statistics on Students, Teachers, Sections and Education Level (2019–2020)

	# of Students	# of Teachers[27]	Average # of Students per Teacher	# of Classes	Average # of Students per Class	# of Schools	Average # of Students Per School
Pre-Primary Education	1,629,720	98,825	-	91,737	-	32,554[28]	-
Primary Education	5,279,945	309,247	17	245,240	24	24,790	213
Lower-Secondary Education	5,701,564	371,590	15	233,168		19,268	284
Upper-Secondary Education	5,630,652	380,631	11	192,029	19	13,046	327

Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

Table 5:
Statistics on Boarding Houses (2019–2020)

	# of Boarding Houses	Student Capacity of Boarding Houses	# of Students in Boarding Houses	Average # of Students Per Boarding House	Capacity Use (%)
General Directorate of Basic Education	295	84,167	39,170	133	46.5
General Directorate of Secondary Education	998	189,816	131,270	132	69.2
General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education	831	132,885	77,746	94	58.5
General Directorate of Religious Education	908	136,526	79,076	87	57.9
General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services	33	2,896	879	27	30.4
TOTAL	3,065	546,290	328,141	107	60.1

Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

2.4.3 Enrolment

According to Regulation No. 29072 on Pre-Primary and Primary Education,[29] Children aged 57–68 months are enrolled in kindergarten, nursery classes, and practice classes until the end of September of the registration year. After the registration of children residing in the registration area of the school who will start primary school in the next academic year, 36 to 56-month-old children can be enrolled in kindergarten and practice classes, and 45 to 56-month-old children can be enrolled in nursery classes, which have sufficient physical facilities. Primary education officially covers the ages of 6–9.

Lower-secondary education continues upon completion of primary education and officially covers the ages of 10–13. Children who have not exceeded 14 years of age can register in lower-secondary schools.[30]

According to Regulation No. 29871 on Upper Secondary Education Institutions,[31] individuals under 18 can register in upper-secondary schools and attend until age 22, but only students who graduate by taking the conditional pass examination at the end of the school year.

27 Permanent and contractual teaching staff.

28 School/Classroom.

29 Published in the Official Gazette on 26 July 2014. https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=19942&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5.

30 http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2020_09/04144812_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2019_2020.pdf.

31 Published in the Official Gazette on 28 October.2016. https://ogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_11/03111224_ooky.pdf.

Regarding open education, according to the Primary Education Law No. 222 and the Pre-School Education and Primary Education Institutions Regulation No. 29072,[32] students who have completed and are out of the compulsory primary education age at the age of 14 can enroll in Open Education Secondary Schools to complete their education, depending on the request of their parents. Secondary school graduates, high school dropouts, and individuals with high school or higher education levels (who want to receive education in different fields) can enroll in open education high schools.[33]

Enrolment in special education institutions/classes is based on the educational assessment and diagnosis conducted by the Guidance and Research Centres of the MoNE.

2.4.4 Absence

Regulations related to absence vary in terms of education level in Türkiye.

Primary Education: According to the Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 29072 on Pre-School Education and Primary Education Institutions,[34] the non-attendance limit is 15 days a school year. Students who do not attend school for at least one semester without an excuse (being abroad, having a medical condition, or being under arrest as specified in Article 27/5) repeat the class.

Lower-Secondary Education: According to the Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 29072 on Pre-School Education and Primary Education Institutions,[35] for the student who does not attend school for 20 days in a school year without an excuse, the teachers of the student decide whether the child repeats or passes the grade in the last week of the second semester.

Upper-Secondary Education: According to Regulation No. 29871 on Upper Secondary Education Institutions of the Ministry of Education,[36] students whose absence period exceeds 10 days without excuse and 30 days in total, regardless of their course scores, are deemed unsuccessful and their parents are notified in writing. However, the total absence period is applied as 60 days (provided that the period of absence without an excuse does not exceed 10 days) for those who have a patient record in university hospitals, training and research hospitals or full-fledged state hospitals for a disease that requires continuous treatment or organ transplantation; who need inclusion and special education; who are taken under protection and care under the official reports of social services, police, or security units; and who are imprisoned. Students deemed unsuccessful due to absenteeism and who have the right to continue their education can continue in the following academic year. Those who do not have the right to continue their education are dismissed from the school and sent to an open education high school or a vocational open education high school. For students with special education needs who continue their education through full-time inclusive education and students enrolled in special education vocational and technical Anatolian high schools, the non-attendance limit is 70 days a school year, on the condition that absenteeism without excuse does not exceed 20 days.

The students at the upper-secondary level can repeat a grade only once. If they fail twice, they are directed to open education high schools or vocational education centres at the end of the school year.[37]

32 Published in the Official Gazette on 26 July 2014. https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr.mevzuat?MevzuatNo=19942&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5.

33 Published in the Official Gazette on 28 October 2016. https://ogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_11/03111224_ooky.pdf.

34 Published in the Official Gazette on 26 July 2014. https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr.mevzuat?MevzuatNo=19942&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5.

35 Published in the Official Gazette on 26 July 2014. https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr.mevzuat?MevzuatNo=19942&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5.

36 Published in the Official Gazette on 28 October 2016. https://ogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_11/03111224_ooky.pdf.

37 In such cases, the registration is automatically referred to open upper secondary schools. The student can prefer to continue their education in Vocational Education Centres (VECs). However, the registration to VECs is not done automatically.

2.5 Educational Measures Taken During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Türkiye

Many countries have taken various precautions to combat the spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 was categorized as a "pandemic" by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11 March 2020. One of the precautions taken by countries worldwide was to close schools. China was the first country to close schools (on 16 February 2020) in response to COVID-19 (Schleicher, 2020). According to UNESCO data (2021), schools were closed in 173 countries (out of 210) at the beginning of April 2020, and this affected 1,484,715,875 students around the world (84.8% of the total students enrolled). The numbers fluctuated throughout 2020, and in mid-April 2021, there were 29 country-wide closures (involving 177,208,409 affected students), and schools were partially open in 74 countries.

In Türkiye, school closures (no face-to-face teaching and learning) in primary, lower- and upper-secondary education levels started on 16 March 2020, and the total duration of school closures reached 38 weeks by mid-April 2021 (UNESCO, 2021). For early child education (ECE,) distance education was given for 57 days during the pandemic, and face-to-face education was continued for the rest. The schools were closed for face-to-face teaching and learning until the end of the 2019–2020 school year (19 June 2020), except for public and private pre-school education institutions and private courses. These institutions were allowed to start education programmes beginning on 1 June 2020, and the 2020-2021 school year started with distance education on 31 August 2020, with an optional three-week catch-up education programme to compensate for the learning losses due to the closure of schools. Schools were partially open for face-to-face teaching and learning from 21 September 2020 to 20 November 2020 and closed again until the beginning of the second semester (15 February 2021). Since then, schools have been partially open for face-to-face teaching and learning, and education at all levels has proceeded in a blended form (limited face-to-face and nationwide distance education).

Chapter 3
Analytical Framework

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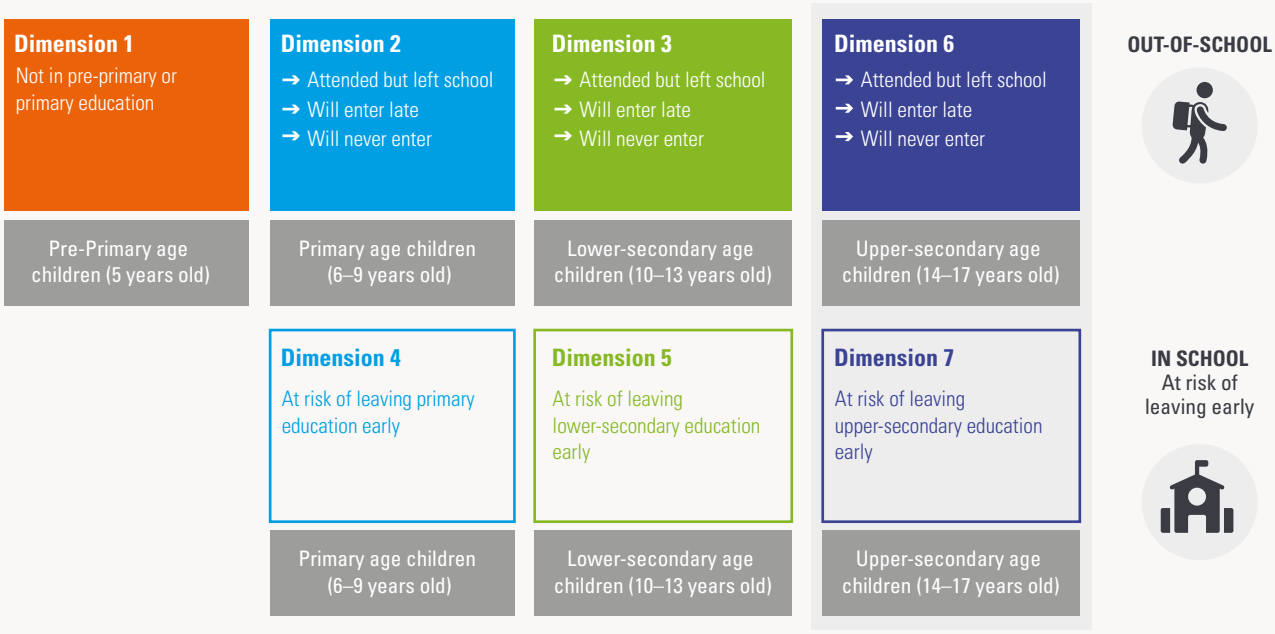
3.1 The Out-of-School Children Initiative Research Framework

3.1.1 The Dimensions of Exclusion

The Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) incorporates different categories of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out of school to develop a comprehensive overview of educational exclusion. The standard OOSCI framework is called the 5 Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) and covers pre-primary through lower-secondary levels (UNICEF-UIS, 2015).

Figure 6 is taken from a recent UNICEF presentation on OOSC. It provides an expanded OOSC framework tailored to the Turkish context (UNICEF, 2019c). Dimensions 1 to 5 are identical to the 5DE framework provided by OOSCI. However, in the context of compulsory 4+4+4 education in Türkiye, it is necessary to extend the framework to include the upper-secondary level ("high school"), which requires two additional dimensions (D6 and D7).

Figure 6:
The Out-of-School Children Dimensions of Exclusion Adapted to the Turkish Education System



Source: UNICEF (2019c).

The seven-dimension framework in Figure 6 covers four distinct levels of education in Türkiye, including pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. The primary, lower- and upper-secondary levels correspond to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 1, 2 and 3.[38] For the 5-year-olds in Dimension 1 of the OOSC 7DE, the corresponding ISCED level is "02", which includes children 3–5 years and does not explicitly include 5-year-olds only.

38 See the "new" 2011 ISCED levels: ISCED 2011 Operational Manual: Guidelines for Classifying National Education Programmes and Related Qualifications (OECD/Eurostat/UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264228368-en

The adapted "7DE" framework includes four dimensions that refer to children who are not in school:

Dimension 1
Pre-primary school aged children (age 5) who are not in pre-primary (or primary)

Dimension 2
Primary school aged children (ages 6–9) who are not in primary school (or lower-secondary), or who have previously been in primary but no longer are in school (dropouts)

Dimension 3
Lower-secondary school aged children (ages 10–13) who are not in lower-secondary (or upper-secondary), or who have been in primary or lower-secondary previously but no longer are in school (dropouts)

Dimension 6
Upper-secondary school aged children (ages 14–17) who are not in upper-secondary (or tertiary/higher education), or who have previously been in primary, lower-secondary or upper-secondary but no longer are in school (drop-outs)

There are three dimensions related to risk:

Dimension 1
Children who are in primary school but are at risk of dropping out

Dimension 2
Children who are in lower-secondary school but are at risk of dropping out

Dimension 3
Children who are in upper-secondary school but are at risk of dropping out

One complication in the OOSCI framework is the definition of being in or out of school. The MoNE data provide totals of enrolled Turkish children, while household survey data sources (like the DHS) ask families about "attendance."[39] For the quantitative summaries provided in this report, children are classified as out of school when they are not enrolled in school in the current school year or indicated they had not attended school during the current school year. Flexibility in the definition of OOSC is required because the available data are based on different questions that reference either enrolment or attendance. Nevertheless, it is important to state that these different question formats are essentially measuring the same thing: whether or not the child has participated in education, in some form, during the current school year.

The primary and lower-upper-secondary OOSC groups have three sub-categories of interest (*see Figure 6*). "Attended but left school" refers to dropouts who have enrolled at some point but are no longer enrolled (or attending). "Will enter late" mainly references primary-aged children who have not yet enrolled in primary school but are expected to do so. Finally, "Will never enter" refers to children who have not enrolled in school and are not expected to do so. In the quantitative summaries provided in Section 4, these three sub-categories are estimated subject to data availability. The total number of OOSC in the country is also summed across the OOSC dimensions (1,2,3 and 6) and measured as a percentage (or rate) of the total child population for that age range. Pre-primary is not compulsory in Türkiye, but children in this age category can still be analysed to provide guidance ahead of the anticipated transition to universal (i.e., compulsory) pre-primary.[40]

The definitions used in the qualitative fieldwork to identify out-of-school children study subjects required some additional modifications due to the timing of the data collection. The enrolment-based definition is straightforward: Children who had never enrolled in school in Türkiye or those not currently enrolled in school in the 2019–2020 and 2020-2021 school years were included in OOSC in-depth interviews (IDIs). In addition, children who had initially enrolled in the regular school system but had not attended school even for one day in the 2019–2020 school year and children who had not attended school even for one day from the start of the 2019–2020 and 2020-2021 school years (from September 2020 onwards) were also counted as OOSC, and eligible for IDI participation.

39 See the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) online data portal (http://data.uis.unesco.org/#) for descriptions of different enrolment and attendance indicators. The UIS definition is somewhat broad and does not go into detail about when the enrolment data were collected (beginning or end of the school year) or whether attendance-based indicators refer to current attendance or attendance at any point in the school year. These details are generally left to individual countries to determine.

40 Another complication with the official OOSCI framework is over-age enrolment. For example, an 8-year-old enrolled in pre-primary is counted as being out of school in the official framework. However, in practice, the OOSCI framework is flexible and allows countries to report different rates of OOSC based on different definitions of the dimensions. Also, it should be noted that children who are enrolled in a level that they are officially too young to attend are counted as being enrolled (within their age cohort). This means a 5-year-old who is already in primary school is counted as being in school, not as OOSC.

The final dimensions in the OOSCI framework are related to the risk of dropping out (*see Figure 6*). The OOSCI does not provide a detailed definition of at-risk children, and again, this is left up to individual country studies to define. UNICEF's recent summary of OOSC uses age and student absence data to define those at risk (UNICEF 2019c). This study builds on this same strategy and presents dropout risk rates based on different levels of absences and over-age, both of which are available through the MoNE for the national Turkish student population (*see Section 2.4.4* for regulations on absences based on the school levels). The qualitative data collection included a subset of at-risk children who participated in IDIs and were identified based on frequent absences during the 2019–2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

3.1.2 Out-of-School Children: Understanding Why Children are Not in School

The standard OOSC research framework considers different barriers that prevent children from participating in school (UNICEF-UIS, 2015).[41] More specifically, discussions of OOSC tend to focus on supply and demand factors where children are not in school due to a range of family background, cultural, socio-economic, and other factors that affect the demand for schooling, or they are effectively excluded from school due to systemic deficiencies related to various features of supply (physical access, school climate and quality, etc.). The demand side generally receives the most attention given the concentration of poor children in out-of-school categories, the frequency that these children are engaged in various forms of child labour, and the significant correlation between parental education levels and their children's school attendance and enrolment. However, the supply side can be equally consequential, beginning with physical access and including quality, relevance and the school environment.

This study divides potential barriers into two general categories, covering both demand-related and supply-related factors (*see Appendix C* for a detailed list of potential barriers). Demand-related factors are categorized as socio-cultural, social capital and health-related barriers and economic barriers, and supply-side barriers are grouped as school administrative and regulations-related barriers; school supply, quality and relevance-related barriers; and governance, finance, and institutional barriers. These barriers are tailored to the Turkish context and will be revisited later in light of the qualitative data. It should also be noted that various barriers do not affect all children equally, as OOSC rates often vary significantly by gender, age group and region.

These barriers have served as a heuristic map guiding the qualitative analysis of the multidimensional reasons for the out-of-school phenomenon in this study of OOSC among the national population in Türkiye. Analysis of the barriers aims to provide a holistic picture of why children in Türkiye are not in school.

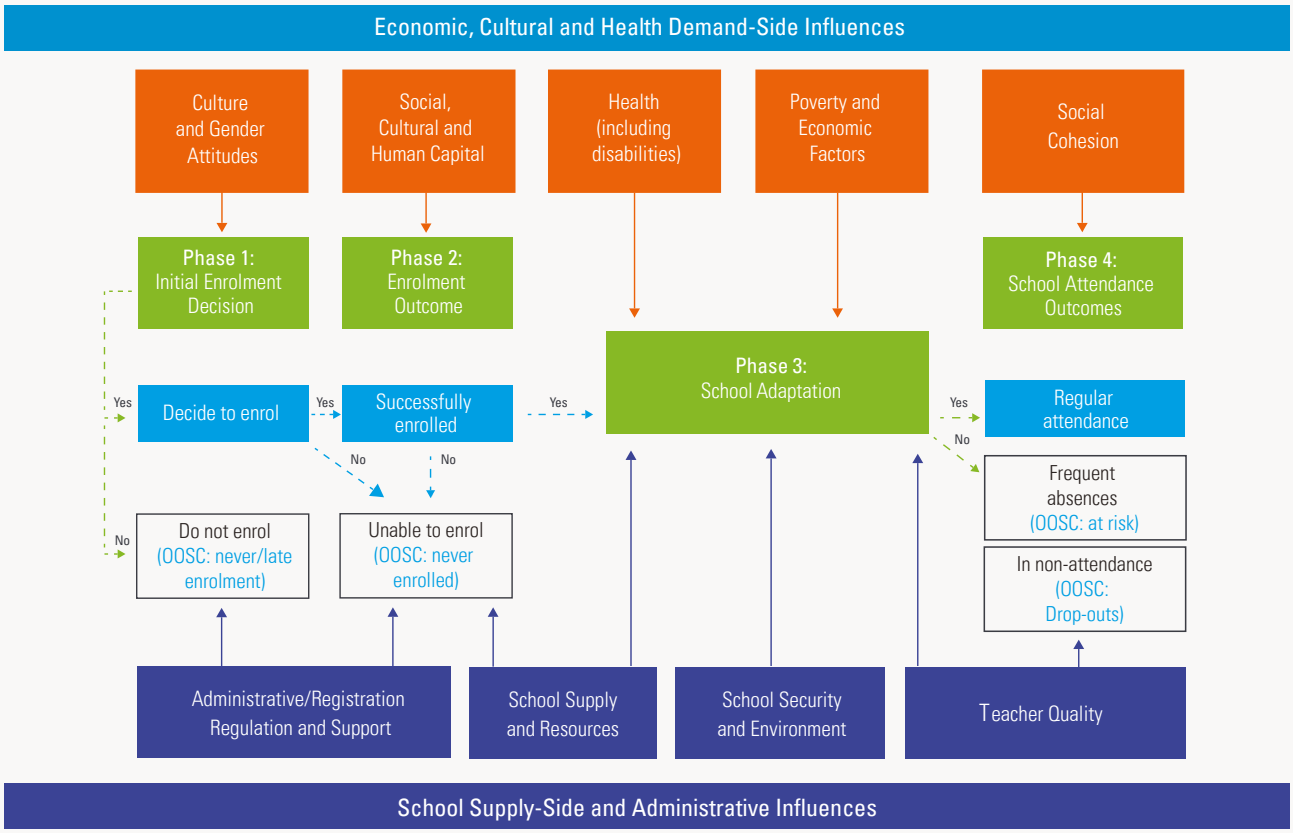
However, it is imperative to restate that the OOSC framework is not based on a single conception of being out of school and includes different categories of OOSC, which, in turn, can be explained by different sets of barriers and require an additional layer of flexibility in the analysis to assess the impact of barriers that may vary by gender and age groups (school levels – dimensions of exclusion) and across the different sub-categories of OOSC. These sub-categories of OOSC for this study are identified as children with disabilities; child labour; children in conflict with the law; child, early and forced marriage; and students enrolled in open education institutions, each of which is separately presented as case studies. This study aims to fill in as much detail as possible related to the barriers preventing Turkish children from participating in school and, when possible, align these barriers with different categories of OOSC.

Despite the small numbers of OOSC in primary and lower-secondary education, the number of potential barriers is extensive *(see Appendix C)*. It will not be possible to analyse every barrier, and not all of the OOSC categories (and phases) in Figure 7 can be analysed in detail across the qualitative and quantitative sources. The mixed-methods analysis is constrained by data limitations related to existing quantitative data sources and, for the qualitative data collection and analysis, by the need to be efficient and devote sufficient time and effort to individual categories of study subjects and topics.

Phases 3 and 4 in Figure 7 assume the child has entered school. The key indicators in the school participation phases are related to attendance. They are grouped into three categories on the far-right side of Figure 7 that again are intended to align with the OOSCI dimensions: students who are regularly attending, students who are frequently absent and are therefore at risk of dropping out, and students who have stopped going to school (dropouts).

41 For a detailed review of barriers related to OOSC, please see Finishing School – A Right for Children's Development: A Joint Effort. Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. Executive Summary (UNICEF, 2012).

Figure 7:
Four Key Phases in School Participation with Demand- and Supply-Side Influences



Source: (UNICEF, 2019c).

The supply- and demand-side factors that influence these processes are included at the top and bottom of Figure 7. The enrolment phases (1 and 2) begin with the supply side and are potentially impacted by administrative and registration regulations and support activities in communities, as well as by school supply indicators related to physical access (i.e., distance) and things like school-related expenses, such as supporting parent-teacher associations, sports/art materials expenses, field trip transportation, etc. The school adaptation and school attendance phases can be affected by a wide range of school environment, resource, and quality factors.

The demand-side influences could potentially affect all phases, including cultural and gender attitudes that can affect family decisions about sending children to school and pulling girls out for early marriage. Various forms of capital are also commonly associated with school attendance decisions and economic factors related to poverty and a household's reliance on child labour.

The overall goal of this study is to fill in as much detail as possible related to the barriers that prevent children in the national population from participating in school and, when possible, align these barriers with different categories of OOSC. Given the number of potential barriers, this is an ambitious task. It will not be possible to analyse every barrier, and not all of the OOSC categories (and phases) in Figure 7 can be analysed in detail across the qualitative and quantitative sources. The mixed-methods analysis is constrained by data limitations related to existing quantitative data sources and, for the qualitative data collection and analysis, by the need to be efficient and devote sufficient time and effort to individual categories of study subjects and topics.

3.2 Out-of-School Children Among Turkish Children: Research Objectives

The previous sections introduced the OOSC framework, various sub-categories of out-of-school children, and the barriers that potentially affect school participation among school-aged children in Türkiye. The bulk of the research questions this study attempts to answer are drawn from the connection between these two pieces. Other questions are also important, so the research objectives are briefly reviewed in this section.

It is important to restate the overarching purpose of this study and its intended impact. The topic of out-of-school children among the Turkish population has been studied before, and in fact, UNICEF commissioned an OOSC study in 2012 (UNICEF, 2012). However, the schooling experiences among Turkish youth are not fixed and are constantly evolving. Furthermore, the policy response (or apparatus) is also evolving, and there are potentially new barriers or at least influences that have become more prevalent in recent years. Standing out is the transition to 4+4+4 schooling, which introduces a new level of compulsory schooling to the OOSC framework. Therefore, updating research on topics like OOSC is necessary to ensure that policy adapts to new problems that will likely change over time.

This study will also provide a comprehensive overview of the topic, taking full advantage of the available quantitative data and analysing new qualitative data focusing on out-of-school children. The level of detail in the mixed-methods analysis will make it possible to present trends in OOSC outcomes and barriers over time, develop more detailed profiles of out-of-school children and the barriers they have faced, and identify new barriers. Furthermore, with so many potential barriers facing children, an additional contribution of the mixed-methods framework is to highlight the barriers that appear to be most consequential, which is especially critical for the policy work since the State's counterparts (and other stakeholders) will need to prioritize their actions.

There are three main research objectives.

Research Objective 1: Updating and deepening the analysis of quantitative indicators of OOSC and school participation among Turkish children.

One of the core activities in OOSC reporting is to present detailed summaries of the Dimensions of Exclusion across different school levels, ideally with comparisons over time to assess recent trends in these core indicators. As noted before, the OOSC issue in Türkiye is concentrated among young children who are not in pre-primary (which is not yet compulsory) and upper-secondary (high school)-aged children who have dropped out. Official statistics indicate OOSC at every schooling level, which requires careful analysis to provide a complete quantitative summary. More specifically:

- How many Turkish children (in numbers and percentages) are currently out of school by level, divided into never enrolled and dropout categories?
- How have the raw numbers and percentages (rates) evolved? Examining the evolution of OOSC numbers since moving towards compulsory upper secondary is essential. Adding upper secondary to the official (e.g., compulsory) OOSC framework means there are more potential out-of-school children, and the overall OOSC total may increase over time due to the inclusion of additional grades in the calculation. However, looking at trends at other levels to assess progress is still possible. The trends analysis also benefits from the availability of DHS survey data from 2013 and 2018.
- How do estimates of OOSC compare across the MoNE and DHS data sources in common school years?
- How many Turkish children enrolled in school are in the correct grade for their age? Does this data vary based on gender?
- How do estimates of the number of Turkish children at risk of dropping out (Dimensions 4, 5, and 7) vary by risk dimension (over-age, number of absences, low achievement levels, etc.)?
- Are any new indicators or data collection modalities required to better measure and monitor OOSC among Turkish children?

Research Objective 2: What barriers prevent Turkish children from going to school?

Despite the small numbers of OOSC in primary and lower-secondary schools, this is still the most extensive research area in this study, especially considering the different schooling options at the upper-secondary level. As noted above, one of the main goals of the barriers analysis is to provide a comprehensive, updated list of barriers that helps fill gaps in the existing knowledge base regarding OOSC in Türkiye. It is not feasible to list out every research question by barrier.

While not a barrier that prevents Turkish children from going to school, school enrolment-related regulation and enforcement mechanisms are a potentially important feature of the OOSC panorama in Türkiye. Therefore, one potential outcome of the study is updated information on implementing these regulations and enforcement mechanisms and how they interact with the OOSC outcome.

In addition, four cross-cutting issues deserve attention across the analysis of barriers. **These include:**

- How do the identified barriers differ by schooling level and the child's age?
- How do the effects of the barriers vary between boys and girls?
- How have the identified barriers evolved? Is there any evidence that some barriers are more or less prevalent in recent years or that new barriers have emerged?
- How do the barriers differ across provinces and regions?

The final set of questions about barriers addresses an issue of fundamental importance for OOSC research, policy, and programming in Türkiye: What are the most critical barriers that explain OOSC? There is an existing literature on Turkish OOSC (UNICEF, 2012) that addresses critical barriers like economic barriers, including poverty and families' reliance on child labour. Therefore, it is intended to categorize better and understand the "hierarchy" of barriers and their relative importance instead of simply summarising the present barriers.

This study will address this question through quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative side will bring in multivariate analysis to consider the effects of multiple home-related factors[42] on school participation indicators (current enrolment, grade attainment, etc.). The qualitative work will incorporate several strategies to reach conclusions about barriers' relative importance (or prevalence). Both are explained in more detail in later sections. Nevertheless, it is important to state upfront that identifying the most critical barriers is tricky. The main problem is that many out-of-school children face multiple risks, and it can be hard to disentangle these various factors when determining how much importance (or weight) to give each barrier.

Research Objective 3: What are the implications of the main findings for Turkish OOSC policy?

Within this objective, two topics are critical: policy-related regulations on school enrolment and enforcement mechanisms for 4+4+4 compulsory schooling in Türkiye and policies and policy measures that address Turkish children's schooling barriers.

For each topic, the policy analysis sequence has four stages:

1. Establishing the existing policy measures related to school administrative regulations
2. Assessing local official understanding of policy and programme features
3. Analysing the actual implementation of the official policy and regulations as they relate to the main OOSC categories
4. Assessing the overall policy implementation and recommending how it can be improved.

More specific questions include:

- What policies have been working, and why?
- What policies have not been working, and why?
- What are the policy gaps? What is missing?
- What kinds of policy adaptations and adjustments have occurred? How have these changes occurred (from below, above, etc.)?
- In addition to improving the design of policies and regulations, how can implementation be improved?

42 Home-related factors such as family size, parents' education background, etc., are not exactly barriers but some of the values can be associated with a higher probability of being in school (e.g., parents with university education) while other values can be associated with lower probability of being in school (e.g., large number of siblings).

3.3 Quantitative Research: Data and Methods

The quantitative analysis takes advantage of the enormous amount of available data concerning the national children population and their families' experiences in Türkiye. The wealth of data makes it possible to assess OOSC trends over time and focus on specific sub-categories of OOSC using a range of statistical techniques.

3.3.1 Data Sources and Coverage

Two primary data sources are used in the secondary data analysis. The bulk of the quantitative data comes from the MoNE's official statistics. The MoNE provides very detailed annual summaries of enrolment across the entire system. This information is necessary for establishing overall trends and enrolment rates and is also available by province. The MoNE has also provided detailed data on student absences incorporated in the dropout risk analysis (*see Figure 6*, Dimensions 4, 5, and 7).

The most recent Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) make up the second primary source of quantitative data. The focus is on the most recent DHS survey (from 2018), but comparisons with earlier survey years (e.g., 2013) are also helpful in establishing trends. The advantages of the DHS are the detailed summaries of child and household characteristics, including children who are not currently in school. This data source, however, does not explain why children did not attend school. The DHS data are representative at the national and regional levels but not at the provincial level, so they do not have the same geographic reach as the MoNE data.

3.3.2 Methods

Most of the quantitative analysis relies on basic descriptive statistics and frequencies using the MoNE and DHS data. The DHS data are based on a clustered sample design that uses sampling weights, which must be incorporated in all analyses. The DHS data are also used in multivariate analysis of school attendance outcomes, like current enrolment and grade attainment, by age group and gender. Given the limited number of barriers available in the DHS data, this analysis is not presented in detail in the report's main body; the main findings are instead referenced in the Section 5 discussion on barriers. A more detailed description of the multivariate analysis methods, research objectives, limitations and results are provided in Appendix B.

3.4 Qualitative Research: Data Collection and Methods

The qualitative research aims to explore the answers to why children in Türkiye are out of school or at risk of dropping out. The qualitative research aims to analyse the relationship between the causes, i.e., barriers, and effects, i.e., being out of school or at risk of dropping out. The qualitative research aims to complement the quantitative analysis, which reveals the degree and extent of challenges related to OOSC, to deepen its findings by analysing the underlying barriers hindering children's access to and completion of compulsory education in Türkiye.

Qualitative research and data collection methods are usually not representative and do not claim to be representative. In this report, qualitative analysis was used to complement the quantitative data to explain possible factors behind the findings of the quantitative analysis. Generalizations (if any) can only be "internal generalizations" referring to the research sample population and not the general child population in Türkiye. The qualitative analysis aimed to provide a spectrum of barriers to children's education, and it does not claim that all the problems exist in the same way and are experienced equally by all children in Türkiye. On the contrary, variations and differences among different categories of children/parents, extreme cases, etc., were all clearly indicated throughout the qualitative part.

Qualitative research focuses on a general analysis of the barriers for children at risk of dropping out (Dimensions 5 and 7) and out-of-school children (Dimensions 3 and 6). In addition, the qualitative research provides four separate case studies on four sub-categories of out-of-school children who have or are exposed to multiple vulnerabilities identified in line with the special interests and priorities of UNICEF: children with disabilities, child labour, children in conflict with the law, and children subject to early and forced marriage.

The thematic framework of the qualitative research is developed for four major dimensions of barriers, based on the existing literature and drawing on the guidance provided by the OOSCI, with some adaptation to the Turkish context. **The four dimensions of barriers are as follows:**

1. Socio-cultural, social capital, and health-related barriers (demand side)
2. Economic barriers (demand side)
3. School administrative regulations-related barriers (supply side)
4. School supply, quality, and relevance-related barriers (supply side).

Different from the existing literature, a fifth dimension is added concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, both demand-side and supply-side factors. "Governance, finance and institutional set-up" is considered a part of the enabling environment for the children's educational prospects and is separately structured with the policy analysis of educational governance in Türkiye.

This thematic framework guides the collection of new and extensive qualitative data on the barriers and their qualitative analysis. For an overview of the barriers and their sub-topics, please *see Table C1* in Appendix C. Those dimensions are developed from an extensive literature survey, which also informs and complements the qualitative analysis. In addition, the existing or missing policies relevant to those barriers are also explored as part of the qualitative research in the policy analysis section.

3.4.1 Data Collection

Qualitative data collection aims to produce new and extensive qualitative data to deepen the analysis of OOSC categories, barriers and policy dynamics. The original data collection methodology was face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were several risks to conducting fieldwork based on the original methodology, both for the data collection team and participants. In order to reduce these risks of extended delays and ensure the completion of the data collection on time, there was a need to adopt a different approach based on a remote interview methodology. Therefore, the qualitative data collection was conducted remotely in this study.

The participants for the interviews include the national children population in Türkiye, both those at risk of dropping out and those out of school, parents at risk of their out-of-school children dropping out, and several key informants at the local and central levels. The online FGDs were held with the teachers/psychological counsellors. Although the original plan was to conduct FGDs with the children and their parents, due to the physical limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, qualitative data from Turkish children and their parents were collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs). In addition to qualitative data for the general qualitative analysis, the five case studies were collected separately through additional interviews with children and their parents and key informants in particular sub-categories.

For the general qualitative analysis, the interviews with the key informants at the local level were conducted with public officials and NGO representatives working at the provincial or district levels. Interviews at the central level were mainly with the representatives based in Ankara from the ministries, international organizations, and civil society organizations that extensively work on the OOSC. Interviews with the key informants at the local level for the case studies were conducted with the officials of public institutions and NGO representatives, particularly those experienced in the specific situation of the children under the particular sub-category of children in the case study.

The geographical scope of the qualitative data collection covered 12 provinces to have comparable data from different regions and to understand various challenges. Those 12 provinces in which the fieldwork was conducted remotely are Adana, Ankara, Bursa, Istanbul, Izmir, Kars, Konya, Muş, Samsun, Şanlıurfa, Trabzon, and Van.[43] Those provinces were selected in close collaboration with UNICEF by considering the ratio of OOSC in those provinces in a balanced representation of geographical regions. The provincial directorates of the MoNE and other institutions and NGOs selected participants among volunteers.

Data collection instruments, namely the question sets for the online FGDs and IDIs, were tailored separately for all the different categories of respondents. Question sets for the children and parents were structured to collect first-hand data about the household and parents, previous schooling experiences, and the children's social environment and cohesion. The question sets for the online FGDs with the teachers/psychological counsellors and those for the IDIs with the key informants at the local and central levels were designed to collect the perceptions and experiences of the respondents on the barriers hindering children's education

43 Due to the lack of NGOs actively working with child, early and forced marriage in Muş, the pilot province had to be changed from Muş to Istanbul to enrich the quality and variety of data.

and their experiences with and views about the existing education policy measures. In addition, key informants were also asked about their experiences with barriers for Syrian children UTP to education to provide additional data to report on OOSC for Syrian children UTP. The question sets for the case studies also included questions reflecting the specific conditions/situations of the OOSC in that particular case (such as the working conditions, experience with the health procedures regarding disability, or experiences of conflicting with the law), in addition to the questions about the household, previous schooling experience and social cohesion—those additional questions aimed to identify barriers that would negatively affect specific categories of children with multiple vulnerabilities. Table 6 shows the question sets used in the IDIs and online FGDs. All the question sets were prepared in English and then translated into Turkish.

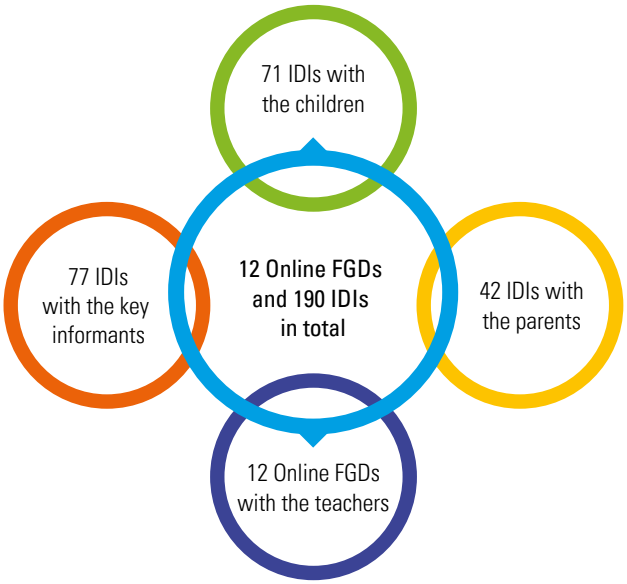


Table 6:
List of Question Sets

General
In-depth interviews with **key informants** at the **local** level
In-depth interviews with **key informants** at the **central** level
In-depth interviews with the **out-of-school children**
In-depth interviews with the **parents** of **out-of-school children**
In-depth interviews with the **children at risk of dropping out**
In-depth interviews with the **parents** of **at-risk children of dropping out**
Online Focus Group Discussions with the **teachers/counselling teachers/psychological counsellor**
In-depth interviews with **key informants** working on/with students enrolled in open education institutions
In-depth interviews with the **students enrolled in open education institutions**
In-depth interviews with the **parents** of **students enrolled in open education institutions**
Case Study: Children with Disabilities
In-depth interviews with **key informants** working on/with children with disabilities
In-depth interviews with the **parents** of out-of-school children with disabilities
Case Study: Child Labour
In-depth interviews with **key informants** specialized in child labour
In-depth interviews with the **out-of-school children** involved in child labour
In-depth interviews with the **parents** of **out-of-school children** involved in child labour
Case Study: Childhood, Early and Forced Marriage
In-depth interviews with **key informants** working on child, early and forced marriage
In-depth interviews with the women aged 18–23 who were involved in child, early and forced marriage
Case Study: Children in Conflict with the Law
In-depth interviews with **key informants** working on/with children in conflict with the law
In-depth interviews with the **out-of-school children** in conflict with the law
In-depth interviews with the **parents** of **out-of-school children** in conflict with the law

The study had several limitations regarding the interviews planned and conducted for the case studies. As discussed and agreed with UNICEF, due to the safeguarding principles for the target groups, no interviews were held with children with disabilities; only their parents were interviewed. Again, due to the safeguarding principles, the interviews with the out-of-school children for the child, early and forced marriage case study were conducted with adults aged 18–23 who were forced to marry before the age of 18. It was initially planned that the interviews on the child, early and forced marriage would be conducted in Muş; however, due to the lack of actively working NGOs in Muş, the location had to be changed from Muş to Istanbul. Moreover, as COVID-19 conditions affected reaching target groups, the interviews with adults aged 18–23 who were forced to marry before the age of 18 could be held only in Izmir and Ağrı.

While all interviews were conducted remotely due to COVID-19 precautions, only the IDIs with the children in conflict with the law were conducted face-to-face, as the regulations of MoJ required face-to-face interviews. **Finally, the interviews for the case studies were conducted only in selected provinces, as follows:**

Safeguarding procedures were also adopted based on the remote interview methodology and applied diligently during the data collection by the data collectors and the safe persons assigned by UNICEF, ASAM, and MoJ (*see Appendix D*) for the Approved Safeguarding Procedures, which were prepared considering the requirement of the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection, and Analysis.[44]

The Ethical Review Board approved the materials used during the data collection on 8 November 2019. As required by the UNICEF Ethics Procedures, the data collection did not include any questions about socially or politically sensitive issues. In the case of responses violating safeguarding and ethics procedures from the participants, the supervisors, data collectors and safe persons applied the defined steps in the safeguarding procedures. The procedures are detailed in Appendix D. All data gathered through data collection was anonymized to ensure the participants' privacy. The UNICEF Policy on Personal Data Protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was applied during the data collection to ensure global information security standards. Following GDPR data protection rules, personal data are stored with limited access.[45]

The qualitative data collection took place in November 2020 and March 2021 (*see Appendix E* for the breakdown of interviews based on province and target groups). The number of IDIs and online FGDs conducted based on the dimensions, case studies, and target groups is presented in Table 7.

Table 7:
Number of IDIs and Online FGDs Based on Dimensions

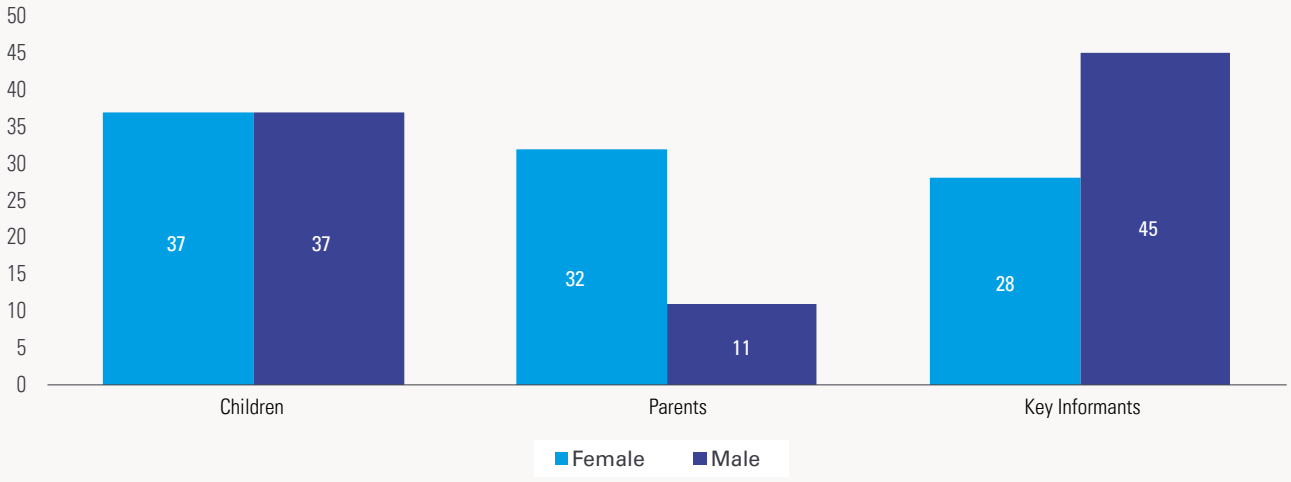
Type	Dimension 3	Dimension 4	Dimension 5	Dimension 6	Dimension 7	KII
Online FGD	0	0	6	0	6	?
IDI	3	0	28	17	44	77

44 https://www.unicef.org/media/54796/file.

45 Considering the GDPR, all personal data gathered through the interviews were stored in Microsoft OneDrive system and any voice records have been destroyed after the safeguarding procedures were applied. In addition, the data were secured on Mott MacDonald's IT system, which is powered by Microsoft SharePoint to ensure its security and backup. These systems are accredited to the Cyber Essentials Plus scheme and ISO 27001:2013. Only the authorised email accounts mentioned in the NDA have access to the data. Please see more detailed information in Appendix D.

The gender-based breakdown of the interviews is provided in Figure 8.

Figure 8:
Gender-Based Breakdown of Interviews



The dimensions and gender-based breakdown of the interviews are presented in Table 8.

Table 8:
Dimension and Gender-Based Breakdown of the Interviews

Dimension	Percentage of Female	Percentage of Male
Dimension 3	100	0
Dimension 5	47	53
Dimension 6	44	56
Dimension 7	65	35

Last, it is worth noting that an extensive literature review also accompanied the qualitative data collection stage of the qualitative research. The findings of the previous studies and reports in the literature were considered to be complementary at the qualitative analysis stage.

3.4.2 Methods

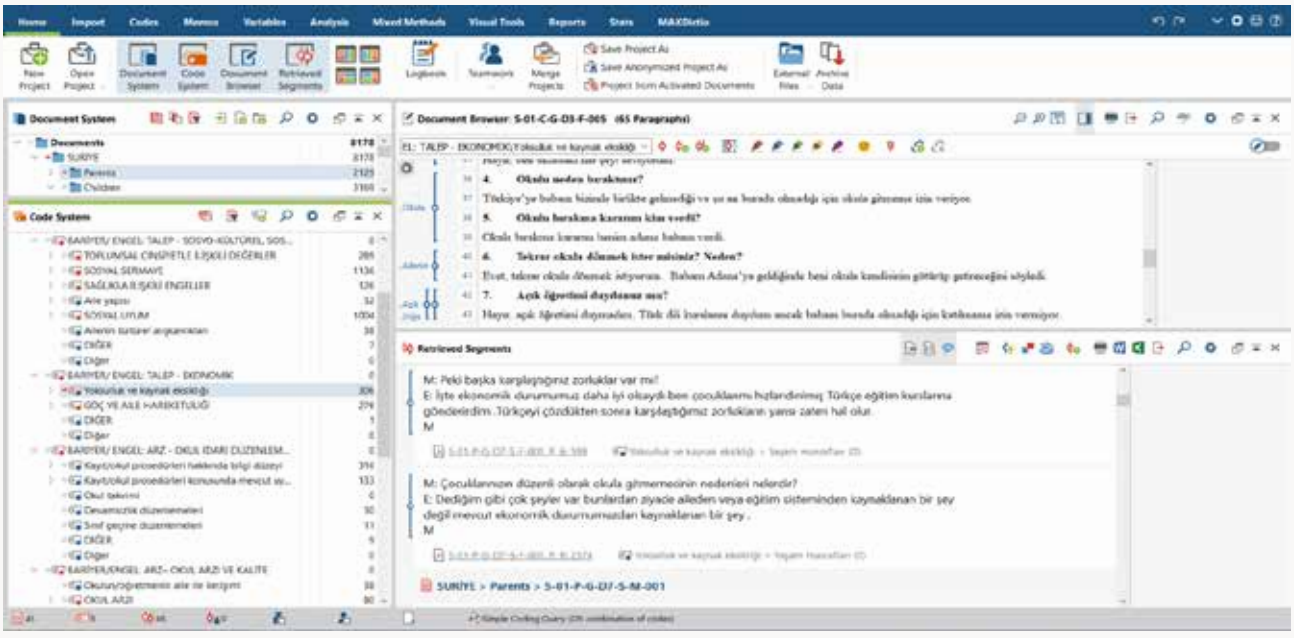
Qualitative research methods can be defined in two categories: qualitative data collection methods and qualitative analysis methods. As mentioned, the qualitative data collection instruments are IDIs and online FGDs. Originally, meetings were planned to be conducted face-to-face with the respondents in their localities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the fieldwork was adapted to use remote interview methodology, which included phone/video calls with children and parents, online FGDs with teachers and teachers who were counsellors/psychologists, and video conferences with key informants.

The methodology of qualitative analysis includes different stages, namely compilation, transcription, translation (when needed), and coding of the qualitative data sets collected through fieldwork.

At the qualitative data compilation stage, the data collected through the online FGDs and IDIs were voice recorded and stored in a safe electronic environment in line with the personal data protection principles of the UNICEF Policy on Personal Data Protection, EU General Data Protection Regulation and the Turkish Law on the Protection of Personal Data. When recording during a meeting was not permitted, the data collectors took notes and reported separately. Following this stage, all the qualitative data in the voice recordings were fully transcribed anonymously. When online FGDs or IDIs were conducted in Arabic, the transcripts were translated into Turkish for the qualitative analysis.

Once the transcriptions were finalized, all the qualitative data were coded through MAXQDA software. The coding exercise was aimed "to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize" (Saldaña, 2009), as illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9:
Coding via MAXQDA Software



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For the qualitative analysis in this study, the coding was pre-structured, and a two-cycle qualitative coding method was adopted. The first coding cycle aligned with the codebook prepared based on the pre-defined barriers. In addition, the codebook also included additional codes for the profiles of respondents. The first cycle codes were synthesized throughout the second coding cycle by regrouping them into major categories to identify patterns, conceptual similarities/differences and causality within already coded data categories, particularly concerning barriers to the children's education.

The qualitative analysis based on this coding exercise helped in grouping and comparing qualitative data according to different criteria, such as the profile of the respondents (age, gender, location, sub-categories of children) and categories of barriers, ensuring an analytical and systematic explanatory analysis for identifying the patterns and conditions that cause children's non-attendance to or dropping out of school. A similar coding exercise was also conducted for the policy analysis to identify and analyse the perceptions and experiences of the teachers and teachers who were counsellors/psychologists and key informants on the existing education policy measures.

3.5 Limitations and Challenges for Data Collection

The study was comprehensive and reached 109 participants in the qualitative data collection. It is imperative to underline that the findings of this study must be considered along with the limitations. The study's limitations largely reflect the limitations of the different data sources.

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Limitations

The two primary sources of data (the MoNE and DHS, *see Section 3.3.1*) provide complete and complementary information. There are only a couple of relatively minor limitations with these data sources:

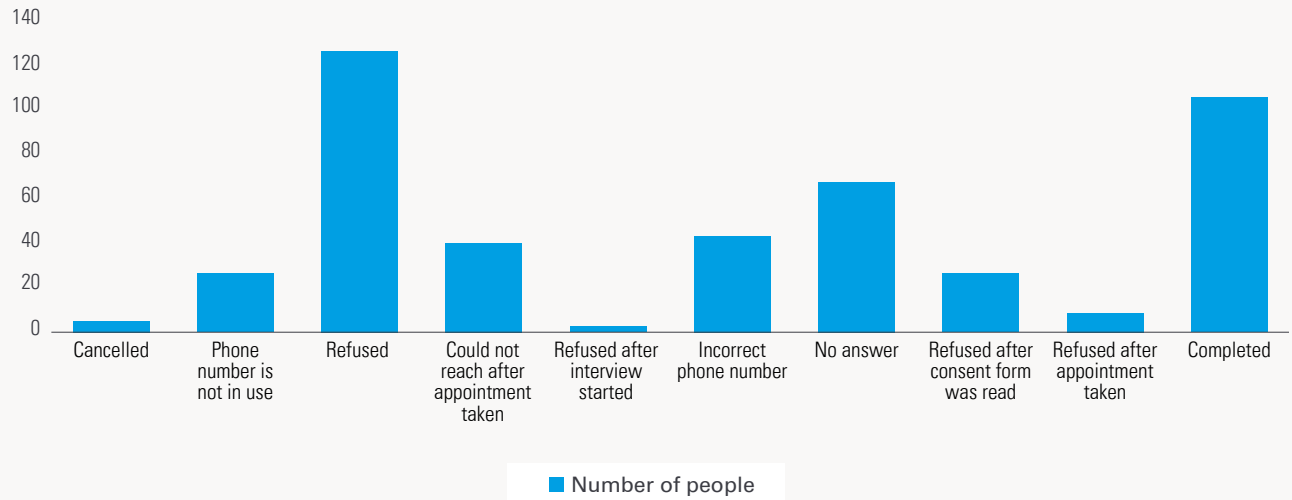
- The DHS data are representative only at the national level, not the provincial level, meaning it is impossible to provide detailed summaries of OOSC using the official OOSCI framework by province. The provincial OOSC numbers are still estimated using data from the MoNE, but only based on the net and gross enrolment rates, which depend on estimating the child population in each province.
- The MoNE calculations for enrolment rates are based on estimations of the relevant population group (i.e., 6- to 10-year-olds), which is used as the denominator. If these population estimates differ from the actual population, the enrolment rate calculations (gross enrolment rate [GER], net enrolment rate [NER], etc.) may not be accurate.
- Neither data set (the DHS or MoNE) includes information about the reasons children (or their families) give for not being in school.

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Limitations

There are four main limitations related to the qualitative data:

- **Schools/education institution closures:** The COVID-19 pandemic caused the most extensive education disruption in global history, affecting over 1.5 billion learners at its peak due to educational institutions' partial or total closure.[46] Therefore, access to key groups during the fieldwork took a significant amount of time and extended the duration of the fieldwork. Despite efforts to reach the sub-groups, it was challenging to find and speak with over-age children in primary schools (i.e., children over the age of 16), children out of school, children with special education needs, and children continuing Quran courses.
- **Participants not being informed in advance:** Central focal points were to inform local focal points about the study so that the participants would be informed before the calls. For various reasons (workload, having COVID-19 themselves, etc.), some participants were not informed beforehand, and some declined to participate. To mitigate low participation, the data collectors texted and called the participants in advance to inform them about the study.
- **Participants' missing/wrong contact details:** Delays and additional workload resulted from participants' wrong or missing contact details. Figure 10 shows the reasons for low participation due to the abovementioned limitations.

Figure 10:
Reasons for Low Participation



46 https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf.

- **Limited generalization:** The results from qualitative survey samples often are certain or have limited generalizability compared with quantitative samples, meaning the results do not necessarily represent the studied population. One constraint can be sample size: time-intensive qualitative interviews usually cannot be conducted with a large sample of respondents, although this constraint's impact depends on the population being studied. An additional problem is the non-random selection of respondents, which results from low response rates or when study subjects who are relatively easy to contact (or identify) are chosen. As described in Section 3.4, the qualitative data were collected in different regions of the country with a sizeable number of participants. Due to sample size and non-random selection, however, these samples of respondents cannot be treated as representative of all families in the national population for each category. The same is true for the provincial samples: these cannot be compared between provinces with the assumption that each sample is representative of the entire provincial population who are out of school, working children or children with special needs. This limitation does not mean the information is not valid; it is just that it is not possible with this type of sampling to assess the degree of representation, and therefore, care must be exercised when making generalizations or comparisons.

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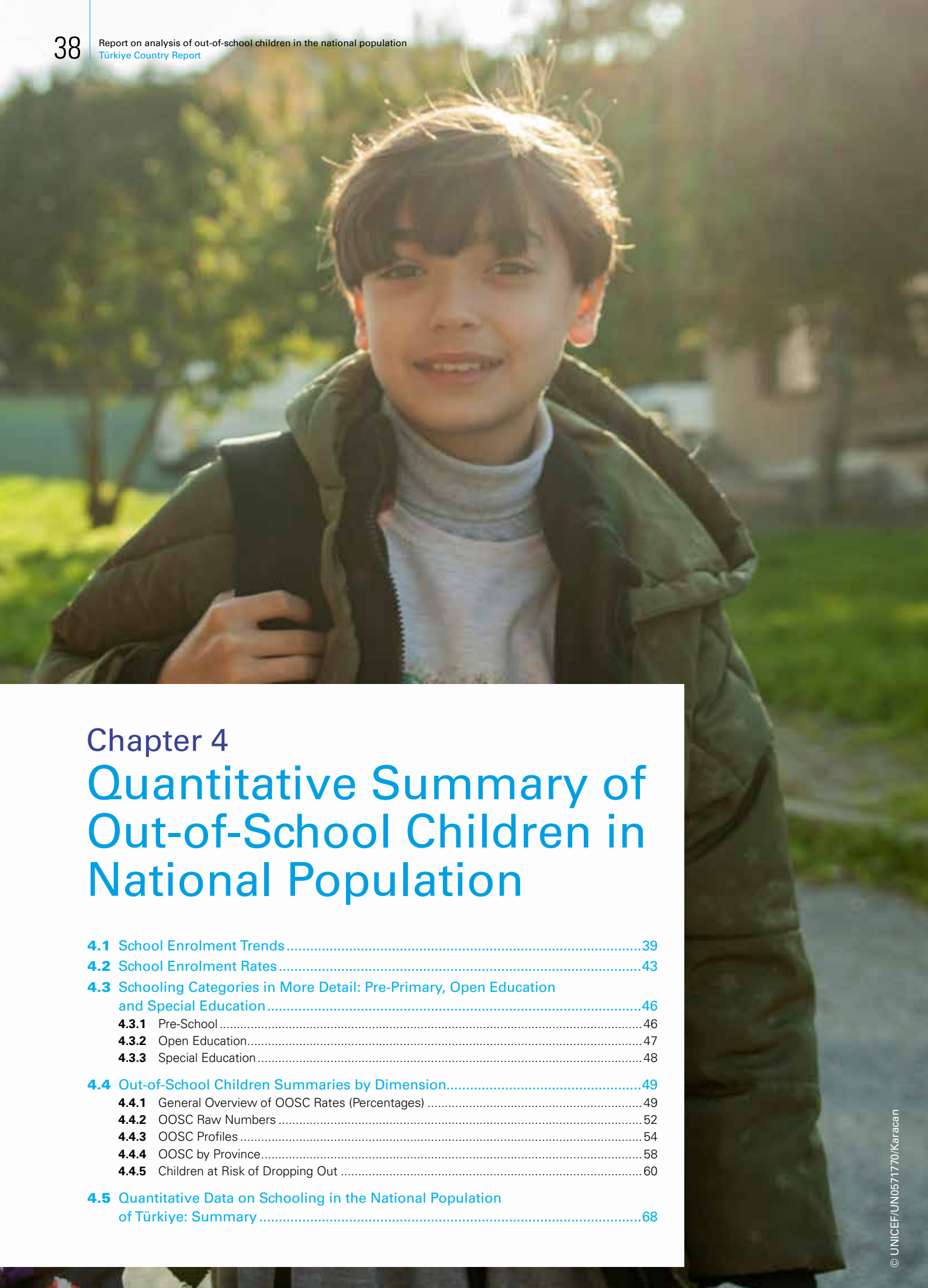

Chapter 4
Quantitative Summary of Out-of-School Children in National Population

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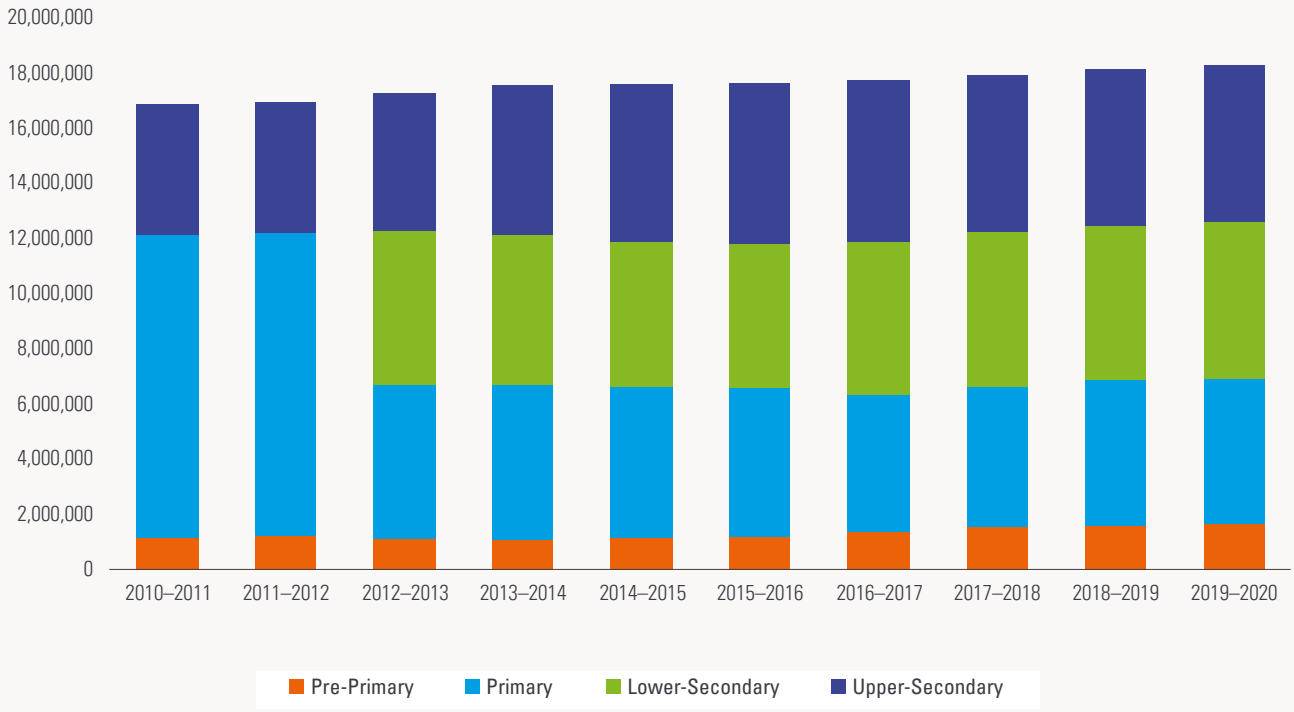
The analysis begins with the quantitative data on children's education in Türkiye, divided into two parts. The first provides an overview of recent trends in basic education participation indicators among the population of children, including raw enrolments by school level and type (*see Section 4.1*), trends in net/gross enrolment rates (*see Section 4.2*), and detailed summaries of specific school categories like open education and special needs (*see Section 4.3*). The second part, Section 4.4, focuses on the seven dimensions of exclusion (7DE) that are part of the official OOSCI framework (*see Section 3.1*).

This detailed summary of OOSC includes national OOSC summaries as well as disaggregated totals by age group and gender, region, and province and a separate discussion on the risk of dropping out. The OOSC summaries are the focus of this section, given the overall purpose of this study. Nevertheless, it is necessary to provide background indicators on enrolments to help understand the complete picture of participation before focusing more on the children not in school.

4.1 School Enrolment Trends

The 4+4+4 compulsory education programme was implemented in the 2012-2013 school year. The numbers in Figure 11 show that the total system enrolment increased by about 600,000 students between the 2011-2012 and 2013–2014 school years. This increase is not very perceptible in Figure 11 concerning the overall size of the sector, and a more detailed review does show that some sub-categories increased during this period, such as open education (940,000 in 2011-2012 versus 1.3 million in 2013–2014) and Imam Hatip schools (268,000 in 2010-2011 versus 474,000 in 2013–2014). These increases were offset, to some degree, by smaller decreases in other categories. The second reason for the increase in enrolment is that the compulsory 4+4+4 implementation coincided with a one-time "surge" in Grade 1 in the 2012-2013 school year, which is discussed below in more detail. Figure A1 in Appendix A provides the same summary but with percentages by category.

Figure 11:
Total Enrolment in Türkiye by School Level (2010–2019)



Source: MoNE, various years.

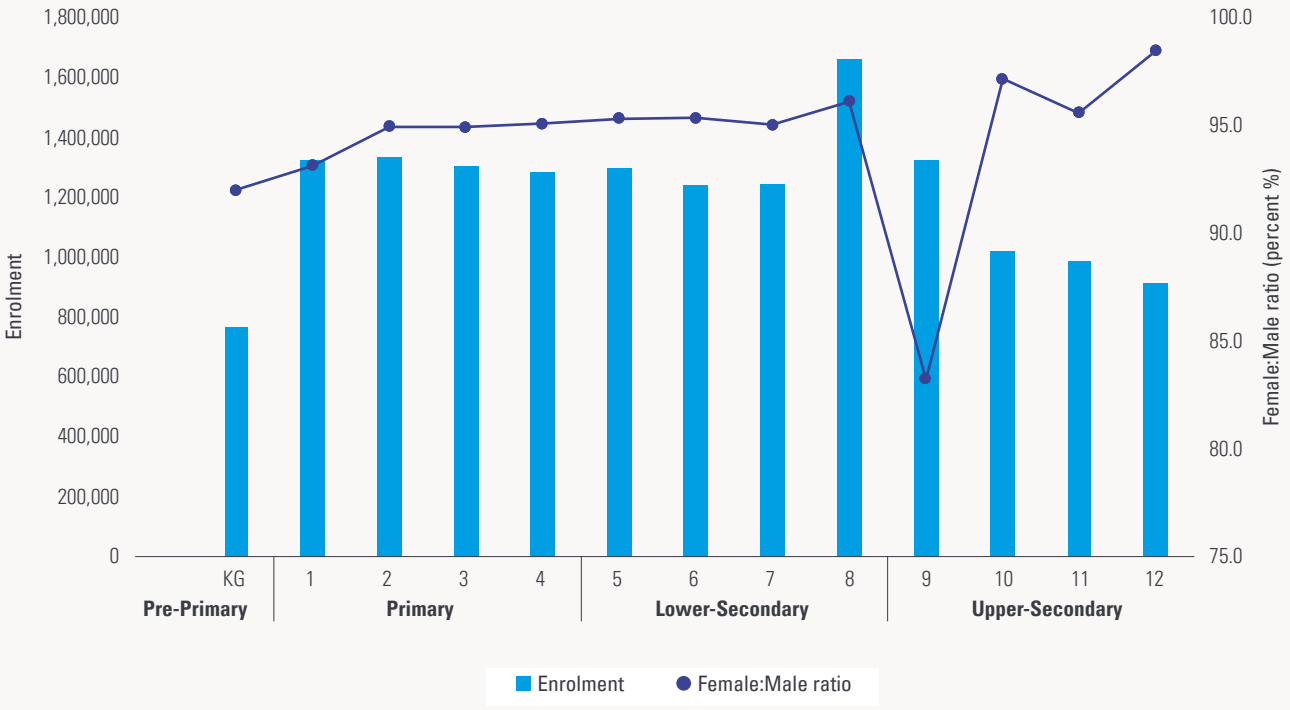
Since the 2013–2014 school year, the overall enrolment totals at the primary and secondary levels have been stable, but within the general secondary education category, enrolment has shown a significant increase (from 2.9 million to 3.4 million). The vocational and technical education sector has decreased from 2.0 million to just over 1.6 million, and the enrolment in the schools providing religious education/Anatolian Imam Hatip high schools has been relatively steady after increasing by 200,000 students in the 2014-2015 school year. The other notable change is in the pre-primary level, which has grown from just under 1.1 million students in 2013–2014 to just over 1.6 million in 2019–2020.

Figure 12 summarizes enrolment totals by grade in the 2019–2020 school year according to the MoNE official data (MoNE, 2020b). The light blue bars represent the total number of enrolled children by grade, while the dark blue line captures the female:male ratio that measures female enrolment as a percentage of male enrolment. There are five key results in the figure.

- **First**, boys consistently outnumber girls across all grade levels. For most grades, the female:male ratio is around 95 per cent, although it is higher in Grades 10–12 in upper secondary, meaning there are almost as many girls as boys. This feature does not reflect a higher propensity for boys to be in school, as net enrolment rates for girls and boys have been nearly identical for an extended period in Türkiye across primary and secondary schooling (*see Figure 12*). The difference in raw numbers simply reflects the larger number of boys in Türkiye in these age ranges (*see Figure 1* population pyramid in Section 2.1).

- **Second**, there is a sharp decline in the female:male ratio in Grade 9, followed by a somewhat higher female:male ratio in upper-secondary Grades 10–12. This break in the trend is not specific to the 2019–2020 school year, and similar results are found in previous years of the MoNE data. Figure A2 in Appendix A summarizes the 2016-2017 data, and an identical pattern is evident, which suggests a type of bottleneck of males at the beginning of upper secondary, most likely due to more boys than girls repeating this grade. Grade repetition rates are not very high in Türkiye, but they do increase somewhat in upper secondary (*see Figure A7 in Appendix A*). It should be noted that the female:male ratio change in Figure 12 looks quite large, but the difference between 85 per cent in Grade 9 and 95+ per cent in other grades does not represent an enormous difference in enrolment numbers by gender. This topic is related to the risk of dropout dimension of the OOSC framework and is discussed further in Section 4.4.5 below.

Figure 12:
Enrolment by School Level and Grade with the Female to Male Ratio for the 2019–2020 School Year

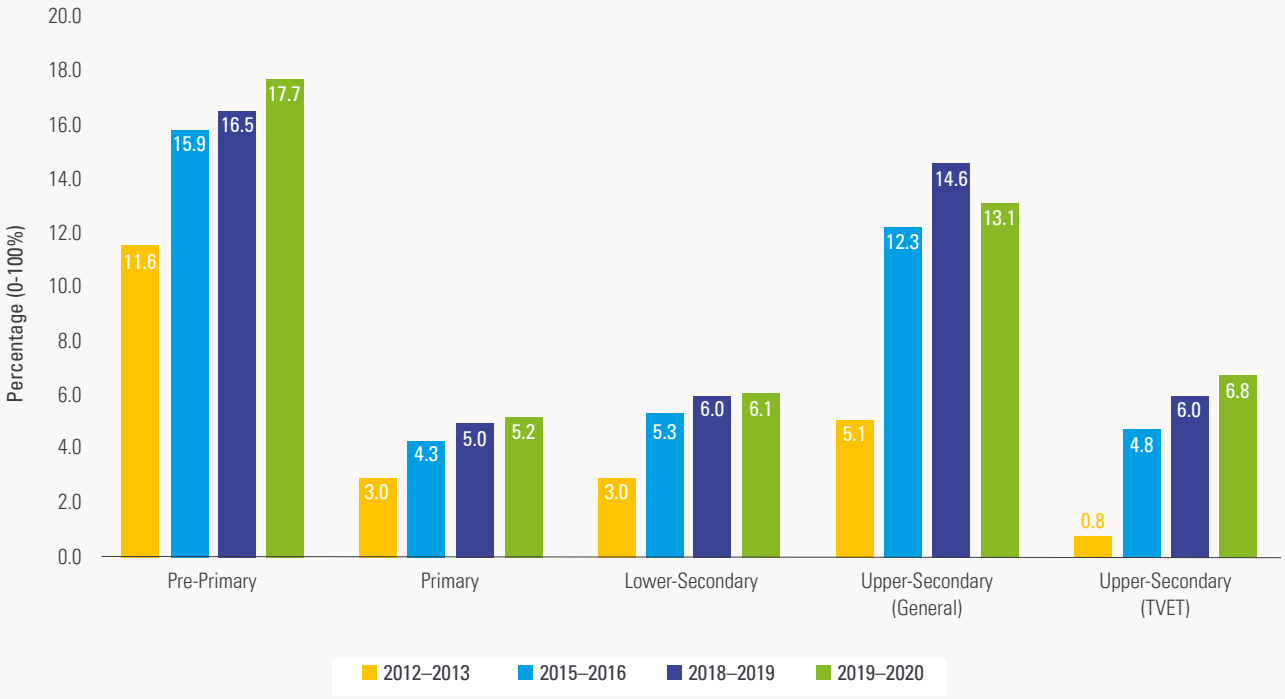


Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

- **Third**, there is room for expansion in pre-primary enrolment, which, as of 2021, is still not compulsory. In the 2019–2020 school years, approximately 293,000 more children were in primary Grade 1 than 5-year-olds in some form of pre-primary; additional details on pre-primary enrolment are provided in Section 4.3.

- The **fourth** result in Figure 12 is the big jump in enrolment in lower-secondary Grade 4 (or Grade 8), with roughly 400,000 more students than in Grades 7 or 9, which does not reflect a bunching up of students at the end of the lower-secondary cycle. It is, instead, a product of a one-time surge in enrolment in primary Grade 1 that happened in the 2012-2013 school year. This surge can be easily documented across the recent MoNE annual summaries, year by year. For example, in the 2012-2013 school year, there were nearly 1.9 million Grade 1 primary school students in Türkiye, compared with less than 1.3 million Grade 2 students. Continuing the analysis in subsequent years shows the same bump up in enrolment, but only for this specific age cohort. This means that in 2013–2014, the total number of Grade 2 primary students was much larger than Grade 1 or Grade 3, and in 2014-2015, the number of Grade 3 primary students was much larger than other primary grades, etc. This increase in Grade 1 enrolment in 2012-2013 did not lead to a noticeable increase in primary enrolment in Figure 13, but the total primary and lower-secondary enrolment in 2012-2013 was several hundred thousand students larger than the total primary enrolment in 2011-2012 under the previous 8+4 system. Figure A2 in Appendix A clearly shows this enrolment bump in the first year of lower secondary in the 2016-2017 school year.

Figure 13:
Private School Enrolment as a Percentage of Total Enrolment by Schooling Level and Year (2012–2020)



Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education, various years.

- The most likely explanation for this one-time increase in enrolment is uncertainty about the initial age of entry into Grade 1 during the transition to 4+4+4. For example, in the MoNE statistical summary for the 2011-2012 school year, only 485 children enrolled in primary who were five years old at the beginning of the school year (e.g., born in 2006). In the 2012-2013 MoNE summary, over 400 thousand 5-year-olds were in primary school (e.g., born in 2007). Since 2012-2013, the number of 5-year-olds in primary schools has steadily declined and was only 57,000 in the 2019–2020 school year. This enrolment surge in Grade 1 that occurred in 2012-2013 will continue to affect the system since this specific cohort is much bigger than others, which likely requires some adaptation in each subsequent grade to accommodate a larger group (with class sizes, laboratories, etc.). A one-time increase in early-age enrolment will not affect net enrolment calculations because those are based on specific age groups. It will instead increase the gross enrolment rate, but this impact will be somewhat transitory and visible mainly at the beginning of each grade level cycle. For example, many underage children in Grade 1 will increase their primary GER, but when this group moves on to Grade 2, the GER will decline because these "extra" children are now part of the official primary age range.

- The **fifth** main result in Figure 12 is the declining enrolment between upper-secondary Grades 1 and 4. The apparent attrition rate within upper secondary is somewhat overstated in Figure 12 because the open education students are not counted in this grade-by-grade summary.[47] Nevertheless, there is an apparent reduction in enrolment by grade at this level, which again highlights the focus on high school-aged children in the analysis of OOSC among the Turkish population in subsequent sections.

The last table in this section shows the total enrolment rates of private schools. Accordingly, "private schools" refers to all educational institutions, including formal and informal (private courses). Nevertheless, it should be noted that in primary and lower-secondary education, private sector enrolment is relatively low and, in recent years, has levelled off at under 6 per cent of the total enrolled school population. The total private enrolment in the 2019–2020 school year is just under 1.5 million students, divided into pre-primary (289,000), primary (274,000), lower secondary (348,000), general upper secondary (449,000) and technical and vocational education or TVET (109,000).

47 The MoNE official data (from the National Education Statistics Formal Education annual summaries) present aggregated open education Figures by level (e.g., upper secondary total), but not by individual grade.

4.2 School Enrolment Rates

Table 9 summarizes gross and net enrolment ratios (or rates). Gross enrolment is defined as the total number of students in a specific level, regardless of age, divided by the corresponding population of persons for that school level (e.g., the number of 6- to 9-year-olds for the primary level). Net enrolment is the number of correct-age students divided by the correct-age population at a specific level. Due to over-age enrolment, the gross enrolment rate can be greater than 100 per cent. Net enrolment is always between 0 and 100 per cent.

The summary in Table 9 is based primarily on the MoNE official figures, augmented in 2013 and 2018 with calculations using the DHS data. It should be noted that the MoNE summaries are based on enrolments obtained at the beginning of the school year, whereas in the DHS, families were asked if their children had attended school at any time during the current school year. These are somewhat different measures, and for the DHS reports, the gross attendance ratio (GAR) and net attendance ratio (NAR) are used instead of GER and NER. For pre-primary, lower secondary and upper secondary, the net enrolment rate pattern is quite similar: steady progress between 2012 and 2020, although the improvement between 2012 and 2020 is relatively small in lower secondary. The pattern for primary education is different, showing declining net (and gross) enrolment rates since the 2013–2014 school year. This somewhat surprising finding appears to be caused by fewer 5- and 6-year-olds entering primary school, most likely due to pre-primary participation (which has expanded considerably in recent years).[48] This finding is revisited below with the summaries of enrolment by age.

Table 9:
Net and Gross Enrolment Rates by School Year and Schooling Level (2012–2020)

Level/ Indicator	Enrolment Rates by School Year									
	2012–2013	2013–2014		2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019		2019–2020
		MoNE	DHS					MoNE	DHS	
Pre-primary (5-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	55.4	43.5	42.3	66.0	70.2	73.9	83.8	85.2	62.9	75.5
Net (NER)	39.7	42.5	37.9	53.8	55.5	58.9	66.9	68.3	50.7	71.2
Primary (6- to 9-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	107.5	111.9	116.0	101.1	99.2	96.0	96.9	98.4	102.3	97.4
Net (NER)	98.9	99.6	94.8	96.3	94.9	91.2	91.5	91.9	93.1	93.6
Lower Secondary (10- to 13-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	107.6	108.8	88.8	107.1	107.1	105.3	102.5	100.3	96.9	106.0
Net (NER)	93.1	94.5	83.6	94.4	94.4	95.7	94.5	93.3	88.7	95.9
Upper Secondary (14- to 17-year-olds):										
Gross (GER)	93.8	100.3	89.9	104.8	107.3	103.7	104.5	108.9	92.8	110.6
Net (NER)	69.3	76.1	72.9	79.3	80.2	82.4	83.4	84.2	77.3	85.0

Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education, various years; DHS Surveys (2013, 2018).

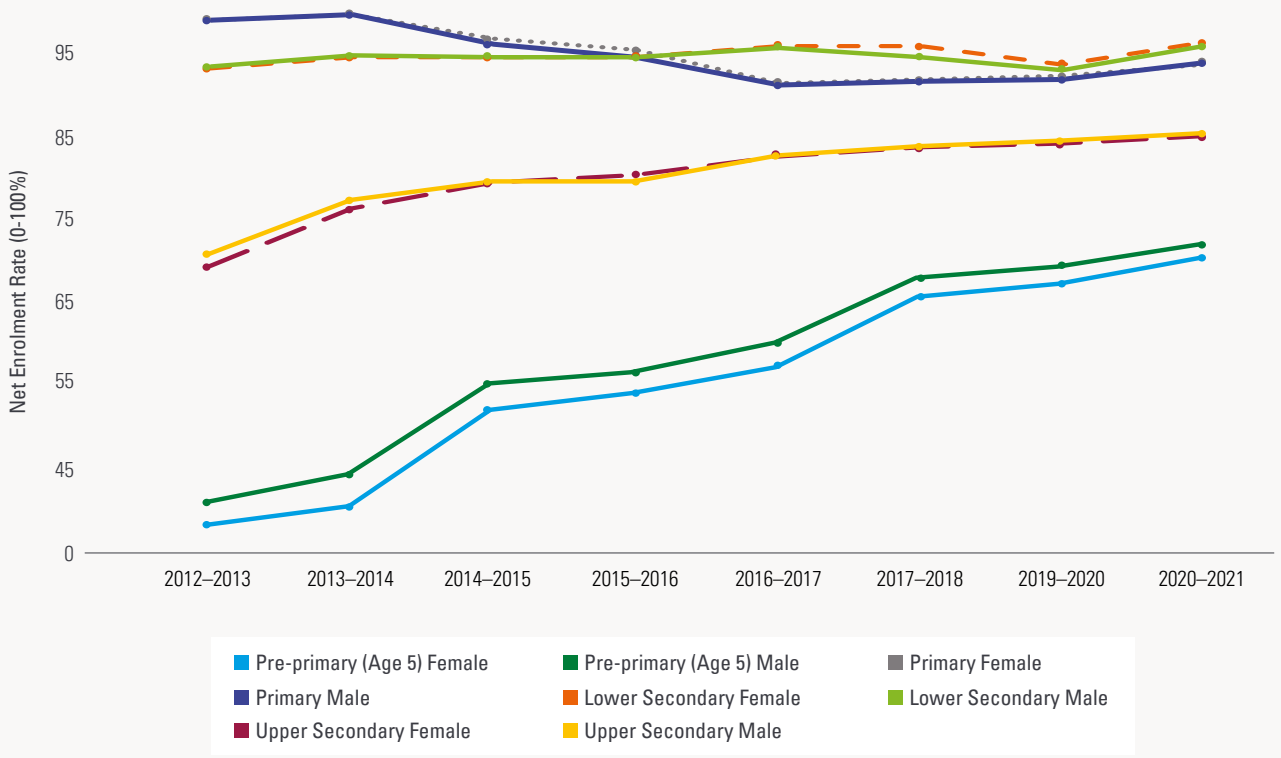
Notes: All rates are taken from the MoNE official data except for 2013 and 2018 DHS summaries, which the authors calculated. The DHS sample sizes for 5- to 17-year-olds are 10,183 (2013) and 8,086 (2018).

48 When there were fewer pre-primary options available, families were more likely to send children to primary early, this would increase the GER for primary and also contribute to high NER. When pre-primary expands, the families are sending young children to pre-primary, which reduces the GER for primary. In some cases, they may be sending 6-year-olds to pre-primary, perhaps because they are very close to the age cut-off. That will then reduce NER (and GER) for primary enrolment.

There are some discrepancies between the DHS-derived NER and GER figures and the official numbers calculated by the MoNE. The lower gross and net enrolment rates for lower and upper secondary in both DHS survey years stand out. Unfortunately, it is not possible to explain these differences. One possibility is that open education is not adequately accounted for in the DHS, perhaps because some respondents (or data collection staff) did not consider participation in open education as "school attendance." While significant, these differences between the MoNE and DHS figures are insufficient to change the main trends in Table 9 substantively. Nevertheless, they have some implications for calculating OOSC below because the DHS shows fewer older children in school.

Figure 14 continues the summary of net enrolment rates (based on the MoNE data) with a comparison by gender across the same 2012–2020 period by education level. The overall trends are consistent with the summary in Table 9 and show improvement in pre-primary and upper-secondary net enrolment rates, a decline in primary, and a fairly steady rate for lower secondary. The other main finding in Figure 14 is that the lines are virtually identical for boys and girls. The individual trend lines by gender are not easy to follow in the figure, but this is simply because they consistently overlap. The lone exception is for pre-primary, where 5-year-old boys are marginally more likely to be enrolled than girls, although this difference has narrowed to only about 2 per cent in the 2019–2020 school year. For primary, lower secondary and upper secondary, there is a very high level of gender parity.

Figure 14:
Net Enrolment Rate (NER) by Gender, School Year and School Level (2012–2020)

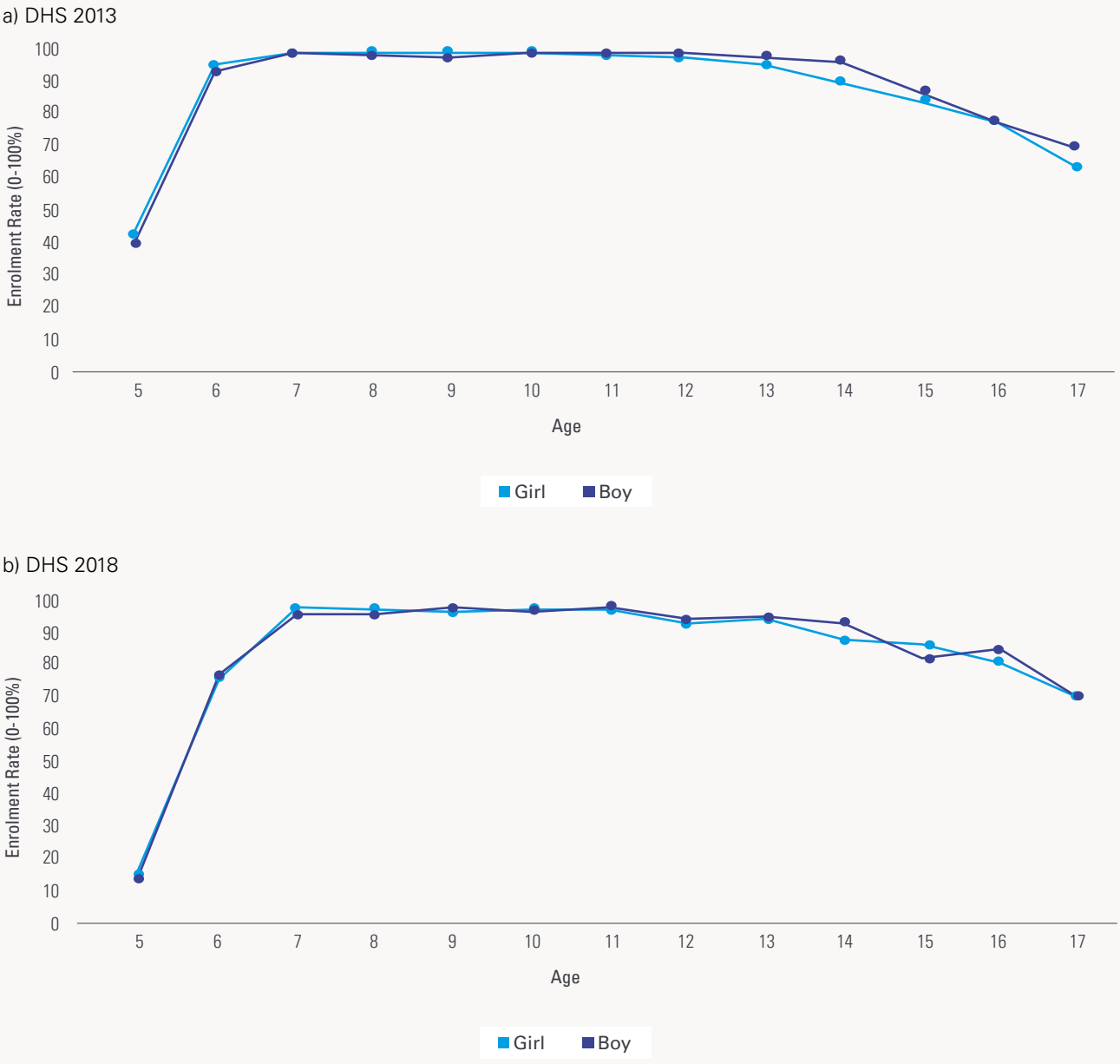


Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education, various years.

Figure 15 concludes this section with a detailed comparison of school enrolment by age and gender in the 2013 and 2018 DHS surveys. Despite the moderate divergence between the DHS and MoNE data for the NER and GER calculations, the DHS data are the best resource for detailed comparisons by age. Enrolment in Figure 15 is restricted to primary and above, meaning that pre-primary is not counted; this is necessary to highlight recent trends in the primary enrolment age. The numbers in Figure 15 show high enrolment rates across the primary and lower-secondary age ranges (6–13) that steadily decline in the upper-secondary age range (14–17). The results by gender show some differences for 14- to 17-year-olds, but again, the overall pattern is one of gender parity. Moreover, there has been some improvement in 14- to 17-year-old enrolment between the 2013 and 2018 surveys, consistent with the increasing NER for upper secondary in Table 9.

The result that stands out in the 2013–2018 comparison is for 5- and 6-year-olds: in the 2013 DHS, over 40 per cent of 5-year-olds and 95 per cent of 6-year-olds were reported as enrolled in primary school. In the 2018 survey, these percentages declined to 15 per cent and 77 per cent, respectively. This decline in 5- and 6-year-old enrolment in primary helps explain the decline in the primary-level gross and net enrolment rates (GER) in recent years. Moreover, since it coincides with an expansion of pre-primary participation, it seems likely that these "missing" primary children are instead enrolled in pre-primary, which is also a result of increased flexibility for parents to enrol children in pre-primary or primary options.[49] This observation is discussed further in the detailed summaries of OOSC by dimension (*see Section 4.4*).

Figure 15:
Current School Enrolment Rates by Gender and Age in 2013 and 2018 DHS



Source: DHS (2013, 2018).

49 The MoNE data include summaries of enrolment by date of birth for each level. The numbers for primary show that 5- and 6-year-olds made up nearly 30 per cent of primary students in 2013–2014, but in 2019–2020, this proportion had declined to just under 25 per cent. A decline in the number does help explain the decline in the gross enrolment rate between 2012 and 2020.

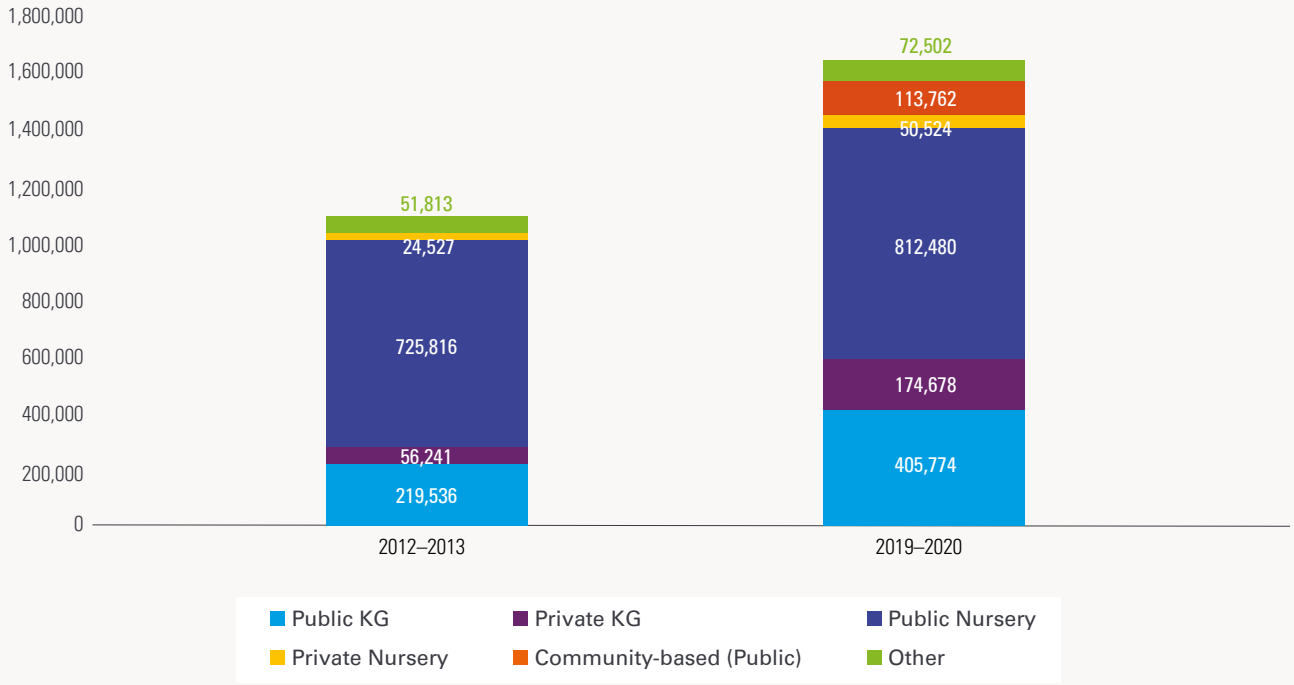
4.3 Schooling Categories in More Detail: Pre-Primary, Open Education and Special Education

This section briefly reviews the three categories of schooling that are focal points for this study on OOSC: pre-primary, open education, and special needs. The purpose is simply to provide a more detailed summary of recent enrolment trends in these categories, including the different sub-categories of offerings by level. This background context will, in turn, help to understand better the potential for these options to reduce OOSC in Türkiye.

4.3.1 Pre-School

Pre-school is a point of emphasis for UNICEF, given the expectation that this level will become part of compulsory education (for 5-year-olds). Figure 16 shows that since the 2012-2013 school year, there has been considerable growth in overall enrolments. The summary is somewhat complicated by including nursery and kindergarten (KG) school options in the official MoNE statistics. Nursery, intended for ages 3–4, has the largest number of students, although nursery school enrolment has not increased substantially between 2012 and 2019 (about 15%). For kindergarten (age 5), the growth has been more substantial across the public and private KG sectors; the combined enrolment in these two categories has increased by 110 per cent. Finally, the community-based pre-primary option is a relatively new provider category (since 2015-2016) and is enrolling more and more students.

Figure 16:
Total Enrolment in Pre-School Education by School Category, 2012-2013 and 2019–2020



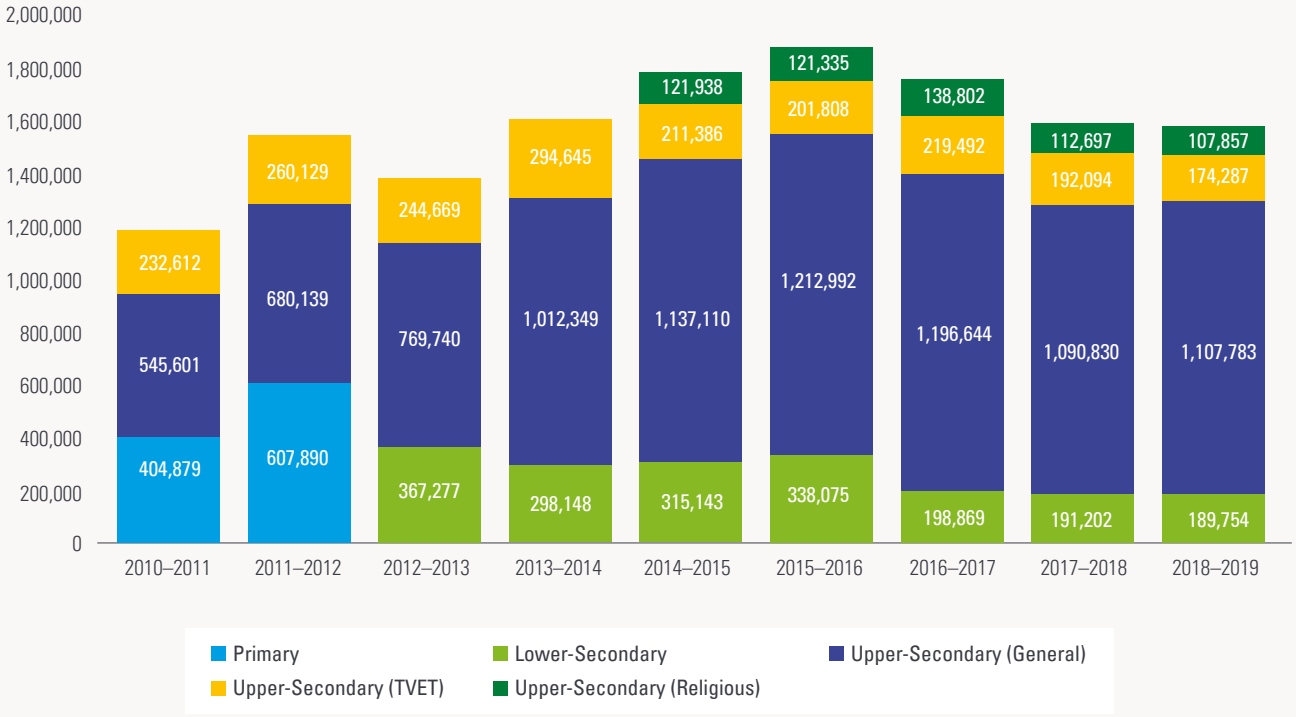
Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education (2013, 2020).

The numbers in Figure 16 provide some context for assessing the future scale-up of pre-school in Türkiye. The extent to which this expansion can come from private sources will depend on the profile of children currently not attending pre-primary, which is discussed further in Section 4.5 with the OOSC profiles by level.

4.3.2 Open Education

Figure 17 continues the more detailed summary of specific school categories with the MoNE data on the open education system since the 2010–2011 school year. Three trends in open education are relevant to the OOSC study. First, enrolment in open education lower-secondary schools has decreased recently, with a substantial drop off after the 2015-2016 school year. According to the MoNE data, the net enrolment rate in lower secondary during this period is relatively stable (around 95%), so this decrease in open system enrolment suggests that more students were choosing to remain in formal education, not exiting lower secondary entirely. The second trend also shows a general decline in open education enrolment in TVET at the upper-secondary level, especially in recent years compared with pre-2015.

Figure 17:
Total Enrolment in Open Education by School Category (2010–2020)



Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2010–2020.

The open high school is the largest open education category, which accounted for about two-thirds of all open education students in 2019–2020. This level also shows a slightly declining trend in recent years. Because the net (and gross) enrolment rate in upper secondary has been increasing, the loss of students across the different upper-secondary categories is again consistent with more students remaining in the formal education system. Regarding meeting future demand for upper education, where more work remains to reach full enrolment, Figure 17 shows several open education categories that can potentially expand. Given the general decline in enrolment, it is essential to understand more about the factors that affect student decisions to drop out of the formal education system, opt-in to open education, and remain in open education until completion. The qualitative data collection and analysis will address these issues.

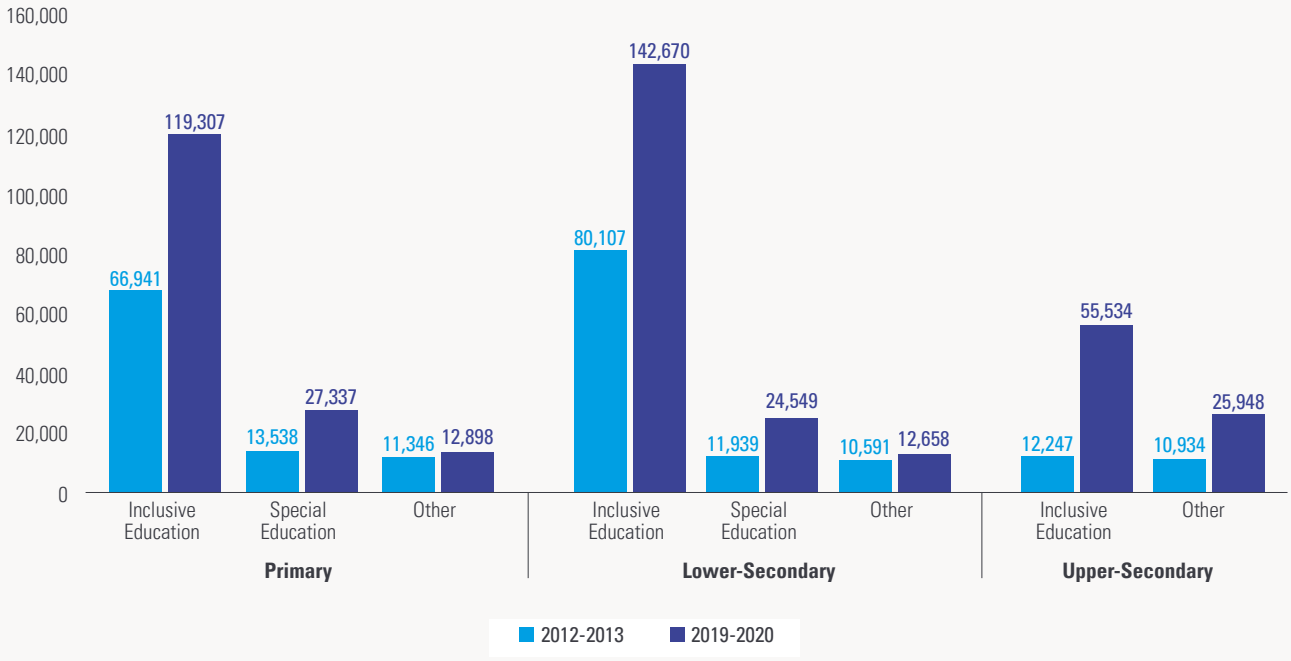
A critical feature of the open education system is the gender imbalance. Figure A1 in Appendix A summarizes enrolments by gender and level in the open education system in the 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 school years. In lower-secondary schools, females make up nearly two-thirds of enrolment in 2019–2020, and they are also the majority in open education Imam Hatip high schools. In the upper-secondary general and TVET categories, males make up 56 per cent and 68 per cent of enrolments, respectively.

4.3.3 Special Education

The MoNE data show that the special education sector has nearly doubled between the 2012-2013 and 2019–2020 school years. The more detailed summary in Figure 18 shows that enrolment has increased in every category. The largest segment of special education, and where the most significant increase has happened since 2012-2013, is in "Inclusive education (educational practices through inclusion/integration)."[50] "Special education" is the second largest category within the sector. More specialized categories of schools cater to specific disabilities (hearing, sight, etc.), which comprise a small proportion of the overall special education sector.[51]

What is missing from the summary in Figure 18 is an assessment of how special education is meeting the demands of the Turkish population. Even with educational practices through inclusion/integration, the overall numbers are minimal in the overall sector: 2.33 per cent of the total enrolment of 18 million students are in the various special education categories in the 2018–2019 school year, as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18:
Total Enrolment in Special Education by Category and Level (2012-2013 vs. 2019–2020)



Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education (2013, 2020).

50 Inclusive education is defined as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children in the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children"" (UNESCO (2005) Guidelines for Inclusion: ensuring access to education for all, Paris).

51 There were also about 5,000 students enrolled in special education at the pre-primary level in 2019–2020, but given the very small numbers, this level is not summarised in Figure 19.

4.4. Out-of-School Children Summaries by Dimension

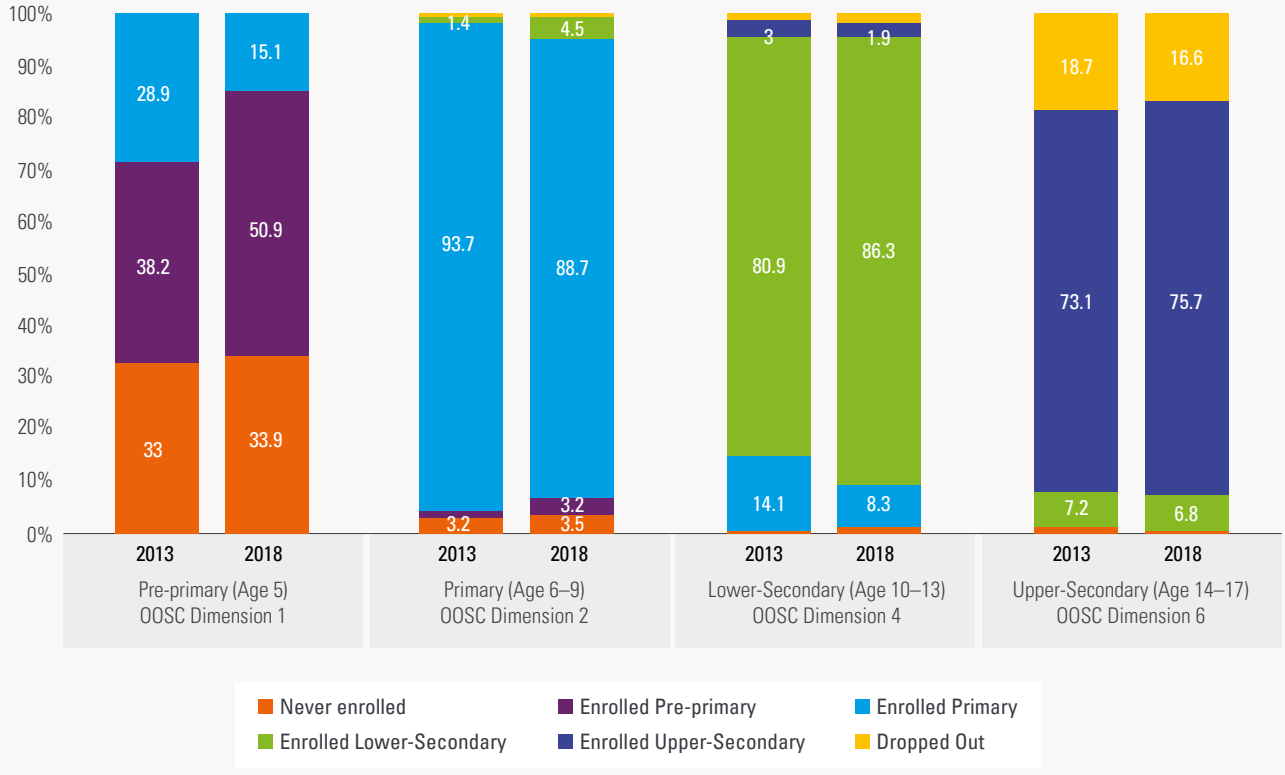
4.4.1 General Overview of OOSC Rates (Percentages)

The previous sections have set the stage for the analysis of OOSC across the various dimensions that are part of the official OOSCI Framework. The summary of overall enrolment trends (*see Section 4.1*) and enrolment rates (*see Section 4.2*) has documented the system's expansion in the 4+4+4 period while highlighting the age ranges where children are less likely to be in school. This global summary has been augmented with a more detailed review of specific education categories (special education, open education) that directly impact educational opportunities for Turkish children (*see Section 4.3*).

The OOSC framework combines these elements with a detailed summary of school participation by age group (or dimension). There are three categories of currently enrolled children: children of compulsory education age, children below compulsory education age (early entry), and children above compulsory education age (over-age enrolment). There are two categories for children currently out of school: never enrolled, although for the Turkish population, "not yet enrolled" is likely to be more accurate, and children who have enrolled previously but are no longer enrolled (drop out).

Figure 19 provides the estimates of out-of-school children (OOSC) rates by school level based on the DHS data from 2013 (the 2013–2014 school year) and 2018 (the 2018–2019 school year). Additional summaries are provided in Appendix A, Figure A3 using the MoNE national education statistics formal education summaries for the 2013–2014, 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 school years. The advantage of the DHS data is the detail that is available to fill in the OOSC categories. In addition to the current grade of enrolment by age, the DHS can identify children who have never enrolled in school or have enrolled before but dropped out. The survey data also include information on child and family background regardless of current enrolment status, which helps establish profiles of children not in school. The main limitation of the DHS is that it is a sample-based survey, so the national numbers are estimates of OOSC among the total population. It was already noted in Section 4.2 that the DHS-derived net and gross enrolment rates for lower- and upper-secondary levels are significantly lower than what is reported by the MoNE (see Table 5).

Figure 19:
Out-of-School Children Summaries by Age Category, 2013 and 2018 DHS



Source: DHS (2013, 2018).

Notes: The DHS sample sizes for 5–17 year olds are 10,183 (2013) and 8,086 (2018).

The advantage of the MoNE data is that they are comprehensive and cover the entire population of students across all levels, including open education categories. There are some limitations, however. First, age treatment is not as specific as in the DHS, with some collapsing categories that complicate the detailed OOSC summaries.[52] The other problem is that there is no information on the non-enrolled population of children. The total number of out-of-school children is simply estimated based on the difference between current enrolment and the population projection for that age cohort. It is also impossible to establish profiles of out-of-school children or determine if they have dropped out or never enrolled.

The OOSC dimensions from the official framework include Dimensions 1 (pre-primary), 2 (primary), 4 (lower secondary), and 6 (upper secondary); the remaining dimensions (3, 5 and 7) are related to the risk of dropping out and are presented in Section 4.4.4. Pre-primary is not a compulsory level of education in Türkiye for the period covered in this study, and therefore, it is not part of the official OOSC count. However, it is a policy point of emphasis, and the results in Figure 16 confirm the substantial growth in this sector between 2013 and 2019. A decrease in early-age enrolment in primary school has accompanied the increase in 5-year-old enrolment in pre-primary. Based on the DHS data, the overall OOSC rate for 5-year-olds changed very little between 2013 and 2018, and the MoNE data summaries confirm this pattern, especially in the most recent school year.

For primary-aged children (ages 6–9), the OOSC comparison between 2013 and 2018 shows a slight increase in the percentage of children who are out of school, which is consistent with the decline in the net enrolment rate for primary that was detailed in Table 9. According to the DHS, a smaller share of 6- to 9-year-olds are enrolled in primary grades in the 2018–2019 (88.7%) than in 2013–2014 (93.7%) school years. A higher percentage of 6- to 9-year-olds were already in lower secondary in 2018–2019 (4.5% versus 1.4%), a by-product of the higher early-entry rate into primary schools in earlier years (i.e., 2013–2014). Also, nearly identical percentages of 6- to 9-year-olds have never enrolled in 2018 (3.5%) or 2013 (3.2%), mainly referring to 6-year-olds not yet in primary school. Another difference for OOSC between 2013 and 2018 is over-age pre-primary enrolment: in 2013, only 1.1 per cent of 6- to 9-year-olds were in pre-primary, while in 2018, this figure increased slightly to 3.2 per cent. Overall, the Dimension 2 summary shows that very few children aged 6–9 are not in school, and the 6- to 9-year-olds who are not in primary school are either pre-primary or out of school but are likely to enter primary eventually. The summary using the MoNE data (*see Figure A4*) reveals a very similar pattern between 2013 and

52 For example, at the pre-primary level, the age breakdown collapses at age 5 and above, so it is not possible to establish if 6- and 7-year-olds are enrolled in pre-primary. Limited information is also provided on the age of students who are enrolled in the open education system.

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2019, with a decline in the share of 6- to 9-year-olds who are in primary school and an increase in the percentage who are enrolled in pre-primary (over-age) or lower secondary (early entry or "underage").

In lower secondary (Dimension 4), the DHS- and MoNE-based summaries show similar patterns. Notably, very few children (1% or less) in the 10- to13-year-old cohort have never entered school, according to the DHS, and the percentage of children who have enrolled previously but are no longer enrolled is also very small in both survey years (less than 2%). The remaining children are enrolled in school, and both the DHS and MoNE summaries show an increase over time in the percentage of 10- to 13-year-olds enrolled in lower secondary and a decrease in the percentage enrolled in primary school, a finding consistent with a slight increase in the net enrolment rate for lower secondary between 2013 and 2019 (*see Figure 14)*.

The DHS and MoNE numbers are **somewhat different** for over-age primary enrolment among 10- to 13-year-olds. In the DHS samples, the proportion of lower-secondary-aged children reported to be in primary school was 14.1 per cent in the 2013–2014 and 8.3% in the 2018–2019 school years (*see Figure 19*). The corresponding proportions in the MoNE were just 5.3 per cent in the 2013–2014 school years and 3.6 per cent in 2018–2019 (*see Figure A4*).

This divergence in results is noteworthy, but it should be noted that the disagreement is about the current enrolment level, not whether or not these children are in school.

Dimension 6 concludes with upper-secondary-aged children (14–17). In both the DHS- and MoNE-derived summaries, there is a clear pattern of improvement over time. In each data source, the percentage of children enrolled in upper secondary has increased, while the percentage of over-age enrolment in lower secondary has decreased. These Figures are again consistent with an improving net enrolment rate during this period (*see Table 9*), confirming that fewer children are out of school.

Nevertheless, one significant disagreement exists between the DHS and MoNE data for the upper-secondary aged children: the percentage who appear to be out of school. In the 2018–2019 school years, according to the DHS, 16.6 per cent of 14- to 17-year-olds indicated they had enrolled in school previously but were no longer enrolled (or "did not attend" during the current school year in the DHS question format). In the MoNE data, there is no category for being out of school (or dropping out); the number of OOSC is instead derived by taking the difference between the total number of children aged 14–17 in the population and the total number of children aged 14–17 who are enrolled in upper or lower-secondary "formal" and open educational options. In the MoNE, this proportion of 14- to 17-year-old children who are unaccounted for, which suggests they are out of school, is only 8.6 per cent in the 2018–2019 school year (down from 9.7% in 2013–2014).

This discrepancy is significant for this study because upper-secondary-aged children likely make up the majority of out-of-school children, especially when considering that most of the primary-aged OOSC will eventually enter school, so it is important to estimate the size of this group accurately. Unfortunately, it is not possible to resolve this issue definitively based on the available information. First, it is impossible to validate the DHS sampling accuracy across the different cohorts of children, which means the differences between Figure 19 and Figure A4 may be related to sampling. The net and gross enrolment comparisons in Table 9 already flagged this issue, with some sizeable differences between the DHS and MoNE Figures in lower and upper secondary.

Some factors can affect the accuracy of administrative data summaries of enrolment rates. First, there is the use of population projections based on an earlier census to establish the size of the age cohort at each level, a standard procedure for obtaining GER and NER estimates because more recent census data are not always available.

There is also the "in name only" enrolment, where the child is officially enrolled in the system but is not participating. It is unclear how possible this is for enrolment in the formal education system, which presumably requires children to set foot in a school to be counted. Furthermore, even if children have been absent for many days and no longer consider themselves to be in school (but are enrolled according to the MoNE), the DHS should still count them as in school for 2018–2019 because the DHS question is "attended school at any time this school year." Absences as a risk factor for dropout are revisited in Section 4.4.5.

For the open education system, there seems to be more potential for divergence between reported numbers and the number of children who regularly participate, which would help explain the difference between the DHS and MoNE data enrolment rates. For example, the possibility of "under-reporting" open education enrolment in the DHS exists, which would happen if the child (or a household member responding to the survey) did not refer to open education participation when asked if the child had attended school during the current school year or if the DHS data collection personnel did not treat open education enrolment in the same way as the formal education system.

One interesting feature of the open education system in Türkiye is the concentration of over-age students. For example, in the 2019–2020 school year, the MoNE reported only 55 students in open education lower-secondary schools who were 13 years old and 222,583 students who were 14 or older.[53] For upper-secondary open education, the MoNE does not report enrolment by age category, so it is impossible to determine how many are correctly placed, over-age, or out of the compulsory education age. However, a substantial segment of children are out of the compulsory education age in upper secondary, a finding discussed below in the more detailed review of age for grade.

4.4.2 OOSC Raw Numbers

The OOSC summaries in Section 4.4.1 rely on rates (percentages) aligned with the OOSCI framework Dimensions 1, 2, 4, and 6. Figure 20 provides an alternative estimation based on raw totals that add up the out-of-school children from all dimensions and a series of adjustments (or filters). Following the discussion in the previous section, the choice of data source (the DHS or MoNE) has implications for summing up the number of OOSC: the bars for the DHS-derived totals in Figure 20 are about twice as large (or more) than the corresponding bars based on the MoNE data, which again highlights the importance of better understanding the underlying differences in the way the two data sources measure enrolment.

The results in Figure 20, regardless of the data source, also vary depending on the filtering strategy. The unfiltered results are captured by the blue bars, which count over-age children as out of school, as well as 5-year-olds that are not in pre-primary (or primary). This strategy is consistent with the official OOSCI framework that counts over-age as out-of-school. It provides a general sense of the cumulative impact of various challenges facing the Turkish system, including out-of-school children, over-age enrolment and late entry into primary school. Nevertheless, the blue bars are ineffective in highlighting the number of children not in school, which is why the filters are used. For example, in the latest DHS data (2018–2019), 2.6 million Turkish children are out of school when counting over-age enrolment and pre-primary aged children (age 5); this equals 15.1 per cent of all children aged 5–17. This number comes down to 1.6 million (or 9.3%) when excluding over-age enrolled children from the total and then down to 1.25 million (7.8%) when excluding 5-year-olds, and finally down to just under 1.1 million (6.8%) after allowing for eventual entry into primary school among 6- to 9-year-olds who are not in school. [54]

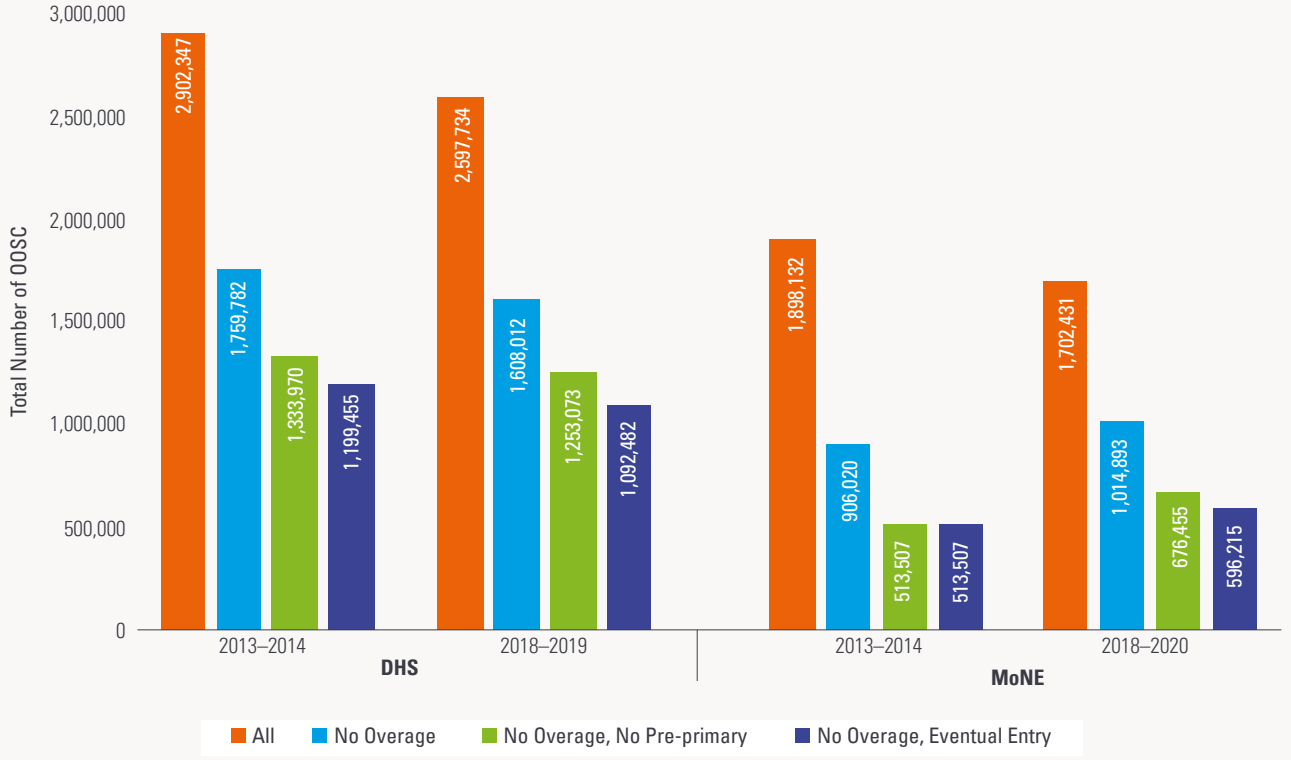
The OOSC raw numbers based on the most recent MoNE data (2019–2020) are much smaller. Without any filtering, the total comes to 1.7 million, corresponding to 10 per cent of all children aged 5–17. After excluding over-age and pre-primary and allowing for eventual entry, the raw total is reduced to slightly under 600,000 in the 2019–2020 school year, or 3.8 per cent of all primary and secondary-aged children.

The largest adjustment in Figure 20 is for over-age enrolment, caused by late entry into primary and grade repetition. Removing these children from the OOSC count is preferred because they are not out of school, but they may be at risk of dropping out later, so this is an important sub-group. For this reason, over-age is treated as a risk factor in the separate analysis of the OOSC dimensions (D3, D5 and D7) related to the risk of dropping out (*see Section 4.4.4*).

53 MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020, Table 2.7b.

54 The eventual entry correction assumes that only half of 1% (0.5 of 1%) of Turkish students will not enrol in primary school at some point, which is based on the never enrolled rate among lower-secondary-aged children. The summary in Figure 19 shows that 3.2% of primary-aged children in the DHS 2018–2019 were enrolled in pre-primary, and 3.5% had not enrolled in school at any level. As noted in Section 4.4.1, late entry into primary does appear to be increasing as more children enter pre-primary school. Almost all of the children affected by this correction are 6 years old.

Figure 20:
Out-of-School Children Raw Totals by Estimation Strategy and School Year, DHS and MoNE Data



Source: DHS (2013, 2018); MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2013–2014, 2019–2020.

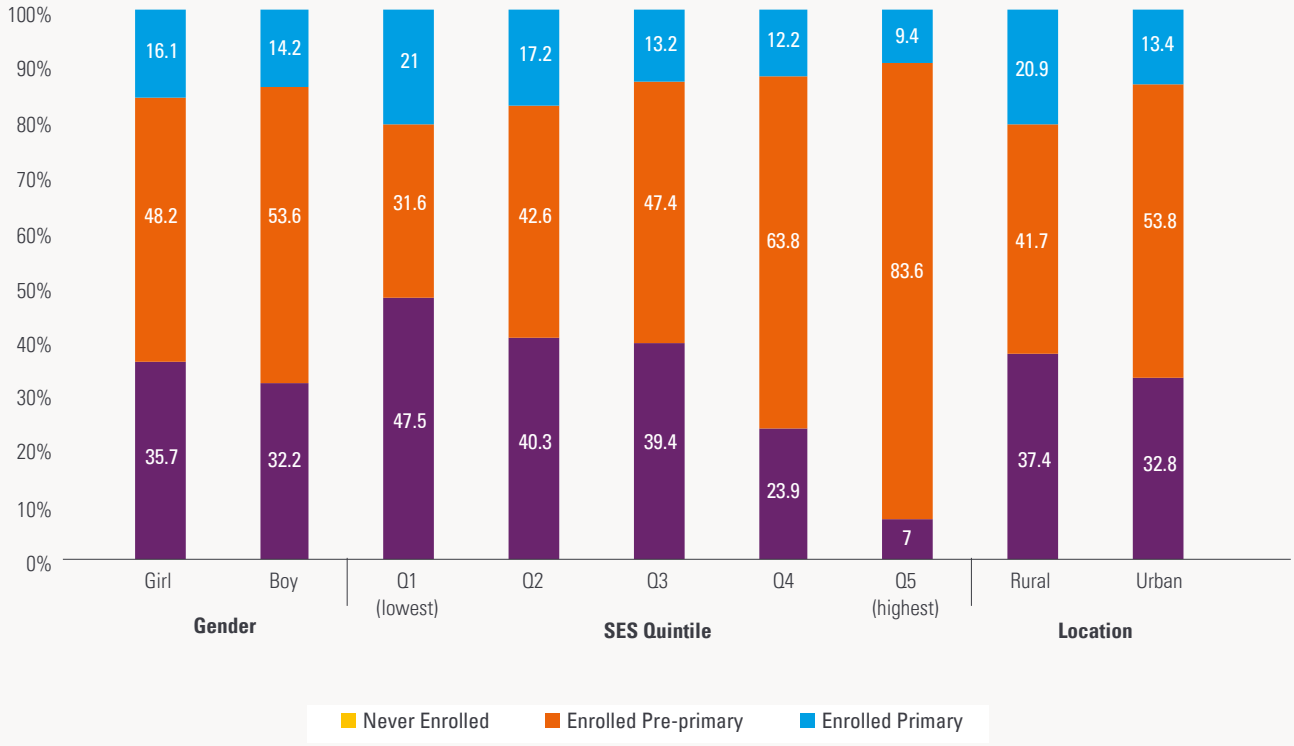
Finally, the data from the DHS and MoNE also diverge somewhat regarding the rate of improvement in reducing OOSC. Based on the DHS, there is an evident trend towards reducing OOSC between the two survey years, especially considering that the population grew during this period. For example, in the DHS data, the OOSC total without over-age has decreased from 1.75 million in the 2013–2014 school year to 1.6 million in the 2018–2019 school year; this corresponds to a decline from 10.6 per cent of children aged 5–17 in 2013–2014 to 9.3 per cent in 2018–2019. The fully filtered total also shows a similar decline based on the total population.

The total number of OOSC has also decreased between the 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 school years using the MoNE data, corresponding to a decline from 11.5 per cent to 9.5 per cent. Once the filters were applied, the number (and percentage) of OOSC increased slightly between these two years, consistent with the net and gross enrolment rate data provided by the MoNE during this period. Between the 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 school years, the net and gross enrolment rates in primary declined, and the gross enrolment in lower secondary also declined. These rates have improved in pre-primary and upper secondary, but these improvements are insufficient to counteract the primary and lower secondary decreases.

4.4.3 OOSC Profiles

Figures 21–24 present OOSC summaries by national population sub-categories for pre-primary-, primary-, lower-, and upper-secondary-aged children based on the DHS 2018 data. Very few children are not in school for primary and lower secondary, although there is a significant proportion of over-age children in some categories in lower secondary. The categories include gender, SES quintile, urban-rural location and, for upper-secondary-aged children, current working status.

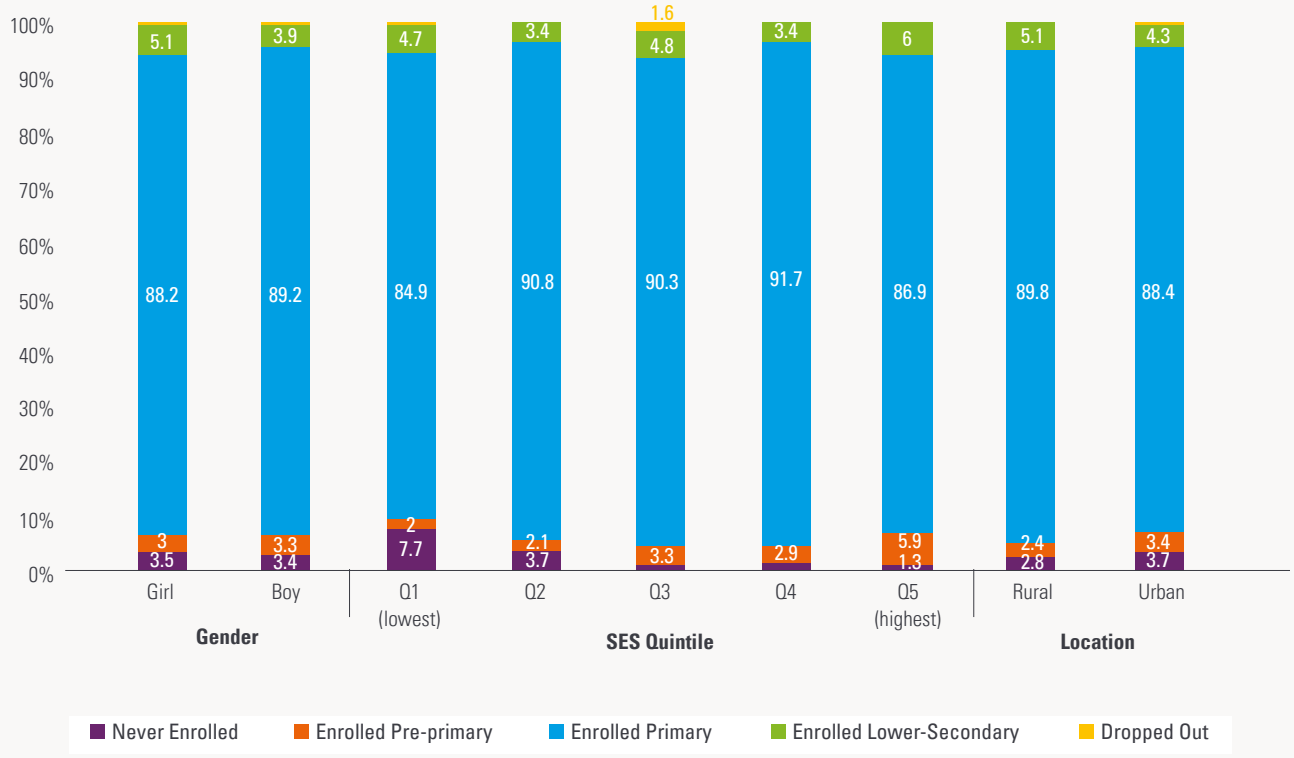
Figure 21:
Pre-Primary (Age 5) Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Profiles by Gender, SES Quintile and Location, 2018 DHS



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS sample sizes for 5-year-olds are 792 (2013) and 607 (2018).

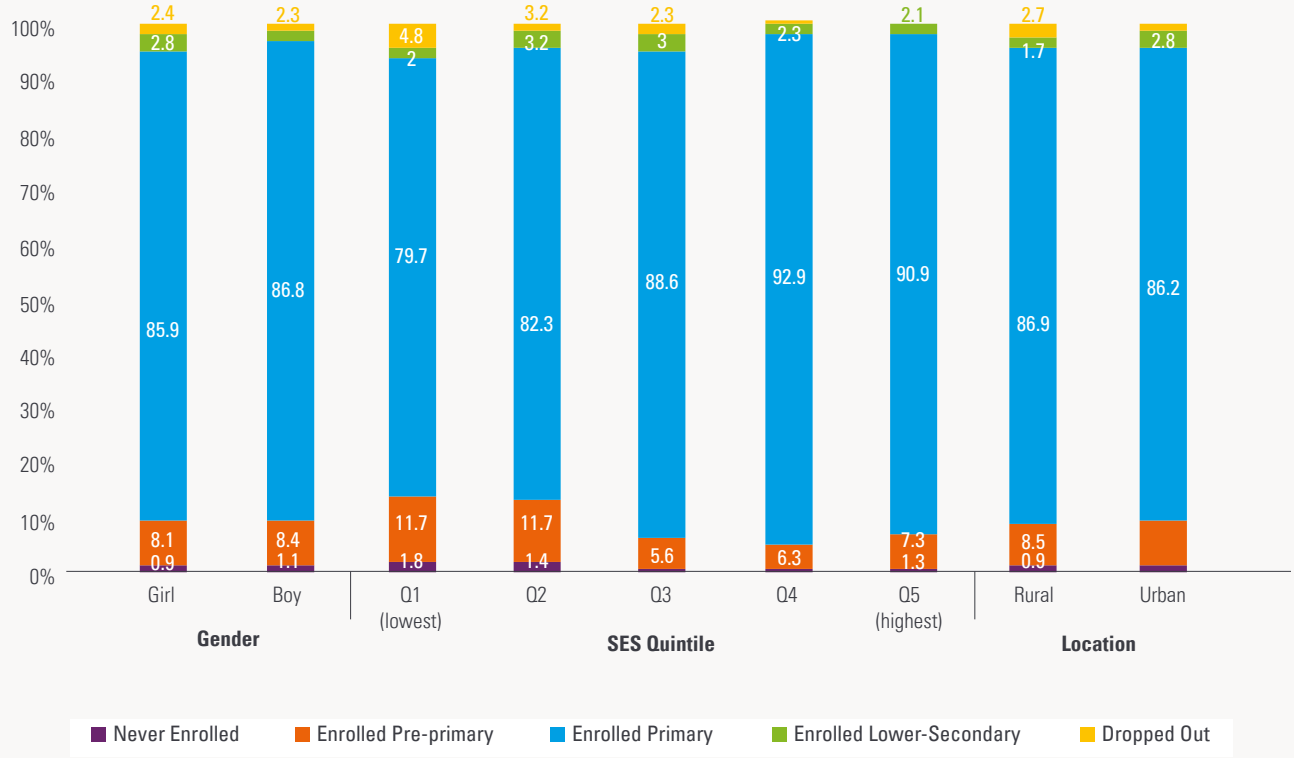
Figure 22:
Primary (Ages 6–9) Out-of-School Children Profiles by Gender, SES Quintile, Language Group and Location, 2018 DHS



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS sample sizes for 6–9 years are 3,059 (2013) and 2,387 (2018).

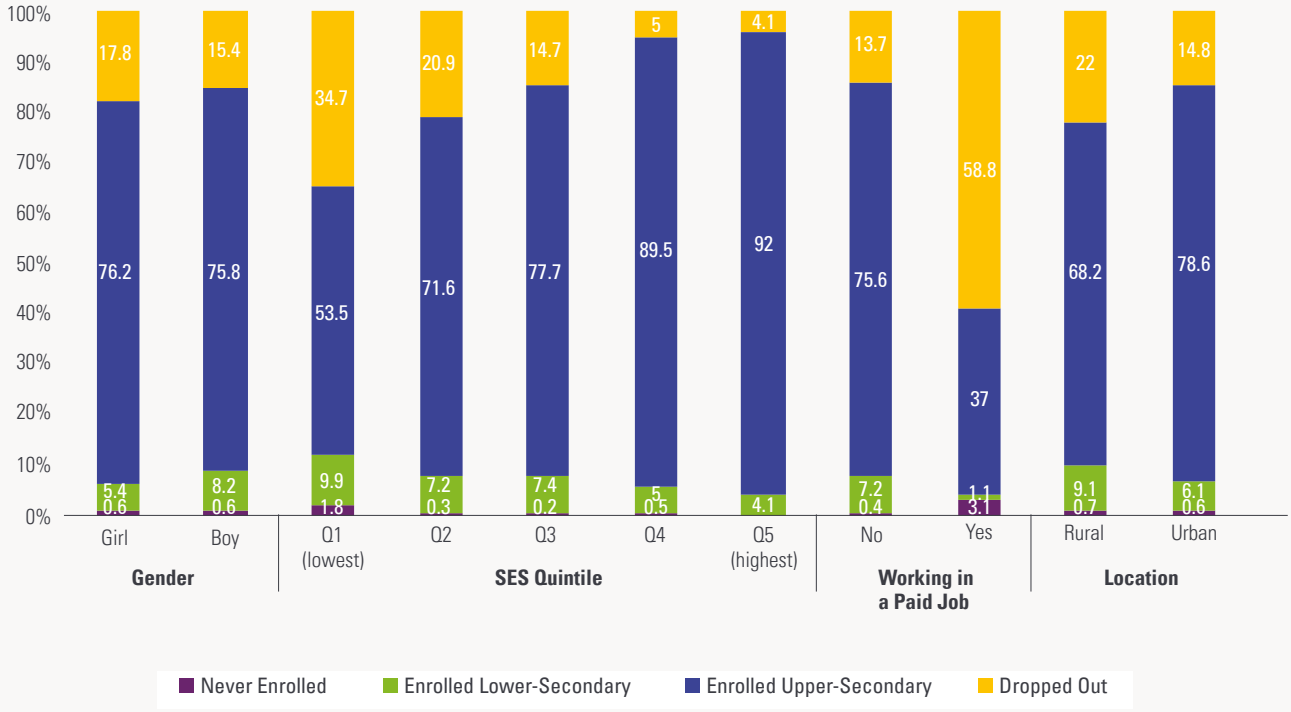
Figure 23:
Lower Secondary (Ages 10–13) Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Profiles by Gender, SES Quintile, Language Group and Location, 2018 DHS



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS sample sizes for children 10–13 years are 3,317 (2013) and 2,650 (2018).

Figure 24:
Upper-Secondary (Ages 14–17) Out-of-School Children Profiles by Gender, SES Quintile, Language Group and Location, 2018 DHS



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS sample sizes for children 14–17 years are 3,015 (2013) and 2,442 (2018).

There are some interesting patterns across the four Figures . One interesting result is that those with early entry into primary school among 5-year-olds are more likely among lower SES children (Figure 21). For example, 32 per cent of 5-year-olds from Quintile 1 families (the lowest SES group based on the DHS data) are enrolled in pre-primary, and 21 per cent are already in primary. By contrast, 84 per cent of 5-year-olds in Quintile 5 families (highest SES) are enrolled in pre-primary, and only 9.4 per cent have already entered primary, which suggests that for socio-economically disadvantaged families, there may be supply-side constraints for public pre-primary options and a reluctance to enrol children in private pre-primary when they can instead enrol their child in a public primary school free of charge. Nearly half of all 5-year-olds from Quintiles 1–3 families are not enrolled in any school.

The other notable findings across Figures 21–24 include:

- The results by gender are very similar, with nearly identical current enrolment rates, consistent with the MoNE summaries of net enrolment rates by gender that do not vary much. There is also minimal variation in the results for gender within sub-categories of other variables. For example, girls and boys have similar results in rural and urban areas. One exception is for SES: older girls (14–17) from Quintile 1 families are more likely to have never enrolled and dropped out than boys, and as a result, their current enrolment rate is noticeably lower (67% for boys versus 58% for girls).

- The results vary little between rural and urban areas for primary and lower-secondary-aged children. The main differences by location are for pre-primary, where rural 5-year-olds are more likely to have never enrolled and less likely to be in pre-primary than their urban counterparts (Figure 21), and in upper secondary (ages 14–17), where rural children are much more likely to have dropped out (see Figure 24). In order to reduce this possibility, with the amendment made to "Regulation on the Amendment of the Regulation on the Opening, Closing, and Naming of Institutions of the Ministry of National Education", it was ensured that kindergarten classes could be opened in settlements with five children of pre-school age, and pilot applications of transporting kids to a central kindergarten and travelling teacher classes have been implemented for pre-school education.

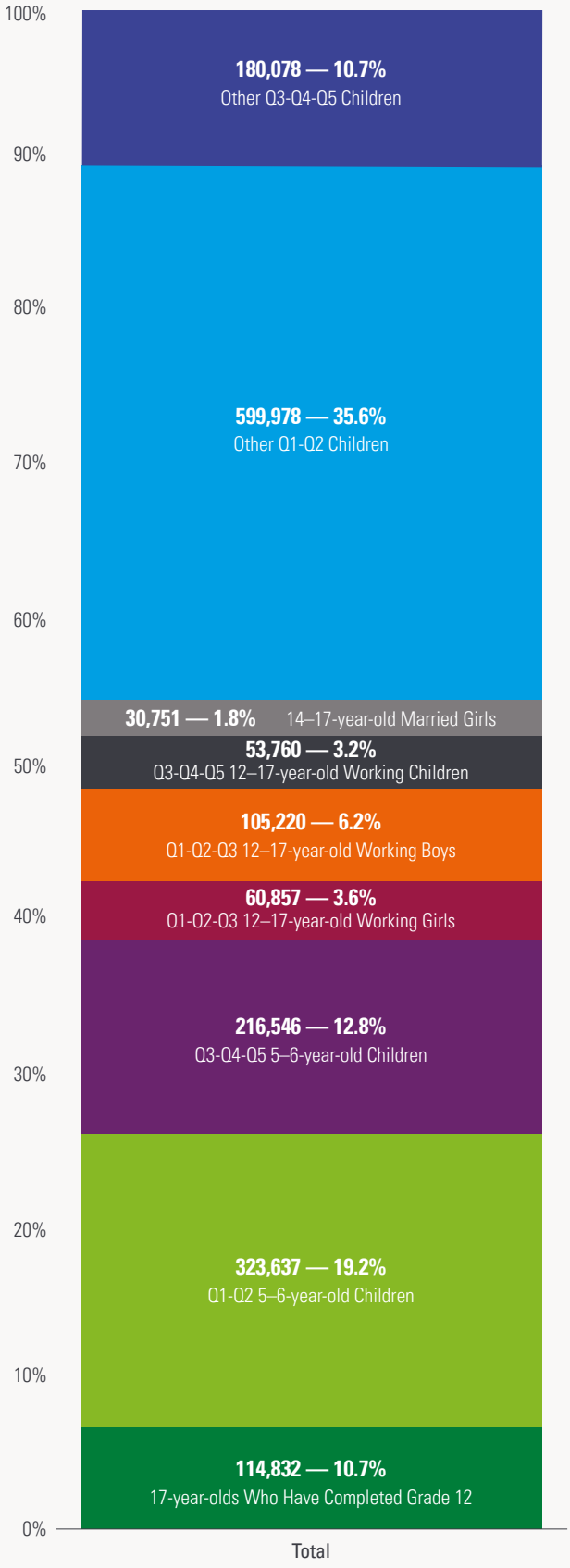
- Some 7.9 per cent of boys aged 14–17 and 4.6 per cent of girls reported that they are currently engaged in "paid work" of some kind. Not surprisingly, the children working in paid labour were much less likely to be in school, as nearly 60 per cent have dropped out (*see Figure 24*).

Figure 25 concludes the profile summary with an updated breakdown of out-of-school children by category. The detailed disaggregation of the OOSC population is a counterpart to the overall total OOSC summary in Figure 20. The summary is based on the roughly 1.6 million children out of school in the 2018–2019 school years, according to the DHS estimation that ignores over-age enrolment.

Nearly 115,000 out-of-school children in 2018 were 17-year-olds who had completed Grade 12 and were no longer enrolled (or 10.7% of the total; see purple bar at bottom). In terms of the disaggregation of out-of-school children, there are also two categories, which are child labour and child, early and forced marriage. Nearly 10 per cent of the OOSC in 2018 were 12- to 17-year-olds working in paid labour, with males making up the largest share. Another 31,000 girls aged 14–17 (or 3.2%) report being married and are out of school. Those 5- to 6-year-olds who are not (yet) in school comprise 32 per cent of the total OOSC, although this is weighted towards the poorest families (Quintiles 1 and 2). And then finally, there are almost 600,000 "other" children from Quintiles 1 and 2 families that are not in school and do not fit with any of the other categories (e.g., they are not working, not married, etc.). This group alone accounts for 35.6 per cent of the total. By contrast, the "other" OOSC from Quintiles 3–5 (middle and highest SES families) only account for 10.7 per cent of the total OOSC.

Overall, three groups of OOSC stand out in Figure 25. First, there are the children who are reporting a specific barrier in the form of child labour and child, early and forced marriage; this group makes up about 15 per cent of the total or 240,000 children. The second group includes 5- and 6-year-olds likely to enter primary school at some point, so they can mostly be filtered out of the summary. The final group is mainly children from lower-income families (Q1 and Q2) who are out of school, but no discernible barrier has been identified in the DHS. This group is critical due to its size, and the barrier analysis in the remaining sections of this report will attempt to explain why these children are not in school.

Figure 25:
Detailed Disaggregation of Out-of-School Children Aged 5–17, 2018–2019 DHS



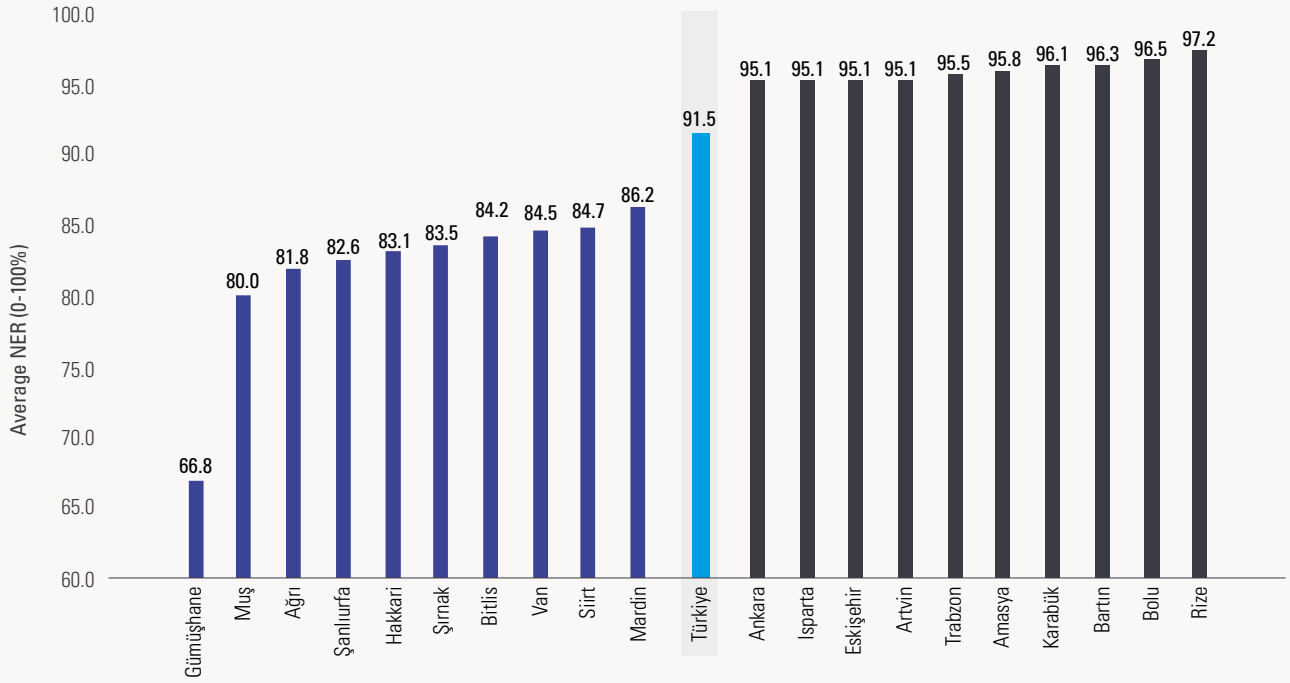
Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: Q1–Q5 refer to socio-economic status (SES) quintiles created by the DHS based on household possessions and access to services. The five quintiles include equal numbers of households and are ordered from lowest SES (Quintile 1) to highest (Quintile 5). Children working paid labour refers to children aged 12–17 who indicated they are engaged in paid labour. The DHS 2018 sample size for children 5–17 years is 8,086.

4.4.4 OOSC by Province

With the MoNE data, it is possible to construct different measures of OOSC for each of the 81 provinces. Table A1 in Appendix A comprehensively summarizes gross and net enrolment rates by province for primary and lower secondary combined, upper secondary, and then primary, lower, and upper secondary combined (overall). The provinces are ranked from highest to lowest based on the overall NER across the 4+4+4 grade sequence. Additionally, Figures A5 and A6 in the Appendix A provides a visualization on a Türkiye map for the GER and NER information per province. Figure 26 summarizes the Table A1 data with a list of 20 provinces divided into the 10 lowest and highest based on the overall average NER. This indicator does not directly measure OOSC but provides a good summary of overall participation by province. Other indicators were created to compare provinces, but the results tend to identify the same provinces as having relatively high and low rates of enrolment (or out-of-school children).[55]

Figure 26:
Ten Lowest and Highest Province Average Net Enrolment Rates (NER) Combining Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary, 2019–2020 MoNE



Source: MoNE (2020).

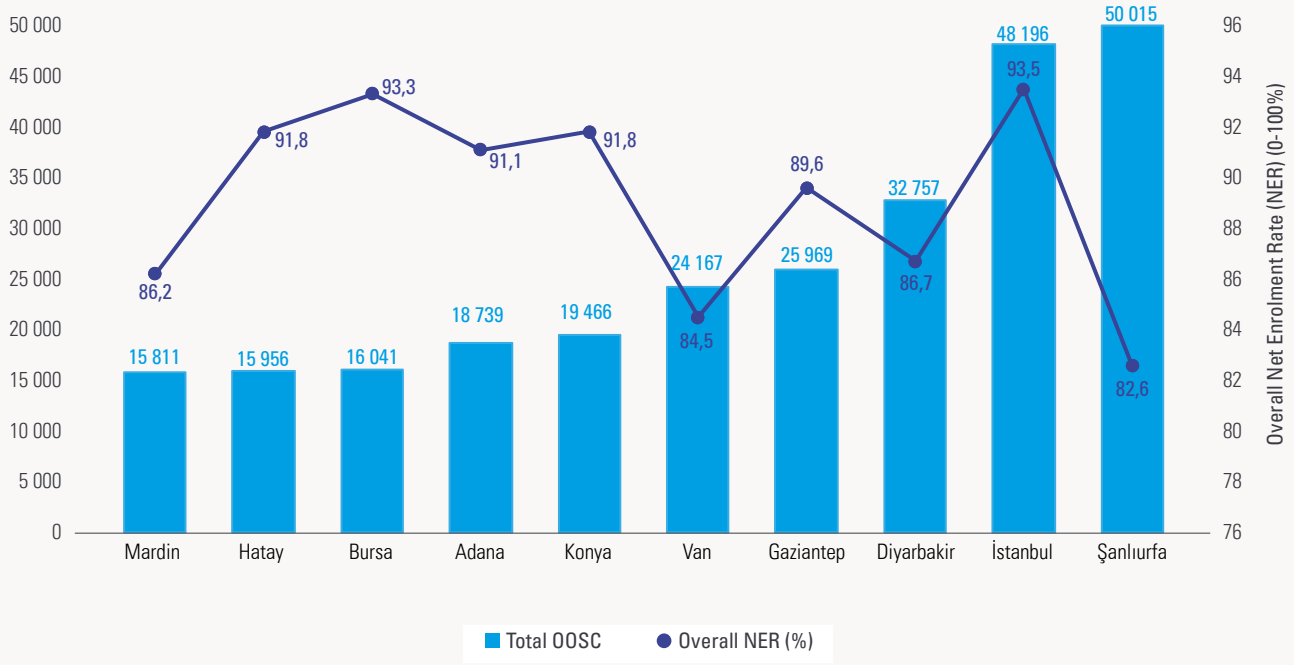
The numbers in Figure 26 confirm that there are significant differences in educational participation between provinces in Türkiye, although except for one province (Gümüşhane), the maximum gap between the highest and lowest provinces is around 15 per cent. This result is undoubtedly a substantial difference, but not as large as the kinds of regional disparities that are common in lower-income countries or were found in the comparisons across provinces with large numbers of Syrian children UTP.[56]

55 Additional indicators that were considered include the average NER across pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary; an estimation of the overall OOSC rate based on total population and enrolment totals by level; and an estimated OOSC rate by level that accounts for over-age enrolment.

56 UNICEF (2022), Country Report on Syrian Out-of-School Children UTP in Türkiye.

The low-performing provinces in Figure 26 are undoubtedly worthy of extra policy attention. In terms of actual numbers of OOSC, however, only three of the lowest 10 provinces in Figure 26 (Mardin, Van and Şanlıurfa) are also in the list of the 10 provinces with the most OOSC; these 10 provinces are provided in Figure 27. Standing out in the raw numbers are Istanbul and Şanlıurfa, which together account for almost 20 per cent of children who are not in school in primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary levels. Figure 27 includes the overall NER rate (right-hand axis), which confirms that several provinces with relatively large numbers of OOSC also have relatively low overall net enrolment rates. In other cases, the large numbers of OOSC are mainly a result of the province's size, not because it has a high rate of OOSC.

Figure 27:
Ten Provinces with the Largest Number of OOSC Among Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary, 2019–2020 MoNE



Source: MoNE (2020).

The provincial analysis concludes with comparisons between female and male enrolment rates. Table A2 in Appendix A provides the overall summary using the 2019–2020 MoNE data. The provinces are ordered from highest to lowest based on the gender gap in the overall NER for primary, lower, and upper secondary. For example, the province of Bolu has the most significant gender gap (3.7%), corresponding to an overall NER of 98.4 for males and 94.6 for females. The provinces at the bottom of Table A2 in the Appendix A have "negative gender gaps" that favour females, with the most significant difference found in Iğdır province: the overall NER for females is 90.2 versus 86.2 for males or a gap of 4 per cent.

The provincial comparisons do not show much variation in the overall NER Figure by gender. Sixty-six of the 91 provinces have a gender gap within +/- 1.0 per cent. Based on additional comparisons at individual schooling levels, the results are not much different and show similar enrolment levels between females and males.

4.4.5 Children at Risk of Dropping Out

The final dimensions of the OOSCI framework are related to the risk of dropping out of primary (Dimension 3), lower-secondary (Dimension 5), and upper-secondary (Dimension 7) children. As described in Section 3.1, the at-risk category is not clearly defined by the OOSCI framework and is left to individual countries to determine based on context-relevant risk factors. For this study on the Turkish national population, over-age enrolment and absences are used as risk factors.

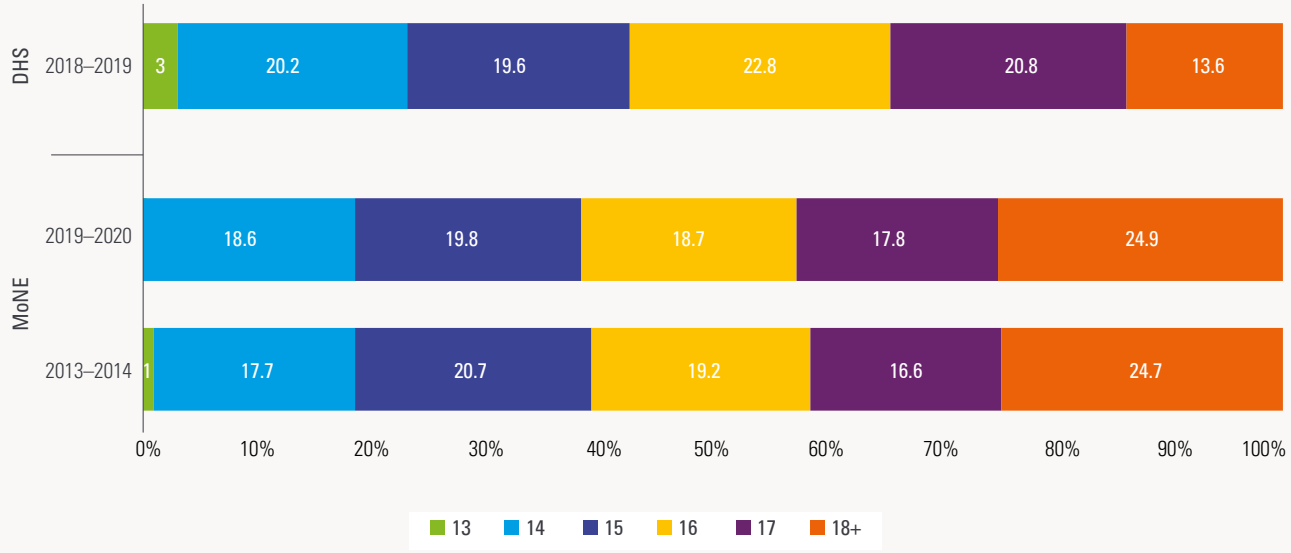
The most recent MoNE data show that few primary or lower-secondary students are over-age. Only 3.6 per cent of children enrolled in primary are 10 or older, and 4.1 per cent of lower-secondary students are 14 or older (*see Figure A4 in Appendix A)*. Figures A7 and A8 also include the age breakdown for primary and lower secondary based on the most recent DHS (2018–2019), and the results are generally consistent with the MoNE numbers (although they do diverge somewhat in primary). The MoNE percentages translate into 195,000 over-age students in primary and 430,000 in lower secondary, out of overall enrolments in each level of roughly 5 million students. For lower secondary, the over-age population can be divided between the regular and open education systems. In the formal education system there are 210,000 over-age students reported by the MoNE. Almost all open education students in lower secondary (223,000) are over-age, consistent with a system that targets people outside of the compulsory education age. This concentration of over-age enrolment in the open education sector at this level was already noted in Section 4.4.1.

The situation is very different in the upper secondary, depending on the data source. Figure 28 shows that, according to the MoNE data, roughly 25 per cent of upper-secondary students were 18 or older in the 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 school years. This result translates to roughly 1.4 million over-age students in upper secondary in 2019–2020 who are out of compulsory education age, although the MoNE does not provide data on the actual age ranges of these students or how many are in the formal or open education systems. This Figure is substantial, especially considering that only 430,000 over-age students are in the lower-secondary level. The much lower Figure at lower secondary suggests that over-age enrolment in the upper-secondary level is largely a product of upper-secondary experience and is not a result of a cumulative process where children begin school late or repeat grades before arriving in upper secondary.

Based on the DHS data, the numbers in Figure 28 are very different for upper secondary. The DHS shows roughly half as many over-age students in the 2018–2019 school year compared with the MoNE data summary from 2019–2020; the results are nearly the same in the 2018–2019 MoNE summary that coincides more directly with the DHS survey year (not presented). The discrepancy in over-age enrolment between the DHS and MoNE is part of the data validity issue discussed in Section 4.4.1. Once again, the open education category seems to stand out because it is possible that over-age children are being automatically enrolled in open education but are not participating.[57]

More detailed summaries of age by grade are only possible with the DHS data because the MoNE releases age data on an aggregated basis across all grades for each school level. Using the DHS 2018–2019, there is a consistent pattern for enrolment age in upper secondary, where the over-age enrolment issue is most prominent. Each of the four upper-secondary grades has similar proportions of over-age students. For example, in Grade 9, nearly 90 per cent of enrolled students are 15 years of age or younger (i.e., within one year of their official age), while in Grade 12, the proportion of children who are 18 years old or younger is nearly the same (*see Figure 28*). In other words, based on the DHS 2018–2019 data, no evidence exists that the over-age students are concentrated in any specific grade.

Figure 28:
Upper-Secondary Enrolment by Age Category, 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 (MoNE) and 2018–2019 DHS



Source: MoNE (2020), DHS (2018)

57 According to the Regulation No. 29871 on Upper Secondary Education Institutions, individuals under 18 can register upper secondary schools and attend until the age of 22 (only for the students who can graduate by taking conditional pass examination at the end of the school year).

There are likely to be **three main drivers** of over-age enrolment in Türkiye.

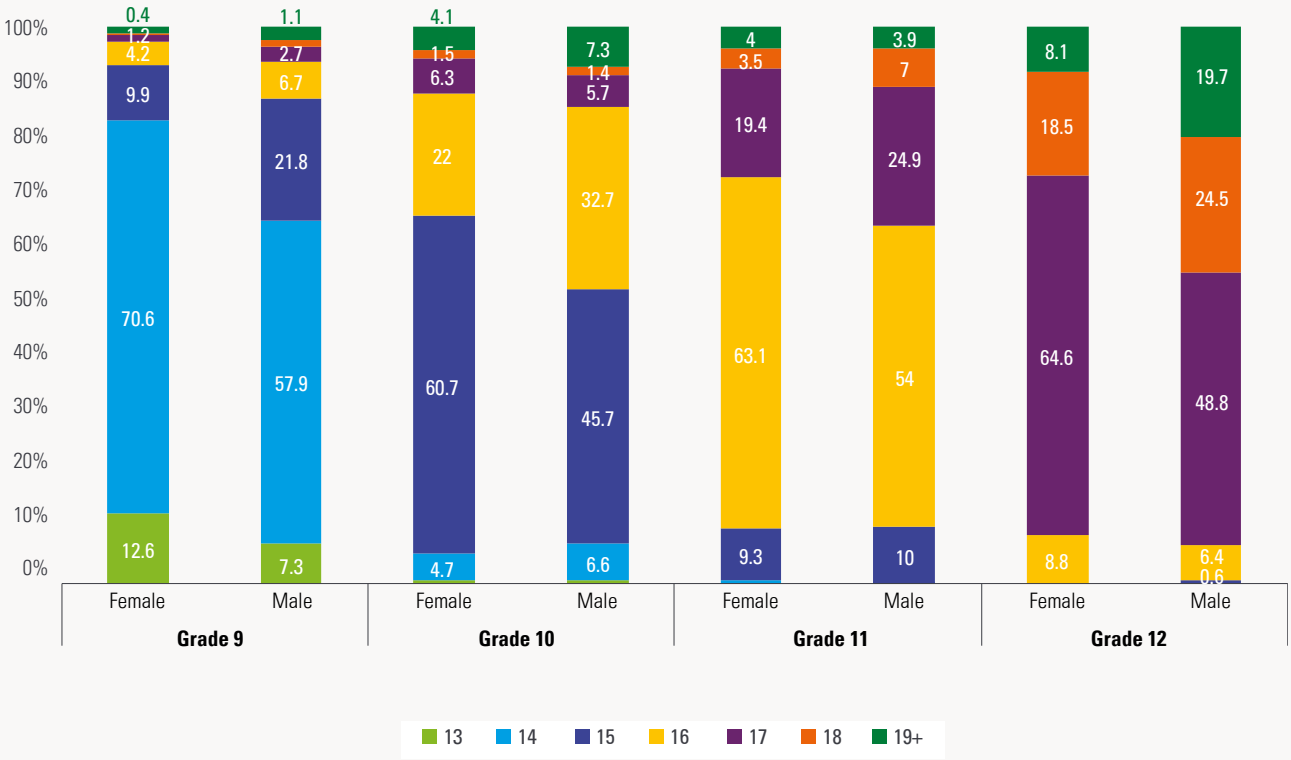
- The first is a late entry into primary school, which appears to be increasing in recent years with the expansion of pre-primary access. In earlier years, the MoNE and the DHS data did not show a large group of children entering primary school late, so this factor does not likely explain much of the over-age totals in Figures 28 and 29.

- The second driver is grade repetition. The MoNE does not have grade repetition data in their annual statistical summaries, but these rates can be computed in the DHS by comparing the grade of current enrolment with the grade of enrolment in the previous year. These DHS-derived grade repetition rates by grade are presented in Figure A9 in Appendix A. On average, about 2 per cent of children enrolled in primary and lower-secondary grades in the 2018–2019 school years were repeating that grade, meaning they reported being in the same grade in the 2018–2019 and 2017-2018 school years. In upper secondary, these rates increase considerably to over 5 per cent, especially in Grades 9 and 10. This result is consistent with a worsening age-grade profile in upper secondary (i.e., more over-age students), but when comparing the repetition rates in upper-secondary grades by gender, there is very little difference between males and females.

- The final source of over-age (people out of compulsory education age) is slow progress through the open education system. No quantitative data are available on open education progress rates, but if students enrolled in the open education system require more time to complete each grade level, this will result in a larger share of over-age enrolment.

The data in Figure 29 show significant gender differences in age by grade in upper secondary. Across all four grades, there is a clear pattern where females are more likely to be in the correct age range. By Grade 12, this advantage is substantial: 92 per cent of female Grade 12 students are 16–18 years old, compared with just over 80 per cent of males. This result means that nearly 20 per cent of male Grade 12 students are 19 years old or older, compared with just 8.1 per cent of females.

Figure 29:
Upper-Secondary Enrolment by Age and Gender, 2018–2019 DHS



Source: DHS (2018)

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 13- to 18-year-olds is 3,705.

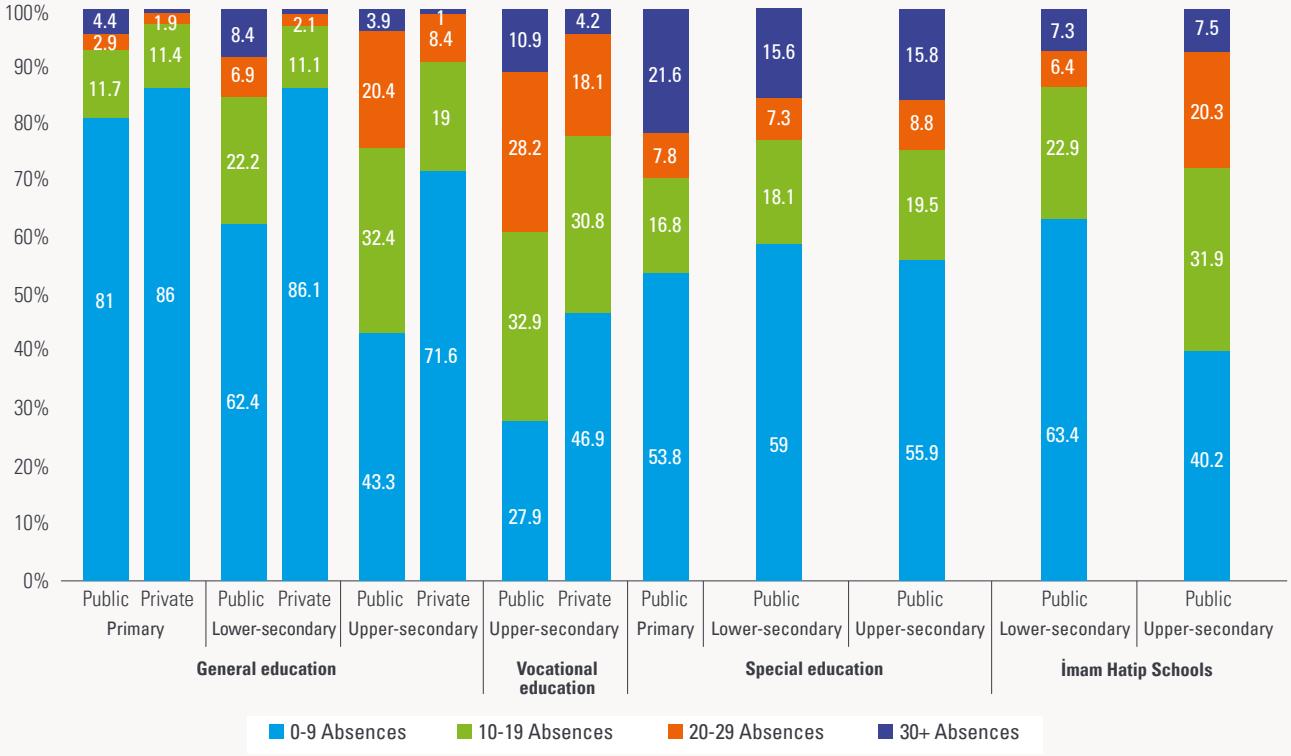
The risk of dropping out is also assessed by using student absences during the school year. The MoNE data on absences was provided for the four most recent school years (2016-2017 through 2019–2020). The MoNE absences data are aggregated at the province level and include the total number of students in four categories per year: 0-9 absences, 10–19, 20–29 and 30 or more. Figure A10 in Appendix A shows that the percentage of students with 20 or more absences for the school year (by grade) is substantially lower in the 2019–2020 school year, presumably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this section focuses on the 2018–2019 absence data.

Figure 30 begins the absence summary with a global summary across the various education systems and grade levels. All bars sum to 100 per cent of enrolled students. The first result that stands out is the yearly increase in absences by school level. Eighty-one per cent of students in primary grades in the public general education system had 0–9 absences during the 2018–2019 school year, and 11.7 per cent had 10–19 absences. That leaves 2.9 and 4.4 per cent with 20–29 and 30 or more absences, respectively. By contrast, among upper-secondary public general education students, only 43.3 per cent reported 0–9 absences, and nearly 25 per cent had 20 or more absences.

The second result in Figure 30 is that private school children consistently have lower rates of reported absences. Some 71.6 per cent of private school students in upper-secondary general education have 0–9 absences (within the allowed absence limits), compared with just 43.3 per cent of public school students. Similar differences are found at other general education levels and between public and private vocational education providers.

The third result is that special education children have higher rates of absences in primary education than in later levels. This result is driven primarily by 31.3 per cent of Grade 1 special education children who had 30+ absences during the 2018–2019 school year. The result suggests a problematic initial transition into formal schooling for these children. The fourth main finding in Figure 30 is that student absences in the Imam Hatip schools in lower and upper-secondary grades are very similar to absences in general education at these same levels.

Figure 30:
Percentage of Students by Number of Absences per Year Categories, School System and Grade Level, 2018–2019 MoNE



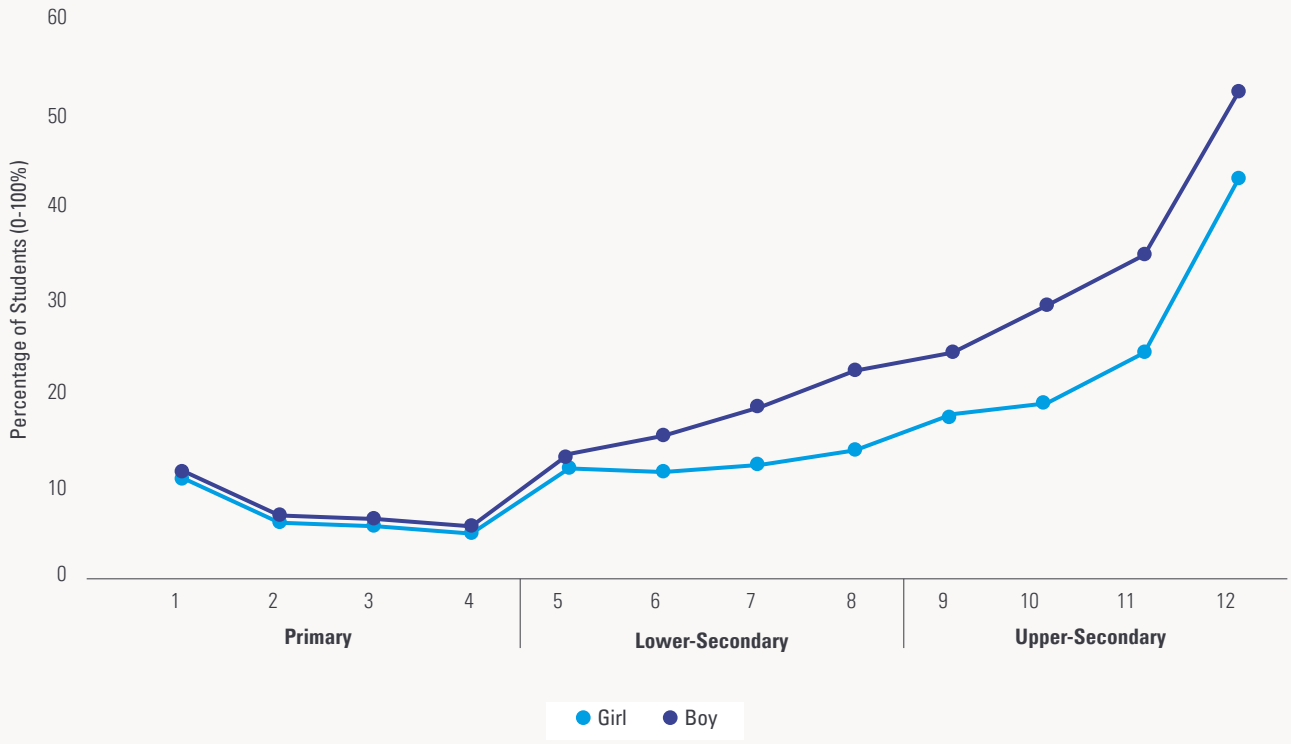
Source: MoNE (2021).

Figures A11(a) and A11(b) in Appendix A provide more detailed, grade-by-grade summaries of the student absence totals in general education (public and private schools) and special education and religious education (public only), respectively. The results confirm the tendency for absences to increase with each grade in general schools and schools providing religious education, while in special education, there are relatively high rates at the beginning of primary school.

Figure 31 details the percentage of students with 20 or more absences during the 2018–2019 school year by grade and gender. The data are aggregated across all public-school providers, which include general education, special education, vocational education, and religious education. The numbers confirm the generally increasing rate by grade, with relatively low levels of absences in primary (especially after Grade 1) that increase during lower secondary and throughout upper secondary. By the end of upper secondary, almost half of the students had 20 or more reported absences.

The second main finding in Figure 31 is the gender pattern: beginning in lower secondary, boys are about 10 per cent more likely to have 20 or more recorded absences than girls.

Figure 31:
Percentage of Students with 20 or More Absences During School Year in Public Education System by Grade and Gender, 2018–2019 MoNE



Source: MoNE (2021).

Table A3 in Appendix A provides a province-by-province summary of the percentage and raw number of students with 20 or more absences across all public education categories by school level. An overall average percentage is calculated for the three school levels, and the provinces are ranked from highest (most absences) to lowest (fewer absences). Table 10 provides a targeted summary of the highest and lowest absences in provinces. There is considerable variation in the absences data, as the low absences provinces average around 10 per cent of students with 20 or more absences across all three levels, whereas the high absences provinces have roughly twice as high percentages.

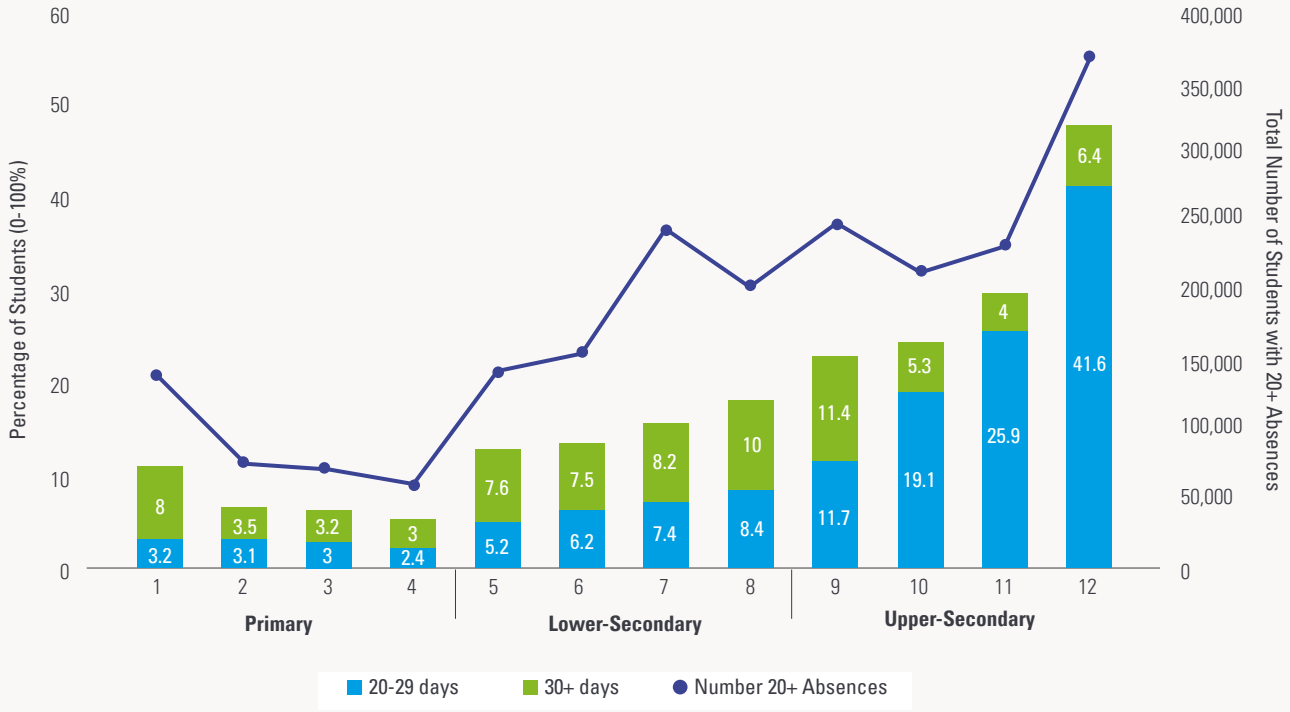
Table 10:
Students with 20 or More Absences During School Year in Public Education System by School Level and Province, 2018–2019 MoNE (Highest and Lowest Overall Averages)

Province	Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary	
	Number	per cent	Number	per cent	Number	per cent
Provinces with 12 per cent or lower overall average:						
BİNGÖL	587	3.1	1,515	7.5	2,063	15.2
TUNCELİ	34	1.2	147	5.3	502	20.8
ORDU	830	2.4	2,667	6.7	6,731	19.6
GÜMÜŞHANE	99	1.9	345	5.7	1,258	23.2
ARTVİN	134	1.9	463	5.8	1,705	23.2
GİRESUN	526	2.9	1,434	7.0	4,451	21.9
TRABZON	1,359	3.5	2,858	6.8	8,938	23.8
KIRŞEHİR	260	2.5	573	4.8	2,899	27.1
ADIYAMAN	1,602	3.5	4,980	10.0	7,878	22.2
TOKAT	693	2.5	2,799	8.6	7,067	24.8
MALATYA	2,055	4.4	4,141	8.1	9,407	23.6
Provinces with 20 per cent or higher overall average:						
KIRIKKALE	773	6.3	2,164	15.7	4,897	38.1
ÇANAKKALE	1,552	7.3	3,458	15.4	7,186	37.6
IĞDIR	1,623	10.4	3,557	22.3	3,213	28.0
ÇANKIRI	438	5.6	1,019	11.9	3,039	43.5
KONYA	8,728	6.7	24,116	16.9	35,918	38.6
GAZİANTEP	14,663	8.6	35,963	20.7	34,458	33.1
KIRKLARELİ	1,528	11.1	2,250	15.5	4,755	37.9
AĞRI	6,212	12.0	12,942	24.5	8,025	28.4
MUŞ	4,224	11.0	9,815	24.6	6,035	30.1
İZMİR	16,208	8.4	36,960	18.3	60,907	39.6
EDİRNE	2,397	15.7	3,586	22.1	4,493	34.4
ŞANLIURFA	60,821	28.4	85,240	41.2	31,436	32.2

Source: MoNE (2021).

Figure 32 concludes the descriptive summary of risk based on absences with the percentage of public-school students with 20–29 and 30 or more absences during the 2018–2019 school year by grade, together with the actual number of students with 20+ absences. For example, the numbers confirm the relatively high rates of absences in Grade 1 (*see Figure 31),* translating into nearly 140,000 children with 20 or more absences. In Grade 12, the numbers are larger: 41.6 per cent of Grade 12 students were absent 20–29 days in the 2018–2019 school year, and 6.4 per cent were absent 30 or more days; summing these two percentages equals almost half of the Grade 12 enrolment, or nearly 370,000 students. The total number of public school students with 20+ absences in 2018–2019 across all grades is over 2.1 million; the number with 30+ is just under 870,000.

Figure 32:
Summary of Student Absences During 2018–2019 School Year by Absence Category and Total Number with 20 or More Absences by Grade, Public Schools 2018–2019 MoNE



Source: MoNE (2019).

The counterpart to Figure 32 based on over-age is Figure A15 in Appendix A. According to the DHS 2018–2019 data, relatively low percentages (less than 5%) of students were two or more years older than the official entrance age for the grade in primary and lower-secondary grades. Again, this changes quickly in upper secondary, where nearly 12 per cent of enrolled students in 2018–2019 were two or more years older than the expected age for the grade. For example, in Grade 12, 6.2 per cent of enrolled students were 19 years old at the time of the DHS survey (October-December 2018), and 7.4 per cent were 20 or older.[58]

The primary purpose of Figures 32 and A7 is to assess the risk of dropping out. The MoNE and DHS data indicate that very few children leave school during primary or lower-secondary grades, and the over-age and absence risk factors are relatively less prominent in these grades than in upper secondary. Nevertheless, high absences in earlier grades can contribute to a cumulative process where students fall behind each successive year, increasing the chances of eventually leaving the system before completing Grade 12. Absences can also lead to grade failure and repetition, putting children in the over-age categories. So, while it is true that the risk of leaving school during primary and lower secondary is low, absences and over-age risk factors are still relevant.

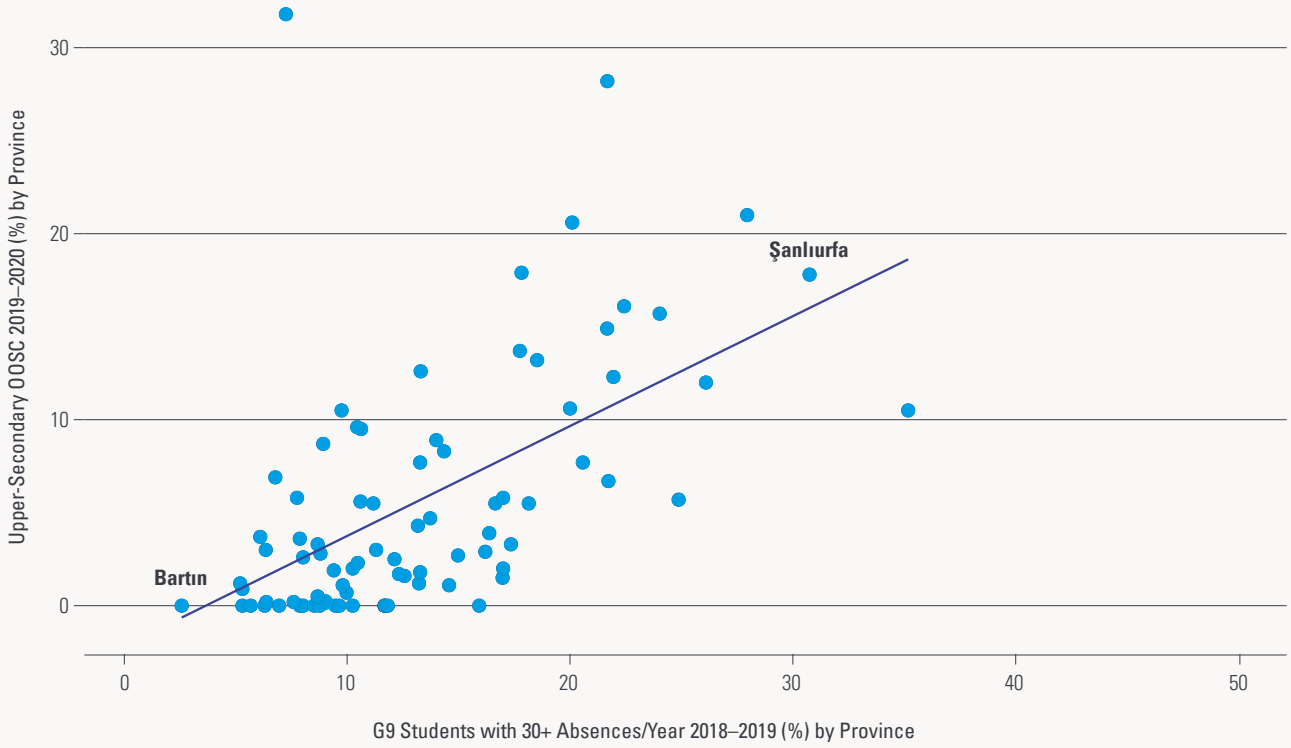
In upper secondary, these risk factors converge, with relatively high rates of absences and over-age students. Some of these children may have already left school, especially those with 30+ absences; this again references the earlier discussion in Section 4.4.1 about children who may no longer be in school but are officially enrolled and the importance of understanding how the MoNE deals with these cases (open education enrolment, etc.). Furthermore, it should be noted that the DHS data suggest a smaller percentage of over-age students in upper secondary than is reported in the MoNE (*see Figure 28*), so there may be even more over-age students at risk of dropping out in upper secondary compared with what is shown in Figure 29.

58 It is not possible to estimate the number of children by grade and over-age category because MoNE does not provide grade-specific enrolment totals that include regular and open education students. Instead, the MoNE data for open education are aggregated for all lower or upper secondary grades. Without knowing how many children are in each grade, it is not possible to estimate the raw total of over-age students using the DHS percentages by grade.

There is no official definition of being at risk of dropping out in Türkiye; this study simply follows the OOSC convention of presenting data on risk factors that are presumably related to an eventual dropout. For student absences, the best way to assess the degree to which this is truly a risk factor for dropout would be to examine absences among enrolled students and those who have left school. This calculation is not possible with existing data, so the scatterplot in Figure 33 indirectly tests the degree to which absences are related to OOSC rates. Each dot represents a province, with province-level averages for the estimated OOSC rate for upper secondary from the MoNE (vertical axis) plotted against the province-average percentage of Grade 9 students with 30+ absences from the 2018–2019 school year (horizontal axis). The scatterplot shows a pronounced positive correlation ($r = 0.57$) between these two measures, which means that provinces with high absences among Grade 9 students have more children out of school at the upper-secondary level.

Interestingly, the Grade 9 absence measure with 30+ days is the strongest predictor of OOSC rates in upper secondary compared with other cut-off points for the absence measure (10+ days, 20+ days), with an overall lower-secondary absences average, and with an upper-secondary absences average. Figures based on 30+ absences for Grade 8 students (*see Figure A12*), 30+ absences average for Grade 5–8 students (*see Figure A13*), and 30+ absences average for Grade 9–12 students (*see Figure A14*) are presented in Appendix A. The correlation between these different measures of absences and the OOSC rate in upper secondary is around 0.30, which is much lower than the correlation between 30+ absences for Grade 9 students and upper-secondary OOSC in Figure 33. In other words, of the available absences measures, the best signal of future dropout at the provincial level is the percentage of Grade 9 students with 30+ absences.

Figure 33:
Comparison of Province-Level Measures of Upper-Secondary OOSC Rate with Percentage of Grade 9 Students with 30+ Absences, All Provinces in Türkiye



Source: MoNE, 2019–2020.

4.5 Quantitative Data on Schooling in the National Population of Türkiye: Summary

There are five main results in this section.

- **First**, the out-of-school children among the national population of Türkiye are concentrated in the upper-secondary age range, and relatively few primary and lower-secondary-aged children are not in school. The DHS and MoNE data were used to fill in the OOSC dimensions from the official framework for Dimensions 1 (5-year-olds), 3 (primary aged), 5 (lower secondary) and 7 (upper secondary). After considering over-age enrolment and the eventual entry of 5- and 6-year-olds not yet in primary school, the out-of-school population is almost entirely children in the 14- to 17-year-old-age category. The DHS data help identify this group in some detail and confirm the existence of barriers like child labour and child, early and forced marriage, in addition to over-age enrolment by grade that may eventually lead to early dropout. Nevertheless, even with the background information available in the DHS, the picture of OOSC children in Türkiye is only partially complete. Understanding more about the barriers faced by these children who are not in school is the key analytical task for the qualitative data collection and qualitative analysis in Section 5.

- The **second** main finding is the divergence between the MoNE and DHS data sources for the number of upper-secondary-aged children not in school. Across multiple data summaries and trend analyses, the results from the sample-based DHS data are generally consistent with the school population totals provided by the MoNE. Nevertheless, the DHS data show a much larger segment of out-of-school children aged 14–17 in 2018–2019 compared with the percentage of children that appear to be out of school based on the most recent MoNE summaries. A potential complication with these comparisons is the treatment of open education enrolment, which is part of a more extensive discussion about the MoNE practices that could potentially affect the counting of out-of-school children. This topic is still pending, and once updated, it may be easier to understand why the DHS and MoNE numbers diverge.

- The **following two** main findings are related to the youngest cohorts in the study. Recent growth in pre-primary enrolment has been impressive. The trend data suggest that many children who previously were enrolling early in primary school are now entering pre-primary instead. This transition from early entry into primary into correct age entry for pre-primary is a positive development, but roughly 30 per cent of 5-year-olds are still not enrolled in either pre-primary or primary, and this is especially true for children from the poorest families. This finding highlights the importance of expanding public pre-primary educational options to ensure pre-primary participation and correct-age enrolment in primary schools.

According to the DHS data, there has also been an increase in OOSC among primary-aged children in recent years, confirmed in the MoNE summaries showing a slightly declining primary net enrolment rate. The underlying explanation is related to the expansion in pre-primary enrolment detailed above: more 6-year-olds that used to be in primary school are now in pre-primary, and as a result, the net enrolment rate for primary education has declined. This trend towards slightly older initial enrolment in primary schools is not particularly consequential for the OOSC analysis since almost all Turkish children eventually enrol in primary school.

- The **fifth** main finding is that a significant number of Turkish children were absent for 20 or more days during the 2018–2019 school year, and in upper secondary, especially, this risk factor is strongly associated with the percentage of children that are out of school. Student absences increase during lower-secondary and especially upper-secondary grades, and there is also a notable percentage of children in upper secondary who are over-age for their grade level. Taken together, the absences and over-age risk factors help explain the increase in out-of-school children's rates in upper secondary and provide helpful monitoring data for assessing the cumulative impact of these factors throughout the child's educational career.

Chapter 5
Barriers to Children's Education in the National Population of Türkiye

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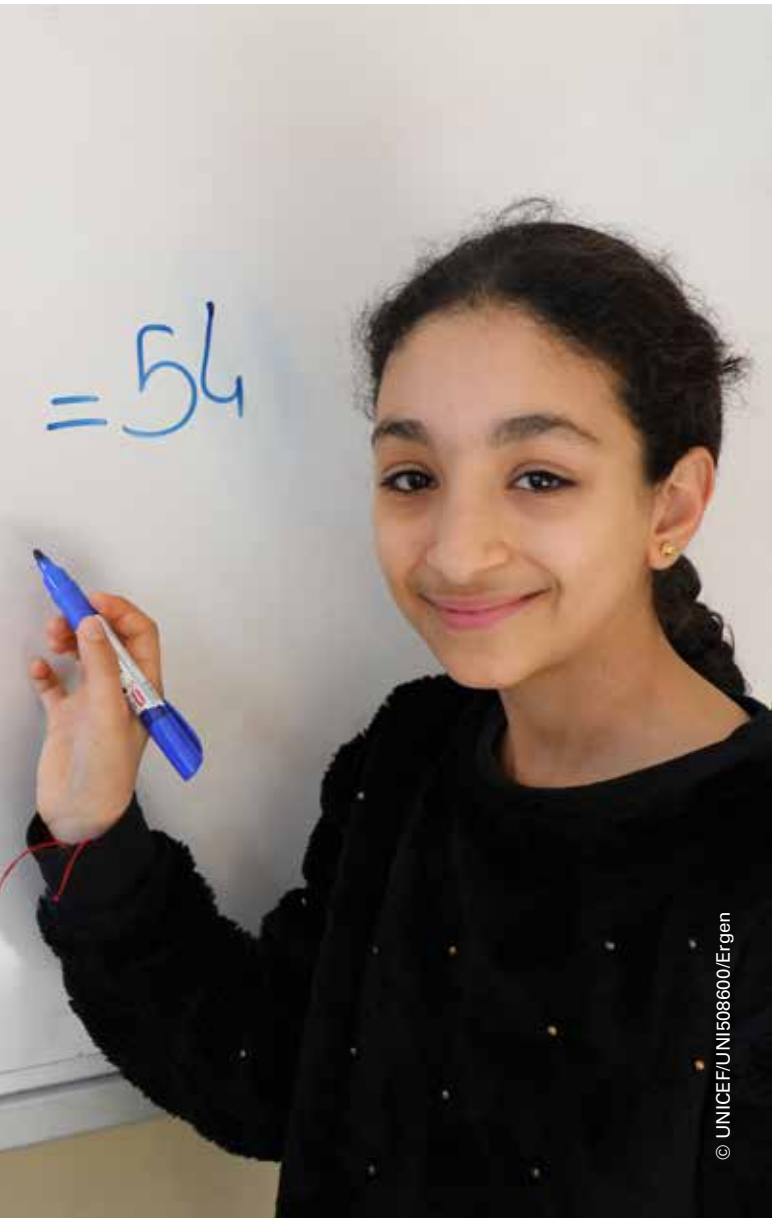
Understanding why children are not in school is central to the OOSC Initiative. By describing barriers and bottlenecks that affect children's schooling, particularly according to the experiences and perceptions of children and their families, the analysis can facilitate transforming quantitative and qualitative data into action based on evidence. The ultimate goal is a set of policy recommendations that effectively address current gaps in policy and implementation, as presented in Section 7.

Recommendations are only possible with an accurate diagnosis of what underlines the OOSC numbers described in Section 4 based on the latest available qualitative and quantitative data. The barriers to children's education are presented in this section based on the perceptions and experiences of the interviewees and key informants included in the qualitative research sample, and they cannot be generalized to the overall children population in Türkiye. The primary aim of the qualitative analysis is to identify all existing barriers and trends based on the qualitative data to draw a global map of barriers. It should also be acknowledged that not all barriers affect every child equally but could hinder their educational prospects differentially.



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This section brings in a considerable amount of recent and original data to analyse a diverse set of factors that could affect the educational prospects of the children in Türkiye and identify the related barriers that could increase the school dropout risk. The primary information source is the qualitative data collection undertaken for this study towards the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021, which included in-depth interviews with at-risk and out-of-school children and their parents, in-depth interviews with key informants at central and local levels, and online focus group discussions with the teachers. When possible, the qualitative data are augmented with existing quantitative data, mainly from the MoNE and DHS 2018.

Section 5 is structured in line with the framework for analysing barriers to children's education developed by the global OOSCI (UNICEF, 2015), tailored to the context of children in Türkiye. The qualitative data collection and analysis are based on demand-side and supply-side factors that are possible barriers to children's education in Türkiye. Underlying this work is the preliminary overview of potential barriers prepared at the beginning of the study (*see Table C1 in Appendix C*) as a heuristic map to guide the analysis of the multidimensional reasons for the out-of-school phenomenon for the children in Türkiye.

The demand-side factors are socio-cultural, human capital, and health-related (*see Section 5.1*) and economic (*see Section 5.2*). The supply-side factors are grouped as school administrative regulations (*see Section 5.3*) and school supply and quality (*see Section 5.4*). Appendix F provides the summary of all the barriers and their relevance to children in a particular dimension. In addition, although the qualitative field research did not include any specific questions on the COVID-19 pandemic – the research was designed before the pandemic outbreak – the effects of the pandemic on children's education emerged from the qualitative data. These are analysed in Section 5.5 and include both demand-side and supply-side factors. The education system's governance, financial and institutional set-up in Türkiye is defined as part of the enabling environment to educate children in Türkiye and is analysed separately in Section 6 under Policy Analysis.

The overall objective of Section 5 is to fill in as much detail as possible related to the barriers that prevent children from participating in school and, when possible, align these barriers with different age categories of out-of-school and at-risk children based on the dimensions of exclusion (adjusted to the Turkish case). In addition, the analysis of the factors also aims to highlight the differential impact of any particular factors on girls and boys from a gender perspective, regional differences, and differences based on school types and/or school levels whenever possible. Given the broad spectrum of potential barriers, this is an ambitious task. Nevertheless, the analysis of qualitative data mixed with the available quantitative data help achieve these goals by providing links between different factors that help illuminate both the reasons for and consequences of a range of barriers that affect the educational prospects of children in Türkiye based on the perceptions and experiences of the interviewees and key informants in the research sample.

The analysis provided in Section 5 is structured as follows. Each sub-section first analyses the particular demand-side or supply-side factor in light of the identified components for each factor in question. In this analysis, whenever links are identified concerning other components under different factors, the cross-referencing system highlights and refers to possible links between the factors and the potential barriers. At the end of the analysis of each component of the factors, a summary of the significant barriers identified from the analysis is presented. This presentation also includes a map/table of the barriers based on dimensions of exclusion. The asterisks (*) in the boxes aim to show the relevance of that particular barrier to children in a particular dimension. Therefore, the box is left empty if a barrier does not appear relevant for any exclusion dimensions. The number of asterisks for each barrier shows the identified severity/weight of the impact of that barrier from the existing qualitative data on the educational prospects of the children under different dimensions of exclusion. One asterisk refers to a low level of impact, two refer to a medium level of impact, and three refer to a high level of impact of the barrier on children in a particular dimension. Last, the asterisk does not mean that identified barriers have an equal impact on "all" the out-of-school children in a particular dimension of exclusion, but instead, it means that this barrier has a more significant risk of affecting those children than other dimensions.

5.1 Socio-Cultural, Human Capital and Health-Related Factors

The first set of demand-side factors that could affect children's education are the socio-cultural, human capital, and health-related factors. This section comprises five sub-sections. *Socio-cultural factors* are analysed for the role of *gender-based norms*, which may have a differential impact on children's educational prospects in terms of families' expectations of their children; children's domestic responsibilities shaped by gender norms; the impact of patriarchal, conservative or traditional norms on children's education; and child, early and forced marriages.

Human capital can be considered the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and abilities in life, and low human capital, not only of the children but also their parents, may serve as a barrier to children's education. For this reason, human capital-related factors are analysed for different components, namely valuing education, language skills, and academic performance at school. *Family structure* refers to the composition of the household members in which children live. Family environment and the role of the parents or caregivers, particularly in crowded households, fragmented families or where the children live with other family members, play an important role in children's education.

The role of *health-related factors* in children's education is examined for the impact of disability, illness, psycho-social effects, traumatic experiences, and pregnancy.

Finally, this section focuses on different aspects of the *social cohesion* of the children in Türkiye related to friendships, integration into the local community and social life, security concerns, and peer bullying. The analysis is based on the qualitative data collected for this report and available quantitative data from the MoNE and DHS 2018.

5.1.1 Gender-Based Norms

The multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 shows that for the children aged 14–17, girls are marginally less likely to be enrolled than boys in the 14–17 cohort, and the difference is statistically significant with an effect size of about 2.5 per cent after controlling for other factors in the model. From the qualitative data, it is possible to identify some gender-based norms that could (mostly negatively) affect the educational prospects of children in Türkiye differently for boys and girls. This section analyses the relationship between gender norms and the expectations of families for their children in general and from their children for domestic responsibilities; the impact of patriarchal, conservative or traditional norms on children's education; and child, early and forced marriages.

> I help my mother sometimes; I tidy my room. My job is to study, I help my mother from time to time. I have no other tasks at home.
> (Boy, Istanbul, Dimension 7)
>
> My mother generally wanted me to study my lessons. Until this year, she did not make me work at home in any way, she always wanted me to study my lessons when I came from school. But this year, since I couldn't attend the classes, I sometimes wash the dishes or sometimes I clean the house, I help my mother.
> (Girl, Bursa, Dimension 7)

The qualitative data show two main tendencies among the families in the research sample about their *expectations of children*. On the one hand, some parents state that the role of the girls and boys in the family should be equal, and girls should also do everything that the boys can do. In contrast, some parents have differential expectations of boys and girls, reflecting the former tendency of both mothers and fathers to expect their children to study and acquire professions for their future. Therefore, their children were not expected to fulfil many domestic responsibilities. In the qualitative research sample, many children, mostly at-risk children, both girls and boys, indicated minimal domestic responsibilities such as tidying up their rooms, buying bread, occasionally helping the mother with cleaning or preparing food, or helping their siblings with their homework. It was striking to observe that in this category of parents, the children already studying were not expected to deal with anything else but their homework or studying, particularly when the children were preparing for the LGS or YKS exams. Still, it could also be observed that, together with the COVID-19 pandemic, the domestic responsibilities of the children increased in some cases.

For the second tendency, the parents' expectations of the children were gender-based and differential. The qualitative data show that the boys were expected to work, whereas the girls were expected to contribute to the domestic chores, mainly caring for their siblings. Some boys indicated that their only responsibility was to work, and not surprisingly, many of those boys in the qualitative research sample were out-of-school children aged 14–17 from different provinces. Some of those children indicated working on their families' land or caring for the household animals. The at-risk and out-of-school girls in this category, mostly aged 14–17, reported being responsible for domestic chores such as cleaning, cooking, serving family members, and caring for seniors or their parents who had illnesses. These girls' most prevalent domestic responsibility was caring for their siblings. Numerous key informants and teachers stated that, particularly in crowded households, older girls had to take care of their siblings, particularly when the mothers were casually or full-time working outside or were seriously sick, which caused irregular attendance, non-attendance, or school dropout among these girls. In cases of low academic performance at school, those girls often dropped out of school due to heavy domestic responsibilities, but in some cases, girls with high levels of academic performance were indicated to be negatively affected. In other words, the qualitative data suggest that low- and high-performance pupils could drop out due to domestic responsibilities.

59 https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/human-capital.

> For example, she was a very hardworking girl. At the age of fourteen, her enrolment was removed by her parents. Because there were brothers at home. The mother said, "I can't keep up; you have to take care of the house as the second mother of the family.' And she was really such a hardworking girl that she did everything so well. I think she was more successful than most of the boys, but she could not study since she was looking after her family. This is a significant factor.
> (Key Informant, Şanlıurfa, Imam Hatip)

> I usually take care of our family when my mother is asked to work. If she leaves at three o'clock, for example, I look after my brother until the evening. Because this is not something my mother could do anything about. I have to take care of both my brother and the house. We also have visitors; I try to do all domestic chores so as not to be embarrassed.
> (Girl, Bursa, Dimension 5)

The qualitative data show that the *effect of patriarchal, conservative or traditional norms* of the parents is more prevalent on the educational prospects of the girls, particularly in the 14–17 age groups, and they can be observed as a reason for not sending girls to school. Due to patriarchal norms, the girls were not considered as "important" and "valuable" as the boys in the family, and therefore, their education was not prioritized. Such an observation depends on the statements in the qualitative data that there was dishonour in sending them to school; it is against the customs to send female children to school, or the girls could not be safe (due to the existence of boys) in the school environment.

Those gender-based patriarchal, conservative or traditional norms were observed to be more relevant for girls from the ages 12–13 onwards. It was possible to observe that the girls were often sent to primary and lower-secondary schools to an extent but not to upper-secondary schools, especially when their physical appearance started to change with puberty. So, due to patriarchal norms, girls could be observed to be deprived of their education rights, often at the end of the lower-secondary school level or even before completing that level. Regarding the urban-rural divide, the impact of gender norms was reported to be more prevalent in the rural settings or villages compared to city centres (even within the same province) and in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian regions compared to the Western regions of Türkiye.

Some teachers also stated that even in cases where the daughters are at school, the conservative or traditional gender norms may affect girls' education. Those interviewees stated that those parents may send their children to school, but they also ask the teachers not to make their daughters sit next to the boys in the classroom or play with them during the breaks. The control of parents, usually the fathers, over the girls who were attending upper-secondary schools was exemplified in numerous cases, which could eventually turn into a reason for not sending the girls to school on any single occasion against the will of the parents at school (such as talking to a boy). In addition, poor academic success was also stated to act as an accompanying justification for taking girls out of school. Such concerns of parents were also reported to direct them to schooling options, such as registering their daughters in girls-only schools.

> We had a girl; her parents did not allow her to go to school in the second year of the upper-secondary level just because she gave her phone number to a boy at school. But the other daughters of that family study.
> (Teacher, Trabzon, Upper Secondary School)

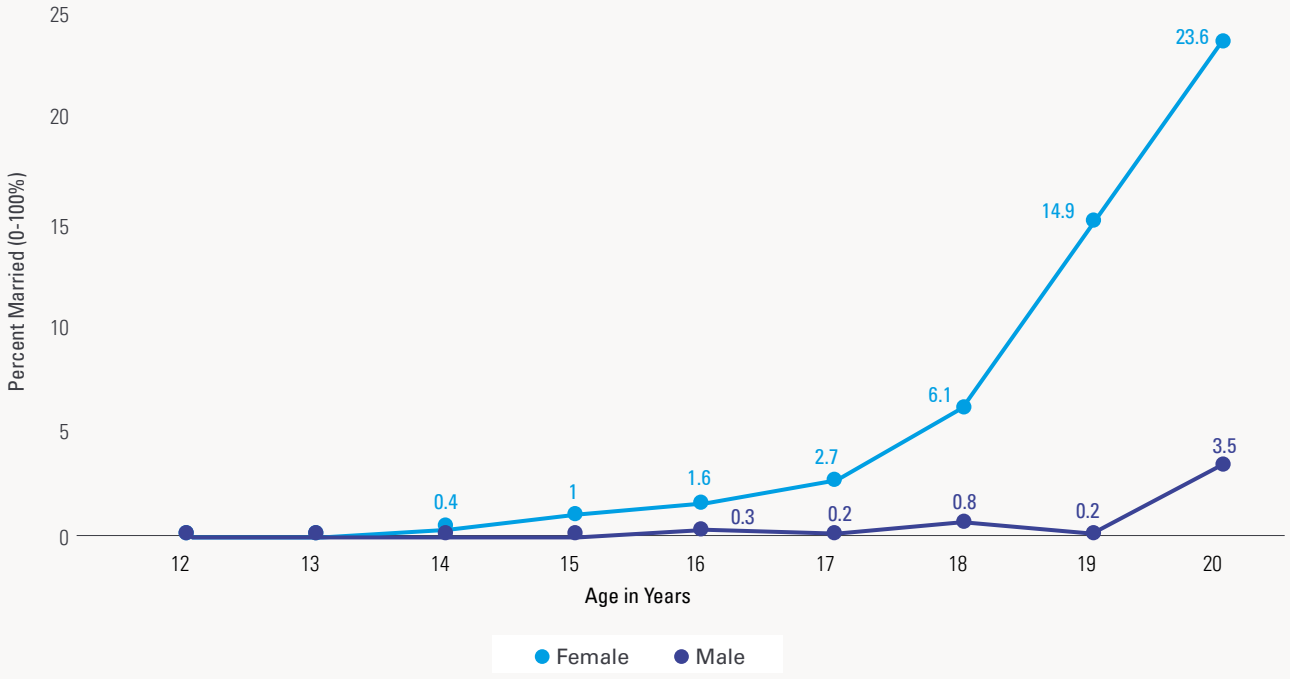
In some cases, some of the girls were reported to react to the pressure from their parents due to such gender norms. One of those reactions was to be more enthusiastic about education, as these girls could consider education as a means for emancipation. Therefore, the girls are motivated to study and try to succeed at school.

> Let me speak for this region. Girls in this region know that the only way to emancipation is education, there is no other salvation. They are aware of this and when they come to school, for example, they want to study all the time, they do not want to go home. They say, teacher, if we go home, we cannot study. They see everything at school.
> (Key informant, Şanlıurfa, Religious School)

The patriarchal, conservative and traditional norms influence children in child, early and forced marriage, and the subsequent requirement to drop out of school. Officially, since 2002, the legal age of marriage in Türkiye is 17 for both men and women, with the consent of the parents or caregiver, according to Article 124 of the Turkish Civil Code and the Regulation on Marriage Procedures. The same legislation indicates that "in exceptional circumstances and for some very important reasons," the judge may allow marriages at 16." Only civil marriages are recognized as legal, although religious marriages can also be observed to accompany civil marriages or as the only form of marriage. For children who marry during their upper-secondary education, it is not legally possible to remain in school, and they are automatically referred to the open schools in line with the legislation.

The quantitative data from the DHS 2018 identify the percentage of females and males who report being married by age. Figure 34 shows that child, early and forced marriages are more prevalent among girls starting from the age of 14 onwards, as almost none of the 14- to 17-year-old boys reported being married. The multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 helps identify the effect of child, early and forced marriages on school enrolment. It states that married children are 36.5 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school than non-married 14- to 17-year-olds (however, less than 1% of children in this age category report being married), and the school attendance rate is only 11.9 per cent for married girls aged 14–17, probably referring to the cases where there is no official marriage or studying at open schools (the sample in the DHS 2018 is tiny with 18 married girls in total), compared to 82.6% attendance rate for unmarried girls aged 14–17).

Figure 34:
Marriage Rates by Gender and Age, DHS 2018



Source: DHS 2018.

Notes: The DHS sample size for 12- to 20-year-olds is 5,338.

Key informants and teachers in the qualitative research sample seemed to agree that child, early, and forced marriages were decreasing, but they also confirmed that when they realized it, child, early, and forced marriages were a prominent reason for the girls aged 14–17 to be out of school. The statements of the key informants and teachers show that the earliest marriage could be witnessed in Grade 8, and marriages may increase towards the end of upper-secondary school. For official marriages, there were instances reported where a court decision legally increased the age of the children. It was also stated that those who married before the official legal age could still register at school, as those were unofficial religious marriages. Some key informants stated that there were instances where the religiously married boys continued to attend the school, whereas it did not seem likely for the girls. In terms of the urban-rural divide, the respondents stated that child, early, and forced marriages were more prevalent in the rural or Eastern regions of Türkiye, but some rare examples were given where the girls were forced to marry in cities like Izmir.

From the qualitative data, some reasons for child, early and forced marriages can be identified. One of the main reasons seems to be the traditional or customary belief that the marriage age for girls starts with their adolescence, which is reported to be prevalent in rural areas. In many cases, the girls were reported to become engaged to their relatives, such as the uncle's son or others, at an early age. An interesting observation was that the marriage and the promise to wed or become engaged could negatively affect the children's school attendance because the families or parents would not like those girls to attend school at that stage.

Another reason for child, early and forced marriages was mentioned concerning economic concerns. Some teachers stated that when the families had economic difficulties, the parents could force girls to marry to get the dowry, or in households with a high number of household members, the marriage of a child could be considered a factor in decreasing the household costs. In those cases, the future of the girls could be observed to be traditionally defined by marriage rather than education or work. In addition, some key informants stated that in some cases, children also agreed to marry by considering marriage as an "escape" from the household where they had heavy domestic responsibilities and/or economic difficulties or from oppressive parental pressures due to traditional gender norms.

> "For example, there is a 15-year-old girl having many responsibilities at home. She sees marriage as an escape since she has too much workload at home. She thinks that she will work less if she gets married. This is also a factor.
> (Key Informant, Şanlıurfa)

Another reason from the qualitative data was the personal decisions of the children to marry, which was reported to be increasingly prominent in urban areas such as Istanbul or Trabzon. Some teachers and key informants stated that they had some students, mostly girls aged 17–18, who escaped from home to marry someone they knew from school, or they met on the internet or from other cities without the knowledge or approval of their parents.

> "A female student of mine was talking to an older person whom she met online during her policymaking vacation. When she turned 18, she left home without informing her mother while her mother was working. Then, when her mother came to school, she informed us that she had gotten married. As far as I understand, the student's father has been in prison for many years. I know that she does not continue her education life at the moment.
> (Teacher, Istanbul, Dimension 7)

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Gender-Based Norms as a Barrier

Among socio-cultural factors, gender-based norms emerge as the most relevant factor affecting children's educational prospects in Türkiye *(see Table 11)*. Although there are a considerable number of parents who only expect their children to obtain an education and to study, gender-based norms are still visible in terms of children's domestic responsibilities. For the children with heavy domestic responsibilities, the older boys may be expected to work (outside or as family workers) and contribute to the family budget. In contrast, older girls are expected to deal with domestic chores, primarily caring for their siblings, particularly in crowded households or in households where the mothers also work or have serious illnesses. Respondents reported irregular attendance, non-attendance, and school dropout in both cases.

Based on the qualitative data and the statements of the respondents, patriarchal, conservative or traditional norms seem to negatively affect the girls in rural settings more, particularly starting from the lower-secondary level, but mainly in a way that hinders their access to education at the upper-secondary level. Some respondents referred to cases where parents with conservative standpoints could send their daughters to school, but the girls were still observed to stay under intense parental pressure, which could result in forced school dropouts in case of problems at school.

A serious barrier stemming from gender norms is the child, early and forced marriages, especially of girls at the upper-secondary level. The qualitative data show that these marriages are likely to occur in rural settings, but there were also instances where the girls themselves decided to escape from home and marry, mostly in urban areas. In almost all the child, early and forced marriage cases, it was possible to observe that the educational prospects of the children were negatively affected.

Table 11:
Gender-Based Norms-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Family expectations from children shaped by gender norms	**		*	***	**
Children's domestic responsibilities	**	*	*	***	**
Childhood, early and forced marriages (mostly girls)	*		*	***	**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.1.2 Human Capital

UNICEF defines *human capital* as "the set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals accumulate towards personal well-being and improved work opportunities."[60] So, education is not only an instrument for investing in human capital, but low human capital can also act as a factor in decreasing the chances for further education. This section analyses human capital for three factors: the value of education, language skills, and academic performance at school (*see Table 12*).

The value of education from the perspective of the parents and the children is the first factor to be considered in terms of human capital. Most parents in the qualitative research sample indicated that their children's education was necessary, and the children's statements also confirmed support for education. The qualitative data did not reflect any variation according to different categories of children (at-risk or out-of-school) or sex. Those parents voiced that education would help their children have freedom/independence, self-confidence, a better life, and economic status, and would help them not look to somebody to sustain their lives in the future. In addition, education was considered to equip the children with a profession, particularly through a university education, and make their parents proud of their children. Third, those parents considered education as an instrument for their children

60 https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/human-capital.

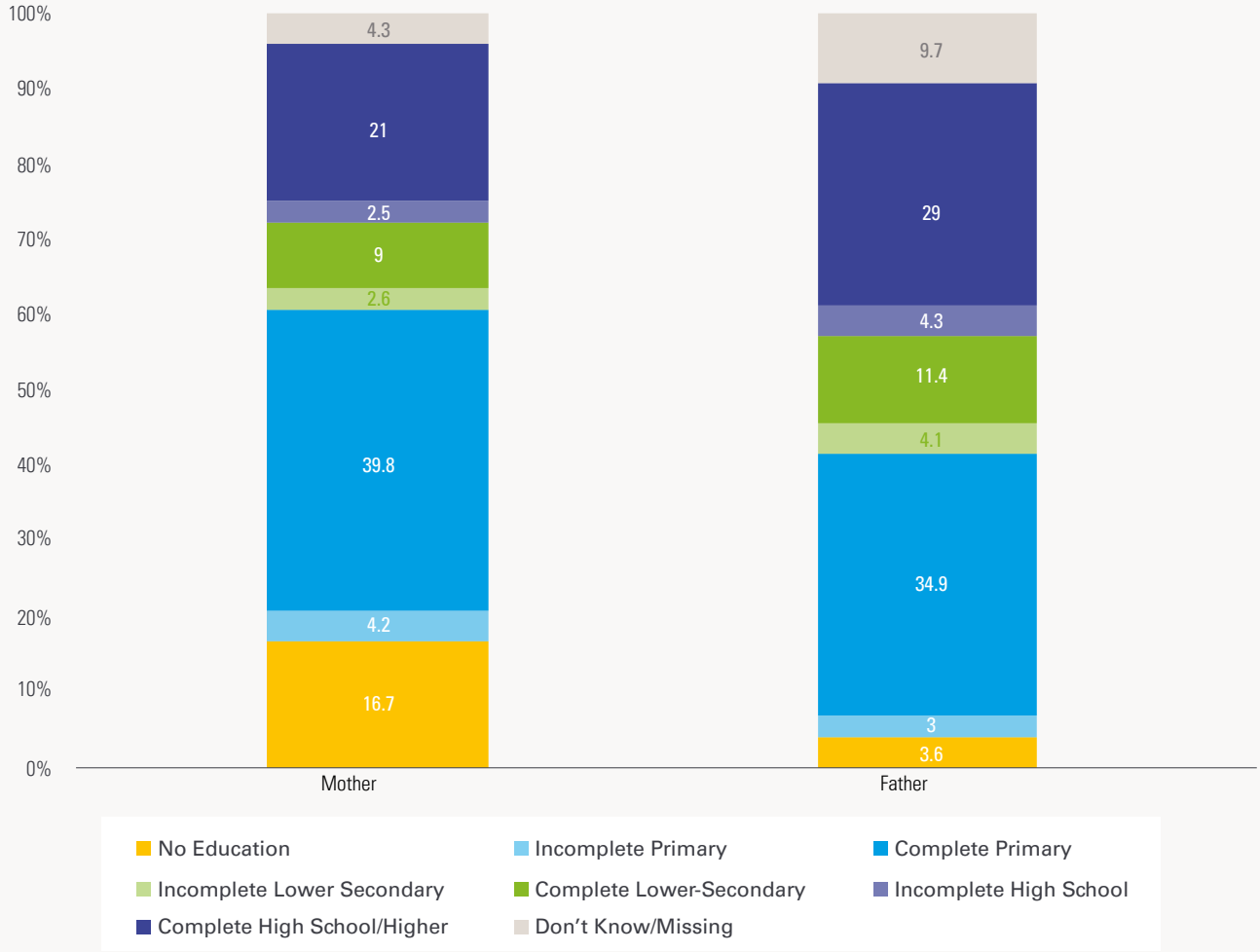
to accumulate knowledge and culture and not to be ignorant by giving them a chance to learn how to express themselves, how to communicate with people, how to behave in the community, how to respect others and how to support their children better in the future. Finally, those parents stated that education was necessary for their children to become good citizens and individuals beneficial for their country and to become the bright future of Türkiye.

Regarding the value of education, the parents' education levels could be considered an indicator of the children's school attendance and dropout rates. The DHS 2018 provides some data about the education levels of mothers and fathers of children aged 5–17 in the DHS 2018 sample. Figure 35 shows that parental education levels are lower among mothers compared to fathers at all education levels, and 16.7 per cent of the mothers have no education at all, compared to 3.6 per cent of the fathers with no education.

The current enrolment (or attendance) rates by age group (6–11 and 12–17) and education level of mother (*see Figure 36a*) and father (*see Figure 36b*) are shown based on the DHS 2018. Figure 35 shows that enrolment rates for children aged 6–11 are around 90 per cent or more for all parental education levels of the mothers and fathers, but it goes down to 88.8 per cent for the fathers with no education.

The picture changes when enrolment rates for children aged 12–17 are considered. Figures 36a and 36b display that the more educated the parents are, the more likely the children aged 12–17 will be in school. The multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 further shows that for the children aged 14–17, parental education is significantly associated with enrolment: children with parents with low levels of education are significantly less likely to be in school, and higher levels of education for the father are associated with somewhat higher enrolment probabilities.

Figure 35:
Frequency Summary of Parental Education for Children Aged 5–17, DHS 2018



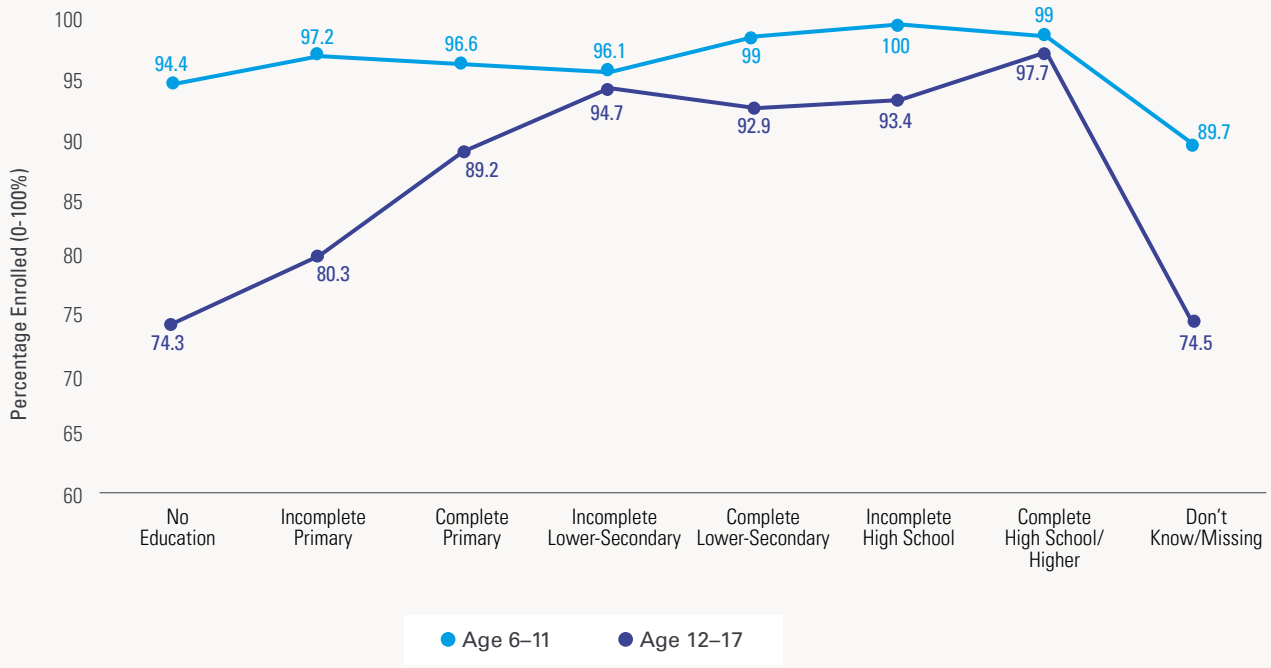
Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 5- to 17-year-olds is 8,086.

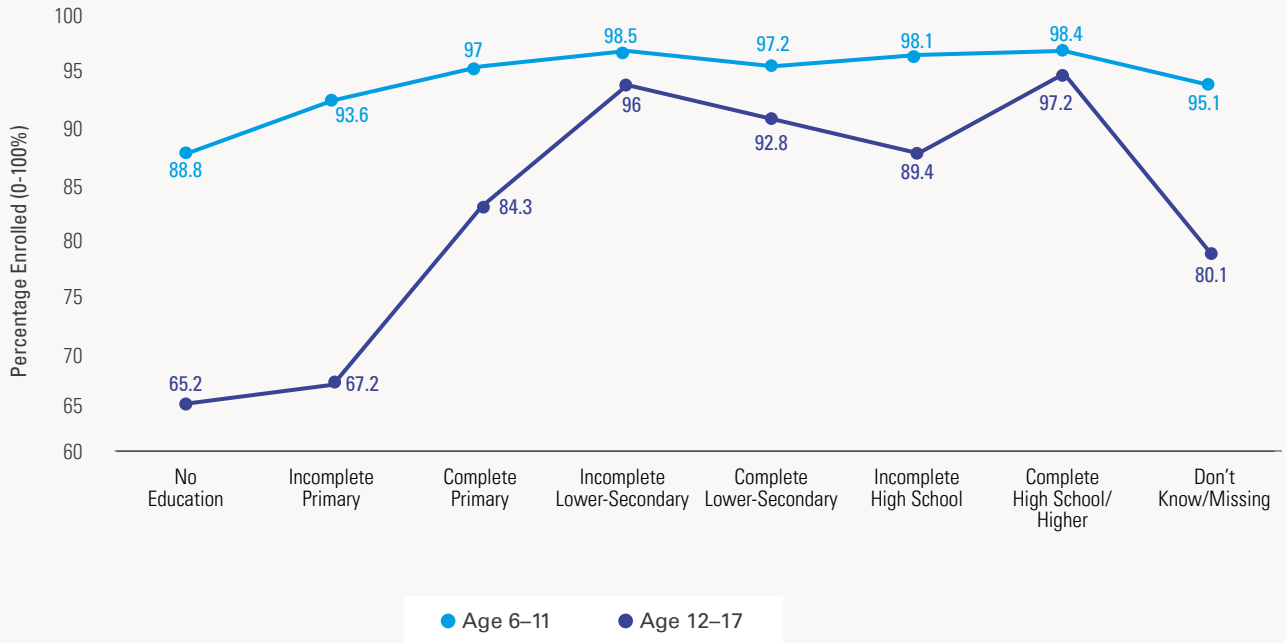
Regarding gender differences, the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 suggests significant gender alignment in the relationship between parental education and adolescent school enrolment. Female enrolment rates are much more affected by their mother's education than by their father's, while for boys, the father's education level is marginally more important.

Figure 36
Current School Enrolment Rates by the Age of the Child and Parental Education Categories, DHS 2018

(a) Mother's Education



(b) Father's Education



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 6- to 17-year-olds is 7,479.

The qualitative data also confirm the quantitative data findings, which show that when parents are educated, they support their children's education. The data reveal that in many cases, parents with low or no education levels, mostly mothers, were motivated to provide education to their children (both girls and boys). In those cases, they argue that they wanted their children to benefit from the educational opportunities they could not have previously. In that sense, some mothers stated that to inspire their children, they started to pursue an education (for example, they learned how to read and write or registered at open schools). In addition, some teachers also stated that the support and encouragement of the parents for the children's education could be more effective than their level of education. Such a finding points out factors other than parental education levels to explain the non-attendance or school dropout among the children in Türkiye. Economic difficulties were one of those factors (*see Section 5.2 Economic Factors*).

Nevertheless, some parents in the qualitative research sample stated that they could, or they actually did, for example, borrow money from the bank, sell their wedding rings or pieces of land in the village, or even beg to cover the education expenses of their children. The qualitative data also show that such parents benefited from different schooling options and alternatives, such as registering children for boarding schools or leaving children with other family members. Another option was going to other cities as seasonal workers to be able to ensure their children's schooling.

Most children in the qualitative research sample also value education by stating that it is vital for their future. They voiced the values of education as an instrument to develop oneself to be a cultured person, to learn how to read, write, and make calculations, to have a good job and a profession, to be able to leave the village they lived in the future, and to be a respected person.

When the children were asked about the profession they would like in the future, their responses referred to some interesting findings, valid for all age groups and both for the girls and the boys in the research sample. First, many children, both boys and girls, voiced the desire to have some profession, namely being a police officer, a military official, or a security guard. Another category of children indicated that they would like to continue with the profession they were studying at the vocational school, such as being an electrician, a hairdresser, a designer, or a carpenter. For both categories of children, one can observe that the professions indicated by the children did not require any university diploma, which may mean that those children did not aspire to any university education. Here, a significant concern could be observed as economic considerations, namely to start working and earning money as soon as possible and without "losing time" and money with a university education, which was to a great extent considered not to guarantee any jobs after graduation.

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A third smaller category of children indicated some professions, such as being a teacher, a lawyer, an engineer, a psychiatrist, a veterinarian or a doctor, which would require a university diploma. A fourth category of children stated that they would continue working with their parents in their workplaces (as wholesalers) or lands (as farmers); for these children, education might not necessarily be something to be completed, as discussed further below. The last category of children stated that they had not yet thought of or decided about the profession they would like to pursue, suggesting that they might need guidance for their future education.

To a lesser extent, the qualitative data also provide information about the parents or children who did not value education. Some key informants and teachers indicated that although the number of parents who did not value education was decreasing, particularly among those who lived in city centres, in some cases, mostly in rural areas, some parents did not pay sufficient attention to their children's education. Moreover, the statements of some children, key informants, and teachers in the qualitative data also show that some children do not believe in the benefits of education.

The most prevalent reasons for negative attitudes towards education stem from the gender norms or patriarchal values among parents, which mainly affect the education of girls in rural areas or small cities (also *see Section 5.1.1 Gender Norms*) and the lack of interest and care of the parents with regards to the education of their children. For the latter, some key informants and teachers indicated that some parents might consider education useless for their children. Some parents in this category were reported to consider compulsory education up to the end of lower-secondary school. They regard further education as a waste of time and money, particularly when these parents had businesses where the children were also expected to work. Some teachers stated they had difficulties overcoming such negative attitudes towards education among the parents, particularly in regions such as Van, Kars, or Adana. A signifier of the lack of interest in children's education was often indicated as the parents' non-attendance to meetings with teachers at school or negative attitudes towards teachers during household visits. Another reason for the parents not to value education was cultural beliefs. Some key informants and teachers stated that some parents preferred sending their children to the gatherings of their religious communities or sects rather than to formal schools.

> I wanted to study a lot. I was such a hardworking student, very enthusiastic about school. But my parents didn't let me study. So, I couldn't study; of course, it stuck with me. That's why I want my children to study.
> (Mother, Van, Dimension 5)

When the children's negative attitudes towards education were considered, one of the most prominent reasons that emerged was the economic concerns of the children. First, some children reported they could not believe they could find a job even if they were awarded a diploma and, accordingly, did not believe in the benefits of education for their economic expectations in the future. It was indicated that such a belief depended on more structural reasons, such as widespread unemployment, particularly among university graduates in Türkiye. Some of the teachers stated that the children voiced their concerns about their future, saying that even when they (and their parents) invested time and money in university education, they would not be able to be appointed (for example, as teachers); they would not be able to find a job in the field studied, and they would end up with other low-skilled jobs. Such feelings were reported to create a severe loss of hope among the children and considerably decrease their motivation, particularly at the upper-secondary level.

> My mom and dad want us to study. Because they dropped out of school when they were little. Since my mother could not learn to read when she was young, she went to a course while we were at school. She learned how to read and write. She always tells us that "I could not study, but you will. My father also says, 'Study, at least save your life'. My brother once said that after eighth grade, maybe he would not go to high school. But, my parents changed his mind, and he is studying at high school now.
> (Girls, Kars, Dimension 7)

Similarly, a second economic concern for not valuing education is the belief that starting to work is more advantageous than progress in education. The qualitative data show that children working paid labour while studying at the same time thought that they would not be able to earn more money even when they finished school, and some teachers and key informants confirmed such a perception. As such, school non-attendance or dropout due to earning money were also reported to be the children's preferences rather than that of the parents. The children whose parents already had their businesses or lands could also be included in this category because they, mostly boys at the upper-secondary level, believed they already had a job requiring no diploma. Therefore, those children indicated no interest in academic success at school or in particular course topics such as geography or history.

A third economic concern arising from the statements of some key informants and teachers in the qualitative data is that some children believed they could earn money easily through activities that did not require education or a diploma. In that regard, the role of social media and the children's inspirations to pursue a career through social media, for example as a YouTuber/Vlogger, were mentioned by some respondents.

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In all those cases, the economic concerns of the children were identified as a result of their perceptions that they could still earn money without a diploma or being successful at school. From the qualitative data, this factor can be observed to decrease the value of education in the eyes of the children and increase conditional non-attendance and school dropouts considerably.

Another category of reasons for not valuing education concerns the lack of university prospects. For instance, some teachers stated that some of the children at the vocational upper-secondary schools were not hopeful about being placed at a university, which eventually created a lack of motivation to finish the upper-secondary school. Similarly, some students were reported to believe that even if they managed to obtain a university diploma, they would not be able to work in the field in which they studied. Some key informants and teachers indicated that another reason amongst children for not valuing education was having no targets or aspirations set for the future, conditioned mainly by the environment in which they grew up, and it became difficult for children, particularly for the girls, for example, to dream of university education in another city.

Some key informants and teachers indicated that the lack of successful role models in the family or close environment was another reason for not valuing education among the children. It was reported that when the children could not see any examples of someone who was well educated and achieved progress in life, such as finding a good and well-paid job, they started losing faith in the value of education for their futures. Moreover, it was observed that children who dropped out of school could act as a bad example for the other children who may copy and drop out of school. In contrast, good examples were mentioned to create positive results. Some of the statements in the qualitative data show that the members of the family, particularly the female members, who achieved decent living conditions and worked due to education (for example, sisters or cousins who became teachers), could act as an inspiration and motivation for the girls towards education.

Two final themes emerged from the qualitative data as reasons for not valuing education: first, the negative influence of friendship circles, and second, children's lack of interest in studying with the argument that they did not like school, studying or course subjects, or that the school was too disciplined. In both cases, the key informants and teachers stated that the children became more likely to have irregular attendance or non-attendance, mostly without their parents' knowledge.

Language skills are the second factor to be considered in terms of human capital. The qualitative data show that in some provinces of the research sample, such as Van, Şanlıurfa, Muş, Bursa, and Istanbul, some children and

parents' native languages were Kurdish or Arabic. Some quantitative data about the relationship between language skills and school enrolment is also available through the DHS 2018. Based on the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018, children aged 5–6 from households that conducted the DHS interview in Kurdish are much less likely to be in pre-primary than those in Turkish-speaking households, but there is no difference in primary enrolment probabilities. For children aged 14–17, the DHS 2018 data show that Kurdish-speaking children have the same probability of enrolling in school as Turkish-speaking children when controlling for other factors. Children from households where the DHS interview was conducted in Turkish are likelier to be enrolled in school. The results of the multivariate analysis simply mean that the differences in enrolment probabilities between the Turkish and Kurdish children are captured by other variables in the model, such as SES; for example, Kurdish families in the DHS 2018 sample are poorer.

The qualitative data also support the findings of the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018. The children in the qualitative research sample who indicated that their native language or the language spoken at home was Kurdish also seemed to have Turkish language skills, even when one or both parents were not competent in Turkish. For the Arabic-speaking Turkish citizen households, for example, in Şanlıurfa, the level of Turkish language skills was indicated to be lower among the children, which was stated to be a factor that could limit the children's academic performance at school. Still, the schools were also stated as the places to learn Turkish by some teachers and key informants.

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Based on the qualitative data, insufficient Turkish language skills among the parents, mostly among the mothers, seemed to affect the education of children indirectly, as some of the key informants and teachers stated that communication with parents about the educational progress of their children could be hindered when the parents did not speak Turkish. In addition, it was also mentioned that insufficient Turkish language skills also limited the parents' capacity to support the children's education at home, such as, for example, they could not help children with their homework or guide their children's educational prospects.

The level of *academic performance* at school is the third aspect of human capital. The qualitative data show that some children's academic performances influenced school dropout. Some out-of-school children in the qualitative research sample indicated they left school due to being academically unsuccessful. The decision to drop out of school due to poor academic performance was observed to be taken either by the children themselves or their parents, sometimes combined with other factors such as economic difficulties or having many siblings in the household. Some of the teachers and key informants stated that when the children were successful at school, parents could try to overcome the additional household challenges (economic difficulties, large household); however, when the performance of the children was low, those factors could also act as additional justification for the parents to take their children from school.

The qualitative data also show that poor academic performance was observed to act as a higher risk of school dropout at the upper-secondary level, particularly when the children could not perform well in Grade 8. As mentioned by the teachers and the key informants, a factor for poor academic performance was the quality of education received by the children at the previous school levels. Many key informants and teachers stated that children with low academic performances at the primary or lower-secondary schools had serious risks at the following levels of education, given the difficulties at the upper-secondary level, mostly due to the heavier curriculum at that level. The students with low grades could still pass classes with the decision of their teachers, meaning that many students coming to the upper-secondary schools

could lack some basic skills, such as mathematical skills *(see Section 5.3.3 Grade Transition Regulations*). Similarly, some lower-secondary school teachers stated that the academic performance of the children who come to lower-secondary schools from the primary schools in the villages could also face similar problems.

With regards to gender differences in terms of school performance, the qualitative data show that girls were observed to be more motivated and perform better at school compared to boys in all school types, as the statements of the teachers from Imam Hatip schools and general upper-secondary schools and Anatolian upper-secondary schools show. Those teachers stated that their female students tended to be more dedicated, disciplined, and aspired to university education, whereas the boys were observed to give up rather quickly when their academic performances were poor, and they were inclined to leave the school and start working, often at the beginning of Grade 9.

The qualitative data show that school type is perceived to be associated with academic performance by the parents, children, teachers, and key informants, meaning that some types of schools, particularly the vocational lower and upper-secondary schools, were associated with lower academic performance. This perception depended on the placement test (LGS), which was stated to create a categorisation among schools based on the success and concentration of students with lower academic performance at particular types of schools. Moreover, some teachers stated that some children were sent to vocational schools to acquire a profession, as they were already considered unsuccessful at school by their parents. Another point of relevance is that the children could be registered at schools that might not align with their interests, talents, or capabilities. Such situations were stated to create the risk of being unsuccessful in course topics related to the particular vocation or the basic course topics in addition to the vocational courses.

Lack of motivation or enthusiasm for education among the children was another reason for poor academic performance. Many parents and children in the qualitative research sample stated that the children did not like the school, could not grasp the course topics, were not interested in the courses, were bored at school, could not focus on the courses, resisted going to school, etc. In those cases, when the children could not be supported by their families or parents, the result was often non-attendance and school dropout, particularly at the upper-secondary level.

Another reason for poor academic performance was the lack of support from the families. Some teachers stated that when the parents could not help guide the education of their children due to reasons such as not being educated themselves, not being interested in the education of the children, or not being aware of the need for educational support for their children etc., the children could not progress well, mainly starting from the primary school level onwards.

Another reason, and a consequence of poor academic performance appears to be child labour. Irregular attendance or non-attendance of children made to work can result in low academic performance at school. From another perspective, some children in the qualitative data stated that they decided to start working when their grades were always low. Similarly, some parents were also reported to ask their children to start working due to their low academic performance at school.

For poor academic performance, another reason mentioned concerned the existence of a test-based placement system at the upper-secondary and university levels. Some teachers and key informants stated that when the children did not believe that they would be successful at the LGS or YKS exams, or when they could not be placed in a "good" school at the end of the LGS system, the motivation of the children, or sometimes of the parents, about their future educational prospects could decrease. This is to say that the parents were reported to sometimes measure their children's success by the exam results and could not believe that their children had the potential to continue their education.

> "Students will eventually take exams such as LGS or YKS. Now, parents wonder if there is any chance of being successful in these exams, not really. Therefore, the parents first question why they should send their children to school, and then they start thinking that it is not necessary to go to school. One of the parents says, 'I am sending my children to school for nothing'.
> (Key Informant, Van, Lower Secondary School)

A final reason for poor academic performance was the negative influence of friends. In some cases, children were reported to skip school or courses due to having or hanging out with friends, which usually resulted in them missing exams or courses.

The qualitative data also provide some consequences of poor academic performance for school dropouts. One of those is class repetition or being referred to open schools due to poor performance in line with the success criteria for grade transition. Children who repeat the class twice at the upper-secondary level are referred to open schools. Another consequence of poor performance at school was indicated as referral of the children to another school, but it was also indicated that unless the root causes of the problem of poor performance were resolved, in many cases, such referrals could end up with school dropout. A final consequence stated by the key informants and teachers was that the children with low performance at school were psychologically affected and could reflect their feelings in the form of negative attitudes towards the school, the teacher or their peers at school.

Human Capital-Related Barriers

As a demand-side factor, human capital includes different elements *(see Table 12)*. The qualitative data show that although many children and parents acknowledged the value of education for their children, education was mostly perceived to be beneficial to the economic expectations of their future. So, not valuing education, particularly by the children and their parents, depends on several reasons also conditioned by various economic concerns, such as education not being helpful for economic returns, disbelief in the benefits of university education, etc. As a result, it was interesting to observe among the out-of-school and at-risk children in the qualitative data that they aspired to professions that mostly did not require any university diploma.

Table 12:
Human Capital-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Not valuing education	**		**	***	***
Limited language skills	*			*	
Low academic performance	**	*	**	***	***

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

Insufficient Turkish language skills for the children who stated that Kurdish or Arabic was the language spoken at home is observed to create risks for the children. The qualitative data show that the impact is more indirect, as it was usually the parents, mainly the mothers, who were not competent in the Turkish language compared to the children themselves.

Poor academic performance created serious risks for irregular attendance, non-attendance, or school dropout, particularly at the beginning of the upper-secondary level (mostly starting from Grade 9) and at particular school types, namely, vocational schools. In contrast, the qualitative data indicate that good academic performance has the potential to decrease non-attendance and school dropout, even among children from lower-income households.

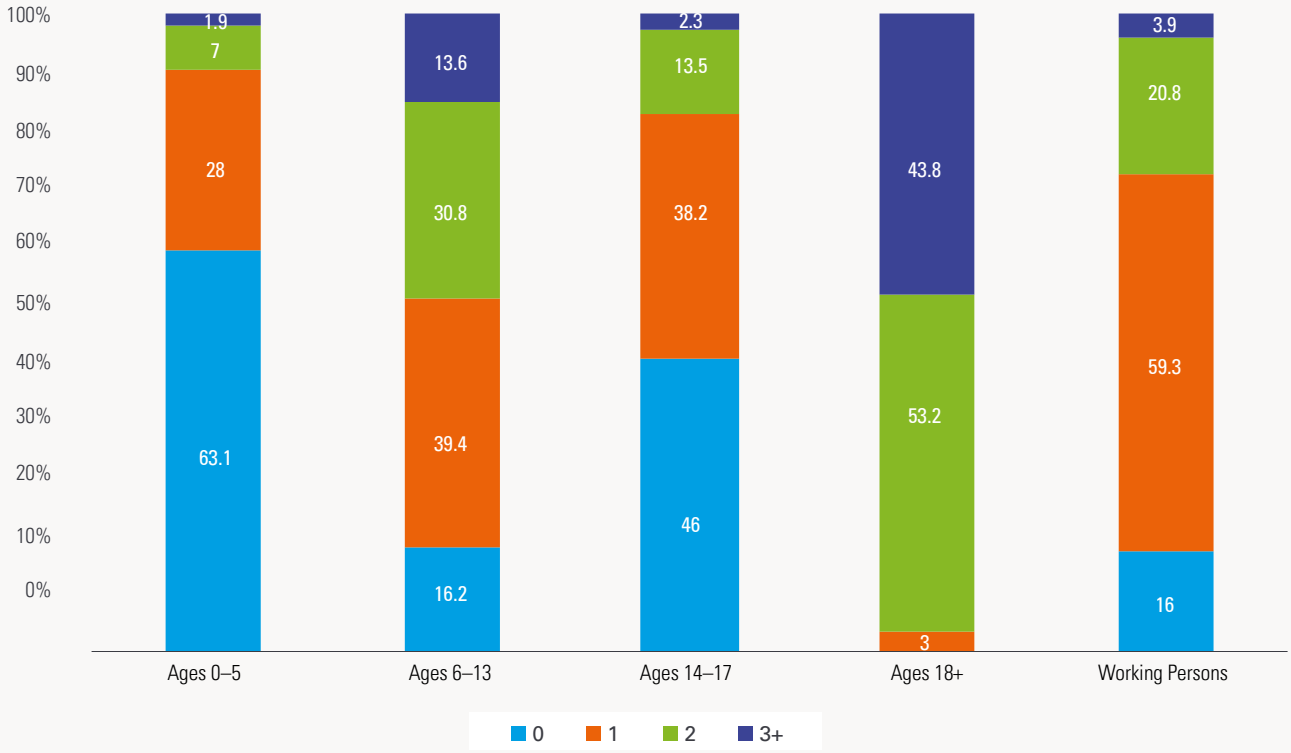
5.1.3 Family Structure

Family structure refers to the composition of the household members in which children live. The family environment and the role of the parents or caregivers, particularly in fragmented families, can significantly affect the children's educational prospects.

The qualitative data show that in addition to the nuclear family consisting of parents and their children in the same household, there are also other patterns of family structure, which are all considered to have consequences on the children's education at all school levels and in all school types. Those other different family structures are observed from the qualitative data as children living in crowded households, with both parents and other siblings, or in extended family structures where the elderly relatives also live with the family; children living only with a mother or father due to the separation of parents or the passing away of one of the parents; children living with other members of the extended family, such as grandparents (primarily grandmothers), aunts, or uncles, due to reasons such as family fragmentation, seasonal work, or the criminal record of the parents; and children living with stepmothers or stepfathers.

The quantitative data show that *the size of the family* can be observed to have an impact on the children's education. Concerning household size in Türkiye, the DHS 2018 provides data breaking down family size with frequencies of the number of persons by age. For example, Figure 37 shows that 63.1 per cent of children aged 5–17 have zero children aged 0–5 in their home, while 28 per cent of these children have one child aged 0–5 in their home. It cannot be established if these other children are siblings. The DHS 2018 shows that the average household size is 5.4 members, and 8 per cent of households have nine or more members.

Figure 37:
Number of Other Family Members by Age and Working Status

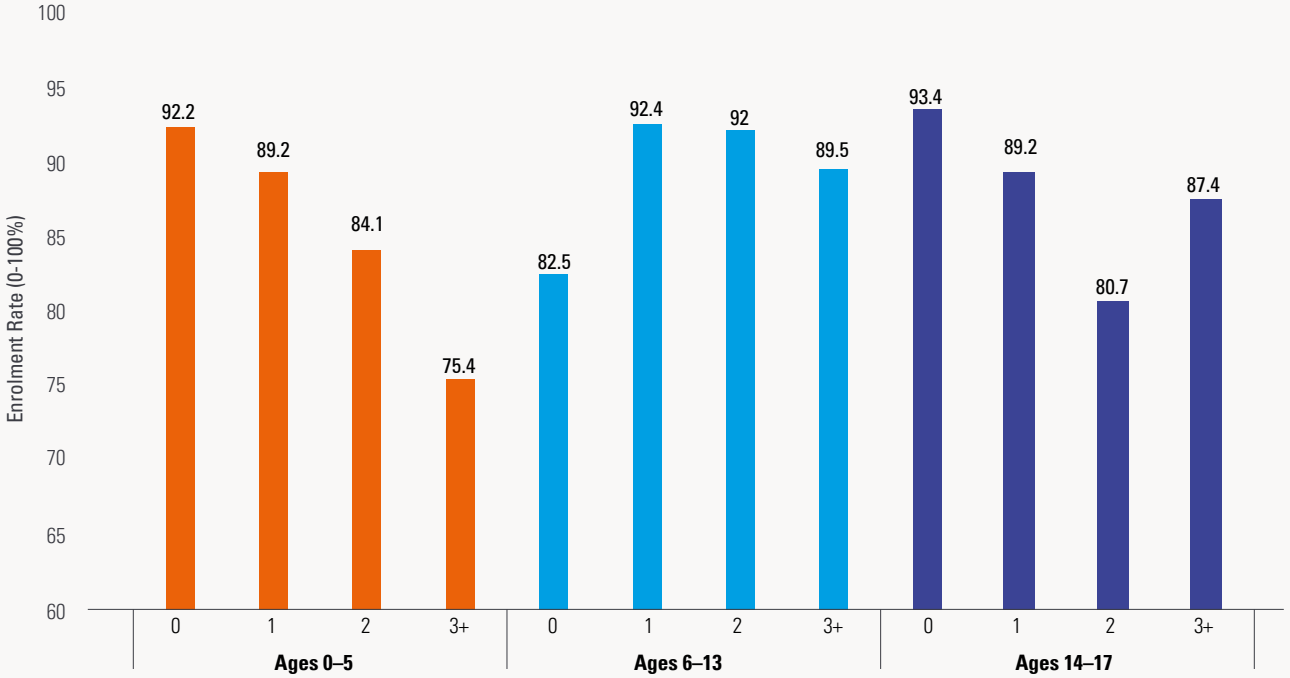


Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 5- to 17-year-olds is 8,086.

Figure 38 shows the current enrolment (attendance) rate of children aged 5–17 by the number of other children in the household. The enrolment rate steadily declines for each young child in the household (aged 0–5). For example, 92.2 per cent of children aged 5-17 in houses with zero other children in the 0-5 age group are currently at school, compared with just 75.4 per cent of children who come from households with three or more children aged 0–5.

Figure 38:
Enrolment Rate for Children Aged 5–17 by Number of Other Children in Household



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 5- to 17-year-olds is 8,086.

The findings from the DHS 2018 data are also supported by the qualitative data findings in that the more children (and other family members) there are in the households, the less likely (at least some of) the children are to be in school. The qualitative data help identify some reasons for the adverse effects of *large family sizes* on children's education. One of the reasons is the level of economic deprivation due to larger families. Some key informants and teachers indicated that they witnessed numerous cases where the children from crowded households, mostly the older boys, had to leave the school to work and contribute to the family budget (*see Section 5.2.1. Lack of Resources*). For the older girls in crowded families, the reason for not being able to attend was observed to be taking care of the younger siblings, particularly when the mothers also worked in the household.

Another reason observed from the qualitative data was the low academic performance at school. It was reported that the children could not have any personal space (a room or a desk) to study at home due to the number of household members, and their learning was limited to the lectures at school, which was not necessarily enough to perform well at school.

A final reason for non-attendance or school dropout for this group of children was the lack of parental care and interest in children's education, particularly in some rural areas. Some teachers stated that when there were many children in the family, the parents could not follow or provide support for the children's educational needs or status, and more so when the children were not academically successful at school, they did not put effort into keeping the children at school.

> Our students may even have five or ten siblings. The parent tells us 'which one should I send to school', he says 'I am even forgetting my daughter's name'; he explains it this way. I mean, we get very strange reactions. Sometimes families do not know which school or class the child is enrolled in.
> (Teacher, Sanliurfa, Dimension 7)

A second category of family structure is the *children living only with their mother or father due to the separation of parents or the passing away of one of the parents*. In the qualitative research sample, some children left school when their parents divorced. It was also stated by the key informants and teachers that family fragmentation had the risk of negatively affecting children at all ages, at all school levels, or all types of schools. For example, a key informant stated that it was one of the most prominent reasons for non-attendance or school dropout at the Anatolian upper-secondary schools, where school dropout due to other reasons was quite rare. The multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 also shows that children aged 5–6 are much less likely to be enrolled in pre-primary when the father is not in the home, and 14- to 17-year-old girls are nearly 10 per cent less likely to be in school when their mother is not in the home.

From the qualitative data, it is possible to observe some consequences of family fragmentation on children and their education practices. One of the consequences of family fragmentation is family mobility, meaning that the children have to move to another city with the parent who has custody. Based on the qualitative data, this is often the case for the children staying with the mothers, as the mothers more often moved to their hometown or where their parents live for reasons such as economic difficulties. In these cases, the children were reported to deal with family fragmentation and changes in their regular environment, which affected their school performances and motivation at their new schools.

The second consequence of family fragmentation on children's education is the increasing probability of child labour. Many teachers and key informants stated that upon separation, the lone parent, usually the mother, could face economic difficulties, which pushed the children to work to support the household, including the mother. The education of the children, mostly boys of all ages who live with lone and non-working mothers, was reported to be negatively affected by this situation because of the need to assume responsibility for the mother and other siblings. In the qualitative data, there were also some reported cases where the father took custody of the daughter, with the expectation of being in charge of the domestic chores and the domestic care of the father.

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A third consequence of family separation was a lack of care for the children from either parent or not being in contact with one of the parents for a long time. It was stated that for the education of children in fragmented families, the teachers or school administrators could have some difficulties in reaching either of the parents. As indicated by some teachers, lack of care became an even more serious risk for the children with special needs because their education needed more effort to be taken by the parents, such as taking medical reports, following GRC/RAM processes, finding the schools, etc.

A fourth consequence of family fragmentation on children is the psychological effects of separation due to death or divorce on the children. It was reported that particularly before the divorce, conflicts and disturbances in the household affected children negatively. The teachers and key informants stated that when the psychological effects of family fragmentation could not be managed well, particularly by the parents, the children could demonstrate their reactions to parents by keeping a distance from the school or at school where they courted or created trouble. In addition, some mothers stated that lacking a father at home made it more challenging to support their children pedagogically.

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The last consequence of family fragmentation is some security concerns for the children. In some cases, it was indicated that due to problems or conflicts between the parents, the children could face some security risks, including risks to life, which also influenced their school enrolment or attendance. Despite the negative consequences of family fragmentation, the teachers and key informants stated that their intervention in children's education through communication with the parents often remained limited, and they could only formally intervene in cases where domestic violence was identified.

The third category of family structure is the *children living with other family members, such as grandparents (primarily grandmothers), aunts, or uncles*. In different cases from the qualitative data, the parents were reported to leave their children with other members of the families due to family fragmentation, seasonal or permanent work in other cities, health reasons (including psychological problems), economic problems or the criminal record of the parents.

The DHS 2018 helps identify the relationship between school enrolment probability and the child's relationship to the head of household. The multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 shows that for children aged 5–6, the child's relationship to the head of household is significantly associated with the probability of being enrolled in primary school. More specifically, children who are grandchildren of the household head and children who are "other relations" (not child, brother/sister, or grandchild) are significantly less likely to be enrolled in primary school than children with a parent who is the head of the household. For the children aged 14–17, the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 indicates that the child's relationship to the head of household is also significantly associated with being in school. Standing out is that children aged 14–17 who are not related to the head of household are 20.4 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school. Moreover, regarding gender differences, the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 shows that females unrelated to the household head are nearly 40 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school.

Some of the reasons for such findings can be deduced from the qualitative data. For the children living with family members other than their parents, responsibility for the children was extended to the other family members. The qualitative data show that there might be cases where those other family members could not adequately support or follow the education of the children due to reasons such as having economic problems, being old, having health problems, having conservative attitudes, not being informed about the education system, not having the legal custody of the children, etc. When neither of the parents was available to support the children (due to reasons such as being in prison, living in another city, having particular addictions, etc.), the children were reported to suffer from a lack of care or interest in their education, which resulted in a lack of focus and motivation at school and poor academic performance.

The final category of family structure is *the children living with stepmothers or stepfathers*. In those cases in the qualitative data, some of the children were observed to have no relations with their biological fathers or mothers or to have antagonistic relations with their stepmothers or stepfathers. There were also some instances where the children were reported to be discriminated against compared to the children of the parents from the second marriage. Although rare, the settings of polygamy were also found to affect the children negatively.

Family Structure-Related Barriers

Qualitative data show that family structure is an important factor that could affect children's education in Türkiye *(see Table 13)*. Living in crowded families, living in fragmented families with lone parents, living with members of the family other than parents or living with stepparents seem to have influenced the daily education routines of the children for reasons such as child labour, increasing domestic responsibilities or low motivation and academic performance at school, all of which could act as reasons for irregular attendance or school dropout. An important aspect of family structure as a barrier to children's education is that it affects all children of all ages, school levels and school types. Gender differences in terms of consequences of family structure can lead to a disadvantage for girls (for example, increasing domestic responsibilities) or boys (for example, increasing risks of child labour).

Table 13:
Family Structure-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Family structure	*	*	*	*	*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.1.4 Health-Related Factors

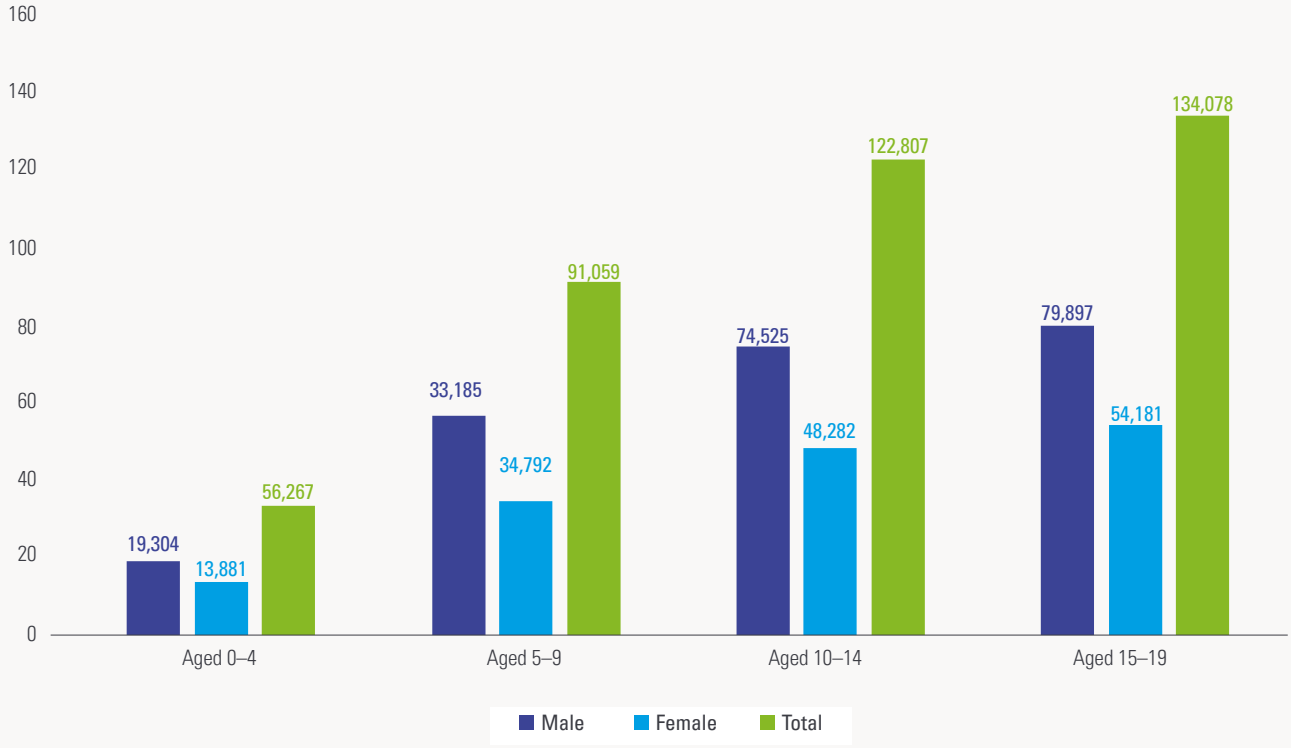
Several health-related factors can prevent children from attending school regularly and cause eventual dropout (*see Table 14*). This section discusses health-related factors in terms of disability, illness, psycho-social effects, traumatic experiences, and pregnancy.

Quantitative data about persons with *disability* in Türkiye is scarce and outdated. The Türkiye Disability Survey (2002) shows that 12.3 per cent of the total population comprises persons with disabilities; there were 460,383 persons with disabilities in the 0–19 age group, where the rate is 4.2 per cent for the 0–9 age group and 4.6 per cent for the 10–19 age group (Education Reform Initiative [ERG], 2016). According to the TURKSTAT's Türkiye Population and Housing Census (2011), persons aged three and above with at least one type of disability comprised 6.9 per cent of the population, and the rate was 2.3 per cent in the 3–9 age group, 2.1 per cent in the 10–14 age group, and 2.3 per cent in the 15–19 age group (ERG, 2016).

The National Data System for Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Family and Social Services also provides some data on persons with disability in Türkiye. Accordingly, by April 2021, 381.129 people aged 0–19 with disabilities were registered on the database.[61] The distribution of the population with disabilities according to age and gender is presented in Figure 39.

61 The data only included individuals who have applied to authorised hospitals to obtain a Disabled Health Board Report. In addition, the publicly available data did not provide the distribution according to the age group and type of disability (categorized for the general population as visual, hearing, language and speaking, orthopaedical, mental, psychological and emotional impairments, chronic illness, etc.).

Figure 39:
Number of Persons with Disabilities Registered in the Database According to Age Group and Gender



Source: EYHGM (2021).

Globally speaking, discrimination against individuals with a disability is quite a widespread social problem. For children with disabilities, a severe consequence of their disability can be being deprived of the right to education. The qualitative data help explore some aspects of the education of the children with disabilities in a way that explains their lower level of school enrolment/attendance compared to children without disabilities.

The types of disabilities of children reported in the qualitative data were often visual impairments, mental disabilities, and orthopaedical disabilities. Multiple disabilities were rarely reported within the qualitative data. From the qualitative data, the factors that affect the educational prospects of children with disabilities are identified as the families' attitudes towards (or denial of) children's disabilities, problems with registration, and problems encountered by the children with disabilities at school.

The first factor affecting the education of children with disabilities emerged as the families' attitudes towards (or denial of) children's disabilities. Some key informants and teachers indicated that in cases where the disabilities of the children were identified at school, the parents did not want to accept that their children had disabilities or did not follow the required procedures, such as getting a medical report through GRC/RAM. Such an attitude of the families was reported as a factor that hindered the fulfilment of the special education needs of children with disabilities (for example, sending them to special education institutions) and caused children to face numerous problems at regular schools. In addition, some parents were found not to send their children with disabilities to any type of school at all because of concerns that their children would be stigmatized and discriminated against.

Another factor affecting the education of children with disabilities was reported as the problems with school registration and, in some cases, the perceived hesitation of the schools to enrol them. Some key informants stated that although education is a basic right for children with special education needs, there could be issues of lack of quota at school or disagreement/prejudices of the other parents. In some cases, the registration process was reported to be prolonged due to the procedures to be followed for quota requests or complaints from the families. In such cases, it was also possible to observe the professional support of the civil society organizations working in the field of disabilities for the parents who needed help. One of the consequences of school registration problems was reported, as children with special education needs were found not to be enrolled in schools close to their residences continuously but in those schools that eventually accepted them. Some key informants stated that the parents of

children with special education needs preferred enrolling their children in special education schools (rather than full-time educational practices through mainstreaming in regular schools), where they believed their children would face fewer problems (*see Section 5.3.1 School Enrolment*).

The third factor from the qualitative data that affected the education of children with disabilities was reported as the problems encountered by the children with disabilities at school, mainly in the context of full-time educational practices through inclusion/integration. Some teachers and key informants stated that children with disabilities were observed to have some adaptation problems at school, as a result of which they could feel pressured or unwanted and excluded. One of the reasons for the adaptation problems was the attitudes of their peers, including some acts of peer bullying. In addition, some teachers stated that the physical capacities and infrastructure of the schools were not always sufficient to accommodate children with disabilities.

There were some key informants and teachers who indicated that those children with disabilities who have difficulties at school could eventually drop out of school. Some support mechanisms developed at schools to avoid children dropping out were also exemplified. Those initiatives of the schools observed from the qualitative data were to make physical arrangements (such as arranging a classroom on the basement floor) for the students with disabilities, to communicate with the families to be able to keep the students with disabilities at school or to organize awareness raising activities with the children about disabilities.

A final observation with regards to the role of disability is that in some cases, the disability of any of the household members, such as the siblings, could be a factor for irregular attendance or non-attendance of children, even those who did not have any disabilities themselves, due to the care responsibilities for household members with disabilities at home.

Illness is the second health-related factor that could affect the children's educational prospects, mainly in high levels of excused non-attendance and, in some cases, school dropout. Many types of illnesses of the children were mentioned in the qualitative data, such as types of cancer and leukaemia, anorexia, traffic accidents, work accidents, spinal disc herniation, and psychological problems. The qualitative data also show some alternative educational opportunities for children with illnesses, such as "education at home", open education, or educational support given by some civil society organizations. Those children and their parents in the qualitative research sample reported frequently having to visit or stay at hospitals and receive treatments, preventing them from regularly attending school.

The major impact of illness on children's education was found to be broken in education at all school levels, at different lengths, from short (for a few weeks) to long (up to two years). In the qualitative data, there were some cases where children could not attend school due to their chronic or acute illnesses, resulting in their registration being frozen, and in certain prolonged illness cases, some children even had to leave the school permanently.

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Breaks in education can be observed to result in two major problems. The first is the adaptation problems upon return to school. Some teachers and key informants indicated that when the children returned to school, they could be over-age for the grades they returned to, and in that sense, they could have communication problems with the other students in their classrooms. Moreover, some of the students who had to receive education at home due to their illnesses faced problems, particularly in terms of adaptation to school discipline and being with other students in the classroom. Moreover, students with hyperactivity or attention deficit disorder were also reported to face difficulties in the school atmosphere with teachers and other students.

The second major problem was that of lost learning. It was stated that children who missed classes due to illness needed additional support to catch up with the curriculum. The qualitative data show that the additional support from the family or schools was limited. A final issue concerning the effects of illness on children's education arose when the school was distant from the homes of the students who had illnesses and treatment. Some parents and children stated that they hesitated to attend school after the treatment because they had no transportation.

In addition, some children in the qualitative research sample could not attend school regularly due to the chronic or temporary illness of some household members, such as mothers, fathers, or grandparents. When this was the case, the children reported either taking care of the ill members of the households at home or working to provide income for the family.

Another health-related factor affecting the educational prospects of the children is *psycho-social effects*, such as the stigma of poverty. Some children in the qualitative research sample indicated that when they did not have the essential equipment needed at school, such as notebooks, books, or stationery, they refrained from attending school as they felt ashamed and deprived. In other cases, some teachers stated that they witnessed cases where the children, mostly the girls, did not want to come to school due to lack of proper clothing or shoes, for example, because of the embarrassment of wearing the same sweater every day. One key informant stated that the elimination of the school uniform system and the adoption of free dress codes at schools created some disadvantages for the children from low-income families because they felt deprived due to a lack of clothes similar to those of the other children at school.

Another health-related factor for children's education is the effects of *traumatic experiences* to which children could be exposed. In the qualitative data, most of the traumatic experiences were related to their family environments, and some of the examples mentioned were loss of parents, parents being in prison, blood feuds between families, divorce of the parents, domestic violence, psychological problems and addiction among the parents, being a victim of abuse, or witnessing or being involved in a crime. Many of those experiences were observed to have additional side effects on the children's lives, such as the need to move to another city or economic and security problems. Those children were reported to suffer from serious problems, mostly expressed in the form of psychological impact, harming the educational prospects of the children, mostly in the form of non-attendance or school dropout. Some of the teachers and key informants stated that children who lived through traumatic experiences could be observed to be anxious, distressed, introverted, scared or timid, or on the other extreme, too extraverted, reckless or rebellious against the school environment. Those children were also reported to have difficulties communicating with their peers and teachers, tend to hide their experiences from others, or not attend school due to embarrassment and social pressure.

Most of those children were observed to need psychological support, provided mainly by the schools and teachers and sometimes by medical professionals. Some teachers and key informants stated that they tried to supply counselling by directing the children to counselling teachers at school or keeping in communication with their parents. It was also indicated that when the parents supported their children, they were more likely to overcome the effects of the traumas. There were also some key informants and teachers who underlined the importance of the school in supporting children with traumatic experiences because the children might find the school to be an escape from the traumatic environments where they meet friends and feel better.

A last aspect of the health-related factors is pregnancy, which could affect the educational prospects of girls, predominantly of those at the upper-secondary level. Instances of pregnancy were rarely mentioned in the qualitative data: few teachers stated that they witnessed a pregnant student.

Health-Related Barriers

Qualitative data show that when they exist, health-related factors can act as barriers to children's education even though education services are provided at home or in the hospital (*see Table 14).* The most prominent barrier is having disabilities, which is a major reason for non-attendance and leaving school at a certain level of education. Here, the attitudes of the families towards their children, school registration and school supplies for children with disabilities and adaptation to the school environment, particularly within the context of full-time educational practices through inclusion/integration, appear as important aspects. Illness can also affect the education routines of the children, mainly due to prolonged treatment processes, which results in children with illnesses missing some school semesters. The breaks in education create concerns, such as the need to overcome adaptation problems and compensate for lost learning.

An important observation is that disability and chronic illness among household members may also negatively affect the school attendance of children without disability or illness. In these cases, the children, both older boys and girls, could assume some care or economic responsibilities that can affect their schooling routines.

Another aspect of health-related factors is the psycho-social effects, mostly due to poverty, that are visible among some children who refrain from going to school due to a lack of essential educational equipment, clothing, or shoes.

Traumatic experiences of children, as another component of health-related factors, can be observed to create serious psychological effects on the children, which may considerably affect their school attendance and well-being at school. In this regard, the role of the school as a support mechanism for protecting the well-being of children is very significant. Although it was rare in the experiences of the respondents, pregnancy was reported to be a barrier for girls in the 14–17 age group as a reason for school dropout.

Table 14:
Health-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Disability of the children	***	**	**	***	**
Illness of the children	**	**	***	**	***
Psycho-social effects: the stigma of poverty	*	*	*	*	*
Traumatic effects	**	*	**	***	***
Pregnancy (for girls only)	*			**	*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.1.5 Social Cohesion

Ensuring the social cohesion of children by minimizing their exclusion from society and increasing their chances for dialogue and interaction within their social environment is a factor that is likely to increase the educational prospects of the children. The qualitative data provide evidence to elaborate on different aspects of social cohesion, namely the level of friendships among children, the level of integration in the social environment and participation in social life, security concerns, and peer bullying.

Regarding the *children's friendships*, most of the children and their parents in the qualitative research sample indicated that their children had friends. Those friendships were usually observed to be created in the neighbourhood, at school, through family and relatives and, in some cases, on social media. Here, the school appeared as a valuable venue for making friends. Some children in the qualitative research sample reported that what they liked the most about school was having friends there. In contrast, when the children had few friends at school (for example, due to moving to the city recently), their motivation to go to school was observed to be lower.

Children with friends reported many different activities undertaken with the friends, including talking/chatting, wandering around, playing games outside, playing computer games at home, playing football, basketball, volleyball, skating, cycling, going on a picnic, visiting each other's houses, going to parks or historical places in the city, eating something, recording TikTok videos, etc. Children in the qualitative research sample stated that the benefits of having friends are enjoying things together, sharing and talking to their peers, feeling understood by their friends, and being helped. One commonly stated activity was studying together, for example, doing homework, sharing lecture notes, or developing different games to prepare for the exams together. Thus, it can be assumed that children with friends would socialize, enjoy life with their friends, and support each others' educational activities through peer learning.

> "There is an activity that I like to do the most with my friends, we have been doing it for some time. We made a box I ourselves. We put some cards in it by writing the meanings of words one in English and one in Turkish and we were asking those to each other. I loved meeting and studying with my friends outside in the camellia. It was very pleasant, especially during exam weeks, when schools were open, we could understand the subjects better. One was explaining one thing, the other one was explaining the other. We were understanding the lessons better.
> (Girl, Konya, Dimension 7)

Almost all the children stated that they communicated in Turkish with their friends. Some children reported communicating both in Turkish and Kurdish. Only a few children mentioned Arabic or Kurdish as the only language of communication with friends. It was also possible to observe that children living in smaller settlements had more friends than those living in big city centres. One of the reasons for such a finding was that when the families moved to a new city, it took time for the children to make new friends, or the parents were cautious about letting their children engage in social activities in a new city.

From the qualitative data, it was also possible to identify two other, somewhat extreme, cases of friendship for the children. Those are the cases where the children had very few or "bad" friends, the latter labelled chiefly by parents and teachers. In the former case, mostly at-risk and out-of-school girls indicated they had few friends or a limited social life outside the home, mainly due to parental control over the girls, which did not allow them to go out alone or have (male) friends. Some single mothers also mentioned that they considered letting children out risky as they lived in a big city. Those girls mentioned that they were mostly at home, and when they got out, it was with the mother to go shopping or visit relatives. In this category of children, some boys indicated that they felt bored because they did not have many friends, so they preferred to help in the family's shop.

Other children had friends who were considered by the parents and sometimes by the teachers as "bad". Such labelling was observed to be a result of the perceived negative influence of those friends on the children concerned. Based on the statements of the parents and teachers, "bad" friends appeared as the most prominent reason in the context of social cohesion for enforced school dropout or change of school for children, both girls and boys, mostly at the upper-secondary level. The qualitative data show that parents and teachers were concerned about the negative impact of certain friendships

on children in encouraging non-attendance, which could lead to low academic performance. For example, some parents stated that their children were quite successful at school, but after they started hanging out with certain children, they started to skip school and spend time in, for example, internet cafes, or they developed addictions like smoking. According to some teachers, the influence of friendships or friendship groups could lead to children being confused about the benefits of the school, starting to act irresponsibly and rebelliously, and perhaps developing bad habits.

As a consequence, some children were reported to drop out of school themselves under the influence of friends who had also left school or had to be taken out of school by their parents. In the latter case, the children were reported to either be referred to other schools to break the relationship with the friendship circle, be referred to open schools, or stay at home, leaving school altogether. In cases where the children continued their education, it was also observed that parental control over those children increased, particularly for the girls, which then negatively affected the girls' performance at their new school.

In terms of *integration into the local community and participation in social life*, the qualitative data show that most of the children and their parents were quite content with their social environments, particularly when the environment was where they were born and grew up. Their families already had a social environment and relatives there. In limited cases, some children complained that the city was small and they had nothing to do there; the people were not friendly, or they had few job opportunities. In other cases, some parents stated that the city was too big, making it difficult to control their children and sustain their lives.

Still, the qualitative data did not provide any widespread *security concerns* for children in social life. The most visible pattern was the parents' concerns about their daughters' security in the social environment and at school. Some of those concerns were observed to stem from traditional and conservative gender norms, where parents, primarily fathers, were concerned that the social environment of their daughters would enable them to come in contact with boys. A second type of security concern came mostly from single mothers, who described their worries about their daughters' or boys' security in their social environment, particularly if they had recently moved.

Again, the qualitative data did not provide much evidence of peer bullying. Almost all of the bullying instances were reported as taking place at school and will be elaborated under Section 5.4.4 Security in conjunction with how schools are a barrier to children's education.

Social Cohesion Related Barriers

The analysis shows that social cohesion is a relatively less risky barrier to children's educational prospects *(see Table 15)*. Most children in the qualitative research sample seem to have friends and enjoy spending time with them, which could also support their educational progress, as they seem to study together and learn from each other. The children with few friends, mostly girls, were reported to be negatively affected regarding their social development and participation in social life and education, mostly due to the overprotective attitudes of their parents. Moreover, particular friendship types were perceived to influence children towards education negatively and are a noteworthy reason for school dropout, either by the children's will or the parents. Security concerns are mostly relevant to girls, particularly in big cities and new environments, bringing a risk to children's school attendance. Last, in the qualitative data, peer bullying was not reported as a factor in the social life of school-going children or the local community.

Table 15:
Social Cohesion-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Friendship circles	**		*	***	***
Difficulties in integration into local community and social life	**	*	*	**	*
Security concerns	*	*	**	**	**
Peer bullying					

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.2 Economic Factors

Economic factors are an important determinant of children's education. In this section, economic factors are considered in two categories: lack of resources and poverty affecting the ability to cover the cost of living, school expenses, and child labour, and second, migration and family mobility. The analysis of the economic factors depends on the latest available quantitative data, such as the DHS 2018 and various recent TURKSTAT surveys and the qualitative data collected for this study.

5.2.1 Lack of Resources and Poverty

Lack of resources and accompanying poverty constitute serious constraints for children's education in Türkiye. In this section, different factors of economic deprivation derived from the qualitative data are analysed in terms of their overall impact on children's school attendance and dropout, supported by the available quantitative data, mainly from the DHS 2018 and TURKSTAT surveys. These factors include primary sources of income, characteristics of paid work and the size of the household, income levels and difficulties in affording the costs of living, and the share of school expenses within living costs. All those factors are considered to create specific barriers that push some children to work, which can diminish their educational opportunities. This section also analyses the child labour phenomenon as a consequence of economic deprivation for children, acting as a barrier to education for the out-of-school and at-risk children in Türkiye.

The *primary source of income* of the households of the at-risk and out-of-school children interviewed in the qualitative research sample appears to be paid work. Fathers are the primary earners and were observed to work in rather casual jobs with almost no regular income. Many of the fathers in the research sample are workers, for example, in the manufacturing sectors (such as shoe, furniture or textile workshops/factories), construction sector or agricultural sector, sometimes working in a city other than the household's residence. Some fathers work as cleaning staff or door attendants at different building types, as drivers, or are retired. Only a few respondents indicated that the fathers owned some land or had their businesses.

Some fathers were reported to be unemployed, and when this was the case, it was observed that either the mothers or children worked to contribute to family income or the household income depended on transfers from the extended family members, such as retired grandfathers and grandmothers or uncles and brothers-in-law who sometimes lived and worked abroad. Some households reported benefitting from the state contributions, such as social assistance payments for widows or parents' pensions. Many of the mothers in the research sample were homemakers. They usually work as cleaning ladies, babysitters, cooks, secretaries or hairdressers, so they often have casual, low-skilled, low-paid jobs.

Statistics on Family 2020 (TURKSTAT, 2021a) show that 9.7 per cent of households in Türkiye comprise lone parents with at least one child, while 2.2 per cent of total households consisted of lone fathers with at least one resident child and 7.5 per cent are lone mothers with at least one resident child. The qualitative data show that only the mothers or children worked, especially in lone-parent households. It is also possible to observe from the qualitative data that children who worked in lone-parent households were usually out-of-school children aged 14–17.

Concerning the country-wide income distribution, the Income and Living Conditions Survey (TURKSTAT, 2021c) demonstrates that almost half of the income (47.5%) is concentrated at the top quintile, calculated by the equivalized household disposable income. In contrast, the share of the bottom quintile was 5.9%. The same survey shows that for 2020, the Gini coefficient was 0.410 (TURKSTAT, 2021c), illustrating the serious income inequality in Türkiye. The qualitative data show that the *income level* is relatively low among the households in the research sample with at-risk and out-of-school children, except for a few households where the key informants reported owning some land and engaging in agricultural production or husbandry.

Concerning the poverty level in Türkiye, the persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate[62] was identified as 13.7 per cent in 2020 by TURKSTAT (2021c). The quantitative data show that poverty increases when the number of household members increases. When household types were analysed

62 The persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate is defined as "the percentage of the population living in households where the equivalised disposable income was below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold set at 60% of median equivalised household income for the current year and for at least two out of the preceding three years" (TURKSTAT, 2021c).

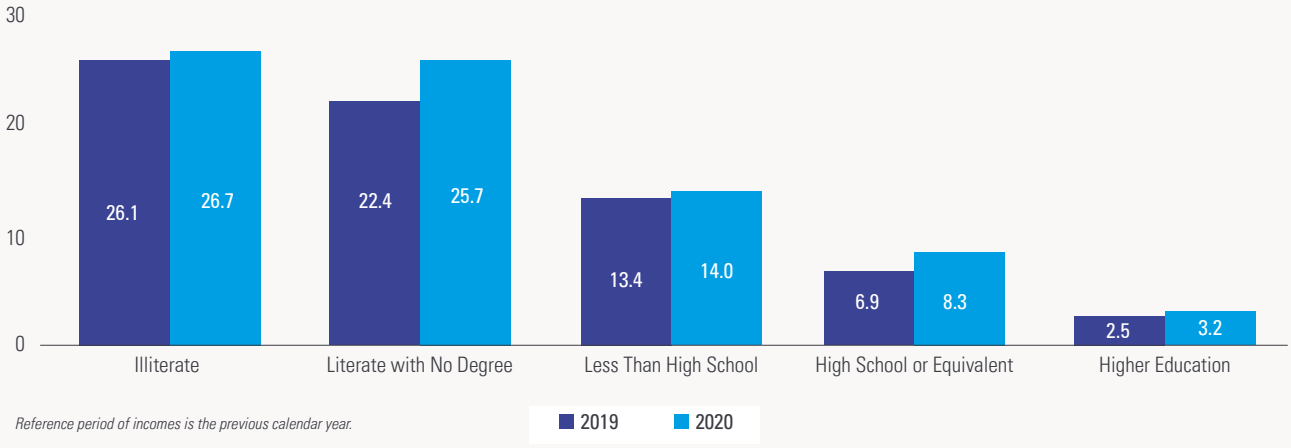
the poverty rate, it was observed that poverty is a problem in Türkiye: 12.3 per cent of one-person households, 20.3 per cent of one-family households, 27.7 per cent of extended-family households and 14.1 per cent of multi-person no-family households lived below the relative poverty threshold in 2020 (TURKSTAT, 2021c).

When the effects of socio-economic status on school enrolment are considered, the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 suggests that socio-economic status (SES) is a strong predictor of both pre-primary and primary enrolment. Children from the lowest quintile (Quintile 1) are less likely to be in pre-primary or primary compared to the other quintile households; in other words, a low SES is associated with higher rates of not being in school. The strongest SES predictor is for the highest SES children (Quintile 5), who are likelier to be in pre-primary or primary schools. SES is very strongly associated with current enrolment among 14- to 17-year-olds. Children from Quintile 5 families are 10.6 per cent more likely to be in school than children from Quintile 1 families; for each move to the upper quintile, there is an increase in the enrolment rate, hence a linear relationship.

The qualitative data collected for this study support the findings of the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 on the relationship between socio-economic status and school enrolment/attendance of children. Many key informants indicated that school dropout was more prevalent among children of households with low-income levels, and there were instances where children could not complete compulsory education due to economic problems, even though the children and/or parents were enthusiastic about educating their children or their children were academically successful at school. In contrast, some of the key informants stated that children from high-income families rarely leave school, even in cases where the children had low academic performances.

The quantitative data also show that education is a powerful instrument to reduce poverty, as the poverty levels decrease with the level of education (*see Figure 40*). According to the Income and Living Conditions Survey (TURKSTAT, 2021c), 26.7 per cent of illiterates were poor, whereas the poverty rate diminished to 3.2 per cent for higher education graduates.

Figure 40:
Poverty Rate by Education Status (%) in 2019 and 2020



Reference period of incomes is the previous calendar year.

Source*:* TURKSTAT (2020a).

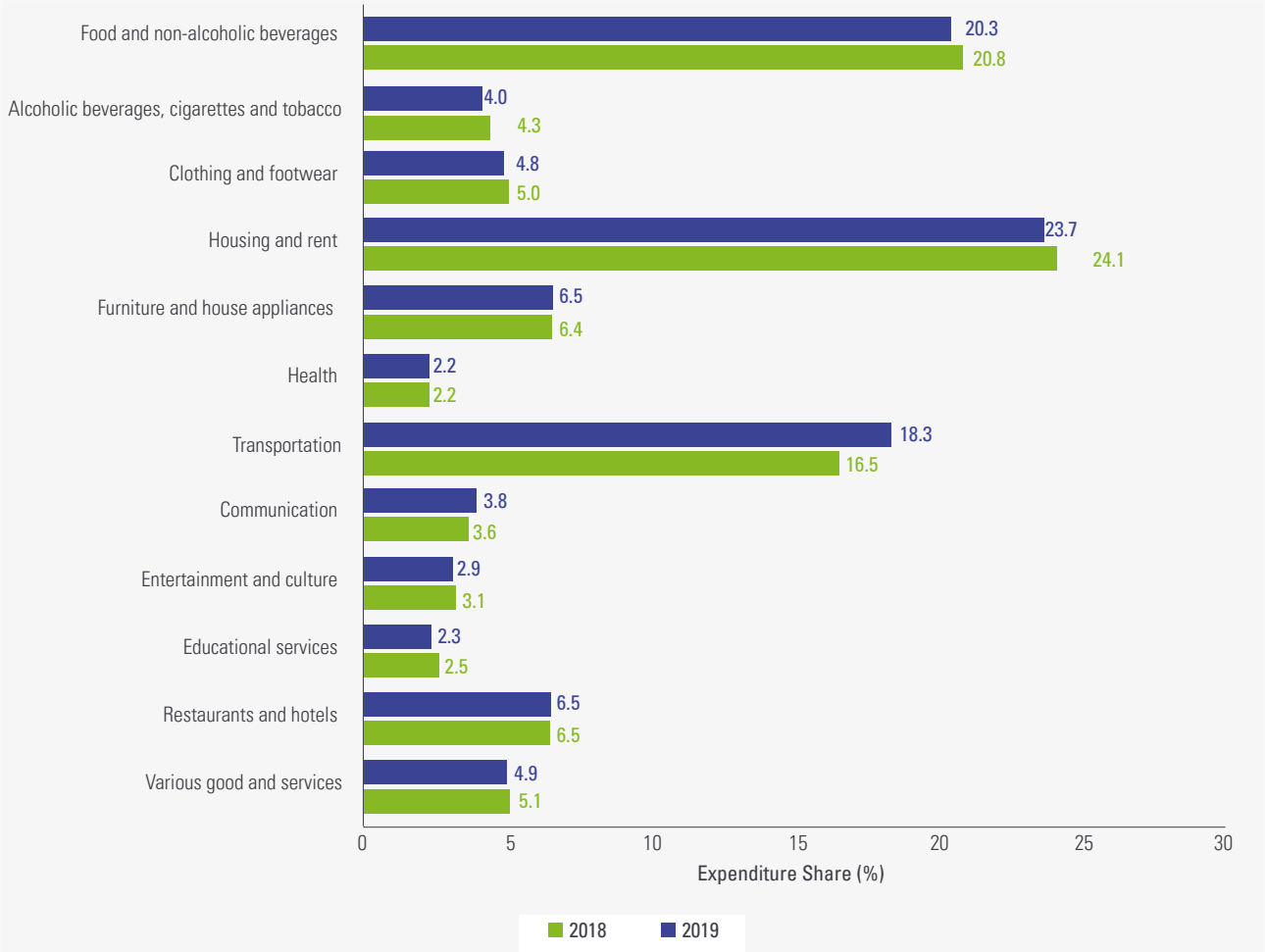
The *household size* is an additional factor that affects economic status, poverty, and concomitant school enrolment and attendance of children in the household. According to the Address Based Population Registration System, in Türkiye, the average household was 3.3 persons in 2020, a decrease from four persons in 2008 (TURKSTAT, 2021a). In contrast, the DHS 2018 shows that the average household size is 5.4 members, and 8 per cent of households have nine or more members in Türkiye. Households in the qualitative sample usually had three to four children at home, but the number of children could go up to nine, as the statements of some parents from the Eastern Anatolian provinces show.

The multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 also considers the effects of household size on current enrolment probabilities when controlling for other variables. The analysis shows that children are significantly less likely to be enrolled in

pre-primary when they have more 6–13-year-old siblings. No significant relationship exists between enrolment probabilities and the number of 0- to 5-year-olds, 14- to 17-year-olds, or adults in the home. Children aged 14–17 are significantly less likely to be in school in households with more children aged 0–5 years, but there is no relationship between school enrolment and the other measures of family size. One surprising result of the multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 is that male enrolment is more negatively affected by the number of young children (0–5 years) in the home than female enrolment. The probability of enrolment is also significantly lower for boys when they have more siblings aged 14–17.

When household expenditures are concerned, the 2019 Household Budget Survey (TURKSTAT, 2020b) shows that the highest shares of household expenditures in total consumption expenditures belong to housing and rent of households (24.1%), food and non-alcoholic beverages (20.8%), and transportation (16.5%; *see Figure 41*).

Figure 41:
Distribution of Household Consumption Expenditure Types (%) in 2018 and 2019



Source: TURKSTAT (2020b).

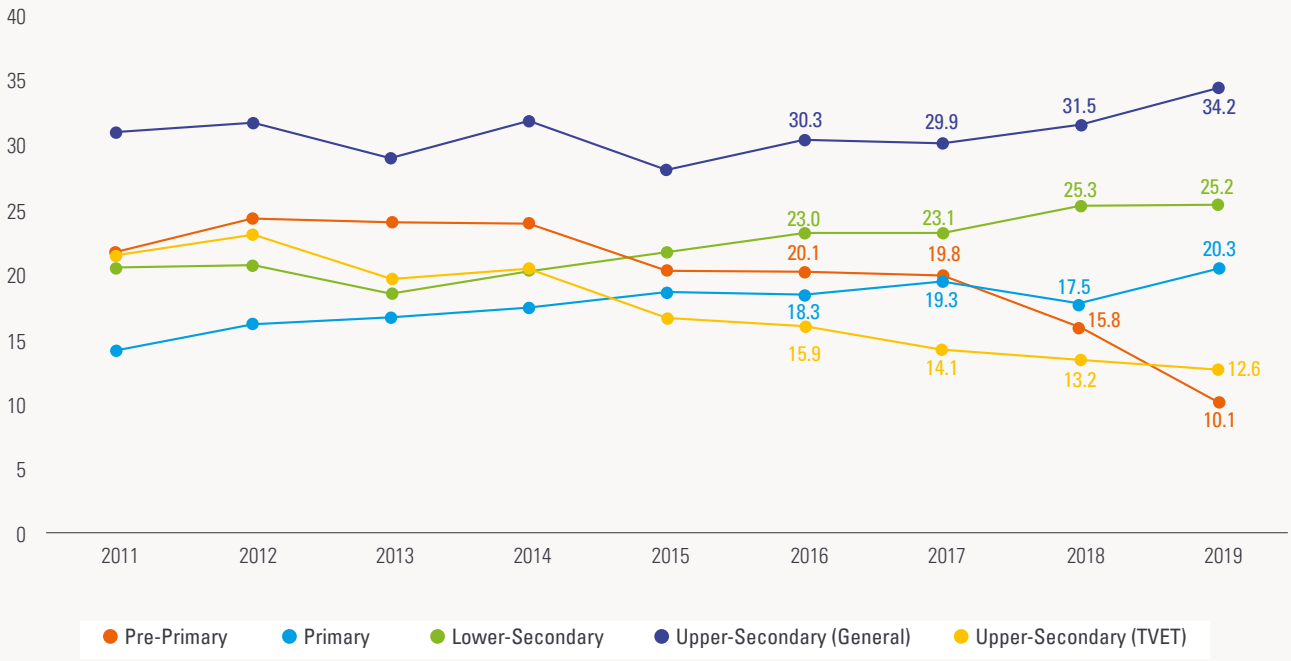
The quantitative and qualitative data show that many households face difficulties affording basic living costs in Türkiye. Many parents and children in the qualitative research sample indicated that they faced economic difficulties and could barely cover some of the monthly expenses. Food costs are commonly mentioned as an item that households have difficulties covering. Some parents indicated that they could not afford to buy meat or could not go to the bazaar for food shopping. Other monthly cost items for which the households had difficulties were the bills (electricity, water, etc.), the rent, health-related costs, the costs of the children, such as disposable nappies, clothing or pocket money for the children, and transportation costs (particularly for those living in rural areas but having to travel to work in the districts). In addition, some parents stated that they owned their houses through the TOKİ housing system but had problems paying the monthly instalments.

Besides such basic living costs, there are difficulties in affording some other costs, as shown by the TURKSTAT's Income and Living Conditions Survey (2020a), such as paying for one-week annual holiday away from home (59.3%), a meal with meat, chicken, or fish every second day (37.3%), unexpected financial expenses (32.2%), keeping home adequately warm (20.3%), and replacing worn furniture (58.0%). Many parents also voiced this situation in the qualitative research sample by stating they could not buy new or necessary furniture or electronic equipment even for their children's education. Some key informants stated that during their household visits, the children did not have a desk to study or any equipment besides the television to follow distance education.

The most prominent instrument for coping with economic difficulties appeared to be borrowing, followed by receiving contributions from extended family members. The qualitative data reveal that most households with low-income levels are highly indebted due to loans or credits. The quantitative data from TURKSTAT (2020a) also show that more than half of the population in Türkiye (58.3%) have instalments or loans (other than mortgages – for the main dwelling – and housing costs), and it was considered a heavy burden by 18.8%. Thus, the burden of being indebted is a severe constraint for many households in Türkiye, and the problem is exacerbated when the number of household members increases.

Among the living costs, one of the important items is the *children's schooling costs* within the family budget. As shown in Figure 42, country-wide, the share of expenditure on educational services within the overall household expenditure was 2.5 per cent in 2019, an increase from 2.3 per cent in 2018, where the monthly average education expenditure is indicated to be 123 TL (US$ 21.6)[63] in 2019 (TURKSTAT, 2020b). According to ERG (2021), household education expenditures vary at different school levels; the highest expenditures are at the upper-secondary level (34.2%), probably linked to the number of students at private upper-secondary schools and the extra spending for the university entrance exam; and the lowest expenditures are at the pre-primary level (10.1%; ERG, 2021).

Figure 42:
Percentage of Household Education Expenditures According to School Levels



Source: ERG (2021) Calculation from TURKSTAT (2020c).

63 Based on the average exchange rate dated 2019 of the Central Bank of the Turkish Republic (https://www.tcmb.gov.tr).

ERG (2021) states that the education expenditures of households vary according to household income and levels: the education expenditure of the highest-income quintile is nearly 20 times higher than that of the lowest-income quintile in Türkiye. Considering the low-income levels of the households in the qualitative research sample, it is possible to identify how those households are constrained by economic difficulties regarding the costs of their children's education. The qualitative data show that the households considered many schooling costs challenging. Those cost items include clothing and shoes, stationary, books and notebooks, school bags, lunch, pocket money (particularly for the children at upper-secondary schools) and transportation costs. In addition, particularly relevant for the school entrance exams for the upper-secondary and university levels, test books or photocopying costs were mentioned to create additional costs. It was also indicated by some key informants that even though the schoolbooks were provided free of charge to all the students, there were some instances where there could be a need for purchasing additional and supplementary resources, mainly for exam preparations, which could appear as extra costs for low-income level households.

> [The] teacher always ask for materials, and my mother can't deal with all of them, frankly. As I said, my mother's salary is TL 700; mine does not even give TL 300. For example, I needed notebooks or something because I went to the art department. We bought drawing notebooks two or three times, and it cost 10-15 lira each time; drawing pens are needed once every two days.
> (Girl, Bursa, TVET, Dimension 7)

In terms of the relationship between the difficulties with affording the school expenditures and the schooling/school attendance of children, some observations can be made based on the qualitative data. The first observation is that *schooling costs may increase for particular schools* (or branches of the schools) due to the additional costs incurred by the activities, equipment, or materials. The qualitative data demonstrate that this is particularly true for pre-school and vocational schools. For the pre-school costs, some informants stated that although pre-school education was free in public pre-primary schools, some costs could still be incurred for the families concerning the children's nutrition or cleaning/hygiene. Second, some children from the qualitative research sample studying at the arts vocational schools indicated that throughout the semester, they needed extra materials such as drawing pencils, paint, or special notebooks/papers, which their parents could not easily afford.

> He needs a computer right now, but I can't afford a computer. Since he is studying informatics, the teachers say, 'You should have a computer, even if it is a cheap one, that you can disassemble and install such parts, do the assignments I give'. So right now, for example, I can't even afford a second-handd computer for him. I started working myself; I hope I will buy it.
> (Mother, Van, Dimension 6)

A second observation is that some factors *increase schooling costs for households*. One of them is the age of the children; some parents in the qualitative research sample stated that the expenditure on children increased as they grew up. The second factor is the number of children in the household: the more children in the household, the more difficult it was reported to be for the household to afford their education expenses. The qualitative data show that such a situation usually ends with school dropout, especially of the older children in the household, to reduce schooling costs and increase household income through child labour, as discussed below. The multivariate analysis of the DHS 2018 also shows that enrolment rates for 14- to 17-year-old boys are significantly related to the family's self-reported financial status level, which may reflect a stronger household dependence on older boys to earn money in the labour market. In addition, particularly for girls, economic deprivation was observed to lead to child, early and forced marriages. There were some instances in the qualitative data where some girls at the upper-secondary level were married due to household economic problems and dropped out of school. The qualitative data show that some parents considered such marriages a means to decrease household expenditure by reducing the number of dependent household members on the one hand and as an "opportunity" for the girls to be freed from economic problems and have a better future on the other (*see Section 5.1.1 Gender-Related Values*).

The third observation from the qualitative data is that *children were negatively affected psychologically by the lack of resources and poverty,* resulting in irregular attendance or school dropout. Many children in the qualitative research sample felt embarrassed and restless in school due to a lack of proper clothing (*see Section 5.1.4 Health-Related Reasons*). In addition, some children stated that they could not do their homework due to the lack of materials,

which created embarrassment towards the teacher in the classroom. The statements from many teachers show that the teachers and school administrators often observed such economic deprivation and lack of schooling materials among the children. The qualitative data included many instances where the teachers themselves tried to develop some mechanisms to support children from households experiencing economic problems to ensure their school attendance. For example, there were cases where the children were provided with free school transportation or stationery as personal efforts of the teachers or school administrators. However, efforts seem to be somewhat sporadic and dependent on the individual initiatives of the teachers.

A fourth observation is that economic factors such as *lack of resources and poverty usually interact with some other factors* to result in irregular attendance or school dropout. For example, the qualitative data show that when the parents did not adequately value education, they could easily use the economic problems as an excuse for not sending children to school. Some key informants stated that, particularly for the girls at upper-secondary age, some parents considered the education of girls' education a "wasted investment," particularly when the children were academically unsuccessful at school.

A final observation is that, according to the qualitative data, the children's basic and secondary education and university-level educational prospects were negatively affected by the lack of resources and poverty. Some parents in the qualitative research sample indicated that their children, who were placed in a university after high school, had to drop out as the parents could not afford the expenses despite a scholarship and extended family contribution. In addition, lack of resources also negatively affected the children's aspirations for a university education; they believed their parents could not afford it even if they were successful at the university entrance exam. Lack of university prospects also appears to affect the attendance and dropout rates at the upper-secondary level.

As already indicated above, one of the severe consequences of economic deprivation of the households is *child labour*. Child labour appears as a reason and consequence of irregular attendance or school dropout among children. In terms of the relationship between the education of children and child labour, some factors will be examined below, namely characteristics of the child labour phenomenon in Türkiye with regards to gender and age differences, the type of work and working conditions, the reasons for child labour, and the consequences of child labour on children's educational prospects.

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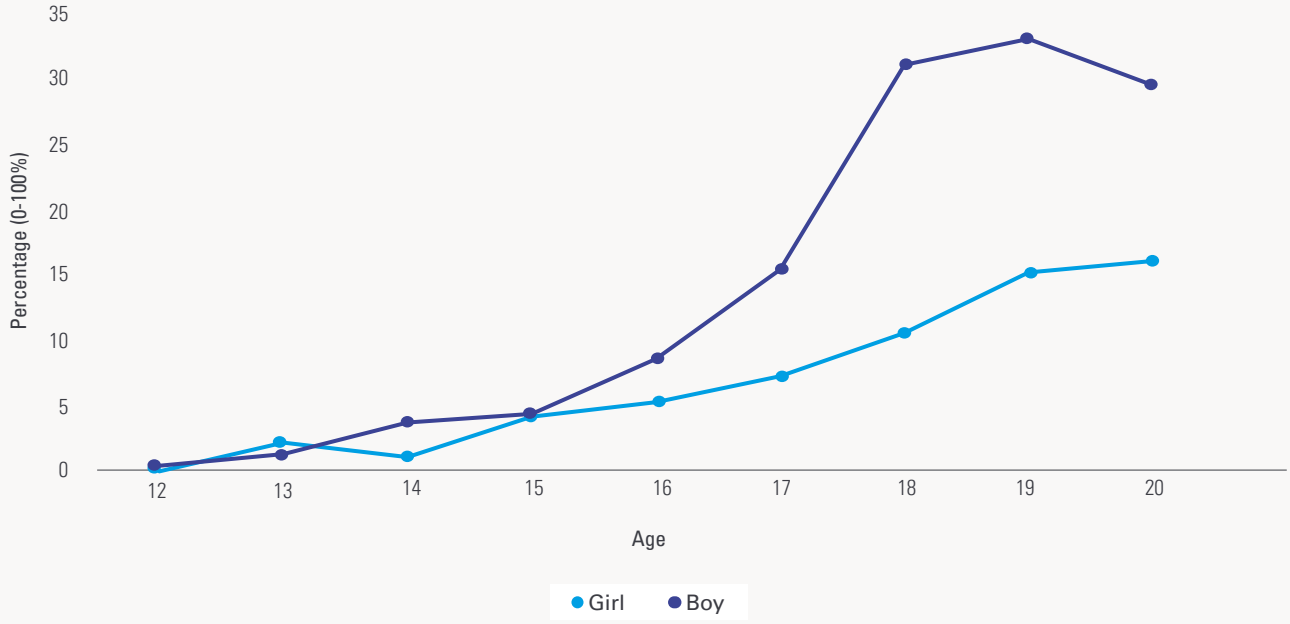
According to the Child Labour Survey 2019 by TURKSTAT (2020d), 720,000 children were engaged in economic activity in Türkiye. When the significant characteristics of child labour in Türkiye are considered, it is possible to identify two trends: child labour is more prevalent among boys and children aged 15–17. Regarding the differences by sex, TURKSTAT (2020d) shows that 70.5 per cent of the children engaged in economic activity were boys, whereas 29.4 per cent were girls. In addition, labour force participation is 23.4 per cent for boys and 8.6 per cent for girls (TURKSTAT, 2021d). The qualitative data also support such findings. Key informants seemed to agree on the fact that the primary reason for boys aged 13–17 dropping out of school was child labour, whereas the girls often left school either due to household chores (such as cleaning, cooking, taking care of the siblings, etc.) or child, early, and forced marriages.

With regards to the differences by age groups, the Child Labour Survey 2019 (TURKSTAT, 2020c) shows that 4.4 per cent of the children engaged in economic activity are aged 5–11, 15.9 per cent are aged 12–14, and 79.7 per cent are aged 15–17, and according to the results of Household Labour Force Survey 2020, the labour force participation rate at the age group of 15–17 was 16.2 per cent (TURKSTAT, 2021d). It can also be seen from the quantitative data that 20.3 per cent of the children in the labour market are actually below the official working age of 14 in Türkiye (TURKSTAT, 2020c).

Child Labour Survey 2019, by TURKSTAT (2020d), also provides data about the schooling status of the children engaged in economic activities. It can be seen from this survey that those children who still attend schools comprise 65.7%, whereas 34.3 per cent of the children who are working are no longer in school (TURKSTAT, 2020c). Analysis of the DHS 2018 shows that, not surprisingly, school attendance rates vary by work status. Only 47.7 per cent of girls working and aged 12–17 indicated that they were attending school, compared with 87.8 per cent of non-working 12- to 17-year-old girls. Only 32.5 per cent of working boys aged 12–17 were in school, compared with 91.1 per cent of non-working boys in this age range. The qualitative data also provide strong evidence that school dropouts deriving from child labour are most prevalent for boys starting from Grade 8 onwards. Analysis of the DHS 2018 data also gives information about the percentage of children who indicated that they were engaged in paid labour by gender and age (*see Figure 43*).

Figure 43:
Percentage of Children Engaged in Paid Work by Age and Gender (DHS 2018)



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS (2018) sample size for 12–20 year olds is 5,338.

Concerning the work practices of children, Child Labour Survey 2019 (TURKSTAT, 2020c) displays the sectoral distribution of child labour and children's status at work. Regarding the sectoral distribution, the Survey shows that 30.8 per cent of the children work in agriculture, 23.7 per cent in industry, and 45.5 per cent in the services sector. When considered by age group, younger children often work in the agricultural sector (64.1% of children aged 5–14), and older children work more in the services sector (51.0% of the children aged 15–17) (TURKSTAT, 2020c). Regarding status at work, the children mostly work as salaried or casual workers (63.3%) and as unpaid family workers (36.2%), whereas a minority (0.5%) work for their own businesses.

The qualitative data show that the *type of work* children are engaged in varies according to the region or economic activity of the province. Particularly in provinces where the agricultural and animal husbandry sectors are prevalent, demand for child labour as seasonal workers seems to be high. From the qualitative data, in cities like Şanlıurfa and Samsun, children are engaged in cotton or hazelnut harvests, or in provinces like Muş, they work in animal husbandry and as shepherds. It is also observed that while some children in these sectors work as paid seasonal workers, others work as unpaid family workers in households that own land or animals. In other provinces, children were observed to work in three sectors, namely the manufacturing, services, and construction sectors, as well as on the streets. From the qualitative data, some types of work appear as working in the car repair sites, as carpenters or apprentices; in restaurants or cafes; in the construction sites; or on the streets by selling *simit* (bagel in Turkish) or water or collecting paper or scrap. In most cases, those children work unregistered; in some cases, they work with their fathers or relatives. There are also children in the qualitative research sample who work in cities other than their families' city of residence.

The qualitative data also help identify several *reasons for child labour*. The most prominent reason from the qualitative data is related to the family. First, it was stated by a variety of key informants and teachers that working and financially supporting the family was an expectation of the family or parents, particularly from the older boys in the household: child labour was perceived as a source of income by some parents. The reason for the gender differences in terms of the expectations of the parents was stated to be the variety of work options for boys compared to girls. Whereas boys were perceived to work almost in every job, even out of town, parents considered girls for work only in agriculture or textile sectors, plus the household chores. Such an expectation could negatively affect children's educational prospects; some teachers stated that even when the children would like to study, the parents could choose not to send them to school, giving various reasons to cover up their expectations of children's work practices.

A second family-related reason is the lack of education perspectives of the families. When the children, particularly the boys, did not want to study, the parents did not put any extra effort into keeping the children at school (*see Section 5.1.2 Human Capital*). Some key informants and teachers stated that the parents who did not believe in the benefits of education for children's future were not concerned about children dropping out of school as they believed that children could work instead. Here, an important observation is that neither those parents nor their children seemed to have any university prospects, and in that sense, leaving school was only perceived to accelerate the income-generating activities of the children for the family. Some key informants stated that such situations could have been avoided if the monetary fines for the parents arising from compulsory education regulations were implemented.

A third family-related reason for child labour appears to be the structure of the family. The qualitative data show that children were pushed into the labour market more in particular types of households, such as in lone parent households where the mother did not work; in households where fathers were unemployed or did not work for reasons such as being sick, in prison etc., and crowded households. As already examined before in this section, such households can be observed to have relatively limited economic resources, a situation which pushes children to become engaged in an income-generating activity to support the family financially (for example, to pay the debts) and, in some cases for the education of younger siblings in the household (*see Section 5.1.4 Family Structure*).

> **I would love to go to school very much, but the situation does not allow. We have debts to pay, there is a problem. S o even if I would like to continue school, I have to work because of debt.**
> (Boy, Konya, Dimension 5)

The last family-related reason for child labour is seasonal agricultural work. The qualitative data show that seasonal work activities were usually undertaken along with the other household members. Those seasonal work activities could be in the form of unpaid family work when the households own their own agricultural or husbandry activities or could be in the form of paid work in crop sowing, harvesting or irrigation, and husbandry and transhumance activities (herding or feeding animals, etc.), especially when the parents also took part in such activities in particular seasons.

> I ran into my students working in the city centre. The parent's point of view is reflected on the children's way of thinking. He says, 'What is going to happen if I study? I earn money by selling 250-300 simits a day'.
> (Key informant, Samsun)

> Once there was a boy who was not coming to school. So, I went and saw him in the market He was selling cigarettes. I said 'why don't you come to school?'; he said 'teacher, I won't come, I'm working'. Our principal asked to advise him, 'How much money do you earn, so that you don't come to school?' The boy said, 'I earn two thousand lira a week'. The boy was only twelve or thirteen years old. What should I say to this child then, what kind of motivation should I provide? I said to his father, 'Is he really bringing money to the house?' He said, 'My teacher, he is looking after us'. How am I going to convince this kid now?
> (Teacher, Van, Dimension 5)

Another prominent reason for child labour is poor academic performance in school, particularly in Grades 9 and 10. The qualitative data show that when children felt unsuccessful at school, they did not want to continue studying. In the research sample, many out-of-school children, mostly boys at the upper-secondary level, indicated they were bored at school or could not understand the course topics. In addition, as some teachers stated, failing the courses or repeating the class also contributed to children feeling unsuccessful. When such poor academic performances occurred, the children or their parents decided to leave the school and start working. In the qualitative data, some children stated they did not want to study and wanted to take their chances earning money in the labour market.

On the other hand, there were also instances where the parents did not have any hopes for the children's academic success, and when coupled with economic problems, they opted for taking the children out of school and encouraging them to work outside or help with household chores. Other teachers indicated that they witnessed cases where children from low-income households were successful at school, and the parents did not hesitate to put in extra effort to keep them at school even with economic difficulty.

The third reason for child labour identified from the qualitative data is the enthusiasm of children to earn money as soon as possible and the belief that they would not be able to earn more even when they had a diploma, which is, to an extent, related to poor academic performance at school. Some aspects go beyond the enthusiasm to earn money, such as not valuing education (*see Section 5.1.2 Human Capital*). For that category of children, it was observed that education was considered mainly as an instrument for better income in the future, and when it was perceived that education would not guarantee a decent income, the children were inclined to work before or without finishing school. This category of children seemed to decide to drop out of school themselves, sometimes under the influence of their friendship circles who had already started working. In addition, it was also a situation observed for children whose household members already had a workplace or agricultural land on which the children could work. In that case, the children believed that they did not need education, regardless of whether they finished school or not, they would be working in their family's business, and they thought that learning specific topics (such as geography or history) at school would not help them in their actual work. Some key informants and teachers stated that if the children earned relatively satisfactory amounts of money, convincing them to return to or graduate from school became almost impossible.

> Interviewer:
> Did you have to drop out of school since you had to work?
>
> Boy:
> Not really, I don't want to go [to school]. I mean, I can tell you clearly that I don't understand anything. I can't do any homework, fail to understand, my father was fed up with me anyway.
> (Boy, Istanbul, Dimension 9)

> One of the families said in our meeting: 'I openly talked about this situation with my daughter at the beginning of this year. If she studies high school, we will do our best to support her. But, if she continues not to be focused on studying, our financial situation is clear. She has four more siblings who are studying beside her. I mean, I'm sorry, but we'll invest in other siblings rather than investing in her. If necessary, she can contribute to the household chores.
> (Teacher, Istanbul, Dimension 7)

From the qualitative data related to the previous reason above, the last reason for child labour emerges as a lack of future educational prospects, particularly for a university education. Some key informants and teachers pointed to situations where the children could not set any goals for their future, did not receive further support for their goals from their parents, or did not have any successful role models in their families, and eventually, they retreated from school and the idea of education to start working instead. Some teachers indicated that some of the children and parents perceived higher education as a long and challenging process, where the children first enter a university with an exam, study for some more years to graduate, and then still have to prepare themselves further with internships or foreign languages to be able to find a good job. The qualitative data show that the parents considered this process costly, as the ultimate benefits could not be foreseen beforehand. Some key informants and teachers indicated that in the absence of university prospects, having a lower- or upper-secondary school diploma was not considered to make a difference for the children to find a job, and the children and their parents did not want to "lose" another four years at the upper-secondary school before the children started working.

The qualitative data also help identify several severe *consequences of child labour*, mainly in terms of the children's relation to education. The first observation is that, as indicated by many key informants and teachers, the number of children who attend school while working is relatively small, supporting the findings of the DHS 2018 presented earlier. It was also indicated that in some cases, the children were enrolled in school but were completely absent and working in another city with their parents, for example. Thus, many key informants and teachers stated child labour as one of the primary reasons for school dropout, particularly for boys at the upper-secondary level.

Second, child labour was indicated to create serious attendance problems for those who study and work at the same time. For example, although the children engaged in seasonal agricultural and husbandry work were mainly enrolled in school, it was often reported that their attendance was irregular, usually missing the first and last two months of the school year. Irregular attendance was also noted for children working in other sectors, especially those who studied in non-double-shift schools or missed afternoon classes due to work. Such irregularities created serious learning losses and eventual school dropouts for these children, as they missed several courses and exams throughout the semester. Some teachers indicated that even when working children could finish upper-secondary school, they had difficulties in university entrance exams because they had no extra time to study for or even to enter the exam. Moreover, some teachers reported cases where children had severe work accidents and were injured at workplaces such as construction sites and missed education due to lengthy health treatments at the hospital.

> For example, the child is at the 12th grade and will take the YKS exam. Even though this exam is on Saturday, the child works outside in construction until Friday evening. He works in construction without having rested and goes to the exam the next day. When asked him why he was doing this, he said, 'Teacher, I am the only one working at home, my parents are not working. I have to earn a living, I have to work'.
> (Key informant, Konya)

A final observation about the relationship between education and child labour concerns the enrolment of working children in open schools. Many key informants and teachers indicated that when teachers or school administrators could identify the children engaged in economic activities, they tried to convince the families to send the children back to school or at least register them at open schools. The qualitative data show that some working children were registered to open schools, whereas others were not. It was also stated frequently that in the former case, the registration was usually non-functional as a remedy to avoid the risks of non-registration due to compulsory education regulations and to escape from the pressures of the teachers and school administrators. Some key informants and teachers even indicated that some parents who wanted their children to work abused the open education system. The qualitative data suggest that in many of those cases, the children did not fulfil the academic requirements of the open schools; for example, they did not even take the exams at the end of the semester. So, it is suspected that although those children seem to be enrolled in schools as far as the open education system allows them, they could be out of school regarding their actual education practices (*see Section 5.4 School Supply – Open Education*).

Economic Barriers: Lack of Resources and Poverty

The qualitative data highlight the lack of resources and poverty as economic barriers, among the most prevalent and severe, negatively affecting school attendance and enrolment of children in Türkiye (*see Table 16*). The education of children of all ages living in low-income families high in household members seems to be negatively affected by economic deprivation. More specifically, high living costs and difficulties in affording regular living costs (including school expenditures) tend to pull mostly the boys of those households out of school, primarily due to the need to contribute to the family budget through work.

Child labour can be observed as a serious barrier, particularly for older boys (aged 14–17 and, to a lesser extent, for those aged 10–13) who are out of school, but it also affects the at-risk boys in both age groups. School-related expenses, which increase at upper education levels and in particular types of schools, can be observed as another economic barrier that affects girls and boys, regardless of whether they are out-of-school or at-risk children. Combined with other economic problems of the households, but also due to family-related reasons such as being a lone parent household, having numerous siblings, not believing in the value of education, and being enthusiastic about earning money as soon as possible, mainly the older boys leave the school to work to contribute to family income. Even when they continue studying, they can still be observed to have irregular or non-attendance or to be enrolled in open schools.

Table 16:
Economic Barriers: Lack of Resources and Poverty

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
High cost of living	***	*	**	***	**
School-related expenses	***	**	***	***	***
Child labour	***	*	**	***	**

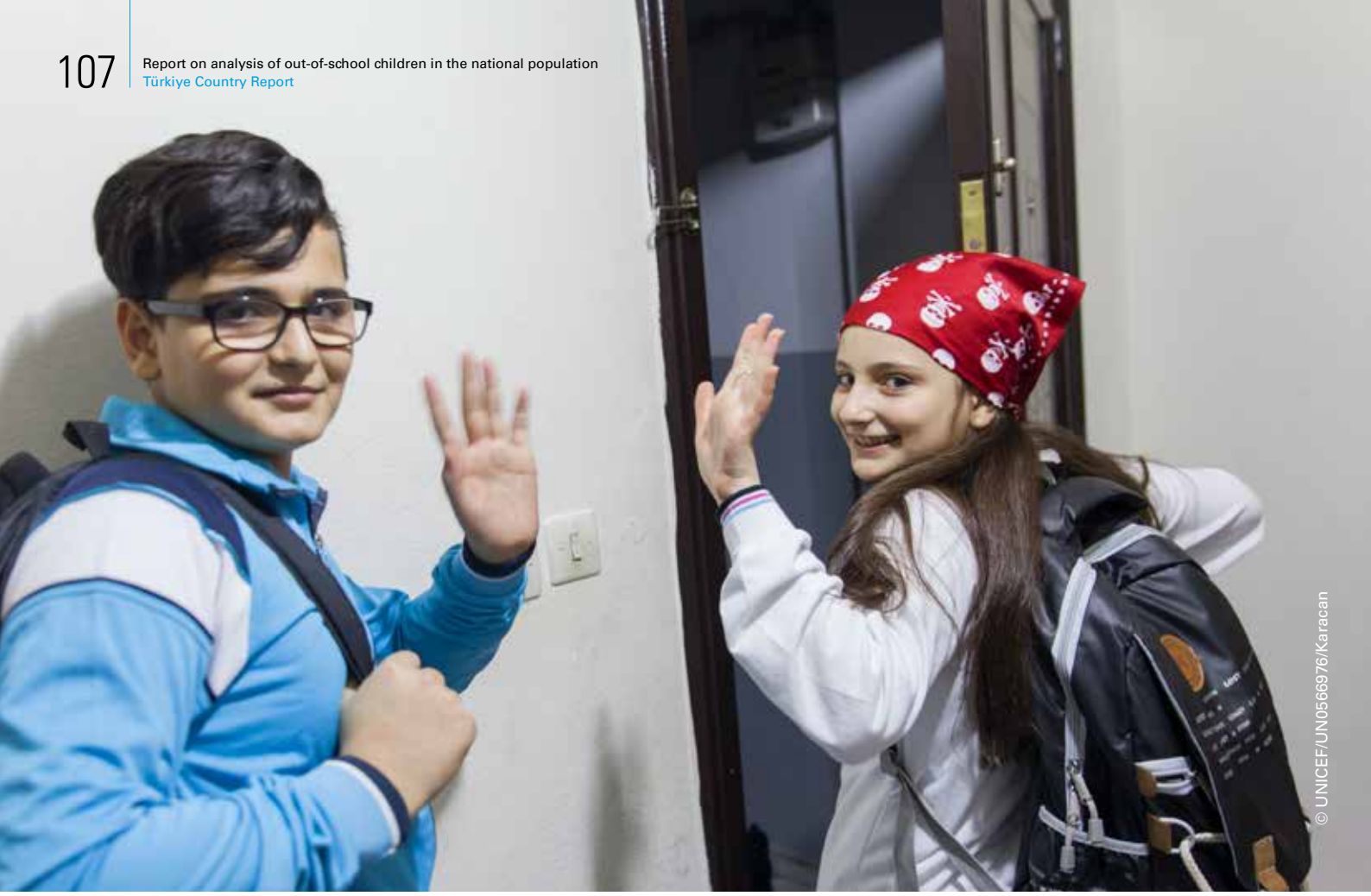
Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.2.2 Migration and Family Mobility

Internal migration and family mobility are two interrelated factors that can harm children's educational prospects. Mobility brings together the risk of disrupting the relationship between children and their education, which may eventually reduce children's chances of obtaining an education. In this sub-section, based on the experiences of the children and parents and those of the key informants in the qualitative research sample, the patterns of family mobility, reasons for family mobility, and consequences of family mobility on the children's educational prospects are discussed. The section concludes with the future mobility prospects of the households and the reasons for them.

The qualitative data show that *household mobility* is high in Türkiye. Almost half of the households in the qualitative research sample indicated that they moved within the country. Some patterns for family mobility can be observed from the qualitative data. One of those patterns is to move from the rural areas or villages to the city centres, either within the borders of the same city or to different cities. Another observed pattern is to move from the eastern to the western (and more metropolitan) provinces in Türkiye, such as moving to Bursa from Bitlis or Van or Şırnak to Konya. A third pattern is moving from metropolitan cities to other metropolitan cities in different regions, such as Gaziantep to Konya or Antalya to Samsun. A last pattern is that some households have moved more than once, visiting different cities or returning to their home cities after living in different provinces.

The qualitative data point to different *reasons for family mobility*. The most prominent reason is to work/find jobs in different provinces. Many households reported that they moved due to economic difficulties in the cities they used to live in and with the hope of finding jobs (or better jobs) in other provinces. When the household members perceived that there could be job opportunities in different cities, they decided to move there with the help of other family members or acquaintances. It was also reported that when some households could not guarantee jobs in the



destination city, they returned to their hometowns or moved to other cities. Another work-related reason for moving is to be appointed to another city, mainly for the household members who work as civil servants or are retiring. A final work-related reason is seasonal work, prominent in particular provinces/regions of Türkiye such as Şanlıurfa, Samsun, or Adana, where agricultural activities take place, mostly starting from Spring (April–May) to Fall (September–October). Some key informants stated that households also moved when there was a seasonal work opportunity in any region of the country, such as the hazelnut or tea harvest in the Black Sea region, the beet harvest in Konya, or moving livestock in Van.

The second prominent reason for family mobility emerges as family-related reasons, such as divorce or the marriage of parents, death of a family member, conflict within extended families, insecurity of children due to conflicts with peers, or the prior move of one of the household members to another city. A third reason is to provide better opportunities for the children, particularly valid for households in rural areas or villages. Those parents stated that they moved to bigger cities due to the lack of opportunities for children, for example, lack of or distance to schools, which might require children to walk 10 kilometres to reach the school.

The last reason is natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, or security threats, as they damage or threaten the living conditions of the households in that area and push household members to search for better living and working opportunities in different cities.

The qualitative data point to some *consequences of family mobility on children's education*. First, the seasonal mobility of the family seems to create severe negative consequences for the children. It was stated that seasonal mobility usually takes place during the school year, disrupting the school attendance of the children because the families cannot leave their children behind. Some key informants indicated that children in the lower- and upper-secondary levels could also participate in seasonal work activities with their families as child labourers. The children of the families moving for seasonal work could not attend school, mainly in the Spring and Fall seasons, coinciding with the end or start of the school year (*see Section 5.2.1 Lack of Resources and Poverty and Child Labour*). Some key informants stated that in addition to irregular school attendance, those children could mostly not take the exams at school or, in rare cases, took the exams in the city of destination, negatively affecting children's academic performance and future educational prospects. Some key informants also pointed out that, particularly for this reason, children at the start of the upper-secondary level might drop out of school. In addition, some key informants stated that due to high levels of family mobility throughout the year, some families could not even register their children in school. For this reason, some families leave the children of school age with their close relatives, such as aunts, uncles or grandparents.

Second, some key informants indicated that family mobility due to family-related reasons may negatively affect children's education. For example, the children who moved to a particular city due to the divorce of their parents were reported to be negatively influenced both by migration traumas and the economic problems of single parents. Children of the households who moved due to antagonisms in the extended family, which could be exposed to some acts of crime by household members, were reported to be negatively affected by the consequences of moving to a new city and the security concerns.

Last, family mobility, in general, was stated to affect children's educational prospects. For example, some key informants stated that children who moved from rural areas or villages could not be sent to school for economic reasons or could show poor academic performances due to their previous schooling experiences in rural settings. Difficulties in adaptation to a new school appear as a factor that affects children's educational prospects in the city of destination. There were also some instances in the qualitative data where moving to another city affected children's education due to limited schooling options or the insufficiency of quotas in particular (vocational) schools in the destination city. All those factors increase the risk of children dropping out of school.

The qualitative data provide insights into *future family mobility prospects and their reasons*. Many of the households in the qualitative sample indicated that they did not have any plans to move shortly for reasons such as the existence of extended family in the city or being settled down in that city, being indebted or not having sufficient economic resources to move; children's unwillingness to move to another city; and unwillingness to take the risks of moving to a bigger city. A prominent reason for not planning to move is children's education: some parents indicated that their children were studying in that city and did not want to disrupt their schooling routine. Among the households that would consider moving, in addition to the economic reasons for finding a job, the most common reason indicated by the families was to provide further educational options for their children. Those parents stated that if their children could be placed in an upper-secondary school (such as a science high school) or university, they would consider moving with their children. Therefore, the children's academic success or schooling routine is a factor in deciding whether to move.

Economic Barriers: Migration and Family Mobility

From the analysis of the factors leading to migration and family mobility, high family mobility due to economic reasons may create barriers to children's education (*see Table 17).* Specifically, seasonal family mobility creates irregular attendance or non-attendance for all sub-groups of children. It risks being unable to register for a school or school dropout for the children (particularly at the upper-secondary level) due to irregular schooling and working as a seasonal child labourer. Another barrier due to family mobility appears to be difficulties in adapting the children to a new city and school setting. Particularly for the children moving from rural areas or villages to bigger cities, they were reported to have poor academic performance and might need some time to catch up with their peers.

Table 17:
Economic Barriers: Migration and Family Mobility

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
High levels of household mobility, particularly due to seasonal work	**	*	***	**	***
Difficulties in adaptation to a new school due to family mobility		*	**		**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers

5.3 School Administration

School administrative regulations are a supply-side factor affecting children's educational prospects in Türkiye. Under this heading, the first aspect analysed is school enrolment, which includes the level of awareness of the parents and children, school enrolment requirements and procedures at different education levels, and over-age enrolment (age-grade distortion). In addition, non-attendance and grade transition are two other aspects of school administrative regulations. In this section, mostly based on the qualitative data and supported by available quantitative data from the MoNE and DHS 2018, as presented in Section 4, these three aspects of school administrative regulations in Türkiye are analysed to identify their impact on the children's educational prospects.

5.3.1 School Enrolment

School levels and the child's age in Türkiye, as summarized in Section 2.4.3, define enrolment-related regulations.

Compulsory education is 12 years (also known as 4+4+4). The first eight years are called basic education, covering primary and lower-secondary education, four years for each level. Primary education officially covers the ages of 6–9, and upon completing primary school, children are registered to lower-secondary schools, which officially covers the ages of 10–13. The upper age limit for registering to lower-secondary schools is 14.

Registration in primary and lower-secondary public schools (except for the lower-secondary Imam Hatip schools and lower-secondary open schools) is automatically done based on MERNIS (Central Registration Administration System), which means that the placement of the children in schools is address-based; parents/caregivers do not need to apply for the initial enrolment.[64] In addition, the MoNE's centralized e-School (*e-Okul*) information system is also used to identify the children at the age of schooling from their address-based registration. Those children who are over 14 and have a primary school diploma can be registered with open lower-secondary schools (for more details on open education, *see Section 5.4 School Supply*).

For the upper-secondary schools, the upper age limit for registration is 18, meaning that individuals under 18 who have a lower-secondary school diploma can register in the upper-secondary schools and attend until the age of 22, taking the conditional pass examination at the end of the school year to graduate. At this level, children can be registered in various upper-secondary schools (*see Section 5.4 School Supply*) based on the scores obtained in the national centralized test (LGS) and talent tests. The students who do not take the centralized test can choose among schools that accept students according to their local placement in an address-based system.[65] After the enrolment, the students are also allowed to request transfers to different upper-secondary schools, the conditions of which are defined in Articles 37 and 38 of the Regulation on Upper Secondary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education.

Enrolment in special education institutions/classes is carried out in line with the educational evaluation and diagnosis made by the GRC/RAM of the Ministry of National Education. Special Education Services Board under the Ministry of National Education places children with special education needs in the most appropriate public school or institution in line with the Special Education Evaluation Board Report and Educational Plan.

There are also open upper-secondary school options for the children, either based on voluntary or sometimes compulsory conditions (for more details on open education, *see Section 5.4 School Supply*). For the latter, students who repeat a grade more than once, who marry officially (earliest at the age of 17 or exceptionally at the age of 16 with the consent of the parents/caregivers) or who are dismissed from upper-secondary school due to disciplinary action are automatically referred to open schools. There is no upper age limit for registering in open upper-secondary schools, and no limit is set for the duration of education.

Children with a lower-secondary diploma can also be enrolled in vocational education centres (VECs). There is no specific enrolment period for VECs, which means that enrolment is possible throughout the year, and there is no upper age limit. Enrolment in special education institutions/classes is based on the educational assessment and diagnosis conducted by the Guidance and Research Centres (GRCs/RAMs) of the MoNE.

64 The Regulation on Pre-School and Primary Education Institutions, Official Journal No: 29072, dated 26 July 2014.

65 The Regulation on Upper Secondary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education, Official Journal No: 28758, dated 7 September 2013.

The quantitative analysis in Section 4.2 shows that school enrolment rates in Türkiye are relatively high for the primary and lower-secondary education levels but drop at the upper-secondary level. The qualitative data provide some insights into the impact of school enrolment-related regulations at different levels of education on the actual school enrolment rates in Türkiye.

Enrolment in Primary and Lower-Secondary Schools

The first aspect to consider is *parents' and children's level of awareness about the enrolment procedures for the primary and lower-secondary levels*. Based on the qualitative data, the parents and children seemed well informed about the procedures, mainly due to the facilitation of the enrolment procedures through the address-based registration system. Usually, the mothers were observed to deal with the enrolment procedures of the children, but in some cases, both parents, fathers or close relatives, such as aunts or grandmothers, accompany parents for the enrolment procedures. The most prominent source of information for the enrolment procedures appears as the teachers and school administrators at schools or household visits by schools. Other sources of information were reported as the internet, headmen, friends and other parents with children in different schools.

The qualitative data help present some positive aspects of the address-based school enrolment system implemented for the primary and lower-secondary levels and some concerns about it for the children and parents. As for the positive aspects, some key informants and parents indicated that the address-based registration system considerably facilitated the enrolment procedures through the automatic placement of the children in schools close to their residential addresses. In this system, the schools prepare lists of the children placed in their schools and announce them publicly so parents can communicate with their children's schools. Another positive aspect was that this system helped ensure children's safety by facilitating monitoring and tracking children by placing them in the nearest school in their neighbourhood.

> For the students in primary school, as we are in a village, teachers go from one house to another house. They have a list of names. They come and say 'your child has to go to school this year'. If you don't send them, they still visit you so many times. Our school director is very good, God bless him. They come over and over again and ensure that those children go [to school].
> (Father, Van, Dimension 5)

The qualitative data also show that the schools develop mechanisms to ensure the enrolment of the children with the help of the address-based school enrolment system. It was possible to observe that the school administrator and teachers were responsible for following up on the children who did not contact the school through household visits or contacting the parents. Particularly for the households living in smaller settlements like villages, it was also mentioned by some parents, teachers, and key informants that teachers conducted household visits to inform the parents about their children's school enrolment. The key informants also stated that the headmen were contacted to obtain further information if the household visits were unsuccessful. One problem identified as a result of the household visits, stated by some key informants, is that sometimes the households moved without updating or changing their residential addresses, which made it impossible to reach the children at the address to ensure their school enrolment.

A particular problem with school registration was related to the children with no official guardians for reasons such as both parents being in prison, living with the grandparents or relatives due to missing parents, etc. Some key informants stated that in those cases, the caregivers were expected to fulfil some official procedures, but it was not always possible or easy to fulfil for the caregivers due to being old, having financial problems, etc.

The most prominent aspect of the address-based school enrolment system for the primary and lower-secondary schools was said to be *the inability of the parents to change the school* with another one than that assigned in the system. One of the cited reasons for the school change request is the personal preferences of the parents or the children. For example, one of the parents stated that her son in Grade 5 was placed in a school different from the school of her son's friends, and the parent indicated that because the child was not registered to the school he wanted, he considered dropping out of school. A key informant stated a similar concern: when the parents or the children perceived some schools as being of better quality than the one into which the children were placed via the address-based system, they might insist on enrolling their children in other schools. Here, a key informant stated that one of the reasons for parents' unwillingness to send their children to schools in their neighbourhood was the perceived physical and human resources limitations of the schools. As a result, certain degrees of imbalance between student populations due to the school's location (being central or distant, being located in a less developed district, etc.) were also stated to occur.

The qualitative data show that the existing address-based school enrolment system is not flexible. To overcome the problems of the inability to change schools due to the system, some middle- and upper-income level households resorted to alternatives, such as moving within the city, transferring the residence of the children to another neighbourhood/district to be able to ensure enrolment of their children in a school of their preference, or enrolling their children to private schools where there is no address-based school enrolment requirement or limitation. The inflexibilities of the address-based system could be assumed to affect the schooling prospects of children in lower-income families negatively. A striking statement was made by one of the key informants that the address-based system did not allow children from lower-income households to register at schools in districts/regions with higher income levels, therefore hindering the opportunities for children with different socio-economic statuses to come together and learn from each other and exacerbating the risk of creating inequalities between children based on socio-economic class.

Another reason stated for the request to change schools was compelling situations, such as concerns for the children's welfare or safety concerns. One key informant gave an example of this, stating that due to severe problems in the extended family, such as customs or traditions, blood feuds or confidentiality orders against children, some families change the residence of their children, and as a result, they have to change schools. Similarly, in some cases, families prefer schools in certain areas for their children's sake but cannot enrol their children in those areas due to the address-based system. In such cases, it was mentioned that the registration process, which requires more effort, becomes tiring for families and creates a danger that children will eventually drop out of school. The qualitative data suggest that some school administrators use discretionary powers to help families overcome such difficulties in emergencies.

A final reason for the request to change the school was observed in the context of the rural settlements. Some key informants stated that there were cases where the parents living in rural areas, such as villages, might want to send their children to schools in the district or city centres to study while staying with relatives (such as sisters/brothers, uncles, or aunts) living there. It was stated that in those cases, the address-based school enrolment only allowed children to register at the schools to which they were placed in the system, and the parents could have difficulties with, or would not prefer dealing with, the additional official procedures for changing schools.

The qualitative data help identify the most prominent concern about the address-based school enrolment system as the inflexibility of changing the school at the primary and lower-secondary levels. Some key informants and teachers also stated that the most severe consequence of such inflexibilities was the parents' eventual decision not to send their children to school, mostly due to the belief or practice that they would be unable to change schools. Thus, some key informants proposed that the address-based school enrolment system should be more flexible to overcome the existing difficulties experienced by the parents.

> The parents are complaining so much. Some says: 'I don't want my child to grow up in this neighbourhood, I don't want him/her to live my life in that neighbourhood'. Yes, it [address-based school enrolment system] has strengths such as a monitoring and tracking system for children in terms of security by placing them to the nearest school in their neighbourhood. But the weak point is that not everyone ca n get out of their neighbourhood and region.
> (Key informant, Izmir, Primary School)

Enrolment to Upper-Secondary Schools

Enrolment, or better-called *placement*, at upper-secondary schools, is made in two ways: according to the national centralized test (LGS) scores or local placement based on the scores obtained at a lower-secondary school and the child's address. In both cases, the students can choose among different upper-secondary school options in line with their scores. In addition, students placed in an upper-secondary school are also given a chance to transfer to other schools, often at the beginning of the semester, and the right to transfer can be of benefit more than once throughout the transfer period.

The qualitative data point to several concerns about the *parents' and children's level of awareness about enrolment in upper-secondary schools*. A common opinion among the interviewed key informants and teachers was that the parents and children were unaware of or not guided in deciding between different types of upper-secondary schools. One pattern was that some parents considered compulsory education until the end of the lower-secondary school, as was the case previously, and did not engage much in placement to the upper-secondary schools. So, when they had hesitations about sending children to upper-secondary schools, they stated arguments such as the children had problems with the parents, there were problems in the family, or they had some family mobility, etc. A consequence of not engaging in this process for the children and parents who could not set their targets and develop a plan was the increasing risk of being out of school.

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Another observed pattern from the qualitative data is the dominant preferences of the parents and the children. Many teachers and key informants stated that there was a need for proper guidance, particularly for children, to identify their talents and future aspirations and be directed to different school options, due mainly to the observation that the children might be unaware of the differences between various school types and their potential contribution to their future professions or lives. It was also stated that the responsibility to guide the children and parents falls on lower-secondary schools, particularly the teachers and guidance teachers/counsellors at that education level. One of the concerns voiced by some key informants was that guidance for the parents and children at the lower-secondary schools was based on the school-level success with the upper-secondary level placement or on the statistics of placement, which were required by the MoNE every year. However, preparing children well for the LGS test through a well-informed process for school selection in line with the capabilities and aspirations of the lower-secondary level was proposed to be a responsibility of upper-secondary education.

As a consequence of those factors, some key informants and teachers stated that the demand for some types of schools, namely vocational upper-secondary schools, remained at low levels, although the school capacities of those schools were indicated to be high and the required points to enrol were comparatively lower. The reason for the insufficient demand was mentioned concerning children's and parents' willingness to choose Anatolian schools, and even in cases where the exam scores were not high enough for the Anatolian schools, the parents still sought opportunities to place their children in those schools through the local placement system instead of vocational schools. It was suggested that better guidance for children and parents could increase the demand for vocational schools.

From a different perspective, another concern for registering for vocational schools appeared to be the local placement requirements as a factor in decreasing the demand for vocational schools. A key informant stated that the local placement system may hinder children's registration in vocational schools where they would like to study. In this specific example, the vocational and technical Anatolian

schools, for example, those specialized in agriculture and which used to receive students from relatively remote districts of the province located in mountainous and agricultural areas, could no longer enrol those children due to limited geographical coverage under the local placement system, but only those from the provincial centre. It was stated that, on the one hand, the purpose of the vocational school was to increase the vocational skills of the children who could use them in the future because their regional characteristics could not be realized, and on the other, the demand for this school decreased considerably.

Some key informants and teachers also voiced *concerns regarding the general local placement system at the upper-secondary leve*l. One of the concerns was the limited options for the children due to the size or population of the provinces. Some key informants stated that not all types of schools or branches in the schools were available in all the districts, and the closest upper-secondary school to the children's addresses might not be the one in which the children would like to study. There were instances where the children stated that the school they studied was not their preference, so they considered transferring to an open school. A second concern stated by some teachers was that some of the children who lived in relatively remote regions of the provinces would like to study in a different district closer to the city centre, where the schools were perceived to be of better quality, but it became impossible with the local placement system. A third concern was that this system was perceived to create inequalities among children by leading to segregation of schools based on the scores of the students: some schools accepted only the students with the highest scores, while children with lower scores were concentrated in certain other schools in certain regions/districts.

> This is Anatolian High School. I wanted the Health High School, the Vocational High School. I can't study what I want right now. I think it would be better if I went to open education.
> (Girl, Konya, Dimension 7)

Upon being placed in an upper-secondary school, the system still allows children to transfer to other schools under the conditions defined in the Regulation on Upper Secondary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education (2013). The transfer is possible on multiple occasions throughout the transfer periods, both for local placement schools, with the condition that schools are located in the same local placement region, and for other schools in line with some student quota and national centralized test (LGS) scores. Some key informants stated that the transfer system was designed to satisfy the needs of the children better (for example, transferring to a closer school, transferring from a school where children were placed by mistake, transferring from the school if children did not like it there, etc.) to ensure and facilitate the registration of the children to an upper-secondary school.

From the qualitative data, it was also possible to observe some concerns about the student transfer system. Some key informants and teachers indicated that with the transfer system, the children could frequently change schools during the first month of the semester, particularly in metropolitan cities with more school options. Some students who started with a particular school but had some adaptation or other problems were reported to be easily able to request a transfer, which can be processed through the e-School system, sometimes without the knowledge of schools. There were even some reported cases where children transferred to three or four different schools in the same period and others where they eventually returned to the first school in which they were placed. Some key informants and teachers stated that in those cases, the children could face very similar problems in every school they transferred to, and the root cause of the children's problems remained unexplored when they frequently transferred. In such cases, the children were considered to be likely to leave the school eventually when their problems could not be sufficiently addressed. Moreover, transfer processes were reported to create non-attendance risks for the children in the early weeks or months of the school year, which could negatively affect students' academic success and social interaction with their teachers or peers.

> In this period, due to the slightest problem, children with low problem-solving skills constantly wanted to go to different schools. The students can frequently requesttransfers due to different reasons such as 'Teacher, I don't like this school. The rules here are very strict. I will go to another school because their rules are more flexible.' or 'It is difficult for me to walk to this school, I will go to that school where I will walk five minutes less.' After the transfer, they cannot find what they hoped for in the new school, and they can return back to their schools in a short time, in about a month. Many students who left from us returned, or there were too many students who came to us from different schools and returned to their old schools. Of course, during this transfer process, children had many days of absences. Such non-attendance creates problems both in terms of their learning process and their adaptation to school environment.
> (Teacher, Istanbul, Dimension 7)

The second concern with the transfer system appears as the problems related to student quotas at schools that accept students with LGS scores. The qualitative data show that in many cases, insufficient school quotas became the primary reason for the students not being able to transfer to different schools. It was reported that some students had to wait until some places were opened in the schools they wanted to transfer to, and if they could not be placed at the end, they became likely to drop out of the school. From a different perspective, the quota issue was also mentioned to create some tensions between the parents and the school administrations, particularly when the parents would like to transfer their children to schools without necessarily fulfilling the score requirement of the school. In that sense, the parents were observed to need more precise guidance about the transfer requirements.

Enrolment to Other Types of Schools

Albeit to a limited extent, the qualitative data provide some insights about *enrolment to different types of schools*, namely pre-primary education, open schools, vocational education centres, and special education schools.

For *enrolment in pre-primary schools*, the qualitative data demonstrate that the major concern used to be the enrolment age when the 4+4+4 system was first introduced. Some key informants stated that the initial age regulation was considered pedagogically early for pre-primary education because the psychomotor skills of the children aged 60 months were not considered sufficiently developed for pre-primary education. These key informants also stated that, in line with the feedback from the school administrators, provincial directorates of the MoNE, and parents, the age limit was increased to 69 months to overcome potential problems.

Regarding *enrolment to open schools*, most parents and children were observed to be informed about the open education and enrolment requirements of the open schools. Many key informants stated that when the students at risk of dropping out due to poor academic performance, child labour, etc., were identified, the teachers informed the parents and the children about the open schools. The outcome of the dissemination of information appeared to be that some of the children could register for the open school, whereas some others did not prefer it or did not take action to register. Among the reasons for not enrolling in open schools, the parents and children indicated their concerns, such as not believing in the benefits of open education because it was perceived to be different from attending regular classes, the unwillingness of the children to attend open schools; or not being able to choose between open education of a high school type. In addition, some parents mentioned problems regarding enrolment in open schools, such as missing the registration period or enrolling the children in open schools other than the parent's preference. A thorough analysis of open education is also provided in Section 5.4 School Supply – Open Education.

Regarding enrolment in *vocational education centres*, the qualitative data show that almost half of the interviewed parents and children were informed about them, whereas the other half were not. Some key informants stated that even when the parents and children had some information about the VECs, they were not often aware of its educational content or its differences from the vocational or open schools. Some key informants mentioned some enrolment requirements of the VECs as advantages compared to other types of schools, such as being able to register as soon as achieving a lower-secondary school diploma or being an option within the context of formal education for those who did not want to attend upper-secondary schools. Some parents and children informed about the VECs also shared their experiences or opinions about enrolment in VECs. One of the concerns was not being able to enrol through the workplace where the children were already working. In another case, the child was observed to be negatively affected by the unwillingness of his friends to enrol to VECs, and consequently he did not register either. Finally, another child confused the VECs with İŞKUR on-the-job training programmes, showing a lack of awareness about the VECs. Therefore, the differences between various vocational education and training opportunities from different public institutions should be clarified better among the target group of those opportunities. Further analysis of VECs is provided in Section 5.4 School Supply – Vocational Education Centres.

The qualitative data points to concerns concerning the school enrolment of *children with special education needs*. Some key informants stated that education is a fundamental right for children with special education needs. In practice, however, there could be some instances of a lack of quota or disagreements or prejudices among the other parents at school. Consequently, the children with special education

needs were observed not always to be enrolled in schools close to their residences but in schools that eventually accepted them. Some key informants stated that the parents of children with special education needs preferred enrolling their children in special education schools rather than the full-time educational practices through inclusion/integration in regular schools, where they believed their children would face fewer problems (*see Section 5.1.4 Health-Related Factors*).

Over-Age or Age-Grade Distortion

From the qualitative data, the most prominent reason for over-age or age-grade distortion was the children's gap years for reasons such as health, working, early and undeclared marriages, or family mobility. The key informants and teachers stated that although short breaks in a semester of a few months did not create serious problems for the children, returning to school after giving breaks of one year or more, usually observed from Grade 9 onwards, was considered to create a high risk for dropping out.

Another reason for over-age was the 12-year compulsory education, formulated as 4+4+4 years. One of the key informants stated that in some cases, the parents and children could consider every four years separately as a way to give breaks to education for several reasons, such as working or religious education (for example, preparations for becoming a Hafiz).

Many key informants and teachers stated that the children returning to school depended on the extra motivation and dedication of the children. The qualitative data identify some positive examples. For example, there were cases where the interviewed teachers had students who had to leave the school after (undeclared) marriage but returned to school after giving birth and became the most successful students in the classroom. Similarly, one of the teachers indicated that a female student who left school in Grade 11 to work due to the family's financial situation returned to school and graduated successfully.

The key informants and teachers also indicated why over-aged students were likelier to drop out of school. One of the reasons was difficulties adapting to the school environment while studying with younger students. Many key informants and teachers reported that those children had concerns about the other children in their classes, such as not being understood well by the others, having difficulties in communicating with them, having conflicts within the classroom, feeling excluded, or being exposed to bullying, for example, in the form of teasing. Some over-aged students were also mentioned to feel mentally, emotionally, and physically more mature than other children, and as a result, they did not feel they belonged to that particular class, or they tried to dominate the younger students in their classes. Such hard feelings at school were also indicated to reflect on the over-aged students' academic success negatively.

Such problems were witnessed to a lesser extent among the children over-aged due to class repetition, mostly due to high absences, but the age difference between the children was observed to be relatively lower in the cases of class repetitions. Many respondents mentioned that the over-aged students' unpleasant experiences and feelings discouraged those children from school, which usually resulted in high levels of non-attendance and/or school dropout or referral of the children to open schools.

From the qualitative data, it was possible to observe that open education was considered an alternative for over-aged students, starting from the lower-secondary level but more at the upper-secondary level. Students of open education are included in the formal education statistics for calculating school enrolment rates, but the open education statistics do not allow any data segregation based on age. Open education, therefore, seems to be a major location for the over-age phenomenon.

Based on the qualitative data, another alternative for educating over-aged children with a lower-secondary school diploma appeared as the VECs. Again, with no upper age limit for registration, students from various age groups can gather in the same classes, but because education at VECs mostly depends on actual work practice, such an over-age situation was not mentioned to create severe problems for the children.

School Enrolment-Related Barriers

School enrolment issues are aspects of school administrative regulations that can present barriers to children's schooling in Türkiye *(see Table 18)*. A positive observation from the qualitative analysis is that a majority of parents are informed about the enrolment procedures at the primary and lower-secondary education levels, mainly due to the facilitation of the address-based school enrolment system. As discussed above, there are concerns about this system, particularly the challenge of changing children's schools.

School enrolment is associated with more risk of dropouts in upper secondary. A significant concern is the lack of awareness and in-depth information about particular types of schools, which could be supported through further guidance for the parents and children at the lower-secondary level to help them identify and better match the needs, capabilities and future aspirations of the children at the upper-secondary level. In addition, at times, the local placement system was reported to create issues such as placement of the children in other schools than their actual preferences. Although the student transfer opportunity is designed to eliminate such risks, it was also observed to create some concerns in terms of increasing the non-attendance levels of the students during the early weeks/months of the semester or their inability to transfer due to a lack of quota.

Over-age enrolment is observed chiefly to stem from the gap years that the children had due to some reasons such as health, working, early and undeclared marriages, or family mobility. The qualitative data show that although short breaks are less likely to create school dropout, longer breaks (one year or more), which seem more prevalent from Grade 9 onwards, could create high risks for the children to drop out of school.

Table 18:
School Enrolment-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Lack of information by the families	*			**	**
Lack of information about Vocational Education Centres	**		*	**	*
Inflexibility of address-based school enrolment system (primary and lower-secondary levels)	**	*	*		
Local placement system (upper-secondary level)				**	**
Student transfer system (upper-secondary level)				**	**
Over-age enrolment	***		**	***	**

Note: The number of ***** refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.3.2 Non-Attendance

The second component of school administrative regulations, considered a factor of school dropout, is the level of non-attendance or absences. When the official attendance-related regulations are concerned, excused and unexcused non-attendance limits may be set differently for different education levels in Türkiye.

As explained in Section 2.4.4, for *primary education*, the non-attendance limit is 15 days a school year – students who do not attend school for at least one semester without an excuse repeat the class. In lower-secondary education, for the students who do not attend school for 20 days in a school year without an excuse, the teachers of the student decide whether the child repeats or passes the grade at the end of the school year. Primary school students who have not reached the desired level of proficiency can repeat a grade during primary school education only once upon the written request of their parents. Students who do not attend school at all, students whose grades are not entered for all the courses in the primary school weekly course schedule, and students who do not attend school for at least one semester, except for the excuses specified in the fifth paragraph of Article 27 of the Pre-School Institutions and Primary Education Institutions Regulation, are required to repeat a grade.

For *upper-secondary education*, absenteeism is 10 days without an excuse and 30 days with an excuse. Students with more absences repeat the same grade regardless of their grades. For students who have an illness requiring continuous treatment, who are under protection and care based on the official reports of social services or security/police units, or who are under arrest, the excused absenteeism limit is 60 days a school year. For students with special education needs, the non-attendance limit is 70 days a school year, on the condition that absenteeism without excuse does not exceed 20 days. In secondary and Imam Hatip secondary schools, students who have been absent for 20 days without an excuse and whose year-end score is less than 45 in any course are decided by the branch teachers' commission whether to pass the grade or repeat the grade in the last week of the second semester.

Quantitative analysis in Section 4 shows that absences become a more visible risk factor for dropping out at the upper-secondary level, compared to primary and lower-secondary levels. As indicated in Section 4.4, at the primary school level, only 2.9 per cent of the students have 20–29 days of absences, and 4.4 per cent have 30 or more days of absences, whereas, among the upper-secondary public general education students, only 43.3 per cent reported 0–9 absences, and nearly 25 per cent had 20 or more days of absences. When the absence data by grade are analysed, it is possible to see that absences increase by grade, with relatively low levels of absences in primary (especially after Grade 1) that increase during lower secondary and upper secondary. By the end of upper secondary, almost half of the students have 20 or more reported absences. For the primary school level, only the children at special education are observed to have higher rates of absences compared to later levels: 31.3 per cent of Grade 1 special education children had 30+ absences during the 2018–2019 school year, pointing out a problematic initial transition into formal schooling for these children (*see Section 5.1.4 Health-Related Factors*).

Regarding gender differences, the quantitative data show that beginning at the lower-secondary level, boys are about 10 per cent more likely to have 20 or more recorded absences than girls. When the public-private education divide is considered, the quantitative analysis also shows that absences in private schools are reported consistently at lower rates than in public schools.

The qualitative data support the quantitative findings that absences are less prevalent at the primary school level and increase considerably at the upper-secondary level, and non-attendance is more prevalent among boys compared to girls. The qualitative data also shed some light on the reasons and consequences of non-attendance or irregular attendance, as well as the actual practices of the schools to minimize or deal with student absences.

The qualitative data identify some general concerns of the key informants and teachers about non-attendance. In terms of those at the lower-secondary school, some key informants indicated that leaving the final decision to the teachers for the students with more than 20 days of absences to pass the grade meant that most of the children would not repeat the grade due to non-attendance, which created some controversial effects on children in terms of not taking non-attendance seriously and having severe difficulties with the consequences of stricter non-attendance related regulations at the upper-secondary level, which could eventually end up with school dropout.

Regarding non-attendance at the upper-secondary level, a common opinion of the key informants and teachers was that the existing absence-day limits were relatively high.

It was stated that excluding weekends and official holidays, the school year was almost 180 days, and record-keeping was usually flexible during the first and last weeks of the semester. Under those circumstances, the 30 days of a total absence limit at the upper-secondary level was considered a severe gap in different aspects of children's education at school. Those respondents requested stricter implementation of non-attendance to ensure students' school attendance and to avoid perceptions that the official rules (of non-attendance) were not implemented at schools. Two key informants also voiced an opposite perspective, mentioning that becuase compulsory education is 12 years in Türkiye, more options for the absence limit should be given to the students.

The qualitative data suggest *reasons for non-attendance or irregular attendance*, particularly at the lower and upper-secondary levels. Some reasons were common to all education levels, whereas others were more prominent at particular school levels or types. Some regional differences in the reasons for non-attendance could also be observed from the qualitative data.

One reason for non-attendance is the families' attitudes towards children's school attendance. Particularly in the case at the lower-secondary level, some teachers stated that the daily life practices of the parents or families could negatively affect the school attendance of children. For example, letting children sleep late and wake up late, taking the children with them to visit relatives, going out for entertainment purposes, or letting children decide whether or not they would like to go to school are some instances stated by the teachers. Also, in this category, a more concerning reason for non-attendance is children's domestic responsibilities, such as taking care of the siblings when the parents are not at home or dealing with the land or animals of the household.

Similarly, children's unconcerned attitudes towards school attendance are a reason for absences. There were some instances in the qualitative data where the children were not interested in attending school but preferred to spend their time out of school. Such instances were reported to increase when the children were part of certain friendship groups with looser ties to school and education. Particularly valid for the lower-secondary level, such attitudes towards non-attendance were reported to increase due to the children's confidence that their absences would not affect their grade transition due to the standard practice of not failing children at the lower-secondary level. At the upper-secondary level, such attitudes were perpetuated with the belief that unexcused absence days indicated in the legislation were

a right, considered a natural part of non-attendance rights, rather than a benefit under certain circumstances, such as sickness or family emergencies. In addition, there were also some reported cases where the children realized that they would repeat the class due to excessive absences, and they stopped attending school for the rest of the semester.

From the qualitative data, child labour is a prominent reason for non-attendance. Particularly in the case of boys both at the lower- and upper-secondary level, being engaged in paid labour was observed to cause non-attendance or irregular attendance, as the children had to work during school hours or the evenings, which made it difficult to wake up and attend the class on time in the morning. Particularly valid for several regions in Türkiye, children were reported unable to attend school due to seasonal agricultural work activities. Even when the children themselves did not engage in the work activities, they could still miss school because they had to accompany their parents when they moved to different regions in different seasons. Their non-attendance pattern was also seasonal because they usually missed the school year's first and last one or two months. Although school attendance was intended to be ensured at the primary level through "mobile schools," seasonal work activities constitute a barrier to children's regular school attendance for the lower- and upper-secondary levels.

Another reason for non-attendance was reported concerning the school placement or regular exams. Many key informants and teachers indicated that it was prevalent among last year's students (Grade 8 or Grade 12) not to attend school to have time to prepare for the placement exams, namely for LGS at the lower-secondary school and YKS at the upper-secondary school. Some teachers stated that education, in a general sense, was considered an instrument to register at a better school (an upper-secondary school or university) rather than being considered a value in itself. A consequence was stated to be the focus of the children and their parents on the placement exams, which created disinterest towards the particular course topics (such as music or arts) that were not considered "useful" for the placement tests. The qualitative data show that children, with the support of their parents, either used their full non-attendance days or were referred to open upper-secondary schools to have more time for exam preparation. As another impact of exams on non-attendance, some teachers stated that once the regular exam periods were completed at schools, mainly towards the end of the semester, the students were likely to start skipping school.

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Some reasons for non-attendance were defined differently according to the type of schools by the key informants and teachers. Four prominent and interrelated reasons appear in the qualitative data for the upper-secondary vocational schools. The first is that children were indicated to be uninterested or unwilling to progress in the discipline they studied at the vocational school, creating boredom among the students. The second reason was reported as the lack of university prospects among the students at the vocational schools. A third reason was the relatively lower levels of academic success among the students who enrolled in vocational schools; as a result, they were not perceived to be academically successful at the upper-secondary level. The last reason is related to the length of vocational education and their weekly/daily school schedules. Some teachers indicated that four years of education could be necessary to complete the curricula at other upper-secondary schools, such as science or Anatolian schools, but it was too long for upper-secondary vocational education. In addition, some teachers and key informants also stated that the daily school schedules were lengthy, including 8–9 hours of classes every day, which caused children to lose their focus on the course content and teaching practices. Many key informants and teachers also emphasized the importance of more practical rather than academic education for vocational school students to contribute to their professional skill development and progress. Concerning the length of daily school schedules and lectures, some students and teachers from the other types of schools also voiced their concerns by stating that during the full day-long lectures, it became challenging to maintain the attention and energy of the students, and it could act as a factor to decrease the efficiency of education and to increase the risk of non-attendance.

Although most key informants and teachers reported that non-attendance was considerably less in the Anatolian upper-secondary schools, the qualitative data still provide some interrelated reasons for non-attendance at those schools. These reasons were stated as the wrong school or discipline preferences of the students due to lack of guidance, the curriculum taught in those schools, the poor academic performance of the students, and problems with adaptation to school. The teachers indicated that when the students could not succeed well in subjects like physics or chemistry, they tended to skip those classes, eventually increasing their absences.

The qualitative data also provide some less prevalent reasons for non-attendance, such as the student transfer system at the upper-secondary level, perceived as a risk for increasing absences by some teachers, and transportation in rural areas, where long travel times (up to one hour in some cases) could result in children's missing the first hour of the daily school schedule.

Some severe *consequences of non-attendance or irregular attendance* were identified from the qualitative data as poor academic performance at school, class repetition, and eventual school dropout. Some parents and teachers stated that students with high absences fell behind their peers and needed extra effort to catch up with the rest of the students. It was also indicated that, particularly at the upper-secondary level, students had to repeat the grade due to excess non-attendance, even in cases where the students were academically successful enough to pass the grade. In addition, some parents in the qualitative research sample stated that their children who failed the grade one time due to absences also could not pass it in the repetition year due to poor academic performance and had to leave school. Thus, either as a combination of those reasons or independently, the most serious consequence of non-attendance was stated as eventual school dropout.

The qualitative data show that schools already have developed new *practices and mechanisms to deal with and minimize the non-attendance risk among their students*. The practices in implementation differ for the lower- and upper-secondary schools. Most of the key informants from the lower-secondary schools stated that they tried to implement non-attendance-related regulations in favour of the students. Moreover, school administrations accepted the reports for the unexcused absences, and they preferred not to fail the students with over 20 days of absences without an excuse. Many respondents stated that allowing students to pass the grade with the decision of the teachers' commission, also supported by the school administrations, was usually intended to avoid affecting students psychologically, support their further education and avoid their potential school dropout.

At the upper-secondary level, a widespread practice observed is "deleting" the absences of children because the absences are one of the direct reasons for class repetition in addition to students' academic performance. It appears as the practice of changing unexcused absence days into excused absence days at the discretion of the school administrations, usually due to parents not wanting their children to repeat the grade at the upper-secondary level. Some parents and teachers stated that the academic success of their children at school was also influential in the decision of the school to delete children's absences. Some key informants also indicated that the MoNE could issue regulations to pardon students' absences in particular grades, as was the case for Grade 12 students, which they argued was to provide more space for the children to prepare for the university exam.

> My son had a few cases of skipping the school. I looked at his grades and said to the teachers, 'If you are giving grades, allow him to pass the grade, [otherwise] he will not come to school'. His absence was twenty-two days, they reduced it to twenty-one days, so they allowed to pass the grade because the grades were good. Otherwise, he would fail again due to absence.
> (Mother, Trabzon, Dimension 7)

At the same time, many key informants and teachers voiced their concerns about such an "absence deleting" practice by stating that it was almost taken for granted by the children and in a way that negatively affected their attitudes and actions concerning not attending school without an excuse. In other words, when the students believed that their absence days could be deleted or were deleted before, they did not bother about the actual level of their school attendance.

The qualitative data show that to ensure and increase student attendance, schools at all education levels need to develop and benefit from mechanisms such as a non-attendance monitoring system and following up on students by directly communicating with their parents. Many key informants stated that the level of absences was identified at the school administration level, and then, according to the level of absence of the students, the parents were periodically sent warning letters. In some instances, schools were preparing a follow-up plan at the beginning of the semester and deciding on the actions to be taken. It was also indicated that schools established committees of teachers, including school managers and school and classroom guidance counsellors, which contacted the parents and made household visits to identify the reasons for non-attendance and encourage the parents to send their children to school. In some cases, those teachers' commissions were also reported cooperating with the headmen or police to reach the parents to pull children back to school. If the parents were not convinced about the regular school attendance of their children, they were also informed by the schools about different schooling options for the children, such as open schools or vocational education centres.

From the qualitative data, such practices were observed to be more effectively implemented in small settlements due to the limitations of the schools in metropolitan cities with high student populations, which make following up with students and communicating with parents more difficult for these schools. Some parents complained about the school for not contacting and informing them in time about the non-attendance of the child, who eventually failed a second time in the same grade and had to be referred to open education.

Non-Attendance-Related Barriers

The second component of school administrative regulations is non-attendance (*see Table 19*). High levels of non-attendance or irregular attendance can be observed starting from the lower-secondary level, particularly for the at-risk children (Dimension 5), but it becomes a severe problem for at-risk children at the upper-secondary level (Dimension 7).

The quantitative data show how fragile those categories of children are, with high levels of unexcused non-attendance. Non-attendance is more prevalent among boys than girls. It is also possible to observe that although there are some common reasons for non-attendance at all education levels and types, there are also some specific reasons for different school types. The analysis shows that while non-attendance-related regulations were implemented flexibly at the lower-secondary level, more severe consequences of non-attendance-related regulations, namely class repetitions and school dropout, are likely to occur at the upper-secondary level.

Table 19:
Non-Attendance-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Non-attendance	**		*	***	***

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.3.3 Grade Transition

As summarized in Section 2.4.4, there are two grade-transition requirements for different levels of education. Class repetition depends on one of the following reasons: the level of unexcused absences (with different limits at different levels) or academic success. From the DHS 2018, it is possible to observe that, on average, about 2 per cent of students in primary and lower-secondary grades in 2018–2019 reported being in the same grade (i.e., repeating the grade) in the 2018–2019 and 2017-2018 school years, and these rates increase considerably, to over per cent, at the upper-secondary level, especially in Grades 9 and 10. One of the consequences of grade repetition is a worsening age-grade profile at the upper-secondary level, namely the over-age phenomenon, creating risks of school dropout. A second consequence is the referral of children to open schools. Because class repetition at the upper-secondary level is allowed only once, students who cannot pass the grade for a second time are directed to the open upper-secondary schools of various types (e.g., general, vocational, Imam Hatip), where there is no upper enrolment age limit, attendance requirement nor time limits for graduation, or to the vocational education centres. When the open schools are considered within the formal education statistics for the calculation of school enrolment rates and when the open education data based on age are not available, over-age appears as a concern, particularly for the upper-secondary level, as shown in Section 4.4, because anybody over 14 who did not have an upper-secondary school diploma in the country can be a student at those schools.

The qualitative data provide an overview of the implementation of grade transition-related regulations at different education levels. A prevalent view of many key informants and teachers is that the grade transition-related regulations are sufficiently facilitated in favour of the children, particularly for the primary and lower-secondary levels, and the schools and teachers do their best not to cause grade repetitions at all education levels. Moreover, even if the students at the lower and upper-secondary schools had to be unregistered due to grade transition-related regulations, there are still options, such as the open schools and vocational education centres, for completing the compulsory education and obtaining a diploma. Below, the implications of grade transition-related regulations for school dropout risks are discussed based on the education levels and two criteria for class transition.

For the *primary school level*, most key informants stated that absences did not constitute any serious risks for school dropout as it was challenging for the students to fail a particular grade. Grade repetition based on absences depends on the submission of a written request by the parents and approval of the school administrations, and many key informants and teachers stated that the parents usually did not prefer their children to repeat the grade. Some instances were stated where grade repetition was considered necessary by the school administrators or teachers, but the parent did not agree to file a request. Regarding the academic success criteria, some key informants stated that grading was used only for the fourth year of primary school; therefore, academic difficulties could not be considered a reason for any school dropout at this level.

For the *lower-secondary school level*, with regards to the non-attendance criteria, the grade transition of the students with excessive absences was decided by the teachers at the end of the semester, as explained in the previous Section 5.3.2, mainly when the scores of those students are sufficient to pass the class, teachers were usually reported to use their discretion to the advantage of the students. Thus, grade repetition due to absences at the lower-secondary level was indicated to be rare. As per the success criteria for grade transition, the teachers and key informants also stated that grading was made in favour of the students to avoid grade repetitions. It was also reported that in cases where students' scores were at critically low levels, the school administrators might use their discretion to let the student pass the grade, for example, by asking the teachers to give additional oral exams to those students.

For *the upper-secondary level*, non-attendance criteria were reported to be implemented more strictly compared to the lower-secondary level. School administrations also used their discretion to minimize grade repetitions by "deleting absences," as explained in Section 5.3.2. For the success criteria, the students were required to have an average grade of 50 to pass the class, and many key informants and teachers considered this relatively low score as a criterion for grade transition so many students could achieve it. Some course subjects such as literature, mathematics or English language classes were mentioned to have relative weight within the average grade and in some cases, having low grades from such course subjects was reported to cause students to remain below the average. However, it was also underlined that teachers considered such factors while grading the students and ensured they would not be negatively affected. Thus, it was also possible to observe that both grade transition criteria were implemented flexibly to the advantage of the students at the upper-secondary level.

Some key informants and teachers were somewhat concerned about those flexibilities. They stated that such flexibilities made it difficult to discipline some students academically because they already believed they would pass the grade under any circumstances. For example, a teacher voiced some instances where students skipped the exams, asked for the exam questions with the assurance that they would not fail the grade, or were not concerned with their low scores from different classes. Moreover, some teachers indicated that grading flexibilities created inequalities between the students with excellent and poor academic performances and made the students with poor academic performances have poorer performances in the long run. Thus, the actual practice of the success criterion by the schools was suggested to be a factor that had the risk of decreasing the effectiveness of the education given at the upper-secondary level. The scores of many students on the university entrance exam (YKS) also seem to be proof of such concerns of the teachers, as 32 per cent of the students (almost one million students) who attended the basic proficiency test (TYT) in 2021 remained below the threshold by not being able to achieve the required 150 points.[66]

Grade Transition-Related Barriers

Grade transition is the third component of school administrative regulations *(see Table 20)*. Qualitative analysis shows that it could act as a barrier, particularly for the at-risk children aged 14–17 and, to a lesser extent, for the out-of-school and at-risk children aged 10–13. Grade repetitions could end up with the referral of the children to open schools. Students' education status, graduation, and diploma transactions can be followed via the Open Education Schools Information Management System.

Table 20:
Grade Transition-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Grade Transition	**		*	***	***

Note: The number of ***** refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers

66 ÖSYM, 2021 YKS statistics. Available at https://dokuman.osym.gov.tr/pdfdokuman/2021/YKS/sayisal_veriler_28072021.pdf.

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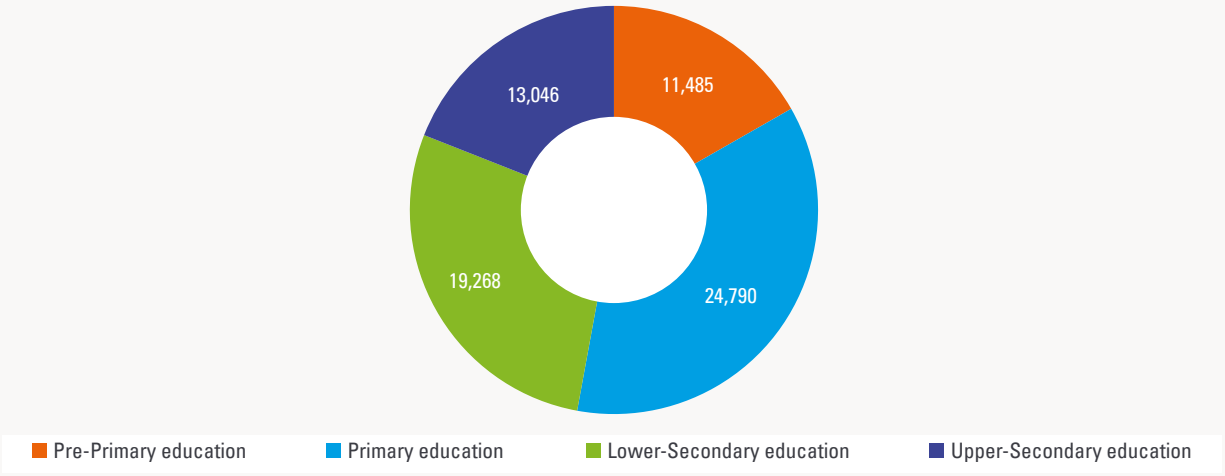
5.4 School Supply and Quality

Some components of the learning environment, namely school supply and quality, referring to the availability of schooling options, resources and quality, constitute an essential aspect of supply-side factors for children's education. This section discusses four components, namely school supply (availability and commuting time/distance of school, pre-school, vocational schools and vocational education centres, and open schools); school resources (physical conditions of the schools, class size, mixed-gender classes, transportation to school, learning materials and curriculum); issues related to teachers (communication of teacher with the children, teacher's attitude, and teachers' skills and competences); and, security in, around and on the way to school. The analysis of these components incorporates the qualitative data collected for this study and quantitative data derived chiefly from the MoNE statistics.

5.4.1 School Supply

The MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020 (*see Figure 44*) shows that there are 68,589 public and private schools at the pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary levels in Türkiye, with a total of 16,6 million students (including those in the open schools), out of which almost 700,000 are Syrian children UTP.

Figure 44:
Number of Schools in Türkiye (2019–2020)



Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

Table 21 provides a school-type summary of the number of schools, teachers, student enrolment and student-teacher ratios for the 2019–2020 school year. For the *pre-primary level*, it can be observed that almost two-thirds of the schools are public, whereas one-third of the schools are private, but students who are enrolled in public pre-schools are 82.3 per cent of all the students at pre-schools. It is also visible from Table 21 that the student-teacher ratio is much lower in private pre-schools (10.9) compared to public pre-schools (18.6).

For the primary level, 92 per cent of the schools are public primary schools, and 94.8 per cent of all primary school students are registered in those public-private schools. There are also 12,884 students at this level registered with 422 special education institutions. The difference between the student-teacher ratio is wider at the primary school level, with 8.2 in private primary schools compared to public primary schools (18.2).

At the lower-secondary school level, there are four different types of public schools: general lower-secondary schools, Imam Hatip lower-secondary schools, lower-secondary special education schools and lower-secondary open schools. Here, the majority of the students (76.1%) are registered in general lower-secondary schools, and the

rest of the students are in Imam Hatip schools (13.6%), special education institutions (0.22%) and the open lower-secondary schools (3.9%). The difference between the student-teacher ratio is also broad, with 8.1 in private primary schools compared to public primary schools (16.3).

Table 21:
MoNE Summaries of Schools, Teachers, Classrooms, Enrolments and Student-Teacher Ratios by School Type (2019–2020)

School Level and Category:	2019-2020 Totals:				
	School or Institution	Teachers	Classrooms	Students	Student-Teacher Ratio
Pre-School					
Grand Total	32,554	98,825	85,528	1,629,720	16.5
Total Public	25,640	72,219	51,815	1,340,507	18.6
Affiliated with MoNE	22,582	62,004	43,929	1,218,747	19.7
Not Affiliated with MoNE	3,058	10,215	7,886	121,760	11.9
Total Private	6,914	26,606	33,713	289,213	10.9
Affiliated with MoNE	5,141	17,704	25,306	225,502	12.7
Not Affiliated with MoNE	1,773	8,902	8,407	64,011	7.2
Primary					
Grand Total	24,790	309,247	261,875	5,279,945	17.1
Total Public	22,808	275,733	231,895	5,005,927	18.2
Basic Education DG	22,386	272,729	227,902	4,993,043	18.3
Special Education and Counselling DG	422	3,004	3,993	12,884	4.3
Total Private	1,982	33,514	29,980	274,018	8.2
Lower-Secondary					
Grand Total	19,268	371,590	195,134	5,701,564	15.3
Total Public	16,917	328,646	166,247	5,354,069	16.3
Basic Education DG	13,039	277,933	138,933	4,340,463	15.6
Religious Education DG	3,437	46,638	26,058	777,439	16.7
Special Education and Counselling DG	425	4,075	1,222	12,621	3.1
Open Lower-Secondary	1	-	-	222,638	-
Total Private	2,351	42,944	28,887	347,495	8.1
Upper-Secondary					
Grand Total	13,046	380,631	219,507	5,630,652	14.8
Total Public	9,161	305,055	168,104	3,712,013	12.2
Total Private	-	-	-	557,472	-
Total Open Education	-	-	-	1,361,167	-
General Secondary	6,925	186,914	108,982	3,412,564	18.3
Secondary Education DG	3,254	116,274	64,230	1,733,913	14.9
TVET DG	176	3,945	1,973	132,033	33.5

School Level and Category:	2019-2020 Totals:				
	School or Institution	Teachers	Classrooms	Students	Student-Teacher Ratio
Upper-Secondary					
Open Upper-Secondary	1	-	-	1,097,394	-
Private Education Institutions DG	3,481	66,695	42,278	448,554	6.7
Vocational Education	4,470	144,255	74,720	1,608,081	11.1
TVET DG	3,591	127,985	62,557	1,300,048	10.2
Special Education and Counselling DG	477	7,389	3,488	25,907	3.5
Vocational Open Upper-Secondary	1	-	-	156,613	-
Private Education Institutions DG	401	8,881	8,675	108,918	12.3
Religious Education	1,651	49,462	35,805	610,007	12.3
Religious Education DG	1,650	49,462	35,805	495,659	10.0
TVET DG	-	-	-	7,188	-
Open Religious Upper-Secondary	1	-	-	107,160	-

Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

Notes: The categorisation scheme closely follows the MoNE summary tables by school level, but with some tiny sectors left out, the sum of sub-sectors does not always equal the total enrolment figure.

At the upper-secondary level, out of 5,6 million students, 65,9 per cent are enrolled in public schools, whereas 9,9 per cent are in private schools and 24,2 per cent are in open upper-secondary schools. There are various types of schools and schooling options at the upper-secondary level. When the public upper-secondary schools are concerned, there are three different categories of schools with various options for each. Some schools offer different types of high school-level education among open education schools as well: *general secondary education* (Anatolian High Schools; Science High Schools; Social Science High Schools; Fine Arts High Schools; Sports High Schools; Multi-Programme Anatolian High Schools; Music and Performing Arts High Schools and Open Upper-Secondary Schools); *vocational and technical secondary education* (Multi-Purpose Anatolian High Schools; Vocational Education Centres; Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools; Vocational Open Upper-Secondary Schools; and Special Education Vocational High Schools for hearing, physical and visually impaired students); and, *religious education* (Anatolian Imam Hatip High Schools; Multi-programme Anatolian High Schools; and, Open Imam Hatip High Schools).

Table 21 shows that public general secondary education accommodates the most significant number of students, with 3,4 million students. Over a million students are registered at the open general secondary schools, followed by the vocational and technical schools with 1,6 million students; almost 10 per cent are in the open vocational schools. Imam Hatip schools cover 610,000 students, one-sixth being in the open Imam Hatip schools. The student-teacher ratio is lowest for the vocational and technical upper-secondary schools (11.1), followed by the Imam Hatip upper-secondary schools (12.3) and general upper-secondary schools (18.3).

Depending on the settlement, some of those public schools in the education system of Türkiye are named "village schools" by the MoNE. As shown in Table 22, almost 660,000 students study at 12,486 village schools.

Table 22:
Number of Village Public Schools and Students

School Level	Number of Students	Number of Schools
Pre-Primary Schools	71,569	3,921
Primary Schools	270,506	5,569
Lower-Secondary Schools	284,399	2,775
Upper-Secondary Schools	33,491	221
Total	659,965	12,486

Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education, 2019–2020.

In light of the quantitative and qualitative data collected for this study, it is possible to identify some general overviews of the school supply in Türkiye at different education levels.

Pre-Primary

Although preparations for the piloting have been ongoing for the pre-primary level, pre-school education is not yet compulsory in Türkiye by September 2021. Concerning pre-school supply, the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020 shows 32,554 pre-primary education institutions in Türkiye, with 25,640 public and 6,914 private. Figure 16 in Section 4.3.1 shows that overall enrolment in pre-primary schooling options has increased since the 2012-2013 school year. The MoNE data show that, out of 1.38 million children, including 5-year-olds, just over one million were enrolled in pre-primary in the 2019–2020 school year.

The quantitative data show that pre-primary education is affected by the socio-economic levels of the households. Compared to pre-primary enrolment, early entry into primary among 5-year-olds is more likely among poorer children (Figure 21). For example, 32 per cent of 5-year-olds from Quintile 1 families (the lowest SES group based on the DHS data) are enrolled in pre-primary, and 21 per cent are already in primary. By contrast, 84 per cent of 5-year-olds in Quintile 5 families (highest SES) are enrolled in pre-primary, and only 9.4 per cent have already entered primary.

Some of the key informants stated that pre-primary enrolment could be observed differently in different types of settlements, primarily due to the work status of the mothers. For example, in the city centres where working was more prevalent for the mothers, one reason for not enrolling in pre-primary could be the high level of demand and insufficient pre-school supply, which could result in not being able to register children in the public pre-primary schools. In contrast, in other settlements, such as Van, it was stated that there could be a shortage of students, as the mothers did not work much and could have the children at home rather than registering for pre-primary school. Still, some key informants and teachers also stated that the supply of pre-primary options was relatively low in the rural settlements compared to the city centres.

Economic reasons were another reason for not enrolling in pre-primary. Some key informants stated that although pre-primary at public institutions was free of charge by legislation, some costs could still be incurred to the families, such as those of nutrition or cleaning/hygiene costs to which parents could be asked to contribute.

A final reason for not enrolling children in pre-primary was the high fees at the private pre-primary institutions.

Vocational Education

The MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020 defines vocational and technical secondary education as "a four-year compulsory educational process that prepares students both for higher education and for the future as well as for an occupation and job fields according to their interests, expectations and abilities in addition to equipping them with world knowledge with an education based on primary education" (MoNE, 2020a). There are two different programmes in vocational and technical Anatolian high schools: technical programmes and vocational programmes. Students are placed in the technical programme according to their scores in LGS and the vocational programme with local placement. Both programmes focus on the knowledge and skills necessary for an occupation and general knowledge courses. The difference is that maths, physics, chemistry and biology weigh more in the curriculum of the technical programme.

Although the quantitative data show that the number of students enrolled in vocational and technical schools at the upper-secondary level is relatively high, the qualitative data point out that there were some concerns among the parents about the vocational schools. One of the concerns was related to the perceived (low) success levels of those schools. Some key informants and teachers stated that whereas the demand from the parents and children for the Anatolian, Social Science or Science upper-secondary schools was usually high, it was considerably lower for the vocational schools, which was generally reported to be related to the perceived low level of performance attached to vocational schools and concerns about the limited opportunities for the future of the children who would graduate from the vocational schools, for example, perceived disadvantages created for the university entrance exam. Some key informants and teachers indicated that the vocational schools were usually placed as the last option in the choice list of the children after the LGS exam, and even when the children were placed there, the parents and children tried to transfer the children to other schools. It was also stated that some vocational schools could face the risk of being shut down due to low demand.

The second concern about vocational education is gender-based segregation among the students in vocational and technical schools. Some key informants and teachers indicated that parents did not consider those schools a viable option for their daughters due to reasons related to security (for example, the internship requirement which took place out of school or the approach of boys towards girls at the vocational schools) or nature of the vocation taught at school (for example, engineering disciplines). Therefore, the number of girls in those schools was considerably lower than for boys. Some teachers indicated that when fewer girls were at their school, the girls sometimes tended to leave school due to male dominance. It was also indicated that school dropouts were high among the boys in the vocational schools. Consequently, irregular attendance and school dropout were often reported to be higher at the vocational schools compared to other types of upper-secondary schools in the qualitative data.

Another vocational education option is the vocational education centres (VECs), which have been included in the framework of compulsory education since December 2016 and are affiliated to the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education of the MoNE. According to the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020, 187,257 participants were covered by 329 VECs in Türkiye. VECs are educational institutions where apprenticeship and mastership training and vocational and technical course programmes are implemented. According to the Law on Vocational Education No: 3308, to be accepted to VECs, the child has to be over 14 years old, have a lower-secondary education diploma and have the necessary health conditions for the relevant occupation. Students are placed in VECs with local placement. The students must be employed in a workplace with a master instructor in the relevant field and discipline. Students enrolled in VECs receive at least eight hours of general and vocational education (1–2 days) and practice training in their workplaces (4–5 days). Students in VECs take the end-of-year skills exam at the end of each school year, starting from Grade 10. The skill exam taken at the end of Grade 11 is for an apprenticeship, and the skill exam taken at the end of Grade 12 is for mastership (MoNE, 2018). In addition, the students of the VECs can also receive an upper-secondary school diploma when they take the additional courses and complete them.

The qualitative data show that vocational education centres were considered a viable schooling option, particularly for the children who dropped out of school due to working. Some of the key informants indicated that the students of the VECs also received salaries from the workplaces where their vocational education took place, and this could help them to remain in education while working in the context of their education. In addition, VECs were also reported to be a good option for children who had poor academic performances in school subjects such as mathematics or history, as the education in the VECs was based on daily practice at the workplace, in addition to general education for one or two days a week.

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Open Education

As mentioned in Section 2.4.1, the education system in Türkiye provides an open education option at the lower-secondary (starting from the age of 14 onwards) and upper-secondary levels. Enrolling in open education can depend on the preference of the parents and/or children, but children are also referred to open education automatically under certain circumstances. Once enrolled in open education, it is still possible for children within the schooling age range to return to formal schools if and when preferred.

There are different open schools in the education system of Türkiye. Students who have completed primary education and are outside the compulsory primary education age (Primary Education Law No. 222) are directed to open education lower-secondary schools to complete their education (Pre-School Education and Primary Education Institutions Regulation No. 29072). Open education at the upper-secondary level is provided through open education high school, vocational open education high school, and open education Imam Hatip high school. These schools offer distance education for individuals who have completed lower-secondary education. In addition, students who repeat a grade more than once, marry or are dismissed from upper-secondary school due to disciplinary action are automatically referred to open schools in line with the Regulation on Upper Secondary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education (2013). The same Regulation also states that students out of the compulsory education age can enrol in open education high schools (18 years and older) except for exceptional cases (absenteeism, grade repetition, etc.).

Students registering for the first time pay a fee (TL 60 in the 2020-2021 school year) for the first semester and then a fee (TL 55 for the 2020-2021 school year) every semester when they re-register for open lower- and upper-secondary education. Parents/caregivers apply at Public Education Centres (PECs) for enrolment.

An academic year in open education schools consists of three terms. While all students attend the first- and second-term exams, those aged 18 and over take the third-term exams. For this reason, only students aged 18 and over must renew their registration for the third-term exams. The enrolment status of a student who does not re-register for a term becomes "frozen," and students who do not re-register for two consecutive terms become "erased" students. The registration of these students is not entirely deleted, and they can again become active students by renewing their registration. Nevertheless, because there is no age limit or limit set for the duration of education, previous credits of unregistered students are reserved, and they can resume their open education when they re-register.

At open lower-secondary schools, the curriculum is the same as the one at lower-secondary schools. However, students may be exempted from visual arts, music, physical education, technology, and design courses. Students with hearing impairment are exempt from foreign language courses as well. Non-Muslim students have the option not to take religious culture and ethics courses. The students sit for a centralized test for each course.[67] At open upper-secondary schools, students take compulsory and elective courses. The credit system is used, and the students must complete the course credits identified by the Board of Education (*Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu*)[68]. The students sit for a centralized test for each course. Digital content (textbooks, lecture videos, etc.) for all courses in open education schools are offered to students through the EBA platform.

As shown in Figure 45, almost 1,6 million students are enrolled in open schools in Türkiye, 98,6 per cent of which are at the upper-secondary open schools. Because there is no upper age limit for registering into open schools, the open education system provides an alternative education opportunity for both children and adults. Some of the key informants in the qualitative research sample indicated that the central idea behind open education is to provide opportunities for citizens above the maximum schooling age who cannot complete their education for several reasons; however, in time, open education also started to be considered as an option for the children within the limits of the schooling age.

The qualitative data, through the experiences of the children within the schooling age but enrolled in open schools, help explore different aspects of open education, namely the reasons for enrolling in open education and the experiences of the students at open education institutions both in terms of the advantages and difficulties with open education.

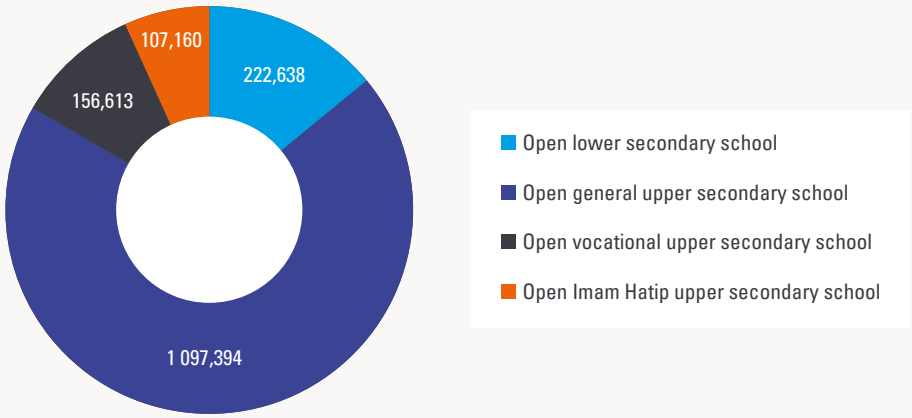
When the *reasons for enrolling in open schools* are concerned, it can be seen that in some cases, referral of the student to open schools is compulsory (such as class repetition twice, marrying officially, and being dismissed from school due to disciplinary action). It was also mentioned that the parents or children could also prefer to register to open schools of their own will.

One of the most prominent reasons for schooling-aged children to refer to open schools appears to be the problems encountered at regular schools. Those problems included poor academic performance, irregular attendance or high levels of non-attendance, problems with friends/teachers, or problems with school transportation. Children who exceed the maximum schooling age can also be included in the same category. In all those cases, referral to open schools can be the decision of the children or their parents, although not always, both parties were observed to agree. In the qualitative data, there were some cases where the parents had to persuade their children to open education, as the children were not enthusiastic about education after their experiences in regular schools. In addition, the qualitative data also show that in some cases, the school administrators directed children to open education, mainly when the children lost their right to study at regular schools.

67 Regulation on Open Lower Secondary School, Official Journal No: 24561, dated 22 September 2021.

68 Regulation on Open Upper Secondary School, Official Journal No: 26033, dated 24 December 2005.

Figure 45:
Number of Students at Open Schools According to School Type



Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

From the qualitative data, another very prominent reason was economic reasons. It was possible to observe that children from households with low levels of income and with economic problems could register for open schools, as the education costs (such as transportation, clothing, stationary, etc.) were perceived to be considerably less in the open education. In addition, open schools were also reported as an alternative for children who already had to start working, including seasonal workers and unpaid family workers at the lower- or upper-secondary level, due to the need to support the family income. Some key informants referred to the role of vocational open upper-secondary schools, where the children could both work and complete their education.

Another prominent reason for referring to open schools identified from the qualitative data was to prepare better for the university exam, the YKS. Many key informants and teachers in the qualitative research sample stated that students, both girls and boys, who had university prospects could prefer referring to open schools from any type of school in Grade 12 to be able to manage their schedule for exam preparations. Some key informants and teachers stated that those students did not want to "spend" time with the regular course load at their schools (for example, the foreign language courses or sports or arts courses) but wanted to individually focus more on the subjects relevant to the university exam, sometimes even being registered in preparation courses rather than schools, could prefer to be referred to open schools. In addition, such referrals were also believed to increase the cumulative average points of the children, which is also a factor calculated for university exam results. Some respondents considered such a situation to be a result of the university exam system, which somehow obscured the meaning of education by limiting education to learning (or memorising) only the relevant subjects in a competitive exam system.

Based on the qualitative data, child, early and forced marriage is another reason for enrolling in open schools. Some key informants and teachers stated that in official marriages, the referral of the student to open schools was automatic. In cases of informal religious marriages, however, the parents could prefer to transfer children, primarily girls, to open schools because they did not want to send the children to school. In addition, some key informants also stated that there were some cases where the children who remained out of school after child, early and forced marriage and even had some children afterwards could use the chance to register and finish open school educations after some time. Also, in this category, the traditional or conservative gender norms hindering girls' enrolment or attendance to regular schools can be considered a reason for enrolling girls in open schools.

Another reason for enrolling in open schools was indicated as the intention of the parents to escape from the obligations of compulsory education. Many key informants and teachers stated that parents who did not want to send their children to school for several reasons justified their decision to take children out of school by stating that they would continue with open education to avoid any adverse legal consequences of such a decision. In addition, some of the children or their parents also seemed to prefer open education just for the children to recieve a diploma.

The qualitative data also provided some other reasons, which were somewhat less prominent. Some key informants stated that there could be cases where the children could not be placed in an upper-secondary school due to parents' being late for the school selection process and the child being registered to the open school for a year until he/she would start from Grade 10 in a regular school the following year. So, open school was considered a means not to lose years between school levels.

The qualitative data also provide an overview of the perceived *advantages of open education*. Many respondents indicated that open education is a new chance or an alternative for children who could not finish school for any reason, which was mentioned for children who were at the schooling age and those who had breaks in their education and decided after the maximum schooling age that they could still finish school through open education. In addition, open education was considered to have the advantage of providing a diploma and a chance to enter the university exams afterwards. Some key informants and teachers also provided cases where children, mostly girls, went back to school through open education, succeeded in the university entrance exams, studied at the undergraduate level, and had a job afterwards. Another benefit of open education mentioned was the opportunity it provided for having a profession, particularly for those who studied at vocational open education schools. Another benefit reported was the characteristics of open education that could save some time for the students to complete their education in a shorter period than regular schools due to the credit-based graduation system. For example, in the qualitative data, there was a case where the girl did not register for lower-secondary school after primary school to be able to be a Hafiz, and when she turned 15 years old, she registered in open lower-secondary school, finished it in one year, and continued with open upper-secondary school.

Last, depending on the qualitative data, it was possible to identify some *difficulties related to the open education system.* One of the difficulties mentioned concerned registration to open schools. For example, some parents stated that they had problems at the registration stage when there was a technical problem with the children's status at the regular school. Some key informants stated that when the children were registered to open school, their registration at the regular school was not automatically cancelled but deactivated, and in some cases, the children might be registered to both schools, creating complications. Another difficulty mentioned concerned the need for approval from the parent for registration in the open school. Particularly when attending open school was the decision of the children themselves, the children officially needed the approval of their parents for the registration procedures, and it was stated that in some cases, the parents had to be convinced about their children's referral to open schools to proceed with the children's registration.

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Another concern with open education was the quality of learning. Although the education process of the students can be followed via the Open Education Schools Information Management System, some key informants, teachers, and parents stated that after being registered in the open school, some children might not be interested in studying, and there was no mechanism to follow their education process nor any time limitations for their graduation. Some respondents stated that due to distance education, learning might not be as efficient as in-person education in the classroom, as it requires additional efforts by students to grasp the content without a teacher and they had to "learn to learn" on their own. Moreover, particularly for children within the schooling age, lack of possibilities for socialization, lack of peer support and peer learning and lack of interaction were reported as factors that could decrease the effectiveness of children's learning process and personal development. Another concern in the context of learning was related to open education curricula. It was stated that the curriculum was the same as those of the Anatolian or Science upper-secondary schools, making it quite tricky for some open school students, particularly the adult students, to follow.

Location of the School

An essential aspect of school supply is the location of the school and commuting time, which may affect the school attendance of children because the distance between school and residence determines the need for transportation, which may bring together some concerns such as additional costs and the safety of children.

There are two primary support measures from the MoNE to ensure school enrolment and attendance of children who could face difficulties accessing schools where they live. Those are education with transport and schools with boarding. Transportation can also be provided for primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary students and students with special needs. Population, number of students, presence of schools, migration, and mobility of seasonal workers are the factors considered for providing transportation services. The distance between the place where the student will be fetched and the transportation centre must be at least 2 kilometres. Transportation is not allowed over a distance of 50 kilometres. Students with special needs are exempt from the conditions mentioned above. According to the Regulation on Access to Education by Transportation (2014), schools where the students will be transported must have a central location, enough physical capacity, teaching materials and a necessary environment for social, cultural and sports activities. Lunch is also provided to transported students at transportation centres.[69]

In this context, *education with transport* is "the practice of transporting primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary school students who have problems with access to the schools due to various reasons to certain schools on a daily basis with the aim of providing them with education" (MoNE, 2020a). It is a practice for children usually living in rural areas not near the district or provincial centre. Table 23 shows that in the 2019–2020 school year, even under the negative influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, 1,1 million students benefitted from education with transport.

Table 23:
Number of Total Transported Students According to Education Levels

School Level	Number of Transported Students
Primary School Students	273,382
Lower-Secondary School Students	481,173
Upper-Secondary School Students	397,965
Total	1,152,520

Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

69 Regulation on Access to Education by Transportation, Official Journal No. 29116, dated 11 September 2014.

The second measure to increase school supply and eliminate problems related to distance to school is the provision of *boarding facilities* at particular schools. As indicated in Section 2.4.1, the MoNE provides accommodation at schools for vulnerable children at lower and upper-secondary levels to enhance access to education. These boarding schools embody boarding houses on their premises. As shown in Table 24, during the 2019–2020 school year, 328,141 students (2.9 per cent of the population) stayed in boarding houses, using 60.1 per cent of the capacity. The gender balance regarding the use of boarding houses was remarkable; girls constituted 50.4%, and boys constituted 49.6%.

Table 24:
Statistics on Boarding Houses (2019–2020)

	Number of Boarding Houses	Student Capacity of Boarding Houses	Number of Students in Boarding Houses	Average Number of Students Per Boarding House	Capacity Use (%)
Basic Education DG	295	84,167	39,170	133	46.5
Secondary Education DG	998	189,816	131,270	132	69.2
Vocational and Technical Education DG	831	132,885	77,746	94	58.5
Religious Instruction DG	908	136,526	79,076	87	57.9
Special Education and Counselling Services DG	33	2,896	879	27	30.4
TOTAL	3,065	546,290	328,141	107	60.1

Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020.

There are also Boarding Regional Lower-Secondary Schools at the regional level, which are not as centrally located as boarding schools and where all students stay in the boarding house. According to the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020, 65,637 students were in 302 Boarding Regional Lower-Secondary Schools in the 2019–2020 school year (MoNE, 2020a).

In boarding houses of public schools, boarding can be free or paid. Free boarding is only for lower and upper-secondary education students, whereas paid boarding is only for upper-secondary students. An additional condition for free boarding is the family's income, which must be below the limit the State identifies.

The qualitative data show that at the primary school level, the location of the schools does not appear to be a significant problem for school attendance and enrolment, as the address-based system was mentioned to help enrol children to the schools close to their residences in the city centres and subject to the availability of village primary schools in rural settlements.

At the lower-secondary level, distance to school starts to be observed as a concern, mainly when fewer lower-secondary schools are available in a district or village, which could be distant from the student's residence. Some parents and children stated that the children had to walk for 20–30 minutes to reach the school as it was the only available school for their address. At the rural settlements, education with transport and boarding schools can be observed as a supporting factor for school enrolment and attendance, but those options also bring concerns, as discussed below, for the upper-secondary level.

For several reasons, the school's location and commuting time are a serious concern at the upper-secondary level in city centres and rural settlements. Regardings city centres, it was possible to observe from the qualitative data that many children needed transportation to their schools, mainly due to the school placement system based on a centralized test, the LGS, which might result in the placement of the students in schools at different districts in the city (*see Section 5.3. School Enrolment*). The qualitative data show that travelling to school could take up to an hour, and most of the time, school transportation was either through school services or multiple public transportation systems with some additional walking. Some teachers from Bursa or Istanbul indicated that their school campuses were rather far from the centres, with insufficient public transportation. It is unknown if the children could benefit from school transportation services because parents considered the expense rather costly, i.e., some indicated they could not afford the school services or public transportation, and their children had to walk to school.

In some cases, the children were reported to be accompanied by a household member, such as the mother, uncle or aunt, but it created problems if nobody at home was available for the children's school schedule. In addition, the distance to the internship facility, particularly for the vocational upper-secondary schools, was mentioned as a risk for non-attendance because some parents did not allow their daughters to attend their internship programmes in places distant from their residences. Some parents solved distance to school problems through student transfers to closer upper-secondary schools.

Regarding rural settlements, distance to school appears even more significant at the upper-secondary level. Many parents and children from rural areas in the qualitative research sample stated that there were no available upper-secondary schools in their village or neighbourhood, and the children had to be registered at schools with more central locations, thus requiring transportation. Most of those children benefitted from education with transport, but some key informants, teachers and parents also expressed concerns with the practice of education with transport. One of those concerns was the geographical characteristics of some rural settings and villages, which could make transportation tricky. For example, it was stated that some settlements were quite scattered, with the houses far apart from each other, which made it challenging to bring children together; moreover, some villages were located in mountainous areas, where winter conditions could be tough, sometimes interrupting transportation for months due to heavy snow; finally, some settlements were quite far, 60–70 kilometres from the district or city centres.

A second concern was related to girls' safety in the transportation process. Some key informants and parents voiced that some parents were unwilling to allow their daughters to participate in education with transport where there would also be boys and the drivers in the vehicle. A third concern was about the tiresome nature of education with transport. Some parents and children stated that it was tiring (for example, children had to wake up quite early to be at school on time) and time and energy-consuming to travel to the school, which sometimes took up to one or more hours under challenging conditions.

A final concern was about the limited supply of transportation services and some regional limitations brought to education with transport practices, which eventually resulted in the cancellation of transportation to some rural regions. In those cases, the parents faced the need to hire services, which could be challenging due to the costs. Overall, it can be observed from the qualitative data that education with transport provides valuable support to attend upper-secondary schools for children living in rural settlements but it did not eliminate irregular attendance or school dropout. In the qualitative data, there were some cases where the children, mostly the girls, had to leave the school or refer to open schools due to transportation difficulties. Many children in this category stated that they would not hesitate to study there if there were any available upper-secondary schools close to their settlement.

> “If the high school was close to our house, and there were no such problems, we would not have gone by car. The roads are very long, you go by vehicle. There was actually a vehicle in the village, it was going to high school. That vehicle was cancelled. In any case, we have to go to the centre to study.
> (Girl, Kars, Dimension 7)

A second support mechanism for children living in rural settlements and villages is schools with boarding facilities. Such schools were exemplified as an option where a school with transportation was not feasible or available. Some key informants and teachers stated that schools with boarding were an excellent option to help school dropouts by providing children (and parents) the opportunity to study without needing to travel. Other key informants, teachers and parents voiced concerns about children staying at boarding houses. It was stated that the capacities of those boarding houses might not be sufficient to fulfil the demand, that some children could have adaptation problems being apart from their families, and that some parents had security concerns, particularly for the girls staying at boarding houses.

School Supply-Related Barriers

School supply involves variety in Türkiye, both in public and private schools and regarding type of schools, particularly at the upper-secondary level. Regarding pre-primary, it was possible to observe an increasing trend in school enrolment, but the lack of school supply (mostly in city centres) and pre-school-related costs limit pre-school enrolments.

Most of the school dropouts were observed to occur at the upper-secondary level, although there could be instances at the lower-secondary level. From the qualitative data, some school supply-related factors that make non-attendance and school dropouts more prevalent at the upper-secondary level could be considered negative perceptions about vocational schools and some characteristics of open education. To the extent that vocational schools were associated with low academic success, parents and children reported refraining from enrolment in those schools, creating a risk for children to remain out of school. In addition, the students studying in those schools were reported to face more risks of non-attendance and dropping out due to poor academic success or gender imbalances.

Regarding open schools, the qualitative data point to two categories of students at those schools: students of formal education age and students outside the formal education age. Open education, in general, provides an educational option for both categories, and increasing referral of the children in the former category from regular schools to open schools necessitates scrutinising the educational progress of those children more closely.

Another school supply-related factor is the distance to school and commuting times. The qualitative data show that there could be different barriers for children living in city centres than in rural settings. Appearing as a problem starting from the lower-secondary level, but more prominently at the upper-secondary level and more for the girls, distance to school brings together the need for transportation and lack of transportation to schools due to limited provision of school services, high costs of transportation and security concerns for the children, all of which could act as reasons for irregular attendance, non-attendance and school dropout (*see Table 25*). Although there are some support measures, such as education with transport or schools with boarding facilities for children living in rural settlements, it is not always possible to assess from the qualitative data that they were effective in ensuring the children's access to education, particularly for girls at the upper-secondary level. Education with transport is mainly constrained by geographical difficulties or limitations in its actual practice, and parents might not prefer schools with boarding facilities because of concerns about the girls' safety.

Table 25:
School Supply-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Pre-school-related costs		*			
Negative perceptions about vocational schools				**	***
Commuting time/distance to school	**		*	**	**
Lack of transportation to school (including school services and education with transport)			**	**	***

Note: The Number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.4.2 School Resources

This section analyses the factors related to school resources based on the physical conditions of the schools, class size, mixed-gender classes and learning materials/curriculum.

The qualitative data show that most key informants and teachers believed that the *physical conditions of the schools* were appropriate for education at all education levels, and it improved considerably in time with new investments and school constructions. Many respondents stated that they had classrooms and facilities, such as music or fine arts classes, sports halls, etc., where students could participate in social and cultural activities in their schools. Some key respondents and teachers from the vocational schools indicated they had well-maintained laboratories and workshops for the students. Some schools were mentioned to be constructed as campuses with a variety of facilities in it. Some respondents from schools with boarding facilities indicated they had sufficient capacity for quality accommodation in their schools. One concern about the newly constructed schools mentioned was the style of architecture, stating that sometimes green areas and leisure spaces for children were replaced by buildings, which could deprive the students of spaces supportive of their physical and psychological development.

Some key informants and teachers pointed out specific physical inadequacies of school buildings. One of the general concerns mentioned was students with special needs. Some key informants and teachers stated that the schools could be developed further to ensure full access of the students with special needs to schools, especially those with physical and visual disabilities. In addition, key informants and teachers reported that libraries, sports halls and places where children could spend their free time did not exist in all schools, mostly upper-secondary schools. Some key informants referred to insufficient personnel for the maintenance of school facilities and cleaning. Particularly in the earthquake-prone regions, concern about the physical conditions of school buildings referred to the need to strengthen the buildings and ensure their resistance to future earthquakes.

Regarding the urban-rural divide, some schools in rural settlements or smaller provinces have limited financial resources to develop their physical conditions. For example, some key informants and teachers reported that school buildings and classrooms in village schools were old and had problems with basic needs such as electricity or heating. Regarding the lack of financial resources, the school administrations and teachers had to put individual effort into physical maintenance by painting the classrooms or developing campaigns to establish libraries in those schools. Moreover, some lower- and upper-secondary schools in those settlements did not have proper indoor facilities for the students to spend time, for example, during the lunch breaks, especially needed in heavy winter conditions.

A critical component of the school resources is the *class size*, measured by the number of students per classroom at different levels. According to the MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education 2019–2020, the average class size is 21 primary and lower-secondary education students and 19 in upper-secondary education (*see Table 4 in Section 2.4.2*).

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The qualitative data suggest that the number of students per classroom may increase in particular cases, up to 40–50 students in a single classroom. For example, some types of schools, such as Anatolian upper-secondary schools, were reported to have classes with more students than other school types. It was also indicated that school dropouts were not prevalent in those schools.

When the education levels are considered, the qualitative data show that lower-secondary schools reported having more populous classes than upper-secondary ones. Regarding the centre-periphery divide in urban settings, the centrally located schools were mentioned to have bigger classroom sizes compared to the peripheral schools in relatively remote neighbourhoods. In addition, the districts that received migration were indicated to give bigger classroom sizes, which required additional measures to arrange the student numbers proportionally.

When the regional differences are considered, the qualitative data show that bigger classroom sizes were more prevalent in the smaller provinces and rural settings, mainly in the Eastern and Southeastern regions, at all education levels. It was reported that due to the limited number of classrooms, teachers or low level of students in a particular grade in schools such as village schools, "combined grade classes" were formed, where the students from different grades (usually at the primary school, Grades 1, 2 and 3) were educated in the same classroom by the same teacher.

Another consequence of big classroom size is "double-shift education," which is defined as "the education provided for the same student groups in the same school in the morning and in the afternoon" (MoNE, 2020a). It is a model used when schools' physical classrooms or teacher capacity is insufficient. According to the 11th Development Plan (2019–2023), 41.3 per cent of primary school students, 33.6 per cent of lower-secondary school students, and 6.8 per cent of upper-secondary school students include double-shift education (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye-Department of Strategy and Budget, 2019). The target for one-shift education for all levels is 100 per cent for 2023.

Some key informants, teachers and parents also mentioned the adverse consequences of receiving education in crowded classes on children's academic performance at school, as students who could not understand the course content or the lectures during the lesson would likely not attend school regularly. It was also stated that in big classrooms, the learning environment considerably distorted the performance of both the teachers and students. The teachers could not spend sufficient time with each student in the classroom, and the students did not have the chance to benefit from the teacher's support when needed. Moreover, they could have adaptation problems.

> **The teacher should take care of each child individually. For example, There are 50 people in our classes, and these are important things. You teach in the West region of Türkiye with 20 people. How can a teacher deal with 50 people here? These [numbers] inevitably alienate children from school.**
> (Key Informant, Van, Primary)

The qualitative data show that *mixed-gender classes* may act as a reason for remaining out of school, especially for girls, due to the gender norms prevalent in the family or among the parents, mostly the male members of the family. Qualitative data show that there were some fathers, although indicated to be to a lesser extent compared to the past, who did not send their daughters to school due to the existence of mixed-gender classes at school. Such conservative concerns were prevalent after lower-secondary education (*see Section 5.1.1 Gender-Related Norms*).

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It was indicated by the key informants and teachers working in the provinces such as Muş, Kars, Van and Şanlıurfa that such concerns of the parents might easily cause the daughters to remain out of school because the parents did not want their girls to have any interaction with the boys. When the children were registered for school, some of the parents visited the school and asked the teachers and key informants to keep tabs on their daughters' contact with the boys and maintain it at a minimum level, for example, by not allowing them to sit together at the desk or play together during the breaks. Some of the alternatives adopted by the parents who did not allow their daughters to attend mixed-gender classes were reported as registering children in the single-sex Imam Hatip schools or open schools if the parents were more aware of other schooling options or sending them to Quran courses (sometimes with boarding) conducted by different religious communities.

Such gender-based norms of the parents were also reported to create problems between the parents and the children, as some daughters would like to attend school because they would have better university educational prospects. Some of the key informants and teachers indicated that such gender-based norms of the parents required efforts from the teachers and school administrators to convince the parents about school enrolment or attendance of their daughters. Such efforts were reported to be successful in some cases but not in others because it was difficult to break the stereotyped gender norms among the parents.

> "To tell the truth, neither judge me nor execute me, I am very against this coeducation. If it weren't mixed, believe me, what can I say, I would work for the rest of my life and I would never leave my daughters, I would send them to school. My daughters are very clever. God knows. But, what can I do, it doesn't work. Boy with the girl, the girls with the boys...
> (Father, Van, Dimension 5)

Learning materials as another aspect of school resources; the qualitative data show that the textbooks were provided free of charge by the MoNE to children, facilitating access to the basic learning materials. In addition, some of the key informants stated that the MoNE also provides additional written or visual materials through TRT EBA or the website of the Ministry.

From the qualitative data, two concerns about the learning materials were identified. One is the cost of the supplementary learning materials that the teachers could ask the students to use or the learning and test materials that could be required for school placement exams, namely *Liselere Geçiş Sistemi* (LGS, the high school entrance exam) and *Yükseköğretim Kurumları Sınavı* (YKS, the higher education institutions exam). Some parents with low income levels reported having difficulties. The second prevalent concern about learning materials was the limited existence of school libraries and books, particularly in the Eastern part of the country or the rural settlements. Many key informants and teachers stated that they tried to overcome such a problem by organizing public campaigns to collect books through donations and establish a library in their schools. Difficulties in obtaining supplementary learning materials decreased the teachers' motivation and made them feel they could not sufficiently support their students' education.

Regarding *curriculum*, the qualitative data show differences between school types, particularly at the upper-secondary level. Many key informants and teachers referred to difficulties related to the curricula taught in their particular schools. For example, some key informants and teachers from the Imam Hatip schools stated that the students could have problems in some course topics, such as Arabic, and could experience decreases in their academic performance. In Anatolian and Science upper-secondary schools, the curriculum was indicated to be demanding and condensed, but students were prepared for such a curriculum throughout the LGS preparation process. The curriculum seems to be a serious concern for the vocational upper-secondary schools, mainly because of the similarities to those of the Anatolian upper-secondary schools, which could sometimes be challenging. Considering the lower level of academic success of the students at the vocational schools compared to the others based on their scores on the school placement test, some key informants and teachers stated that theoretical course loads were rather difficult for many of their students, which could end up with poor academic performance and demotivation towards studying. Many key informants and teachers working in vocational schools stated that the curriculum for those schools should be revised to give more space for practice compared to theoretical input, focusing on the vocational development of the students.

School Resources-Related Barriers

The qualitative data show that school resources have been improving in Türkiye. The physical conditions of the schools improved in recent years; however, there still seems to be room for improvement, particularly for the schools located in rural settlements and villages. There also seems to be an imbalance regarding the class sizes due to factors such as school type, location of the school, and the urban-rural divide.

In this respect, class size might act as a barrier to the academic performance of the students, particularly in the schools at the central locations on the one hand and in the schools located in rural areas on the other, as a factor decreasing the attention of the teachers to each student in the classroom (*see Table 26*). Mixed-gender classes, on the other hand, seem to be influential on parents' decisions of not sending their girls to school and the preferences of school types for the girls at the lower and upper-secondary levels. Learning materials are observed as a low-risk barrier because the MoNE provides the materials, but the cost of supplementary learning materials and the limited existence of libraries at particular schools, mostly in rural settlements or small provinces, is a risk affecting children's academic performance and motivation to study. The curriculum is a potential barrier for upper-secondary students at vocational schools due to the intensity of the theoretical input compared to practical input related to a vocation.

Table 26:
School Resources-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Insufficient physical conditions of the schools		*	*		*
Big class size		*	*		**
Existence of mixed-gender classes	**		*	**	**
Learning materials	*	*	*	*	*
Curriculum	*		*	***	***

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.4.3 Teacher Characteristics

Teachers are often the primary actors in ensuring the well-being of children at school because they are in close and daily contact with the children. The qualitative data show that teachers' attitudes could seriously affect children's relationship to school and education. Many respondents indicated that whereas the students who liked their teachers were further motivated to attend school and study, the students who believed their teachers did not value them could distance themselves from school.

Regarding *communication between the teacher and student*, numerous children and parents stated that the children liked their teachers and enjoyed their classes, which was considered a factor that could keep children in school (*see Table 27*). Some key informants indicated that when the teachers behaved with friendliness to students and made them feel that their teachers valued them, the student's behaviours, attitudes, and academic performances were also observed to change positively. So, the key to positive and effective communication with the students was knowing the children, their characteristics and needs well and showing respect and support to the students and their needs, which was labelled a "student-centred" approach to education, replacing the previous teacher-centred approach.

Some key informants exemplified their efforts to establish positive communication with their students. It was stated that some teachers followed up with their students, and when problems were identified at school, they communicated with the parents to help overcome them. Moreover, efforts to communicate with the students were considered necessary for intervening and solving their problems with other students at the school. Another way of establishing friendly and healthy communication with the students was to organize extra-curricular activities such as picnics or movie events for and with the students, where the children and teachers could spend time together in a less formal setting than the school.

All the different efforts to establish and keep communication with the students were stated to increase the children's motivation towards studying, strengthen their bonds to school, and increase their academic performances at school.

> **I think it was actually the teachers that made me love school. You can talk to some teachers whenever you want. That day, my desire to go to school increases even more. So it depends on the teacher.**
> (Girl, Trabzon, Dimension 7)

In terms of education levels, many key informants and teachers indicated that establishing healthy and positive communication with the students at the primary school level was vital not only for the children's motivation and positive feeling about school and studying but also for being able to equip children with basic skills such as reading and writing. Nevertheless, well-managed communication with students at the upper-secondary level to avoid any potential non-attendance or school dropout was reported to be challenging due to problems of students with teachers.

The qualitative data also show that some children and parents reported experiencing unpleasant instances with teachers and school administrators at school, mainly attributed to the perceived attitudes of the teachers towards students. The qualitative data provide some examples of those cases where the children reported not being able to communicate with the teacher constructively, being exposed to negative attitudes or treatment by teachers and school administrators, being excluded from the classroom, or being exposed to too much discipline and control by the school administrators. Similar concerns were also voiced for the students of educational practices through inclusion/integration, mainly in the form of feeling excluded in the classroom environment. In many of those cases, the children indicated that they felt worthless and distant from the school environment due to the attitudes of the teachers and school administrators. It was also possible to observe from the qualitative data that the reported problems with the teachers increased at the upper-secondary level, mostly among boys, probably due to adolescent psychology, which could make children more sensitive and reactive to the teachers' attitudes.

Many key informants and teachers referred to the consequences of limited communication between the students and the teachers. It was stated that when the children perceived some problems with the teachers or perceived teachers' attitudes negatively, their attendance may be affected negatively. Some parents indicated that when they asked their children why they did not want to attend school at particular times, they voiced their concerns about the teachers' attitudes. In such cases, the children were reported to hesitate to attend school, resulting in non-attendance or irregular attendance, which could sometimes lead to a request to change schools or drop out altogether.

Both in terms of communication with the students and the teachers' attitudes, a critical actor was counselling teachers at schools. Counselling teachers' roles were reported to include the identification of the concerns and problems of the children at school and providing support to children to minimize the negative influence of those problems on children.

A final aspect related to teachers' characteristics is their *skills and educational competencies* as perceived by the parents and children. While many students and parents reported being satisfied with teachers' skills, some stated their concerns about teachers' classroom management approaches. One of the common concerns reported was the attention teachers paid towards the needs of the children in the classroom. The qualitative data show that teachers were sometimes perceived not to be fully efficient in responding to students' questions, not being able to allocate enough time to the children who could not understand some of the topics, or not applying different teaching techniques (but teaching in a very traditional way). Some of the parents indicated that the low academic performance of their children resulted from the classroom experience and that their children could not learn at school and lagged behind the curricula, for example, in particular topics like the English language or mathematics.

Teacher Characteristics-Related Barriers

Teachers are an essential factor that could help children establish a strong bond with education or cause demotivation towards education and studying. Retention in education can be affected by insufficient communication between teachers and children, teachers' attitudes towards students and low educational performances (*see Table 27).* Those factors can influence non-attendance, school changes and dropouts due to the negative psychological or pedagogical impact on the children, which could often be reflected in low academic performance or problems at school. The qualitative data show that the teacher factor was influential at all levels, particularly at the primary and upper-secondary levels. More prevalently, it becomes an issue for the older age groups because children become more sensitive during adolescence. Different pedagogical competencies of teachers were reported to affect children's academic performances at all education levels rather than creating additional risks for school dropouts.

Table 27:
Teacher Characteristics-Related Barriers

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Limited communication between teacher and children	**	**	**	***	**
Teachers' attitudes	***	**	**	***	**
Teachers' educational competencies	*	**	*	*	*

Note: the number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.4.3 Security in and on the Way to School

Security in, around and on the way to school can be considered a serious factor that could increase the children's risks of non-attendance and school dropout. Security concerns at schools appear in different forms, such as bullying or the existence of gangs, which could take various forms with severe consequences. In this section, in light of the qualitative data, the security issue is analysed regarding the safety of the children in the school environment and safety on the way to school to show the extent, reasons, types, consequences and schools' coping mechanisms in the face of security threats.

The qualitative data show that bullying is the most prominent factor threatening school security. Although some parents and children in the qualitative research sample indicated that they did not witness any bullying at school, many key informants and teachers stated that bullying existed. However, its prevalence differed according to the school's location, type, or education level. In terms of its extent, the qualitative data show that it is more prevalent among boys aged 14–17 in upper-secondary schools in bigger cities.

The qualitative data include examples of types of bullying in the school environment. Some physical bullying instances, which appeared to be more prevalent among boys, were reported as physical aggression in the form of hitting, kicking or punching, or fights between groups of children within the classroom, outside the classroom but within the school, or outside the school building but around the school. Examples of *verbal bullying* include acts of verbal assaults, teasing/mocking, putdowns or cruelty. *Social bullying* was exemplified in the form of the intentional exclusion of some children from group activities and settings. In many of those cases, specific categories of children were reported to be exposed more to social and verbal bullying, such as children from low-income families, children with disabilities in the context of educational practices through inclusion/integration, children under protection at state institutions; migrant/foreign students such as the Syrian children UTP; over-aged children studying at lower grades than the grade for their age; shy children; children with hyperactivity; or children with illnesses. Some key informants stated that whereas the girls were

more exposed to social and verbal bullying, the boys were both engaged in and exposed to physical or verbal bullying. There were also reported instances where older children bullied younger children at school.

An important aspect of the existence of bullying in the school environment is that it was reported to affect almost all the students at school negatively because it creates an unpeaceful school environment, which could disturb the education processes of every child at school. For instance, there were also some reported cases in the qualitative data that the students who were not engaged in bullying were punished as part of the whole class in which the bullying occurred.

There were also some instances where the teachers and key informants referred to security concerns occurring *outside but around the school*, often in the form of conflicts or clashes between different groups of children, which were labelled as "gangs" by respondents. Those gangs were reported to be composed of students, mostly boys, and engaged in conflicts mostly after school in the form of fights between students from different schools or between students at the school and other children. Some key informants and teachers also stated that, in some cases, children with migrant backgrounds could come together in gangs.

In addition, some key informants and teachers stated that particularly in big cities, or sometimes in some particular districts or neighbourhoods of that province, there could be some security threats for the children around the schools in terms of the distribution or sale of addictive substances to children, which was indicated as an emerging concern for the parents.

From the qualitative data, bullying at school was observed to create severe consequences for the children. First, the children exposed to bullying were reported to be psychologically affected by those instances because they felt fear, hardship, embarrassment, sadness, loneliness, or unwantedness which might even sometimes necessitate psychological support, and they started to develop negative feelings towards the children who bullied them or towards the school. Due to such feelings, a prevalent consequence of bullying was mentioned as non-attendance or irregular school attendance. There were some parents and teachers who indicated that children did not want to go to school when they were exposed to bullying, or they would skip school without the knowledge of their parents. In addition, it was stated to affect the children's academic performances negatively at school. Another consequence of bullying was the demand of the children or the parents to change the student's class or the school through transfer.

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A final consequence of bullying was indicated as school dropout because the children decided to leave the school of their own will as a result of bullying. It was stated that in those cases, the attitude and awareness levels of the parents became important to keep the children at school because sometimes the parents could agree with the children's decision due to a lack of information about other options such as school transfers or class changes. There were also some cases in the qualitative data where the children who were engaged in bullying could be asked to change schools or be dismissed from the school through disciplinary action.

In the 11th Development Plan (2019–2023), one of the measures is preventing "physical and emotional violence against teachers and students." The qualitative data show some of the mechanisms that the school administrations are developing or implementing to avoid security-related problems and bullying at schools.

One of the mechanisms to manage the cases of bullying was mentioned as an intervention by the school administrators and counselling teachers. In those cases, mostly the counselling teachers were observed to communicate with the students who were bullied and/or being bullied to achieve a peaceful settlement of the issue and support the students psychologically. In some cases, other teachers in the school or the parents were reported to be involved in cooperating for the children's well-being. Directorate General of Special Education and Guidance Services of the Ministry of National Education has prepared awareness, coping, and psychoeducational programmes on peer and cyberbullying for students from pre-primary to high school, and presentations and information brochures for parents and teachers are to be implemented in the 2022–2023 academic year.

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Another mechanism implemented in cases of bullying was the disciplinary procedures in severe cases in line with the school regulations. As a result of implementing disciplinary procedures, the discipline committees were reported to be able to adopt a variety of sanctions, including recommendation of school change through transfer to the students who were engaged in bullying acts or dismissal of the student engaged in bullying acts from the school. While some key informants and teachers indicated that the disciplinary sanctions were not sufficient to disincentivize the bullying, others stated that some measures, such as school change, could help children start a new life at school without being stigmatized by other students.

Another mechanism to avoid bullying at school was reported as the organization of seminars for the parents and children about bullying and how to overcome it at schools as an initiative of the school administrations.

With regards to the mechanisms implemented by the school administrators to avoid security threats that could come from outside the school, the qualitative data show that some of the school administrators increased the security measures at school, for example, prohibiting entry to the school or closing school gates, or surrounding the school with fences so that the inside of the school was not visible to outsiders. In addition, some school administrators stated that the provincial police department was working hard to avoid security threats to students and children. Some key informants stated that such measures could put extra pressure on the children and make them feel uncomfortable at school, but they mostly satisfied the parents concerned about their children's security.

The qualitative data show that security threats exist at and *on the way to school*, particularly for girls at lower and upper-secondary levels. Security concerns were observed to depend on gender norms on the one hand and, on the other, on the geographical characteristics of the children's environment.

For the former, it was possible to observe that some parents considered their daughters' security as being threatened by the existence of members of the opposite sex around their children. For example, some key informants and teachers indicated that some parents considered schools, such as the Imam Hatip or vocational schools only for girls, as places that attracted outside boys' attention and hesitated to send their daughters to schools. In some other cases, girls stated that they were exposed to verbal assaults on the street, and that was why they sometimes felt scared on the way to school.

For the latter, geographical characteristics could be discussed concerning the urban-rural divide. In urban settings, some parents stated that they perceived various security threats from the environment towards their children, mainly if they were new in that province. Some parents did not allow their children, mostly the girls, to go out or take transportation alone; family members had to accompany the children to school. Also, for some children studying at vocational schools or vocational education centres, the daily schedule was sometimes stated to extend late into the night, creating security concerns for the parents about their children's return home from school.

In rural settings, security on the way to school was a condition of the distance of the school to the children's residence. For long distances, the parents had some security concerns regarding the transportation of the children to schools. For shorter distances, where children walked to school, some children voiced that some factors could scare them, like the wild animals or dogs on the way to school.

Barriers Related to Security in School and on the Way to School

Security in school and on the way to school *(see Table 28)*, as the fourth component of school supply and quality, expresses itself in the form of bullying and the existence of "gangs" and emerges as a prominent barrier for all age groups and both sexes, but is more prominent at the upper-secondary school level. The types of bullying seem to differ for the girls and boys, where the boys were more engaged in or exposed to physical bullying. The extent of exposure to bullying at school is usually observed to result in irregular attendance, non-attendance or school changes, and in some cases, in school dropout. Although the security threats on the way to school are less reported, they are also observed to create barriers for children, mostly for girls in the lower and upper-secondary levels.

Table 28:
Barriers Related to Security in School and on the Way to School

Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Bullying/school environment	**	*	**	***	***
Bullying/on the way to school	**	*	*	**	**

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.5 COVID-19 Pandemic and the Education of Children in National Population

The unexpected outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 affected all aspects of life globally, including education. Not only the children and their parents across the globe but also the education policymakers and implementers have had to face and cope with the challenges created by the pandemic to sustain the provision of education as a basic right of children. Like many countries in the world, in Türkiye, one of the first measures in education was to close down the schools on 16 March 2020, and since then, schools have been partially opened or closed during different periods of the pandemic. From March 2020 to the end of that school year, education at all levels was mainly provided through distance education, and as summarized in Section 2.4, several measures have been taken to develop the infrastructure for and provision of distance education.

In this section, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the children's education in Türkiye are analysed in light of the qualitative data collected for this study. The field research of the study was designed before the outbreak of the pandemic and did not include any specific questions about the effects of the pandemic. Because the field research was conducted during the pandemic, the qualitative data inevitably reflect the different experiences of the children and their parents and those of the key informants and teachers throughout the pandemic. Thus, the qualitative data are rich enough to briefly analyse the first year of the pandemic on the education of the children in Türkiye, particularly those who were already in school (Dimensions 4, 5 and 7) when the pandemic started.

The first observation from the qualitative data is that all the at-risk children at all levels of education and their parents in the qualitative research sample were informed/aware of the transition into distance education from face-to-face education. Nevertheless, the qualitative data also show that not all could benefit from the distance education system equally. Some key informants and teachers indicated that there had been some differentiation in access to education and quality of education for the students at the public and private schools. Similar inequalities were observed among public school students, particularly those from low-income households.

Although some children in the qualitative research sample stated that they could attend online classes regularly, many children and their parents reported that children could not properly and regularly attend/follow the courses. Based on the statements of the teachers and key informants, it could be observed that students in the lower grades could attend more online classes compared to those in the upper grades; the children who already had irregular attendance before the pandemic almost entirely stopped attending during distance education; children who were successful and regularly attending school before the pandemic had some difficulties participating in the online classes; and, students in villages, rural areas or disadvantaged neighbourhoods of the provinces could not benefit efficiently from distance education.

Below, depending on the qualitative data, the experiences of the children with distance education during the pandemic are analysed for at-risk children at different school types and from different provinces of the country, considering the reasons and consequences of their experiences with distance education, categorized according to demand-side and supply-side factors.

5.5.1 COVID-19 Pandemic and Demand-Side Factors

Economic factors were voiced as the most prevalent reason for being unable to attend or regularly follow distance education by all different groups of respondents in the qualitative research sample. Economic factors can be observed as effects of the lack of technical equipment and decreasing household income levels, bringing child labour back into the picture.

As technical equipment such as computers, tablets, smartphones, televisions, and internet connection have been the principal means for distance education, *lack of equipment* can be considered a prominent reason for not being able to benefit from distance education. Many children and parents in the qualitative research sample indicated they had some equipment at home, such as a TV or smartphone, but the equipment was not sufficient for all the children at home, or the equipment they owned was not compatible with the requirements of the distance education system. It was also stated that when the owner of the equipment (the mother or the father) was not at home, the children could not follow the courses. Some children indicated that they prioritized their siblings' education in lower grades by allowing them to use the existing equipment, and they could not follow the courses regularly.

Some of the children and parents in the qualitative research sample indicated that children followed the courses from the TRT EBA but could not attend the simultaneous lectures through Zoom due to a lack of equipment or incompatibility with the existing equipment. Lack of internet was another commonly stated reason for not being able to attend the online courses. It was observed that many children did not have internet at home, even in the city centres, and such a lack was even more prominent in the rural settings or villages. There were problems with access to the internet even within different neighbourhoods of the same province.

Only a limited number of the children and their parents in the qualitative research sample indicated that they could benefit from the equipment and internet support provided by the MoNE. Some other children and parents stated that although they communicated their need for equipment to the school administrations and teachers, they could not obtain tablets.

> We didn't have technological equipment. They helped my sister from school. She could attend her classes. My mother also gave us her own phone. As I had a younger slibing, I was prioritizing her/him because I thought s/he needed to learn right now because s/he was in lower-secondary school. I couldn't attend most of my classes. I told this to my teachers, too. Of course, I would like to follow online education. When I can't do it, I try to progress from my own books at home by myself. I'm trying to watch something when appropriate.
> (Girl, Konya, Dimension 7)

> I can only watch on TV. I can't attend live classes because I don't have a phone. My father is usually at work, so I can't get in on the phone either.
> (Girl, Bursa, Dimension 7)

An important observation here is that many children who could not follow distance education mentioned that they regularly attended school before the pandemic, were successful at school before the pandemic, and were willing to participate in distance education if they had any technical equipment or internet. Such instances make it clear that lack of equipment seriously affected children's education by interrupting the educational prospects of those regular school attendees.

Loss of income was observed as another economic factor that negatively affected the children's educational prospects during the pandemic. Numerous children and parents indicated that the mothers, fathers or siblings/children lost their jobs during the pandemic. In some cases, such job losses were mentioned to be permanent and, in other cases, temporary. Two main consequences of income loss could be observed: it constrained the opportunities for purchasing the equipment needed for distance education, and some children who were engaged in job search activities had to start working to support the family or did not spend time being idle when there was no education activity. The latter factor was observed to have resulted in more child labour cases, particularly among at-risk boys aged 10–13 and 14–17. Some parents stated that they let their boys work outside during the pandemic; the children started working as seasonal workers or carrying more responsibilities as unpaid family workers in the land of the family, with the family's animals or at their parents' businesses. One concern is whether those children would return to school when the schools are opened.

> The teachers kept calling for the live sessions. But, my sibling also had a lesson, I wanted him/ her to follow. We had only one phone. I said I had better work, rather than staying idle. If there were two tablets, I would have attended the classes. I would do it in the online system, but not in the face-to-face system. I would have left the job if it was online. I didn't understand the teachers and lessons at school, but maybe online education would be easier.
> (Boy, Bursa, Dimension 5)

Another demand-side factor that negatively affected the distance educational prospects of at-risk children, particularly girls, was the *increasing domestic responsibilities* at home. Those children who used to go to school before the pandemic were exposed to more domestic responsibilities during the pandemic, in a way that decreased their participation levels in distance education. Here, the high number of household members staying at home during the pandemic and the need to care for siblings or other household members negatively affected more at-risk girls.

A striking finding from the qualitative data that requires attention is *child, early and forced marriages*, which were reported to increase during the pandemic. UNICEF has already highlighted the increasing risk for child, early and forced marriages due to the adverse effects of the pandemic by warning that "school closures, economic stress, service disruptions, pregnancy, and parental deaths due to the pandemic are putting the most vulnerable girls at increased risk of child, early and forced marriage."[70] Some evidence for such a risk was identified in the qualitative data. Some key informants and teachers from the provinces, such as Şanlıurfa, stated that some of the schoolgirls, mostly in Grades 11 and 12, were married during the pandemic, and it was mostly due to distance education, which put a distance between the girls and the education for an unknown period. It was also stated that those girls could have finished school and even gone to university if there were no gaps due to the pandemic.

The qualitative data show that the COVID-19 pandemic also created some *socio-emotional stress* for the children, negatively affecting their well-being, socialisation and participation in social life. Many children and their parents in the qualitative research sample stated they did not leave their homes during the pandemic to avoid risking their health. Some also indicated that curfews for children prohibited their options to go out. Some of those children said they remained in contact with their friends by phone or the internet. It was indicated that the children experienced social and moral deprivation because they could not spend their energy seeing or meeting their friends to play with them throughout the pandemic, which is required for socialisation and personal development. Some of the parents stated that staying at home all the time also increased the exposure of the children to mobile phones and TV in a way that perpetuated the risk of technology addiction among the children.

Another aspect of socio-emotional stress for the children was the *demotivation of the children* concerning education. Some children in the research sample, both girls and boys, particularly in the last grade of the lower or upper-secondary schools, indicated that being unable to study or follow the courses regularly decreased or eliminated their motivation and enthusiasm about studying. Some children stated that they could not understand the course topics or concentrate on the lectures during the online lessons. Some others indicated that their chances of success at the school placement tests, such as LGS, diminished because they could not follow the courses. The latter is an important risk for school dropouts, and additional efforts would be needed to increase the children's motivation towards education when the schools reopened.

70 https://www.unicef.org/Türkiye/en/press-releases/10-million-additional-girls-risk-child-marriage-due-covid-19.

Concerning human capital, a prominent risk was a *lack of support from parents*. It was indicated by some of the key informants and teachers that online education also required the support of the parents in the children's educational processes, and only some parents could perform such a supportive role. Some parents stated that they spent time helping their children at primary school to learn how to read and write or followed their children's daily course schedules through the teachers' communication groups. Some teachers and key informants noted that despite the communication mechanisms they developed and used (such as WhatsApp groups), they could not always get positive responses from the parents to ensure their children's participation in the online courses. In addition, some children stated that their parent's education level was not high enough to support them during the distance education process.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Demand-Side Barriers

The qualitative data show that throughout the pandemic, distance education as a measure against the challenges of the pandemic did not benefit all students equally (*see Table 29*). In general, the adverse effects of the pandemic were more evident for the at-risk children.

In Türkiye, where approximately 18 million students entered the distance education period, the Ministry of National Education established fixed and mobile EBA Support points for students with access and device support; EBA was made free to access for up to 8 GB via GSM operators and tablets with webcam, and GSM internet support were distributed. In addition, EBA Live Course services were provided to make it possible to attend TRT EBA and synchronous courses. Although students could follow their courses thanks to these tools and support, some students and families stated that participation in the mentioned courses was somewhat irregular or impossible. Lack of equipment was observed to be the major barrier for all age groups of at-risk children. Moreover, although the TRT EBA was observed to be a useful distance education alternative, it was observed that there were children who were not able to follow the synchronous courses.

In addition, the loss of income in the household during the pandemic seemed to create more dependence on child labour, both in the form of paid and unpaid family work. Here, it is possible to see that due to the pandemic, at-risk boys aged 10–13 have become more prone to enter the labour market, a factor which is likely to affect their educational prospects negatively after the pandemic. For the at-risk girls, it was the increasing domestic responsibilities that were observed to create obstacles to attending distance education.

All children were observed to have experienced some socio-emotional stress, restricting their chances of socialisation and well-being. Not being able to attend online courses seems to create a considerable decrease in the motivation of children to study. Thus, even the children who were already successful and regularly attended school before the pandemic were observed to lose motivation and expressed concern about their chances of obtaining good scores at the school placement exams, such as the LGS. Lack of support from the parents was also riskier for the children who recently started a new level of education, such as Grades 1 or 5.

Table 29:
COVID-19 Pandemic and Demand-Side Barriers

Domain	Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
		D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Economic barriers	Lack of equipment and internet		*	**		***
	Loss of income	**	*	***	**	***
	Child labour	**		***	**	***
Socio-cultural barriers	Increasing domestic responsibilities	**	*	***	**	***
Social cohesion	Socio-emotional stress	*	*	***	*	***
Human capital	Lack of support from parents		**	**		*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.5.2 COVID-19 Pandemic and Supply-Side Factors

The qualitative data also point to some supply-side factors that have conditioned the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on at-risk children's education. During the pandemic, education was provided through distance education. The distance education infrastructure was provided by TRT EBA, the digital educational portal of the MoNE, which functioned as a website and mobile application. In addition, TRT EBA channels also broadcasted courses prepared for both basic and secondary education. Finally, some teachers indicated using platforms such as Zoom and setting up WhatsApp groups to send materials to students or receive their assignments.

The qualitative data show that the school administrations and teachers developed several *support mechanisms* to keep children within the distance education system and communicate with the parents. The first mechanism was the distribution of tablets and the internet to the children initiated and planned by the MoNE. Teachers and key informants indicated that the MoNE sent the schools the list of students to distribute the equipment to, and the schools communicated with the parents and supplied that equipment to the children. The teachers and key informants stated that such support sometimes could not meet the demand, and they had to put extra effort into helping children. Moreover, some key informants stated that equipment distribution was planned at the central level, and teachers were not well informed about the process. Psychological resilience and psycho-education programmes were also provided to students from pre-school to high school level by guidance teachers/psychological counsellors during the pandemic.

It was indicated that the villages' students were negatively affected by the lack of equipment and internet. Some teachers stated that they collected old computers and, after repairing them, donated those to the students; they contacted different individual donors to find support for children's equipment needs; or they provided internet to the children. In addition, it was also mentioned that some municipalities and metropolitan municipalities took the initiative to provide technical equipment or internet. In addition, EBA support centres were established at schools or community centres for the children who did not have sufficient equipment for distant education and EBA Support Point vehicles were used to increase the access of students living far away from support centres. EBA was free to access for up to 8 GB via GSM operators.

Another type of support to the children during distance education was psychological support provided by teachers, including branch teachers. Some key informants and teachers stated that communication between the school administration, counselling services and teachers positively affected the efforts of the schools to keep children within the distance education system. Student monitoring and follow-up systems were reported to be implemented to reach the parents and children who could not attend the online classes, and attempts were made to resolve the problems identified as the reason for non-attendance (for example, by providing a TV for a household in the village). It was also stated that distance education was more difficult to implement in some of the courses, such as music or physical education, and some of the teachers in those branches spent their lecture time supporting the children psychologically rather than following the routine curricula.

The qualitative data show that the pandemic negatively affected in-person education at schools and other educational activities for children. One of the affected education institutions was the *vocational education centres (VECs),* where the students were given some theoretical courses but were also placed as apprentices in some workplaces. Distance education was adopted for the theoretical courses, but the children's participation in online courses was noted to be lower than expected. In addition, as the children were also required to work (as a part of the apprenticeship education) in workplaces, their closure also seemed to negatively affect the education of children in the VECs. Some key informants stated that some workplaces terminated the children's contracts, while others could not accept new students.

The qualitative data indicate a significant problem as the *temporary suspension of the school transfer operations*. One of the key informants stated that the school/student transfer system was put on hold within the measures to address the pandemic and decrease mobility between provinces, which meant that parents who moved to another province could not transfer their children to schools in the city of destination and could not register their children in new schools. The key informant stated that as a result, some students could not be registered at schools, and they could not access the distance education system in their old or new school either because they were unregistered.

A final problem due to the pandemic was observed as *the interruption of some operations of the schools or the MoNE*. Many teachers and key informants indicated that attendance monitoring and eventual household/parent visits, some of the most common practices for decreasing non-attendance and school dropout, could not be fully operationalized during the pandemic. In addition, it was also reported that the extra-curricular activities organized by the schools, such as university visits, social activities like movie nights, sports activities or courses, activities with non-governmental organizations, awareness raising activities (such as on the prevention of child, early and forced marriages), workshops (such as on elimination of non-attendance or social integration of the Syrian UTP population) had to be stopped or postponed due to the conditions of the pandemic. Also, at the central level, the MoNE was reported to suspend some of its projects in cooperation with international organizations such as UNICEF. As a result of the suspension or interruption of such activities, some key informants stated that some of the targets in the Strategic Plan of the MoNE, such as a 100 per cent enrolment rate by 2023, seemed unlikely to be realized due to the negative effects of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Supply-Side Barriers

During the pandemic, it was observed that many students had difficulties in regularly attending and following distance education. As a supply-side intervention, one of the support measures was providing technical equipment to students. At the same time, it could be observed from the qualitative data that it did not quantitatively meet the actual amount of demand of children and parents *(see Table 30)*. Although many schools acted and developed mechanisms to keep in contact with children and parents, such efforts were not always sufficient to keep all children in the system, and their lack of communication with parents, usually due to the indifference of the parents, resulted in irregular attendance or non-attendance to distance education.

The interruption of face-to-face theoretical education given in vocational education centres and practical education in workplaces diminished the educational opportunities for children. The suspension of student transfers was also a reason that hindered the children's access to distance education. In addition, interruption of the schools' extra-curricular activities, their cooperation with other education stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and the projects implemented at the central level appeared as factors that could affect efforts towards ensuring school enrolment and attendance of the children during and after the pandemic.

Table 30:
COVID-19 Pandemic and Supply-Side Barriers

Domain	Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
		D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
School supply	Inadequate amount of equipment and internet		**	**		**
	Lack of communication with the parents		*	**		**
	Interruption of apprenticeship opportunities in VECs			**		**
	Freezing school transfer operations			**		**
	Suspension/delay of activities and projects	*	*	*	*	*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

5.5.3 Overall Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Education of Children in the National Population

The qualitative data show that the COVID-19 pandemic created immediate and long-term consequences for the children's educational prospects. The key informants, teachers and parents frequently cited two prominent consequences: learning losses and the risk of school dropout.

Learning losses were stated to be a consequence for all categories of children, even for those who could follow the courses and those who could not attend online classes regularly or could not attend at all. Some children who could follow the courses complained about not grasping the course content because online education was more difficult than in-person education settings. They stated that the courses were shorter, they could not ask questions comfortably, and teachers could not repeat some topics the students did not understand well due to time limitations. Moreover, they could not fulfil some course requirements that required more practice, such as graphic design, or they had connection problems that interrupted their attendance to online courses. Some of the teachers also indicated that through distance education, education was based on the transfer of knowledge virtually, but it was difficult to pay enough attention to the socio-emotional moods or needs of the children. As a result, some of the children stated that their academic performances declined compared to the pre-pandemic period, and they started to have difficulties in studying in general and practising test solving in particular. Some key informants and teachers stated that such learning losses and potential decreases in academic performances could also create difficulties, particularly when children take school placement tests like the LGS and YKS in the future.

The learning losses were evident for children who could not attend the courses regularly because they missed almost all the course content throughout the school year. Many teachers indicated that compensating for such learning losses would be very difficult in the coming years because adapting the children to school would be hard and would need time when they returned to the classroom. Some key informants and teachers stated that the curriculum in the education system was designed in a way to be more difficult at every grade, and those children who could not sufficiently progress in particular basic course topics such as mathematics would likely face learning difficulties in the upper grades, which would bring the risk of decreasing academic performance. Moreover, some teachers pointed out the need for official data regarding the extent of the learning losses because no studies or research identified such losses; such research could act as the scientific basis for catch-up initiatives for post-pandemic education.

The most severe consequence of the pandemic on children's educational prospects was reported as the risk of *potential school dropout after the pandemic*. Many key informants and teachers stated their concerns about the children who could not access distance education during the pandemic, as they were left out of the education system and lost contact with the schools. It was also reported that many children who did not regularly attend school or whose parents were somewhat hesitant about their schooling had poor academic performance before the pandemic and were further distanced from school during the pandemic and distance education activities. Some children in the qualitative research sample said they would not return to school after the pandemic. Some reasons for this were mentioned, such as losing motivation to study, starting to work or marriage. Some teachers and key informants stated there was no mechanism to identify who could follow the distance education and who remained out of school because all students were automatically considered successful in their grade transitions at the end of the school year. The impact of the pandemic on children's school attendance remains to be seen and may require extra effort to pull children back into school.

Chapter 6
Policy Analysis

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Following the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the factors and identification of barriers that affect school enrolment and non-attendance of children, this section focuses on the existing policy measures related to eliminating those barriers in Türkiye. Section 6 is divided into four parts: socio-economic support (financial and in-kind support), educational support and education governance regarding education policy priorities and school supply, and teacher supply and inclusiveness and participation in education policymaking and implementation. The policy analysis is based on the available data on the existing policy measures and the qualitative data collected for this study.

6.1 Socio-Economic Support

As discussed in Section 5.2.1, one of the prevalent barriers to children's education is economic deprivation, and combined with the high number of household members and children, economic deprivation of the households seems to result in children's irregular or non-attendance and school dropout, mainly due to older children's (primarily boys') engagement in income generating activities, i.e., child labour. In addition, school expenses, such as the cost of transportation or supplementary learning materials, can also act as a barrier. Several financial and in-kind support mechanisms targeting children and their households in Türkiye respond to these challenges.

6.1.1 Financial Support

One of the critical mechanisms of support to children is *scholarships*. Students at lower- and upper-secondary education levels (except Grade 5) can obtain scholarships from the MoNE when they are eligible to apply. These students must take and succeed in the Primary and Secondary Schools Scholarship Test (İOKBS), which is conducted every Spring. The scholarship for 2021 is TL 329.91 per month.

Another support mechanism for children is *family and education assistance*, including *conditional cash transfers*. These are part of the policies for social welfare provision and social assistance provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, distributed through every province's Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations. The expenditure for family and education assistance of MoFSS fluctuates around TL 4 to 5 million, with a decrease in 2020 due to school closures as a measure against the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 2 in Section 2.2 shows that the MoFSS's education assistance includes basic school needs, conditional cash transfers, lunch, schoolbooks, transportation, boarding and food, and transportation of children with disabilities.

The qualitative data show that although the scholarships to children and family education assistance could contribute positively to the school attendance of children in Türkiye, they are insufficient. Some reasons for this could be identified from the qualitative data. One of the reasons stated by some key informants and teachers was that the number of children at low economic levels at their schools was relatively high, but those who could benefit from the scholarships or social assistance payment had the worst economic levels. Also, some teachers and key informants from rural settings or the Eastern provinces stated that economic levels could go down dramatically in their schools. In addition, some parents were reported to receive conditional cash transfers but did not spend such payments on their children's education.

Another serious concern voiced was that, in some cases, the amount of support was considered to be low by the parents compared to the potential income that the children could earn, and in that sense, the parents could prefer their children to work rather than depend on social assistance. Another concern was the parents' lack of information and awareness about the available financial support mechanisms. In addition, it was mentioned by some children that their parents applied to such social assistance, but due to the procedures, their school expenses could not be covered by the state. A final reason is the success criteria for the children who want to benefit from the scholarship. Some key informants stated that the scholarship distribution procedures should be more flexible because, most of the time, children with low economic status could not perform well at school and were not allocated scholarships.

In those cases where the children or their parents were not eligible for scholarships or social assistance, many key informants and teachers developed informal financial support mechanisms for their students. For example, many teachers voluntarily established funds (labelled "teachers' fund") by collecting money among themselves and distributing it to their students that they observed needed support. In addition, school-parent associations were reported to play a role in some cases. Another financial support mechanism mentioned was scholarships provided by the municipalities for children with multiple vulnerabilities, such as living in single-parent households or having disabilities. In addition, some non-governmental organizations or wealthy businesspersons in some provinces or regions were reported to provide financial support, primarily for academically successful children with economic problems who would like to continue studying. There were also some cases in the qualitative data where the school administrators or the teachers tried to find jobs for parents of children with economic difficulties.

6.1.2 In-Kind Support

In Türkiye, numerous in-kind support initiatives to support children's education were mentioned in the qualitative data in addition to scholarships, social assistance and conditional cash transfers. Two of those supports are provided by the MoNE in the form of *education with transport* and *education with boarding*.

As already mentioned (*see Section 5.5 School Supply*), education with transport is "the practice of transporting primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary school students who have problems with access to the schools due to various reasons to certain schools daily to provide them with education" (MoNE, 2020a). Lunch is also given to transported primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary school students and students with special needs in special education classes in transportation centres. Education with boarding provides accommodation at schools for vulnerable children whose parent's income is below the limit identified by the state at lower- and upper-secondary education levels in schools with boarding houses on their premises. There are also free boarding and paid boarding options, where free boarding is only for lower- and upper-secondary education levels, and paid boarding is only for upper-secondary school students.

Many teachers and key informants in the qualitative data strongly underlined that providing transportation and lunch for children were important factors that could increase school attendance and decrease school dropouts.

In addition, the qualitative data show that there were initiatives of in-kind support to students from various non-governmental organizations, municipalities, the private sector, international organizations, or philanthropic individuals from the society, schools, or teachers. Such in-kind support usually included the provision of clothes and shoes and school supplies such as bags, books and stationery.

6.2 Educational Support

In addition to the regular educational activities at schools, the MoNE also organizes supplementary educational activities for the children.

The *Education Program in Primary Schools* (IYEP) has been prepared for students who attend the third grade of primary school but could not become sufficient in reading, writing, comprehension skills, natural numbers and learning four operations with natural numbers in the first and second grades. Guidance Services are also included in the programme, and the programme is open to Turkish students, Syrianan children UTP and all other foreign children. Children with special education needs are not included in this programme.

The programme was developed with UNICEF support in the 2016-2017 school year and piloted in the 2018–2019 school year in 12 provinces for Grade 3 and Grade 4 students. In the 2019–2020 school year, the programme was only implemented nationwide in Grade 3. The programme consists of six modules. The students participating in the programme and the modules they start with are identified via a test prepared in line with the critical learning objectives of Turkish language and mathematics courses in Grades 1 and 2. The learning groups at İYEP cannot exceed 10 students. The program can be delivered for up to 160 hours, with a maximum of two class hours per day on weekdays, six class hours per day on weekends, and a total of 10 class hours per week (MoNE, 2019d).

Another educational activity organized by the MoNE is the National Support Programme (UDEP). The UDEP was developed to overcome the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. It is planned for one and a half years. In the Code of Practice of the MoNE,[71] prepared for the Summer holiday in 2021, the goal of the programme is defined as "ensuring equal opportunity in education, reducing the achievement gaps among schools and supporting the multidimensional development of students through physical, social-emotional and academic programs" (p.1). The Summer component of the programme was to be conducted between 5 July 2021 and 31 August 2021, and participation was voluntary. The activities were planned for students, parents and teachers. The education activities for students are planned under four themes: physical, social-emotional, academic development and special education. The MoNE provides teacher guides, activity plans and supporting videos on a separate website.[72]

Another educational support activity of the MoNE is Support and Training Courses (Destekleme ve Yetiştirme Kursları – DYK), the supplementary training courses the MoNE gives for students studying in public schools. They are free of charge, and the courses are taught entirely according to the school curriculum. Within the scope of the DYK, students can have the opportunity to reinforce and close the gap in the courses in which they are lagging. The DYK is available for various target groups, including lower-secondary level students at public schools, upper-secondary level students at public schools, open lower-secondary school students, special education students, and lower- and upper-secondary school graduates.

The MoNE has also developed some initiatives to increase access to pre-school, particularly in the rural settlements. Article 82 of the Pre-School Education and Primary Education Institutions Regulation dated 2014 was amended in 2019 to introduce different models of access to education in pre-school education. The article states that "for children in settlements where branches cannot be opened due to the low pre-school education age population, and in settlements where the age population is dense and physical conditions are insufficient," pre-school education can be provided through mobile teacher classroom, mobile classroom, transportation centre nursery class, Summer education and similar flexible hours and timed education access models. Mobile schools are also a model to educate children affected by seasonal agricultural work at the primary school level. In addition, with the amendment made to the Regulation on the Amendment of the Regulation on Opening, Closing and Naming Institutions of the Ministry of National Education, it was ensured that kindergarten classes could be opened in settlements with five children at pre-school age.

71 https://cdn.eba.gov.tr/telafi/PDFler/2_uygulama_esaslari.pdf.

72 https://telafidebendevarim.meb.gov.tr/.

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Another educational support activity of the MoNE is "education at home and at the hospital", an education service provided for students with illnesses who cannot attend school for a particular period throughout their treatment. According to the Circular on Education Services at Home and Hospital dated 2010, children at the age of compulsory education who cannot directly benefit from formal education institutions at the pre-school, primary education or special education level can benefit from education at home or in the hospital, in line with an Individualized Education Programme (Bireyselleştirilmiş Eğitim Programı – BEP).

There are also other types of educational activities implemented only in particular locations. Different provincial directorates of the MoNE establish partnerships with different stakeholders to organize activities for children. One of the examples of this type of educational support is the My Hope My Teacher *(Umudum Öğretmenim Projesi)* project. The project aims to increase the academic achievement of half-orphan students in formal education in Istanbul by supporting them with the education coaching method. The project, planned for one school year (2020-2021), is managed by the Istanbul Provincial National Education Directorate in coordination with Istanbul Governorate, district national education directorates of the MoNE, district Guidance and Research Centres (RAMs), local authorities, NGOs and universities.

Many key informants and teachers in the qualitative data sample also provided different examples of educational support activities organized in their provinces, targeting the children and their parents. For example, Parent Academies implemented in Istanbul at the provincial level were started as an initiative to develop and strengthen the relations between schools and parents, indirectly contributing to increasing students' academic performances and raising awareness among parents. In that context, the initiative organized a series of seminars throughout the semester. Another example is the nationwide initiative of the MoNE called "Vocational Schools Meet the Families," where the students at the vocational schools help families in need by repairing electrical installations or furniture at home or producing new furniture. Such initiatives were indicated to establish a bridge between the vocational schools, their students, and society.

Nevertheless, the educational support activities organized for the parents often did not completely fulfil their objectives. One of the key informants' and teachers' concerns was that the parents' participation in such educational support activities was limited. Another concern was that those activities did not successfully change the parents' perspectives, mentalities and attitudes.

Some other educational support activities organized for the children include events such as basic literacy courses or extra-curricular social, sports and cultural events for the children organized by the schools; courses or study hours organized by some non-governmental organizations to support education processes and increase academic performances of children; activities organized at the youth centres of the Ministry of Youth and Sports; and the intercultural learning projects implemented by the schools. All such support initiatives were considered to offer options for the children who could have specific barriers to their education or regular school attendance. Many key informants and teachers stated that all those activities were beneficial in terms of motivating children to school and education, decreasing non-attendance levels, increasing academic performances at school, increasing the confidence and sympathy of the children to the teachers and the schools, increasing the socialisation of children, and widening the horizons of children for future educational prospects.

Nevertheless, some key informants and teachers indicated they did not have sufficient human or financial resources to organize supplementary educational activities for their students. Others indicated that even when implementing activities or projects, ensuring their sustainability was usually impossible. Some key informants and teachers stated that those educational support activities, such as the DYS, were usually attended by students who already had good academic performances, and they might not be beneficial for those who had poorer success levels at school.

6.3 Initiatives for Increasing Attendance Rates and Prevent School Drop-Out

In Türkiye, there have been a variety of initiatives and efforts for increasing enrolment and attendance rates and preventing school dropout. While some initiatives are implemented daily by the schools, others are implemented as projects with grants from international organizations.

6.3.1 School-Based Mechanisms for Monitoring Attendance

The MoNE has already developed a system for monitoring attendance to be implemented by schools at all education levels. In that system, the schools are required to keep the records of the students through different instruments such as student information forms or questionnaires (such as "My Life Window (*Yaşam Pencerem*) to be able to prepare the class-based and school-based risk maps of the students. In addition, students' attendance records are kept through the e-School system, and some school administrators stated that they established some committees to monitor the attendance and academic performances of the students with the help of the class teachers and counselling teachers.

Once students with high levels of non-attendance or irregular attendance are identified, some instruments are used by schools to notify the parents and ensure school attendance. Some schools regularly send absenteeism notification letters to parents throughout the academic year at various times, while others prefer to reach parents by telephone. Some parents in the qualitative research sample indicated they were pleased to be informed about their children's non-attendance by schools. Some key informants also stated that, upon the letters or phone calls, parents could visit the school and talk to the school administrators to take advice about how to ensure school attendance of their children, particularly in cases where non-attendance depended on the preference or attitude of students. Another method the schools used was having individual meetings with students with non-attendance or irregular attendance to identify the reasons for their absences and bring solutions to them.

The final method schools implement in cases of non-attendance, irregular attendance and suspected school dropout is household visits, sometimes also called parent visits and village visits by the key informants and teachers. Some schools regularly conducted household visits based on the lists of students with non-attendance. During those visits, teachers, counselling teachers and school administrators are sometimes accompanied by the headmen of the village or security officials. The household visits' primary objective is ensuring the students' school attendance by identifying the reasons for non-attendance and contributing to overcoming those reasons for the benefit of the children. Many key informants and teachers stated that throughout those household visits, they talked to the parents, tried to identify the specific problems and tried to convince parents about sending their children to school. In that process, the household visit teams were also reported to provide information to parents about the value and importance of education, particularly for girls; the requirements of the compulsory education in terms of the compulsory nature of upper-secondary level education; different schooling options; sanctions of not sending children to school; and different procedures such as students transfers.

Many key informants and teachers stated that they witnessed quite positive outcomes of the household visits, upon which the parents were convinced about sending the children back to school; the children started to attend school again, and/or the children increased their academic performances at school. The household visits were considered to help establish a closer relationship with parents, creating a feeling of mutual understanding and increasing the children's motivation towards school by feeling the support, care and attention of their teachers and schools about themselves as individuals and their education.

Some key informants and teachers also reported cases where household visits were not as successful as expected in pulling the children back to school. One of the reasons indicated by some of the key informants was that establishing contact with the parents was considered a responsibility of the school, and in some cases, it would require excessive efforts to reach the parents. Therefore, cooperation with other public institutions was essential, and the more those institutions put effort into helping schools, the more successful the outcome was. Another reason was stated as the ineffective implementation of household visits, which were not well planned or the outcomes could not be followed up well by schools. Also mentioned was difficulties communicating with the parents due to parents' negative attitudes. Some key informants and teachers stated that there were some cases where the parents reacted

aggressively, such as asking the teachers not to get involved in their decisions. In other cases, parents were reported not to be able to be convinced due to the prevalence of dogmatic approaches to children and education despite the time and energy invested to convince them. There were also cases reported in the qualitative data where parents agreed to send children to school and did it for a short while, and then the children stopped attending school again. Some teachers in the research sample also stated that they did not conduct any household visits, and some parents indicated that the school did not notify parents of the non-attendance situation of children.

The qualitative data show that there were also some other concerns of the teachers and key informants about the implementation of the attendance monitoring system and household visits. One of the concerns voiced was about the quantitative nature of the data collected about non-attendance and the need to focus more on the qualitative aspects of the non-attendance phenomenon was emphasized. Second, some key informants and teachers stated that household visits were more widespread in rural settings and smaller provinces compared to metropolitan cities in the West. So, household visits were reported to be more difficult in the bigger cities due to the high student populations of the schools and longer distances to reach the households.

Another concern was about the workload that attendance monitoring procedures and household visits incurred for teachers. It was stated that there could be some regular teams for household visits because it is an additional workload for the teachers. The final concern was about the economic costs of the household visits. It was stated that for longer distance travelling to households, the costs to schools and teachers could not be covered, and it risked decreased use of an effective method to fight against non-attendance and school dropout.

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6.3.2 The Projects for Increasing Attendance Rates and Preventing School Drop-Out

There are also numerous projects implemented by the MoNE to increase enrolment and attendance rates and to prevent school dropout in cooperation with stakeholders such as UNICEF and the financial support of some donors such as the European Union. Such projects are examples of *project-based policy implementation* through cooperation among public institutions and stakeholders to provide better educational opportunities in Türkiye.

With the cooperation of UNICEF and the MoNE, the Schooling of Adolescents through Vocational Education (SAVE) Program was launched in 2020. The programme identifies all children aged 14–17 (Turkish and SUTPs) who have been out of school for various reasons after basic education through home and workplace visits. The aim is for those who meet the registration requirements to continue their educations by enrolling on Vocational Education Centers, learning a profession, and obtaining a master's certificate; if they successfully enrol in a diploma programme, they can continue their higher education by obtaining a high school diploma.

In addition, OOSC under 14 years who have not completed their basic education are also identified, listed and reported to the Provincial Directorates of National Education monthly. During the home visits of SAVE field teams, families are provided with information and documents about the education system and registration requirements. Child workers are identified and directed to VEC during workplace visits, and business owners and masters are informed about the vocational training system and government incentives.

The SAVE Program started to be implemented in 10 VECs in 10 provinces in 2020, and it is currently being implemented in 30 vocational and technical secondary education institutions in 23 provinces. The plan is to implement the programme throughout the country by 2023.

One of those projects is the **Increasing School Enrolment Rates Especially for Girls Operation-I** (EU-IPA-I) Project between 2010–2012. The specific objectives of the project were:

a. revising and improving the quality of guidance and counselling services by conducting field research, delivering training, organizing workshops and preparing action plans;

b. improving the current e-school system for monitoring the enrolment rates;

c. taking the necessary measures to prevent dropout and absenteeism, especially for girls;

d. providing incentives to children and their families to stimulate their willingness to enrol and continue their education.

The project aimed to equip schools in pilot provinces and detect the girls who dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of secondary education. The second phase of the project, entitled **Increasing School Enrolment Rates Especially for Girls-II** for the period 2015–2017, also aimed to increase the enrolment rates at all levels of education, particularly for girls in secondary education (especially VET), and to decrease dropout and long-term absence rates. Some of the outputs achieved within the context of the project are as follows: 1,649 girls were accessed to secondary education; almost 50,000 students benefited from awareness-raising services or were informed about technical and vocational education; 280 schools and dormitories were equipped; 15,153 parents were trained and 15,990 families were visited at their homes to persuade to send their daughters to school; around 14,000 stakeholders, NGO members and educational staff were trained; 21 Action Plans were prepared; and, 143 protocols were signed to increase the enrolment rates of girls.

Another project within the context of EU-IPA I was the **Increasing Primary School Attendance Rate of Children** Project for 2013–2015. The project's overall objective was to increase the attendance rates in primary education, covering the first eight years of the 12-year compulsory education in Türkiye. The activities aimed to increase the capacity of the MoNE personnel and raise awareness of all related groups to prevent non-attendances. Within the scope of the project, the Progressive Non-Attendance Management (PNAM) system was to be strengthened, and policy recommendations for revision of the legislation and for the activities aiming at improving the basic language skills of children were to be made.

One of the recent projects targeting students at upper-secondary level education is the **Increasing Attendance and Enrolment Rates in Upper-Secondary Education Project** within the context of EU-IPA-II for the 2021-2022 school year. The project aims to support efforts to increase attendance and enrolment rates in secondary education by developing and implementing a comprehensive prevention, intervention and compensation model. The planned activities are developing a prevention, intervention and compensation model; supporting an early warning system; conducting family visits and information meetings; conducting scientific and technical studies; and organizing workshops, conferences and similar events.

Another recent project expected to be implemented in 2022 by the MoNE and UNICEF is the **Increasing Attendance Rates and Preventing Dropouts in Upper-Secondary Education Project**. The programme aims to initiate an early warning system to prevent dropout

in upper-secondary education. The programme design is coordinated by the General Directorate of Secondary Education, General Directorate of Religious Education, and General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education.

There have also been other initiatives by the MoNE to eliminate other factors that could affect children's school attendance. One of those factors is the security of children, particularly in the school environment. **Fight Against Violence Towards Children Project** (2013–2015) was implemented by the General Directorate for Special Education and Guidance Services of the MoNE, with the aim of "contributing to the protection of children against all forms of violence of a physical, emotional, verbal and psychological nature to attain high level of health protection, wellbeing and social cohesion".[73] Concerning schools, the project included actions such as improving the capacity of counselling services at schools and existing Psychosocial Intervention Teams in pilot provinces for intervening and preventing violence towards children; reducing violence towards children at schools by developing a model, "Students with Self-Confidence and Developed Life Skills," which is free from physical, emotional, verbal and psychological violence and implementing the model in selected pilot schools; and, increasing the awareness of parents, NGO members, non-teaching staff, teaching staff and students through organizing seminars, training and conferences on preventing and reducing violence towards children.

Other initiatives of the MoNE concerning security at school included the publication of the circular entitled "Preventing Violence at Schools," published in 2006, on the measures to be taken at the central and local levels against violence[74] and the preparation and distribution of a brochure on cyberbullying.[75]

6.4 Education Governance

The fourth aspect of policy analysis refers to a broader overview of the education policies in Türkiye. In that context, different components of education governance, namely education policy priorities and school supply, teacher supply, and inclusiveness and participation in education policymaking and implementation, are analysed in light of the qualitative data.

6.4.1 Education Policy Priorities and School Supply

As already shown in Section 2.4.1, until the 2012-2013 school year, compulsory education in Türkiye was for eight years, including five years of primary and three years of lower-secondary education. Compulsory education was increased to 12 years starting from the 2012-1013 school year. Also known as the 4+4+4 education system, students study four years at each level, namely the primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary education levels.

The qualitative data show the need for attention to ensure completion of the upper-secondary level. There were many instances in the qualitative data where the key informants and teachers stated that the parents still perceived the compulsory education to end at the lower-secondary level and hesitated to send their children to upper-secondary schools for reasons such as child labour, child, early and forced marriages or gender norms as discussed in detail in Section 5.

The qualitative data also show that the test-based school placement system (LGS) after the lower-secondary school and the school supply at the upper-secondary education system could facilitate enough school enrolment and attendance at the upper-secondary level. As discussed under Section 5.3, school placements based on the LGS test and local placement can be observed to create an imbalance in demand for different types of schools and create some risks for the children placed in some schools in terms of non-attendance and dropout. Some key informants and teachers stated that they had few students due to insufficient demand for their schools, and their schools faced the risk of being closed. The results of school placements at the upper-secondary level also show that many schools have many vacant positions, whereas there is high demand for other types of schools. The qualitative data point towards the need to revisit the school supply planning and transformation of some schools that do not have sufficient demand from the parents and the children.

From the qualitative data, concern was expressed about the vocational upper-secondary schools, where school dropouts were reported to be high. Some teachers and key informants suggested that if the university and work

73 https://siddetinonlenmesi.meb.gov.tr/www/project-summary/icerik/143

74 https://orgm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2015_10/08101631_okullardaiddetinnlenmesigenelgesi.pdf

75 https://orgm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2019_12/26113055_SYBER_ZORBALIK.pdf

prospects for the students at the vocational schools could be strengthened, there would be more demand for these schools. Some of these suggestions were:

- the type of vocations in those schools could be increased and updated by meeting the market needs in light of the technological developments and digitalisation;
- the students who invent/develop something could be rewarded;
- a more practice-based education could be implemented at the vocational upper-secondary schools.

Another aspect of 12-year compulsory education can be observed in the increasing number of upper-secondary students referred to open schools. The reasons for such referrals are discussed in detail in Section 5.4. School Supply; however, it is crucial to restate that open education was originally designed for adults. The increasing demand for open schools from students seeking formal education, particularly at the upper-secondary level, shows that open education has been gradually conceived differently, i.e., as an alternative to formal education. Such an observation also points out the risk of creating a phenomenon that could be labelled a "hidden out-of-school" phenomenon.

6.4.2 Teacher Supply

As presented in Table 31, 1,117,786 teachers worked for the MoNE in 2020. There are mainly two categories of teachers employed by the MoNE: permanent teachers, working as civil servants and contracted teachers. According to the MoNE audit report of the Court of Audits, the teacher shortage of the MoNE is 138,393, but the number of appointments is 23,496 in 2017, 25,577 in 2018, 41,379 in 2019, 40,925 in 2020 and 20,000 in 2021.[76]

Table 31:
Number of Teachers according to School Types

Level of Education	School/Institution	Number of Teachers			Number of Classrooms
		Total	Permanent	Contractual	
Total of formal education	68,589	1,117,686	1,015,956	101,730	727,347
Pre-primary education	11,485	56,218	53,878	2,340	50,831
Primary school	24,790	309,247	282,949	26,298	261,875
Lower-Secondary school	19,268	371,590	325,912	45,678	195,134
Upper-secondary education (General secondary education and technical secondary education+Imam Hatip High Schools)	13,046	380,631	353,217	27,414	219,507
Total of general secondary education	6,925	186,914	177,864	9,050	108,982
Total of vocational and technical secondary education	4,470	144,255	131,791	12,464	74,720
Total of Imam Hatip schools	1,651	49,462	43,562	5,900	35,805

Source: MoNE (2020a).

The qualitative data show that one of the main reasons for the concerns about the teachers was the education and provision of teacher supply. One aspect of the teacher supply was mentioned about contracted teachers. Some key informants stated that because contracted teachers were not permanent staff of the MoNE, there could be too much turnover of contracted teachers, which sometimes affected the effectiveness of education and the system's sustainability at particular schools. Some examples were provided where some primary school students had to change teachers two or three times during their primary school education, with some adverse effects on their learning processes and adaptation to school. The condition of working for four years in the place where the contracted teachers were appointed can be considered a positive development.

76 https://www.sayistay.gov.tr/reports/401-milli-egitim-bakanligi

A second aspect was reported concerning the patterns of teacher supply in some particular regions, such as the Eastern provinces. Some key informants and teachers stated that many newly appointed teachers would prefer not to work for a long time in some regions or provinces or ask to be transferred to Western provinces shortly after their first appointment, and such mobility created a risk of negatively affecting the educational processes of the children.

A third aspect was insufficient teacher supply in schools, which could end up with crowded classrooms or teachers teaching in different course subjects than their discipline, where the quality of education and teachers' performances could decrease considerably. Some key informants and teachers from vocational schools, particularly at the upper-secondary level, pointed out the need for the appointment of more counselling teachers in their schools to better respond to the higher risk of dropout by guiding the children.

A final aspect of teacher supply reported by some key informants and teachers was the routinized education systems adopted by some teachers without updating or changing their education approaches in line with the requirements of recent developments in education. Being closed to dynamism and change was stated as a factor that could diminish the productivity and effectiveness of education in general.

6.4.3 Inclusiveness and Participation in Education Policy Making and Implementation

When the inclusiveness of the policymaking mechanism was enquired about, it is possible to observe that, in general, the key informants and teachers stated that the policymaking system was participatory in the sense that the central administration asked for reports, statistical data and their opinions on particular issues such as when a new regulation or law articles were developed. In addition, some key informants stated that the MoNE collected opinions from the relevant stakeholders, including the MoNE teachers and universities' relevant departments, when there was a planned curriculum change. For such efforts, the methods used were reported to include organizing workshops, sending official letters to schools or organizing awareness-raising campaigns. "One million teachers, one million ideas" (*#BirMilyonÖğretmenBirMilyonFikir*) is one of these online campaigns organized by the MoNE to collect ideas, opinions, projects and suggestions from teachers at public and private schools all over the country.[77]

To ensure participation in education policymaking, the provincial directorates of the MoNE played an important role in disseminating the request for opinions to schools and teachers and collecting their opinions to be sent back to the Ministry.

From the qualitative data, it is also possible to identify some suggestions to enhance inclusiveness and participation in education policymaking and implementation. Some teachers and key informants pointed out that the participation of parents, students and counselling teachers could be enhanced. Another suggestion is that the involvement of stakeholders might be increased in the policymaking and implementation process. A final suggestion from the qualitative data refers to the need to consider the specific needs of different localities, which could necessitate taking specific actions at the local or provincial level.

77 http://birmilyonfikir.meb.gov.tr.

Chapter 7
Policy Recommendations

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This study presents a comprehensive overview of the existence and interplay of the factors related to children's education in Türkiye. For this purpose, two primary available quantitative data sources, namely the MoNE official data and DHS 2018 data, were analysed in Section 4 to identify the extent of the out-of-school phenomenon.

Section 5 complemented the quantitative analysis with qualitative data collected specifically for this study by presenting and discussing the dynamics behind the out-of-school phenomenon and the causes and consequences of demand-side and supply-side factors on the children's educational prospects. Section 6 embedded the analysis of the existing education policy measures and education governance into this overview, also benefitting from the summary of the already existing policies provided in Section 2 and the qualitative data about their actual practice in Türkiye.

Such a multidimensional and evidence-based analysis enabled the identification of a set of barriers concerning children's education in Türkiye. These are classified as demand-side and supply-side barriers and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. The analysis has also identified factors of the enabling environment in terms of education governance and policies in Türkiye by following the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative Operational Manual (UNICEF, 2015) and adapting it to the case of Türkiye. As a result of this exercise, it is possible to present some significant observations, some main findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis, and policy recommendations to overcome the barriers to children's education in Türkiye.

The first observation is that the out-of-school phenomenon has been prominent for the last four years of 12-year compulsory education in Türkiye. The quantitative and qualitative data show that boys and girls usually stay at school until the end of the lower-secondary level. The last four years of compulsory education, the upper-secondary level education, however, is undermined by various factors or a combination of factors. Some of the prominent factors in this regard are the misperception of parents and children about compulsory education; traditional/conservative gender norms that could hinder girls' education after the lower-secondary level; child labour and child, early and forced marriages, which cut the ties of the children with their schools and education; and, school supply-related factors, particularly at the stage of transition into the upper-secondary level.

The second observation is that the out-of-school phenomenon is related to the misperceptions of the value of education among parents and their children, mainly at the upper-secondary level. It is found that the value of education is associated with socio-economic benefits rather than education as a right and essential for every child's well-being. Thus, many children and sometimes their parents underestimate the overall benefits of education by believing that education does not guarantee a job or income, even for university graduates, referring to the high levels of youth unemployment in Türkiye. A consequence is that (mostly) boys, particularly those from lower SES quintiles, engage in income-generating activities mostly in low-paid or informal jobs, rather than studying, at ages as early as 13 and 14, and girls could be married, which considerably limits their opportunities to be educated at the upper-secondary level.

A third observation is that the out-of-school phenomenon is not equally prevalent among different school types at the upper-secondary level. Some factors that affect such an observation are the perceptions of parents and children about those schools and their academic success levels, which admit students without any exams; children's lack of interest in the discipline that they study at those schools; and the other factors such as economic deprivation, poor academic performance or security concerns at school.

The fourth observation is that regional differences still exist in Türkiye regarding school access and education provision at all levels, based on demand-side and supply-side factors related to school administrative regulations and supply. In the rural settings and villages, the conditions for accessing education seem to be more challenging compared to the city centres in terms of the (un)availability of all types of schools at different education levels, particularly at the upper-secondary level; distance to school and transportation to school; engagement of children in seasonal or unpaid family work; or wider prevalence of gender norms that hinder girls' education.

The fifth observation is that it is primarily a combination of different barriers that cause school dropout, meaning that children may face multiple risks, which makes it challenging to disentangle various factors when determining how much importance to assign to a particular barrier and its effect on pulling (or pushing) the children out of school. Many of the barriers, both demand-side and supply-side, are interrelated in that they can be observed as other causes or consequences, which requires a relational and multidimensional overview before producing policy measures intending to eliminate the barriers. For example, poor academic performance affects the educational prospects of children in some school types at

the upper-secondary level, but if the socio-economic level of the parents is high, it may not act as a reason to drop out of school. So, in addition to measures to increase children's academic performances at school, other measures, such as supporting children's school costs or eliminating gender-based norms to ensure girls' school attendance, should also be considered.

The last observation is that some barriers seem more systemic, structural or circular in that they are not only related to one particular aspect of life but expand into different spheres of life. A consequence is that some factors observed in the qualitative analysis may act as causes and consequences for out-of-school phenomena. Examples include child labour, child, early and forced marriage and children's conflict with the law. A better term for these factors may be bottlenecks, as they tend to be the product of multiple influences that eventually have a two-way relation to children's education. For example, children may not attend school due to the need to engage in income-generating activities in the labour market, or children who leave school might end up in the labour market. Therefore, the capacity of education or school, in a more specific sense, to protect children from the negative impact of such bottlenecks becomes even more evident.

From the findings of this study, it is possible to develop a set of policy recommendations for education policy stakeholders based on evidence to assist them in enhancing the educational opportunities for the children in Türkiye, increasing their school attendance rates, and contributing to the elimination of the out-of-school phenomenon among children. The policy recommendations below are categorized under separate domains of policy action, sometimes referring to more macro policies strengthened with some recommended policy actions. It should, of course, be noted that recommended policies and policy actions necessitate active cooperation and coordination among a variety of policy actors, including public institutions, civil society organizations, international organizations and the private sector, to pool their respective resources at the policymaking, implementation and monitoring stages, to ensure a better future and well-being of children in Türkiye.

The policy domains for recommended policy actions are presented below under seven headings, namely awareness raising and information; socio-economic support; skills development; capacity development; school supply and resources (school supply; vocational education; open education; curricula; teachers; and education provision during and after the COVID-19 pandemic); data collection and monitoring; and advocacy and collective action.

Awareness Raising and Information

The analysis shows that although most parents are informed about compulsory education, school enrolment procedures and (to a lesser extent) schooling options, a major demand-side setback to children's education in Türkiye is parents' and children's approach to education. There are misperceptions about the nature of compulsory education and the overall value of education for children's futures. In addition, gender-related norms and child, early and forced marriages still appear as an obstacle to children's education, particularly for girls aged 14–17. In contrast, low socio-economic levels and gender norms about the role of the boys in the family divert children to income-generating activities rather than attending school, mostly at the upper-secondary school level. Thus, further efforts to increase the level of awareness about compulsory education, as well as about early childhood education at the pre-primary level, and the value of education for all children would help ensure children's school attendance and potentially help overcome some of the barriers such as those on the way to the education of the children with disabilities, as well as those related to the children's domestic responsibility, child, early and forced marriages and child labour.

Policy Recommendation: Increase awareness about early childhood education and 12-year compulsory education among the parents and children and provide further information or training about gender equality to the parents.

Recommended Policy actions:

- Organize awareness-raising activities and information campaigns, not only for the parents but also for the extended family members, through a variety of channels (household visits, meetings, seminars, public advertisements, short videos, etc.) on the importance of education for children, from pre-school to the end of the upper-secondary level.
- Organize information campaigns for training on gender equality, particularly in girls' education, when necessary, with the participation of the headmen, preachers, teachers and other relevant actors.
- Promote the overall value of education for the well-being of children, going beyond the academic performance of children to the cultural, sports, artistic and social development.

- Inform parents about and effective enforcement of legal sanctions in case of school dropout, child labour and child, early and forced marriages.
- Benefit from the help of role models or success stories, particularly of girls from different regions and cultures, for awareness-raising activities.
- Inform parents about their responsibilities in ensuring their children's school attendance and support them throughout their children's education for school attendance.
- Provide better guidance for the parents and children about schooling options, particularly throughout the lower-secondary level and the process of choosing a profession.

Socio-Economic Support

Because economic deprivation appears as a prominent barrier to children's education, providing socio-economic support to the households or children in those households, particularly those which experience economic problems more, such as single-parent families or families with a high number of children, can help overcome economic demand-side barriers to the education of children, including child labour.

Policy Recommendation: Continue with cash and in-kind support mechanisms for households and children to minimize and contribute to school expenses and the economic resilience of households.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Increase awareness and information of parents and teachers about the cash and in-kind support to children's education.
- Continue social assistance and conditional cash transfers by adjusting the amounts to be paid in line with increases in the cost of living (inflation, COVID-19 restrictions, reduced employment opportunities, etc.).
- Continue providing scholarships to children.
- Ensure registration of children to schools close to where the families live.
- Continue and increase the provision of school transportation services, particularly for the children in rural areas.
- Continue and promote schools with boarding as an option for children from low-income families.
- Continue providing in-kind educational support to children or develop scholarship funds by encouraging the contribution to different local actors such as municipalities, businesspersons, and NGOs in different localities.
- Implement free lunch/food allowance programmes at schools.
- Eliminate or minimize any additional costs incurred by the schools or teachers for social activities, supplementary learning materials or donations.
- Continue and expand supporting children's education through discounts for education materials, local transportation, access to social activities, etc.

Skills Development

The analysis shows that the lack or limited existence of particular skills among the parents and children, as components of both demand-side and supply-side factors, act as barriers to children's educational prospects. So, skills development initiatives may mitigate the adverse effects of some barriers, such as exclusion/discrimination, bullying, and lack of parental educational support to children. Below, the policy recommendations about skills development are categorized separately for two target groups, namely the parents and children, as the skills for the teachers are dealt with under the school supply below.

Policy Recommendation: Supporting skills development of the parents.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Increase literacy among the parents, particularly mothers.
- Organize training and seminars about parenting skills.
- Organize information meetings about how to support children's education at home.
- Organize training or seminars about psychological support for children.
- Increase the number of trainings or seminars about inclusion and non-discrimination against, for example, children with disabilities, children with migrant backgrounds, etc.
- Prepare and distribute manuals/guides for the parents about supporting their children's social, emotional and mental well-being during and after the pandemic.

Policy Recommendation: Support the skills development of children.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Organize activities about inclusion and non-discrimination against, for example, children with disabilities, children with migrant backgrounds, etc.
- Organize extra-curricular activities for the social, sports and cultural development of children.
- Organize seminars and workshops about bullying and eliminate negative attitudes in the school environment.
- Organize activities about respecting others and the environment.
- Benefit from the help of role models or success stories, particularly of girls, for activities about the value of education.
- Increase opportunities for benefitting from extra-curricular activities of other education stakeholders, such as the municipalities, Ministry of Youth and Sports or NGOs.

Capacity Development

The analysis of the supply-side factors, namely school administrative regulations, school supply and school quality, shows that there are particular barriers stemming from those factors to the children's educational prospects. Eliminating those barriers relates to certain efforts for empowerment and capacity development, mostly in schools.

Five sets of capacity development efforts can target particular barriers. The first is the efforts to increase children's school attendance, primarily by effectively identifying the reasons for non-attendance or irregular attendance and then developing responses to overcome such barriers. The second set of efforts is related to increasing children's academic performances at school because low academic performance can cause school dropout when it comes together with other barriers such as gender norms, economic deprivation, etc. The third category of recommendations under the title of capacity development relates to guidance and counselling, such as insufficient orientation, starting from the lower-secondary level, which can lead to non-attendance and school dropout at later stages of education. The fourth effort relates to the need to engage parents in their children's education processes, particularly by establishing stronger relations between the parents and the schools. The final effort refers to ensuring the security of students at school by eliminating bullying as a prominent barrier to the educational prospects and well-being of the children.

Policy Recommendation: Developing and implementing measures to increase children's school attendance.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Prioritize efforts to ensure effective implementation of school regulation/entry policies and overcome administrative barriers that preclude access to education and other essential services.
- Continue efforts to enhance data-monitoring capacities at the national and school level and develop adequate capacities at the school level.
- Properly implement existing mechanisms at the school for keeping the student records for identifying risks for children and making better use of their qualitative nature.
- Continue implementing household/parent visits by schools to identify the reasons for non-attendance and irregular attendance.
- Delegate household/parent visits to regular teams to be established at schools, composed of teachers, counselling teachers and school administrators.
- Involve teachers in identifying non-attendance and irregular attendance risks by facilitating the workload and supporting household visits.
- Continue involving counselling teachers in risk identification and develop responses to those risks by increasing their number and effectiveness.
- Organize extra-curricular activities at school to ensure children's socialisation and motivate children to be educated and study.
- Develop mechanisms and procedures to follow, with the help of the headmen and other relevant actors, when the children cannot be found at an address.
- Implement non-attendance criteria for the grade transition rules in a less discretionary way by school administrations, particularly at lower-secondary schools.

Policy Recommendation: Developing and implementing measures to increase students' academic performance at school.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Increase the awareness and capacities of parents with children with poor academic performance at school in supporting the educational processes of their children.
- Implement success criteria for the grade transition rules in a less discretionary way by the teachers and school administrations, particularly at lower-secondary schools.
- Identify the learning losses and needs of children with gaps in their education life, over-aged students and students engaged in seasonal work, and develop and implement catch-up programmes according to their needs, particularly at the primary and lower-secondary levels.
- Better identify the reasons for children with poor academic performance using formative assessments where possible.
- Provide remedial programmes with a targeted approach to developing core learning competencies, emphasizing early literacy and numeracy for primary school-aged learners.
- Explore and implement formative assessment practices to complement national education assessments to support the learning needs of children.

Policy Recommendation: Increasing guidance and counselling.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Ensure better academic guidance to children and parents about choices of profession.
- Ensure better academic guidance to children and parents throughout the lower-secondary level by providing information to children and parents about different schooling options and their characteristics at the upper-secondary level.
- Provide more targeted guidance about the open upper-secondary schools as a last option for children of school-going age.
- Strengthen the current mechanism to identify children's areas of interest, talents and academic performances throughout the primary and lower-secondary levels to guide the upper-secondary level.
- Provide better information about the conditions and procedures for student transfers at the upper-secondary level.

- Increase the accessibility and provide psychological counselling and guidance for parents and children.
- Increase support and guidance services to children studying at schools with boarding.

Policy Recommendation: Develop effective mechanisms to engage parents in their children's learning.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Organize awareness-raising activities by the schools about the role of parents in their children's education.
- Develop mechanisms to strengthen the relationship between parents, school administrations and teachers, and increase cooperation with school parent associations.
- Increase the role of counselling teachers for strengthening the relationship between the parents and schools.
- Increase the provision of counselling and household visits to parents.

Policy Recommendation: Fight against and eliminate bullying at school.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Develop and implement strategies and initiatives to prevent bullying at school at the central level.
- Develop and implement or strengthen mechanisms at the school level to be implemented in cases of bullying with a focus on building tolerance, communication skills and diversity in and around schools to promote social cohesion.
- Ensure cooperation between the school administrators, school counsellors, and parents of the children exposed to bullying to help children overcome the adverse effects.

School Supply and Resources

The analysis shows that better planning and allocating school supplies and resources can eliminate non-attendance and school dropouts in Türkiye. Several action areas concerning school supply and resources can be listed: school supply, vocational education, open education, curricula, teachers, and education provision during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

School supply, in general, appears as a barrier first in terms of insufficient supply of schools in the rural settlements and villages and then to unequal distribution of school resources such as limited school facilities, big classroom sizes and inaccessibility for children with disabilities. A second concern with school supply is vocational and open education, which could bear some risks for non-attendance and school dropout. In the case of vocational education, which is an option at the upper-secondary level where non-attendance and school dropout are prevalent compared to other school types, some particular risks occur as the perceptions of the parents towards vocational schools, insufficiency of quality guidance about vocational education, limited resources in vocational schools and curriculum at vocational schools. In the case of open education, the most significant risk seems to be transfers of students at the schooling age to open schools, which can potentially create a "hidden out-of-school" phenomenon because there are few efforts to follow up on the progress of those children at open schools.

Another component of school supplies and resources is the curricula implemented at schools. Although it is not reported to bring high risks for the children at the primary and lower-secondary schools, it appears as a risk at the upper-secondary level. Long lectures, the weight of theoretical input, and insufficient practice are concerns with vocational schools.

When all school types at all education levels are considered, the need for extra-curricular activities and adoption of new, innovative and student-centred education approaches becomes visible as a way to overcome barriers to communication between schools and students, lack of interest from the children towards the school, and low academic performances of children at school. Measures to empower teachers as a fundamental element of school supply and increasing resources are essential in eliminating the barriers to school attendance, such as limited teacher communication with children, teachers' attitudes towards students, and low educational performances. Finally, planning education provision during and after the COVID-19 pandemic is critical to overcome the learning losses and adapt children effectively and safely back to school to avoid any potential school dropout.

Policy Recommendation: Increase and better plan school supply throughout the country.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Ensure better planning for establishing or closing schools, particularly at the upper-secondary level, based on the school demand and their vacant quotas.
- Ensure school supply at all education levels, particularly in rural settings and villages.
- Eliminate inequalities of school resources between schools at all levels and ensure an equal supply of supportive facilities for the students, such as libraries or study halls, sports halls and art rooms at all education levels.
- Better balance the classroom sizes by decreasing the number of students.
- Ensure full implementation of the regulations at all schools to ensure accessibility of schools for children with disabilities.
- Define some procedural flexibilities in the address-based registration system for children with specific situations, such as children in seasonal work, children in single-parent households and households with severe family problems.

Policy Recommendation: Better plan and strengthen vocational education.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Ensure better planning of vocational education through scientific studies by identifying the skill needs of the business sector and matching them with the requirements of vocational education.
- Supply and ensure the distribution of vocational schools in line with different regions' needs and economic sectors.
- Eliminate gender segregation among vocational school students by promoting vocational education among girls.
- Continue cooperating with the private sector to support the modernisation and development of vocational education in Türkiye.
- Provide better guidance and information about vocational education to children and parents.
- Increase the physical facilities and capacities of the vocational schools and increase their potential for practice by introducing more practice-based courses.

Policy Recommendation: Reconsidering the role of open education and strengthening open education.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Restrict the transfer of students of school-going age to open education to exceptional cases.
- Organize support activities to increase students' motivation at open schools about education and studying at open education schools.
- Conduct and publish research about the different aspects and achievements of open education.

Policy Recommendation: Revise and strengthen the curricula at different school levels and organize extra-curricular learning activities for students.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Reconsider daily schedules and course loads of different schools at all education levels and, if needed, decrease the daily course hours or length of the lectures.
- Align curriculum and skills acquisition to employment opportunities, including introducing a more practice-oriented curriculum at vocational education institutions.
- Align learning content to labour market opportunities for older adolescents and young people while focusing on building foundational and transferrable skills among younger learners to lay the foundation for today's learners to succeed in the changing world of work.
- Introduce new learning methods, such as learning to learn, learning by doing or experiential learning and encourage using applied methods and physical/scientific activities (such as small learning groups, paper-based solutions, etc.) in teaching.
- Conduct continuous research on the developments in the field of education and implement new, innovative, student-centred education approaches at all levels.
- To increase communication and cooperation between different schools, provide more extra-curricular interactive learning activities for students through cultural site visits, sports tournaments and university visits.

Policy Recommendation: Strengthen the capacities of teachers.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Continue to develop in-service teachers' capacities on various topics, such as recent developments and new approaches in education and pedagogic formation.
- Ensure that teachers are appointed to courses in their disciplines.
- Ensure the establishment or sustainability of communication mechanisms where the teachers can know their students better and develop responses to their needs and problems.
- Decrease the procedural and reporting paperwork of teachers.

Policy Recommendation: Plan education provision during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Conduct needs analysis studies to identify the extent and nature of the learning losses.
- Ensure a safe return of children, teachers, and all school personnel back to school after the COVID-19 pandemic in a way that provides healthy learning/teaching and physical environments.
- Organize remedial learning activities separately for different education levels to recover learning losses for the children and support them with any possible in-person, distance or hybrid education models.
- Support schools and teachers in addressing the learning losses of the children and better use of digital education tools in their teaching, and support teachers to use a combination of physical, virtual, and technology-assisted learning solutions, especially to reach the most vulnerable through their teaching.
- Continue to support education and programme strategies that support children's and vulnerable learners' mental health and well-being to improve further learning and acquire transferrable skills needed to reach their full potential. Scientifically and transparently plan and implement emergency plans to identify and publicly announce in-person and distance education conditions when needed.

Data Collection and Monitoring

Collection and availability of reliable and regular data are not only a crucial component of developing evidence-based and targeted education policy for children in Türkiye but also of monitoring the progress for further development of policies and reaching out to those at risk of dropping out or out of school children. The analysis in this study highlights the need for available, reliable, regular and accessible data to eliminate some barriers to children's education, such as academic success, children with disabilities, non-attendance levels and learning losses.

Policy Recommendation: Collect, update, and share reliable and regular data and conduct analyses on the extent of non-attendance and out-of-school phenomenon, as well as the educational experiences of children in Türkiye.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Ensure updating student and parent data in the e-School system, ensuring its accessibility by the schools and developing a mechanism to identify children who cannot be found at their registered addresses.
- Establish student risk-tracking systems and produce quantitative and qualitative risk maps for provinces and regions.
- Produce data on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's education.
- Conduct quantitative data and evidence-based analyses on the extent and reasons for non-attendance using different variables such as gender, education levels, school types, locations of the schools, etc.
- Conduct and publish research about different aspects and achievements of open education.
- Ensure sharing and accessibility of outcomes for different projects conducted on children's education through an online platform or portal.

Advocacy and Collective Action

The analysis shows that some particular barriers are hindering the educational prospects of children in Türkiye, such as child, early and forced marriages, child labour, and disability of children, which go beyond the exclusive competence of the education policy and governance in a way to reflect the need for cooperation and collective action among different policy areas and policy actors. In addition, barriers to education, such as security concerns, peer bullying and domestic violence, require targeting from a macro perspective. Policy advocacy at the macro level would also help bring the need for further and cooperative efforts to overcome such barriers into the policy agenda.

Policy Recommendation: Increase policy advocacy initiatives for eliminating the barriers to children's education.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Strengthen the role and prospects of the schools for the identification of particular barriers and risks for the children's education, such as domestic violence, child, early and forced marriages, child labour, and disabilities.
- Continue to promote pre-school education and the enrolment of children in pre-school education institutions.
- Collect and promote (educational) success stories of girls as role models and agents or promoters of education.
- Organize information campaigns about the legal conditions of civil marriages, not only for females but also targeting male members of households.
- Support initiatives of other policy actors, specifically targeting the elimination of child, early and forced marriages.
- Support initiatives of other policy actors targeting the elimination of child labour in Türkiye.
- Develop initiatives to discourage employers from employing children with legal measures and inspections.
- Strengthen the relations between the relevant public authorities and the schools in cases of need for action upon identification of situations that are against the law.

Policy Recommendation: Develop and participate in collective action to eliminate the barriers to children's education.

Recommended Policy Actions:

- Ensure enforcement of legal rules/sanctions about child, early and forced marriages.
- Ensure that inspections are conducted and the stated sanctions in the legislation are implemented regarding child labour without exception.
- Continue and encourage cooperation between all relevant actors, central and provincial level public institutions, local governments (particularly municipalities), non-governmental actors, the private sector, and international organizations at the education policymaking and implementation stages.
- Institutionalize mechanisms to coordinate and collaborate among the relevant policy and enforcement actors in the inventory of out-of-school children.
- Encourage more participatory policymaking and implementation processes based on the experiences and feedback of the people working in the field.
- Continue effectively coordinating case management services in close complementarity with the child protection, social protection, and health sectors to promote information sharing on suitable , relevant learning opportunities for children.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

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Almost all Turkish children complete primary- and (lower-) secondary education levels and the children who are not in school are concentrated in the upper-secondary ("high school") age range; nevertheless, across all levels of schooling in Türkiye, there are vulnerable groups that are not enrolled in school or are not attending regularly. These include children with disabilities (CwD), children engaged in various forms of child labour, those subject to child, early and forced marriage, and those in contact with the law, among other groups. This study ensures a comprehensive overview of the current situation of OOSC among the national population in Türkiye by providing extensive analysis of OOSC numbers, trends, barriers and interrelated factors such as poverty, child labour, child, early and forced marriage, bullying, school quality and access, and cultural norms.

The study was divided into three main parts. The **first part** incorporated an extensive set of quantitative data to describe recent trends in out-of-school children based on the official OOSC dimensions developed by the UNICEF-UNESCO initiative on OOSC (UNICEF, 2015). The data include administrative summaries from the MoNE (enrolments, student absences) as well as survey-based data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) from various years (2018 is the most recent).

The **main finding** from the quantitative overview of OOSC is that very few children are out of school in the basic education sequence, which includes primary and lower-secondary levels. There has been a slight decline in primary enrolment rates in recent years as more children are entering pre-primary, which is not yet compulsory and still has much room to grow (roughly one-third of 5-year-olds have never entered school, according to the DHS 2018). Overall, the percentage of children aged 6–13 who are not in school is less than 2 per cent, with very high gender parity.

The **second main finding** from the quantitative summary is that the OOSC picture does change at the upper-secondary level. There has also been improvement in recent years and a steady trend towards universal enrolment, consistent with the changeover to compulsory 4+4+4 schooling. Based on survey data, there is a sizeable proportion (about 15%) of children aged 14–17 who are not in school. One complication at the upper-secondary level for counting out-of-school children is the open education category, which may include enrolled children who are not participating. Another feature of upper-secondary education that stands out and is likely related to eventual dropout from regular schooling is the high number of reported absences among enrolled children. By Grade 12, nearly half of all students have 20 or more absences during the school year, especially for boys.

The quantitative summary clarifies the OOSC situation among the national Turkish population regarding the total number of children not in school, the concentration of OOSC in the upper-secondary level, and additional details such as OOSC rates by province. The quantitative data – especially the DHS 2018 –are also helpful in identifying a handful of barriers that help explain why some older boys and girls are not in school, including early marriage for girls and child labour activities. Nevertheless, the quantitative data alone cannot explain **why children are out of school or at risk of leaving early (i.e., frequently absent)**. Addressing this question was the main task of the **second part** of the report, which identified an extensive set of barriers to education for older Turkish children and undertook a detailed review of existing policies that potentially affect OOSC. This analysis incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data sources. The principal source of information – and the main contribution of this study to the knowledge base on the OOSC phenomenon in Türkiye – was an extensive qualitative data collection undertaken throughout the country with Turkish children, their families and other key informants.

The barriers and policy analysis findings are too extensive to be summarized here. The main result is that, despite the high enrolment rate, Turkish children are exposed to several barriers that impact school enrolment. These barriers include demand-side factors related to socio-cultural and economic factors such as household poverty and the need for child labour, families not valuing education, and health-related issues, including disability. Several supply-side factors were also identified, including issues related to regulations for grade transitions and non-attendance, school supply limitations and bullying. The barriers analysis was also extended to consider the COVID-19 pandemic period and the challenges Turkish children and their families faced to adapt to this significant school disruption. Within each demand and supply-side category, there are numerous other factors, and the analysis of the barriers also highlighted variation in barriers by gender, age group and category of OOSC (out-of-school or at risk of dropping out). **The second part of the study provides barrier-related observations on the OOSC phenomenon in Türkiye**. First, the out-of-school phenomenon is related to the misperceptions of the value of education, mainly associated with socio-economic benefits rather than education as a right and essential for every child's well-being. Second, the out-of-school phenomenon is not equally prevalent among different school types at the upper-secondary level. In this manner, dropping out of school among children placed in high schools at the centralized school placement test is much less likely compared to children enrolled in vocational or upper-secondary Imam Hatip schools. Third, regional differences still exist in Türkiye regarding school access and education provision levels. In rural areas,

access to education is more challenging considering school transportation, children's engagement in seasonal or unpaid family work and gender norms. Another significant observation is that many of the barriers, both in demand and supply sides, are interrelated, and these barriers may be other barriers' causes or consequences. Notably, some of the barriers, such as child labour, child, early and forced marriages and children in conflict with the law, seem to be more systemic, structural and circular. Therefore, multidimensional and interrelated policy measures are required to eliminate the barriers.

In the **third part of the study**, the objective changed from describing and understanding the OOSC phenomenon to finding ways to get these children into school. Policy recommendations were developed and presented across 18 core areas closely linked to the main barriers and policy analysis. Those recommendations include policy actions targeting *the parents and the children* (such as increasing awareness about early childhood education and 12 years of compulsory education; continuation of cash and in-kind support mechanisms for the households and children; supporting skills development of the parents and children); *the capacity building of the schools* (such as developing and implementing measures to increase school attendance and academic performance of children at school; increasing the provision of quality guidance and counselling; fighting against and eliminating bullying at school); *the school supply and resources* (such as better planning of school supply and strengthening the quality of vocational education, the open education system, the curricula at different school levels and the capacities of the teachers); and *data collection and monitoring* (such as collecting, updating, and sharing reliable and regular data and conducting analyses on the extent of non-attendance, the out-of-school phenomenon and the educational experiences of children; and increasing, developing and participating in policy advocacy initiatives and in collective action for eliminating the barriers to the education children).

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Chapter 9

Appendices

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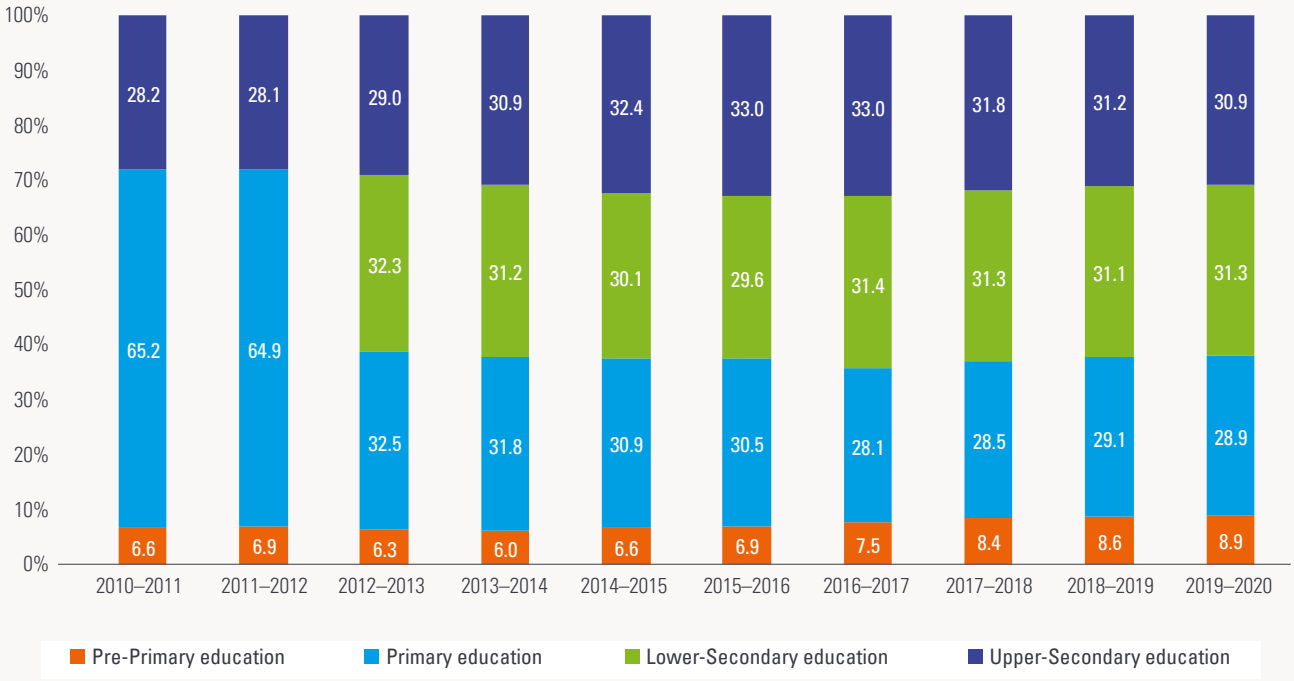
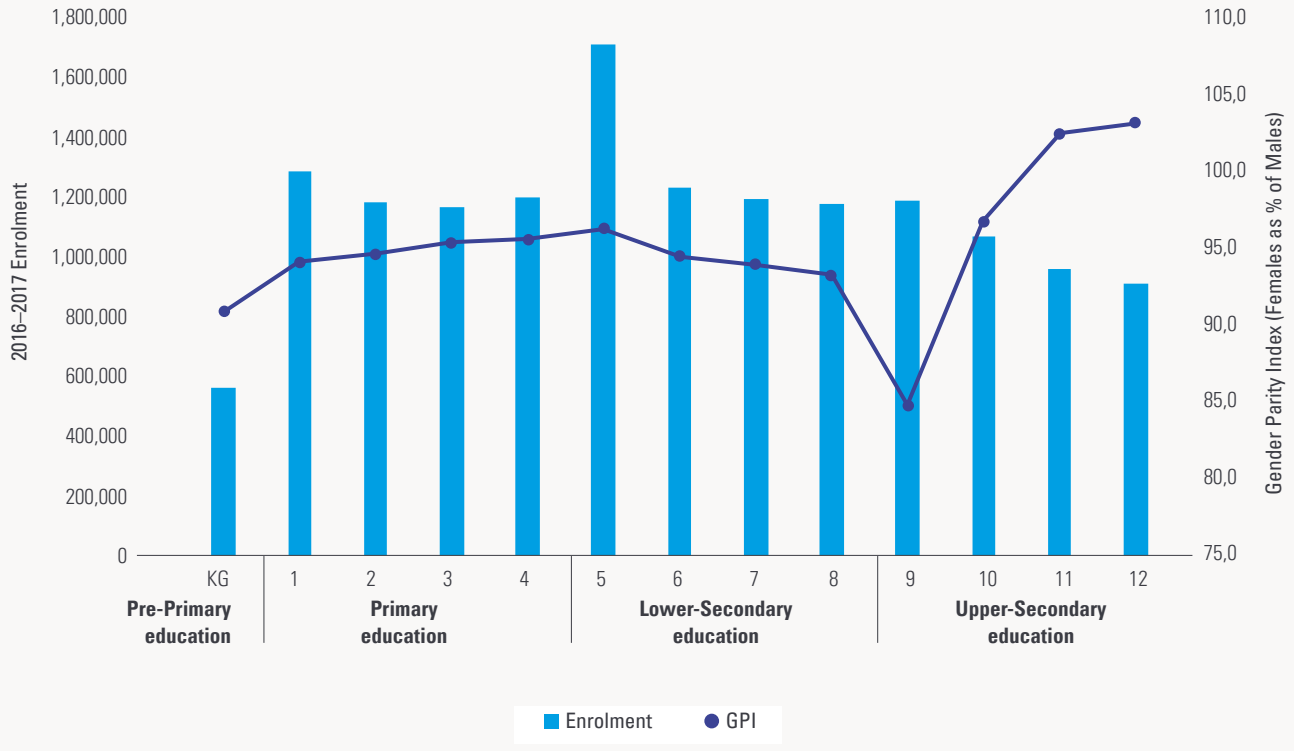
Appendix A. Additional Quantitative Results

Figure A1:
Percentage Breakdown of Total Enrolment by School Level (2010–2019)



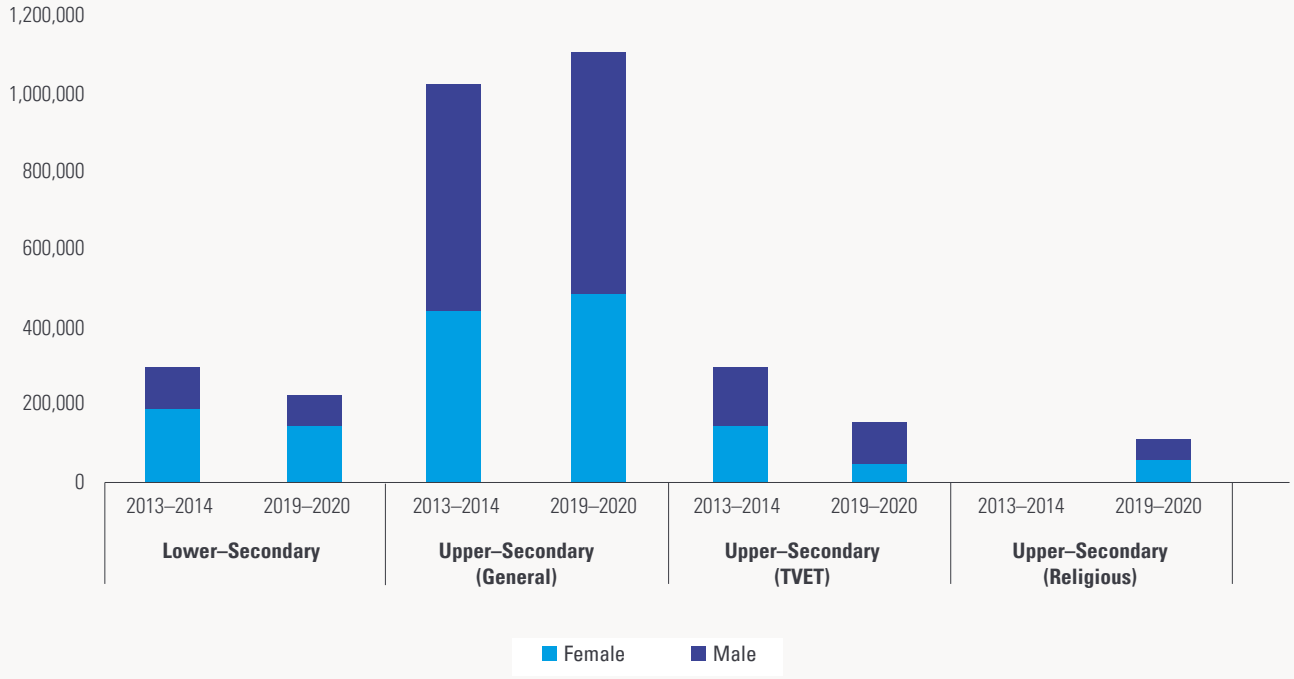
Source: MoNE, various years.

Figure A2:
Enrolment by School Level and Grade with Female:Male Ratio): 2016–2017 School Year



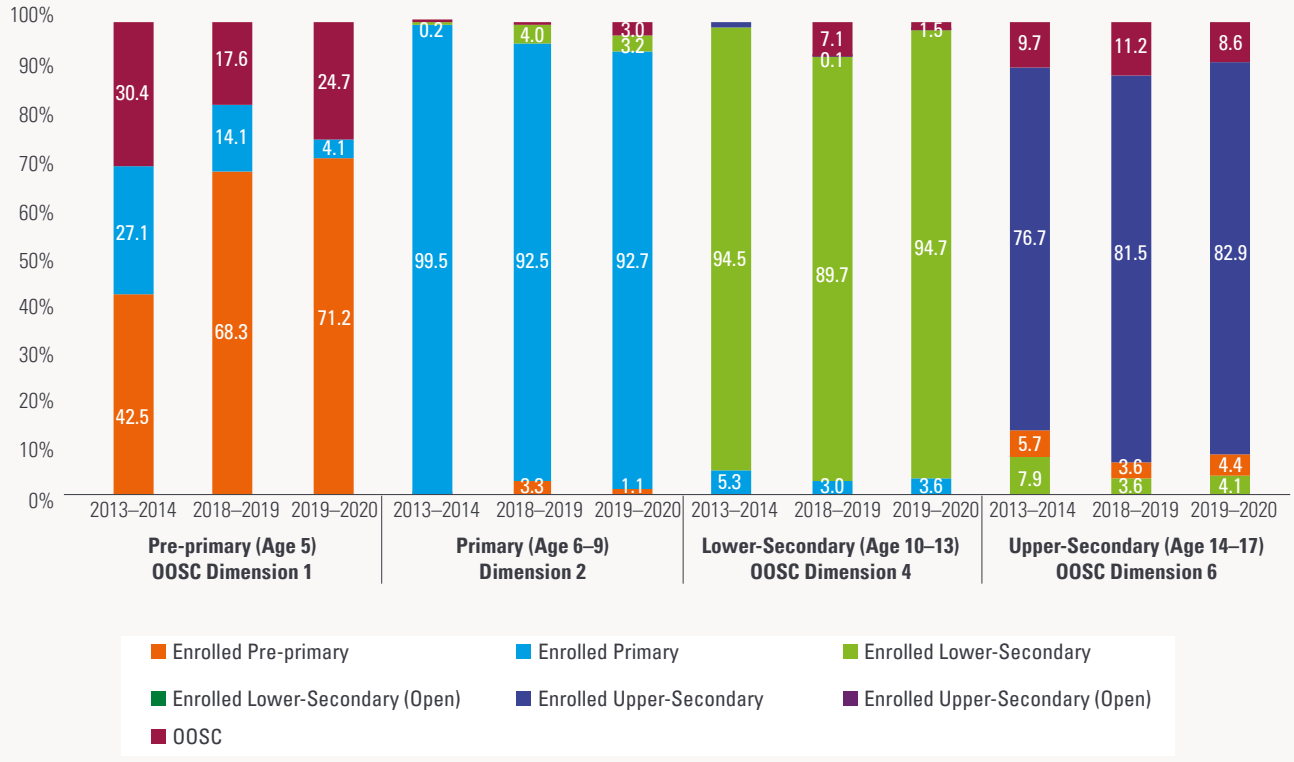
Source: MoNE, 2016-2017.

Figure A3:
Enrolment in Open Education System by Level and Gender: 2013–2014 and 2019–2020



Source: MoNE National Education Statistics Formal Education (2014, 2020).

Figure A4:
Out-of-School Children Summaries by Age Category, 2013–2014, 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 MoNE Data



Source: MoNE (2014, 2020, 2021).

Table A1:
Net and Gross Enrolment Rates by School Level and Province (2019–2020) MoNE

SR Region	Primary + Lower-Secondary		Upper-Secondary		Overall (Primary, Lower-Secondary and Upper-Secondary)	
	GER	NER	GER	NER	GER	NER
TR904 Rize	101,4	98,3	135,1	100,0	112,5	97,2
TR424 Bolu	100,0	96,9	129,1	99,4	109,7	96,5
TR813 Bartın	101,1	98,5	121,3	95,9	107,7	96,3
TR812 Karabük	101,8	98,1	124,0	96,4	109,1	96,1
TR834 Amasya	101,1	98,2	121,6	95,2	107,9	95,8
TR901 Trabzon	100,7	98,1	120,1	94,9	107,1	95,5
TR905 Artvin	100,0	97,6	119,2	94,6	106,4	95,1
TR412 Eskişehir	101,1	97,6	121,5	94,2	107,9	95,1
TR612 Isparta	100,6	97,4	119,3	95,3	106,7	95,1
TR510 Ankara	101,6	97,7	121,6	93,6	108,2	95,1
TR333 Kütahya	100,6	97,7	120,6	93,0	107,2	94,8
TRB11 Malatya	101,5	98,4	118,2	93,2	107,0	94,8
TR811 Zonguldak	100,4	98,2	115,9	91,9	105,5	94,7
TR421 Kocaeli	101,4	98,0	124,4	92,2	109,0	94,5
TR821 Kastamonu	101,5	98,2	119,1	91,4	107,3	94,4
TR522 Karaman	100,3	97,1	120,2	92,7	106,9	94,3
TR711 Kırıkkale	101,2	98,0	118,4	91,2	106,8	94,1
TR902 Ordu	99,7	97,7	110,8	91,4	103,3	94,1
TR831 Samsun	100,7	97,9	117,3	91,2	106,1	94,1
TR721 Kayseri	100,9	97,8	116,9	90,8	106,1	94,1
TR334 Uşak	100,5	97,7	116,7	91,4	105,9	94,1
TR833 Çorum	100,5	96,9	118,9	91,6	106,6	93,7
TR422 Sakarya	101,0	98,0	116,2	90,0	106,0	93,6
TRA12 Erzincan	100,2	97,2	118,6	91,4	106,3	93,6
TR221 Balıkesir	101,1	97,9	114,1	89,4	105,4	93,6
TR100 Istanbul	102,5	98,1	121,3	89,2	108,8	93,5
TR413 Bilecik	100,5	97,0	116,2	90,1	105,7	93,5
TR722 Sivas	100,1	97,5	116,9	90,1	105,6	93,5
TR310 Izmir	102,4	97,6	121,0	89,4	108,6	93,4
TR222 Çanakkale	101,3	97,4	114,0	90,0	105,5	93,3
TR411 Bursa	100,8	97,6	112,3	89,0	104,6	93,3
TR715 Kırşehir	98,7	95,9	115,9	92,3	104,3	93,2
TR903 Giresun	97,8	95,5	113,0	92,9	102,8	93,1
TR322 Denizli	100,8	97,2	111,1	89,8	104,1	93,1
TR331 Manisa	101,1	98,0	109,9	87,7	104,0	93,1
TRB12 Elazığ	101,1	97,7	114,7	89,5	105,6	93,0
TR611 Antalya	101,1	97,0	119,7	89,8	107,3	93,0
TR423 Düzce	100,1	97,2	113,9	88,9	104,6	92,9
TR321 Aydın	100,9	97,7	110,3	87,8	104,0	92,9
TR213 Kırklareli	102,4	97,7	111,3	87,4	105,3	92,6
TR323 Muğla	100,7	97,0	115,6	88,2	105,6	92,6
TR622 Mersin	101,6	98,1	110,7	87,0	104,6	92,6
TR425 Yalova	100,8	97,2	116,5	88,7	106,0	92,5
TR714 Nevşehir	100,3	97,5	108,5	86,7	103,0	92,3

SR Region	Primary + Lower-Secondary		Upper-Secondary		Overall (Primary, Lower-Secondary and Upper-Secondary)	
	GER	NER	GER	NER	GER	NER
TR613 Burdur	101,6	96,6	116,0	89,3	106,4	92,3
TR211 Tekirdağ	101,8	97,8	113,0	85,5	105,5	92,1
TR212 Edirne	102,2	97,9	107,0	85,5	103,8	91,9
TR521 Konya	100,3	97,2	110,5	86,2	103,7	91,8
TR631 Hatay	100,8	98,0	104,4	85,2	102,0	91,8
TR Türkiye	101,7	97,7	110,6	85,0	104,7	91,5
TRC12 Adıyaman	101,0	97,8	106,7	84,4	102,9	91,2
TRA24 Ardahan	102,3	98,9	102,2	83,4	102,1	91,2
TR621 Adana	101,7	97,8	108,4	83,6	103,9	91,1
TR823 Sinop	99,7	95,9	112,3	86,1	103,9	91,0
TR632 Kahramanmaraş	100,4	97,1	105,1	83,2	101,9	90,7
TR332 Afyonkarahisar	100,0	97,0	105,1	82,9	101,7	90,7
TRB14 Tunceli	97,6	95,1	115,2	85,0	103,5	90,6
TR713 Niğde	100,4	97,4	100,1	82,0	100,2	90,6
TRA13 Bayburt	96,4	93,9	117,7	89,0	103,4	90,5
TR633 Osmaniye	102,3	97,2	106,9	84,3	103,8	90,3
TRC13 Kilis	101,7	97,4	107,2	82,0	103,5	90,0
TRC11 Gaziantep	102,1	98,1	101,9	79,4	102,0	89,6
TR712 Aksaray	98,5	95,9	103,8	81,9	100,2	89,5
TRB13 Bing l	101,6	97,4	101,7	78,7	101,6	88,8
TR723 Yozgat	96,4	93,7	106,0	83,2	99,5	88,6
TRA11 Erzurum	102,0	97,8	102,2	77,2	102,1	88,5
TRA23 Iğdır	103,5	98,8	93,1	75,9	100,2	88,1
TRC32 Batman	102,8	98,2	97,7	74,9	101,1	87,5
TR822 Çankırı	95,8	91,9	111,8	82,6	101,1	87,5
TR832 Tokat	93,2	90,4	108,4	86,0	98,1	87,2
TRA22 Kars	103,3	98,6	89,9	72,7	98,9	86,9
TRC22 Diyarbakır	102,9	98,5	93,0	71,5	99,7	86,7
TRC31 Mardin	103,5	98,3	90,9	71,8	99,4	86,2
TRC34 Siirt	104,2	98,4	90,6	67,8	99,6	84,7
TRB21 Van	104,9	98,6	88,0	67,1	99,2	84,5
TRB23 Bitlis	103,3	98,3	87,0	65,6	97,9	84,2
TRC33 Şırnak	104,8	97,8	88,5	67,1	99,3	83,5
TRB24 Hakkari	102,4	94,5	96,9	71,1	100,5	83,1
TRC21 Şanlıurfa	104,7	98,4	80,5	62,4	96,8	82,6
TRA21 Ağrı	106,2	98,6	76,2	59,6	96,3	81,8
TRB22 Muş	103,4	97,1	72,9	56,4	93,3	80,0
TR906 Gümüşhane	71,9	70,2	80,5	63,3	74,7	66,8

Table A2:
Net and Gross Enrolment Rates for Primary, Lower and Upper-Secondary Combined by Gender and Province, 2019–2020 MoNE

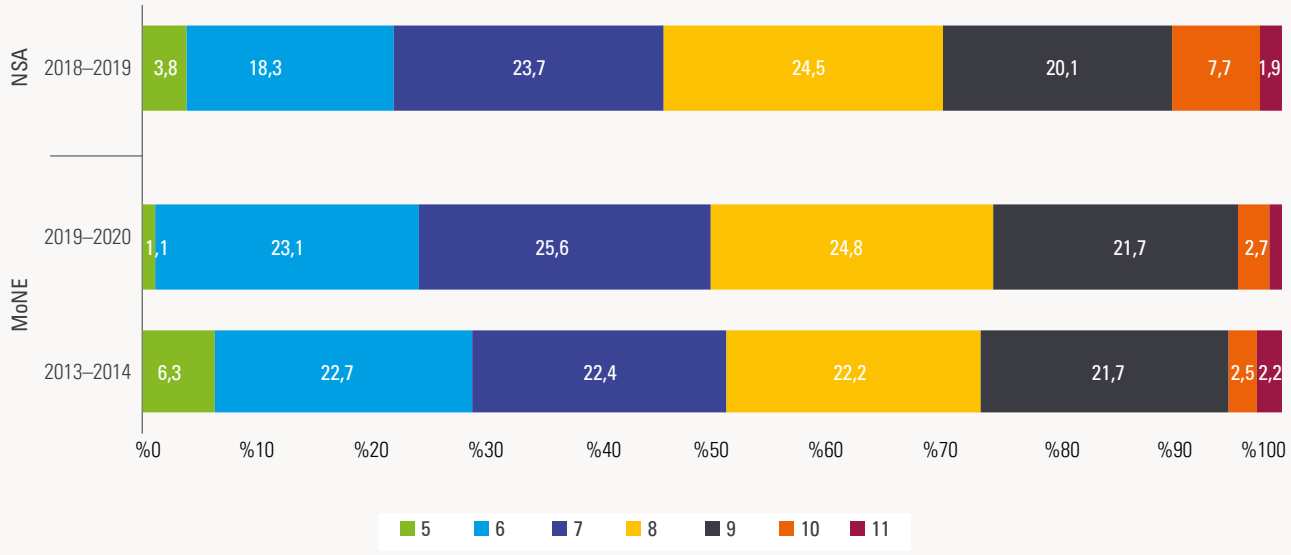
SR Region	Overall GER			Overall NER		
	Female	Male	Gap	Female	Male	Gap
TR424 Bolu	107,1	112,2	5,1	94,6	98,4	3,7
TRC21 Şanlıurfa	93,8	99,6	5,8	80,8	84,3	3,5
TRB23 Bitlis	94,4	101,2	6,8	82,4	85,9	3,5
TRC34 Siirt	95,4	103,6	8,1	83,0	86,3	3,3
TRB22 Muş	91,2	95,2	4,1	78,6	81,4	2,8
TR904 Rize	110,1	114,8	4,7	95,9	97,9	2,0
TR723 Yozgat	98,1	100,8	2,7	88,1	89,1	1,1
TRB24 Hakkari	98,7	102,1	3,4	82,6	83,6	1,0
TR905 Artvin	106,5	106,2	-0,3	94,7	95,5	0,8
TRB13 Bing l	100,6	102,7	2,1	88,4	89,1	0,7
TR832 Tokat	97,4	98,8	1,4	86,9	87,5	0,7
TR833 Çorum	105,9	107,2	1,2	93,3	94,0	0,7
TRB14 Tunceli	103,0	104,0	1,0	90,3	90,9	0,7
TRC31 Mardin	97,9	100,9	3,0	85,9	86,5	0,7
TR906 Gümüşhane	74,3	75,0	0,7	66,5	67,1	0,6
TRA12 Erzincan	105,8	106,9	1,1	93,3	93,9	0,6
TR213 Kırklareli	104,2	106,4	2,2	92,4	92,9	0,5
TRC13 Kilis	101,3	105,6	4,3	89,7	90,2	0,5
TR622 Mersin	103,4	105,8	2,5	92,3	92,8	0,5
TRC22 Diyarbakır	98,1	101,2	3,1	86,5	86,9	0,4
TRC33 Şırnak	97,3	101,2	3,9	83,3	83,6	0,3
TR821 Kastamonu	108,3	106,3	-2,1	94,2	94,6	0,3
TRB12 Elazığ	104,6	106,5	1,9	92,8	93,1	0,3
TR631 Hatay	100,8	103,1	2,3	91,7	92,0	0,3
TR711 Kırıkkale	105,4	108,1	2,7	94,0	94,3	0,3
TRC32 Batman	99,4	102,6	3,2	87,4	87,7	0,3
TR321 Aydın	103,1	104,9	1,8	92,8	93,0	0,2
TRA11 Erzurum	100,9	103,3	2,4	88,4	88,5	0,1
TR834 Amasya	107,7	108,1	0,3	95,8	95,9	0,1
TR901 Trabzon	106,7	107,5	0,9	95,4	95,5	0,1
TR903 Giresun	102,3	103,3	1,0	93,1	93,2	0,1
TR331 Manisa	103,0	104,9	1,9	93,0	93,1	0,1
TR521 Konya	102,6	104,7	2,1	91,8	91,9	0,1
TR Türkiye	104,0	105,3	1,4	91,5	91,5	0,0
TR632 Kahramanmaraş	100,6	103,1	2,5	90,7	90,7	0,0
TRA13 Bayburt	102,1	104,7	2,5	90,5	90,5	0,0
TR812 Karabük	109,0	109,3	0,3	96,1	96,1	0,0
TR722 Sivas	104,9	106,3	1,4	93,5	93,4	0,0
TR621 Adana	102,8	104,9	2,1	91,2	91,1	-0,1
TR412 Eskişehir	108,2	107,6	-0,6	95,2	95,1	-0,1
TR823 Sinop	103,6	104,1	0,5	91,0	90,9	-0,1
TR411 Bursa	104,7	104,6	-0,1	93,3	93,2	-0,1
TR715 Kırşehir	103,2	105,4	2,2	93,3	93,1	-0,1
TR422 Sakarya	106,3	105,8	-0,5	93,7	93,6	-0,1

SR Region	Overall GER			Overall NER		
	Female	Male	Gap	Female	Male	Gap
TR712 Aksaray	99,5	100,9	1,4	89,6	89,4	-0,1
TR714 Nevşehir	101,9	104,0	2,0	92,4	92,2	-0,2
TR332 Afyonkarahisar	100,8	102,5	1,7	90,8	90,6	-0,2
TRC12 Adıyaman	101,3	104,5	3,2	91,4	91,1	-0,2
TR100 Istanbul	108,5	109,0	0,5	93,6	93,4	-0,2
TR222 Çanakkale	105,5	105,5	0,0	93,5	93,2	-0,3
TR221 Balıkesir	105,0	105,8	0,9	93,7	93,4	-0,3
TRC11 Gaziantep	100,9	103,1	2,3	89,8	89,5	-0,3
TRB21 Van	98,3	100,2	1,9	84,7	84,3	-0,3
TR333 Kütahya	107,8	106,7	-1,1	95,0	94,7	-0,4
TR212 Edirne	103,4	104,1	0,8	92,1	91,8	-0,4
TR211 Tekirdağ	105,3	105,7	0,4	92,3	91,9	-0,4
TR811 Zonguldak	106,6	104,4	-2,2	94,9	94,5	-0,4
TR510 Ankara	108,5	107,9	-0,6	95,3	94,9	-0,4
TR323 Muğla	104,6	106,6	2,1	92,8	92,4	-0,4
TR721 Kayseri	105,6	106,6	1,0	94,3	93,9	-0,4
TR421 Kocaeli	109,0	109,1	0,1	94,7	94,3	-0,4
TR310 Izmir	108,5	108,7	0,2	93,6	93,1	-0,5
TRB11 Malatya	106,3	107,7	1,5	95,0	94,6	-0,5
TR611 Antalya	107,0	107,6	0,5	93,2	92,7	-0,5
TR813 Bartın	108,6	107,0	-1,6	96,5	96,0	-0,5
TR423 Düzce	105,0	104,3	-0,7	93,2	92,7	-0,5
TR831 Samsun	106,0	106,3	0,2	94,4	93,8	-0,6
TR425 Yalova	106,4	105,6	-0,7	92,8	92,3	-0,6
TR612 Isparta	106,1	107,3	1,2	95,4	94,8	-0,6
TR902 Ordu	103,3	103,4	0,1	94,5	93,8	-0,7
TR334 Uşak	104,9	106,9	2,0	94,5	93,7	-0,8
TR322 Denizli	103,5	104,7	1,1	93,6	92,7	-0,9
TR633 Osmaniye	102,8	104,8	1,9	90,8	89,9	-0,9
TR822 Çankırı	100,9	101,3	0,4	88,0	87,0	-1,0
TR413 Bilecik	104,9	106,5	1,6	94,0	93,0	-1,1
TR522 Karaman	106,4	107,3	0,9	94,8	93,7	-1,1
TRA21 Ağrı	96,1	96,5	0,4	82,4	81,3	-1,1
TRA24 Ardahan	101,8	102,4	0,7	92,0	90,4	-1,6
TR613 Burdur	105,7	107,0	1,3	93,1	91,5	-1,6
TR713 Niğde	100,1	100,3	0,1	91,6	89,6	-2,0
TRA22 Kars	99,0	98,7	-0,3	88,0	85,9	-2,1
TRA23 Iğdır	102,1	98,4	-3,7	90,2	86,2	-4,1

Figure A5:
Heat Map for GER-Based Province

Figure A6:
Heat Map for NER-Based on Province

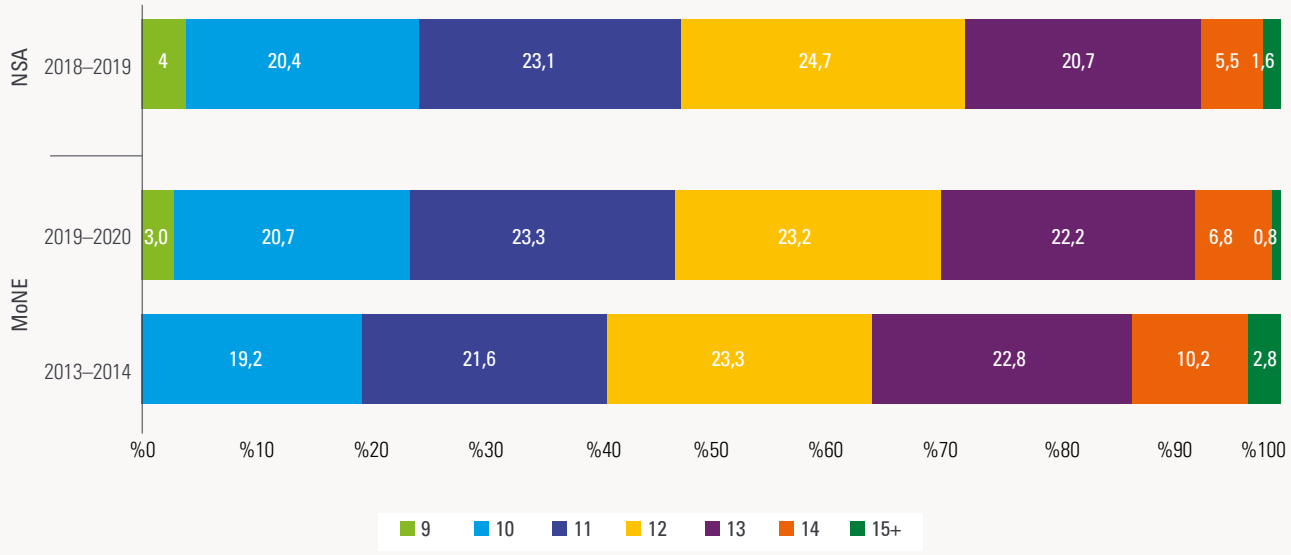
Figure A7:
Primary Enrolment by Age Category, 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 (MoNE) and 2018–2019 DHS



Source: MoNE (2014, 2020) and DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 6–9 year-olds is 2,387.

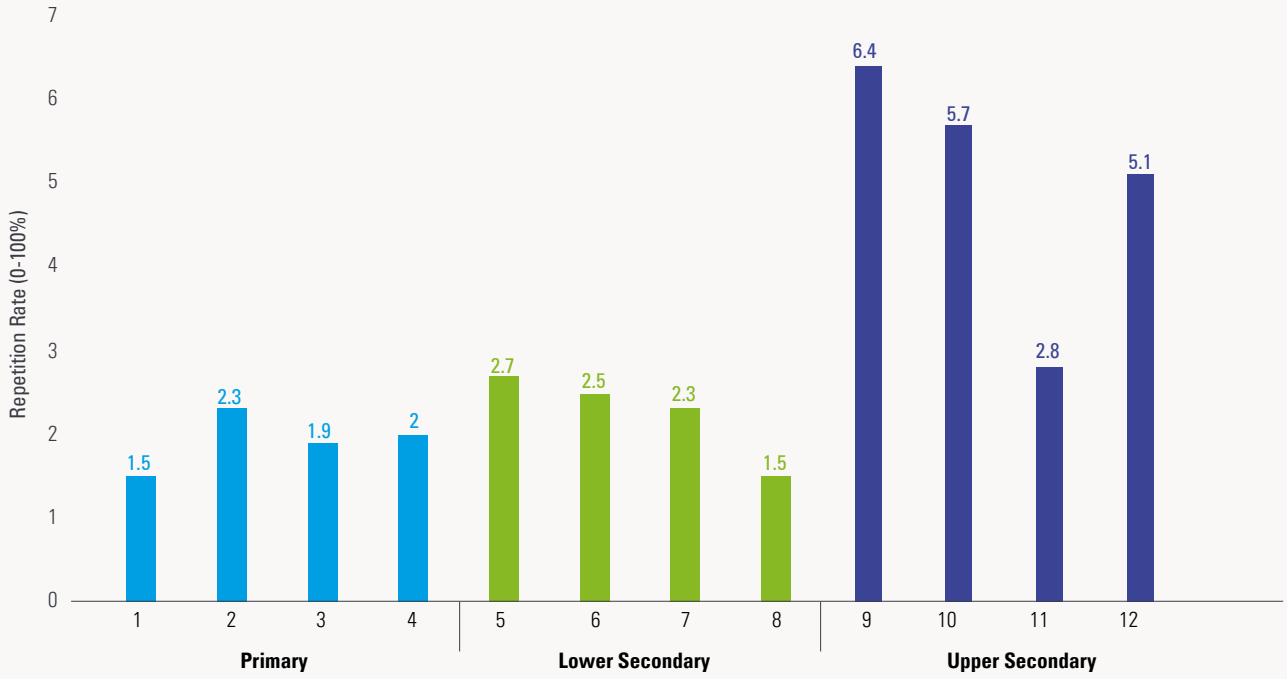
Figure A8:
Lower-Secondary Enrolment by Age Category, 2013–2014 and 2019–2020 (MoNE) and 2018–2019 DHS



Source: MoNE (2014, 2020) and DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 10–13 year olds is 2,650.

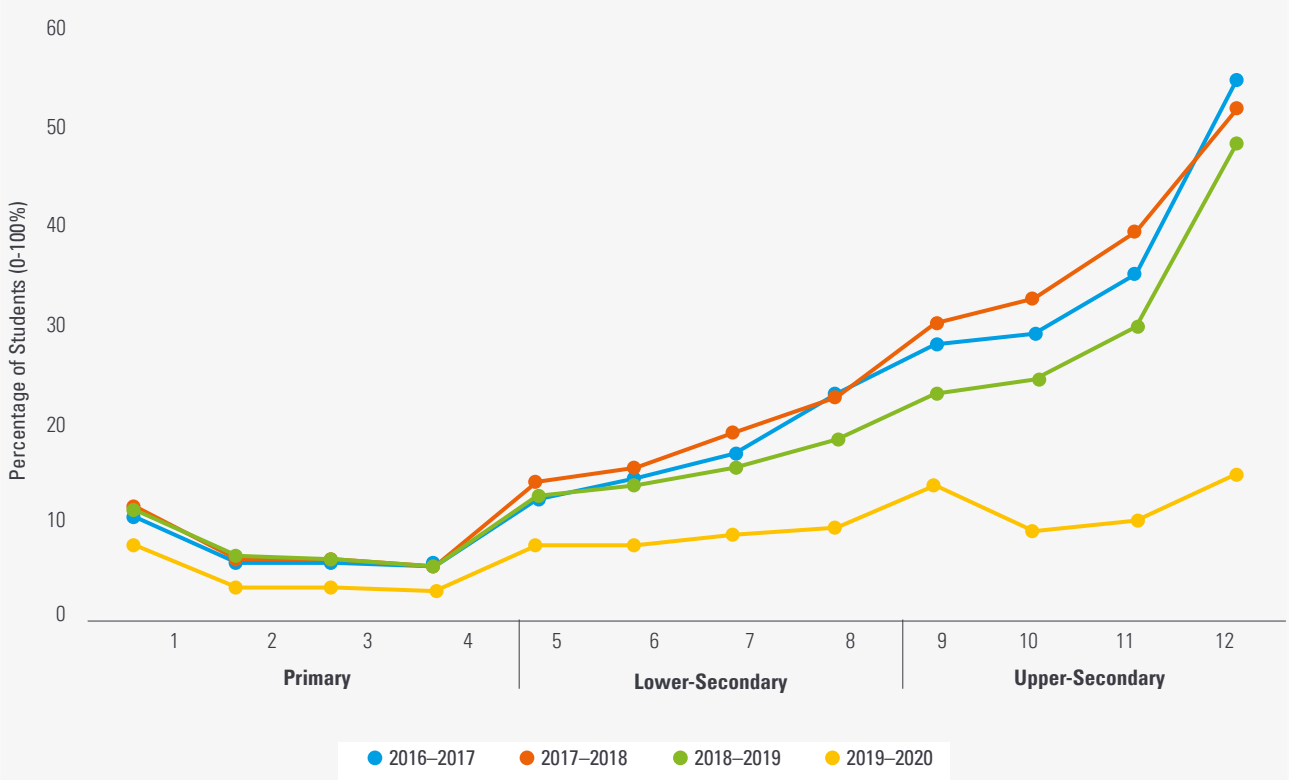
Figure A9:
Percentage of Enrolled Students Currently Repeating the Grade by Grade, 2018–2019 DHS



Source: DHS, 2018–2019.

Notes: The DHS 2018 sample size for 5–17 year-olds is 8,086.

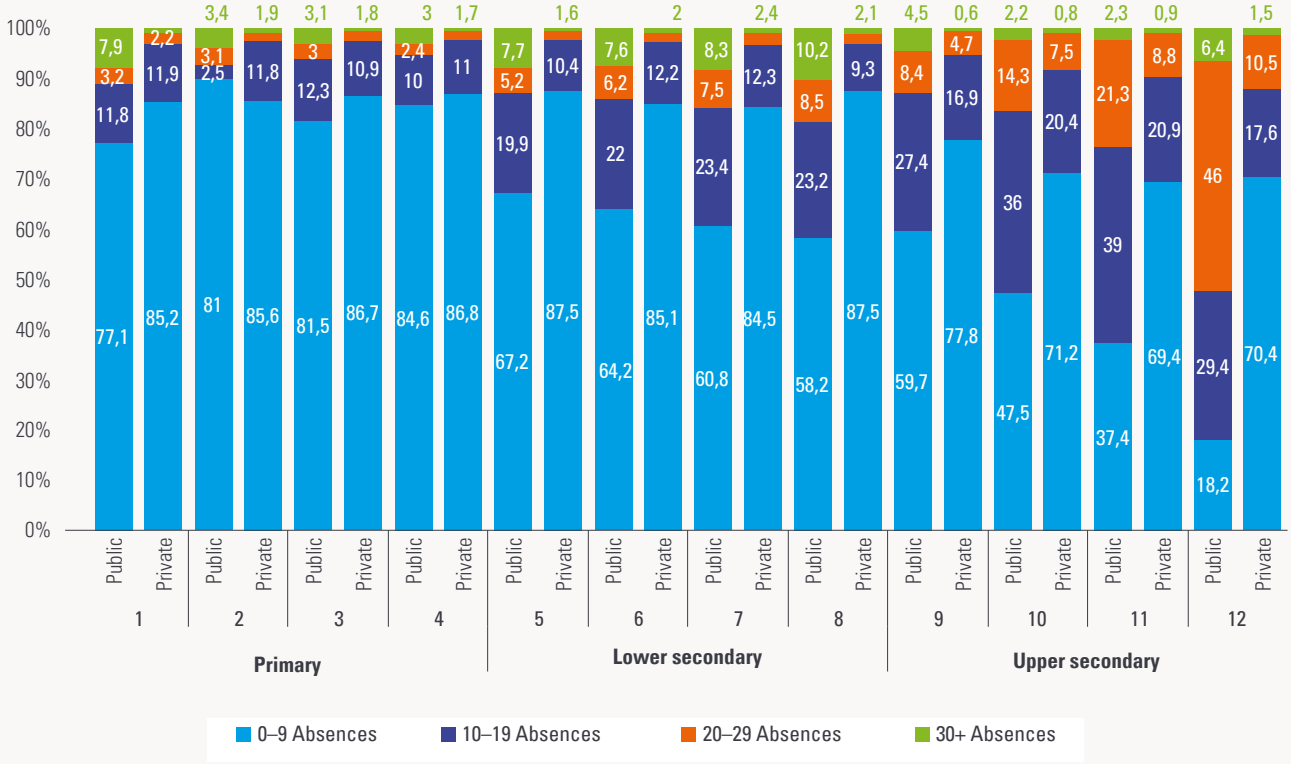
Figure A10:
Percentage of Students with 20+ Absences per Year by School Type and Grade, 2016–2020



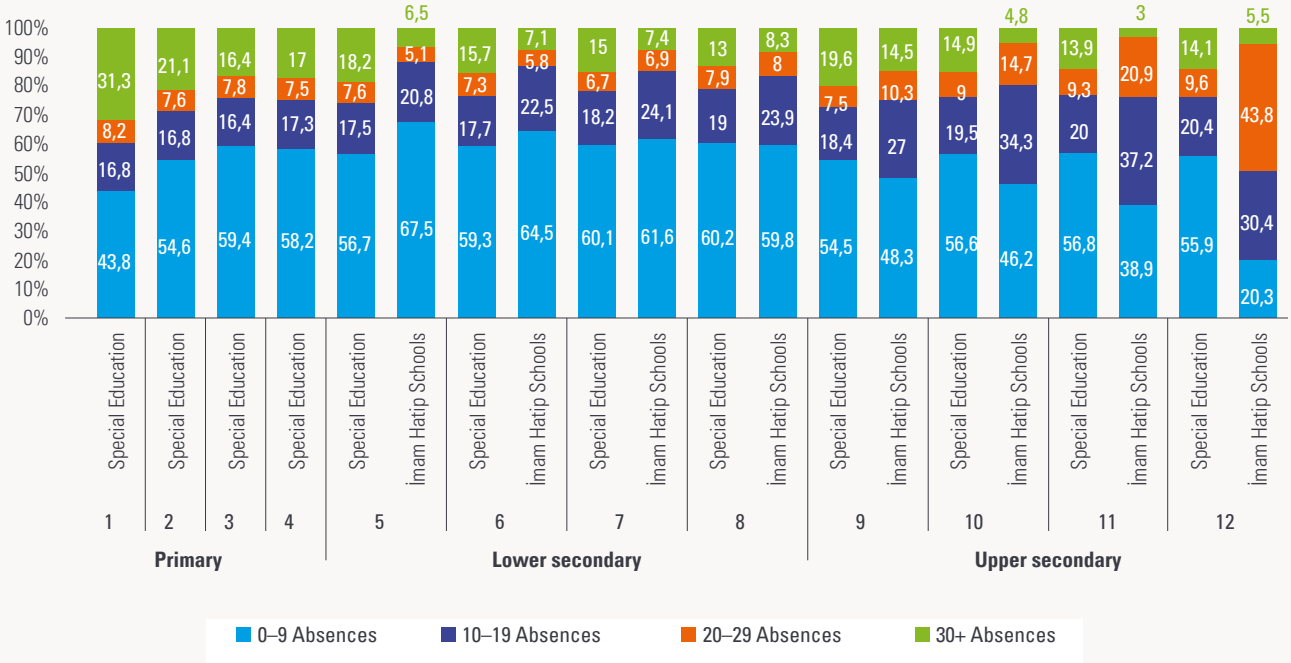
Source: MoNE (2020b).

Figure A11:
Percentage of Students by Number of Absences per Year Categories, School System and Grade, 2018–2019 MoNE

(a) General Education Public and Private



(b) Special Education and Imam Hatip Schools



Source: MoNE (2020b).

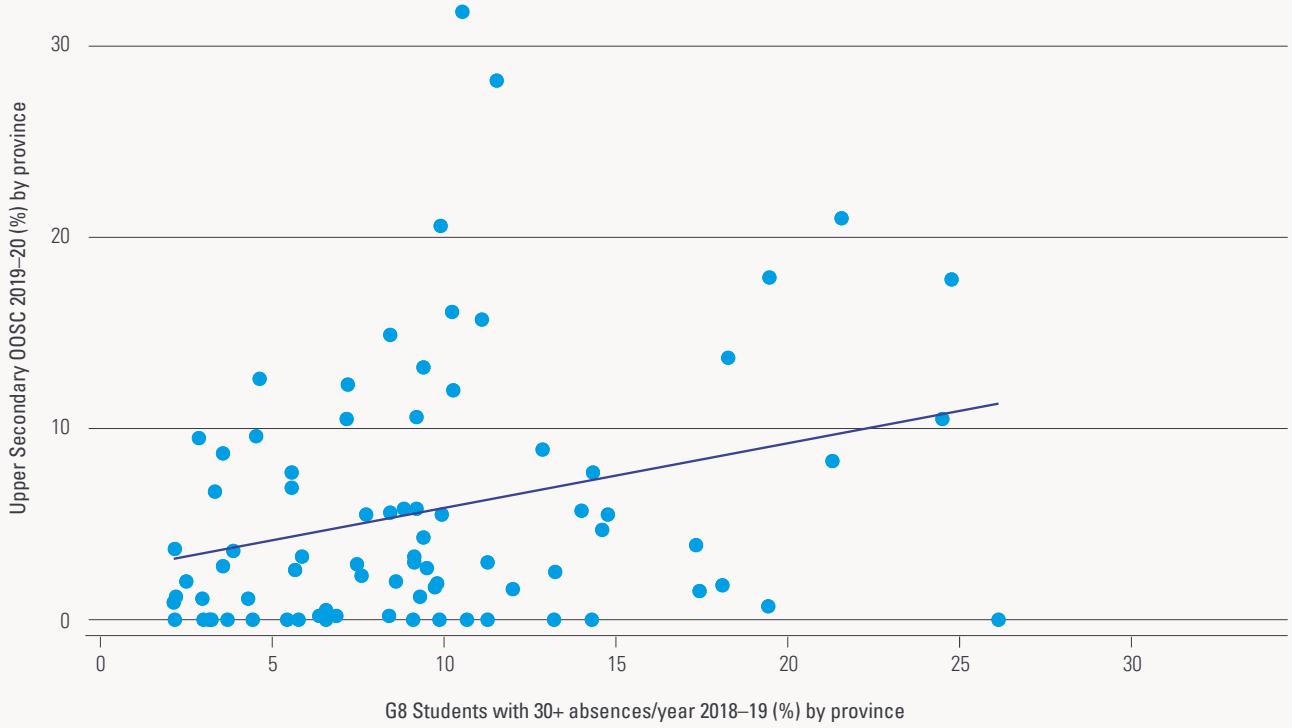
Table A3:
Students with 20 or More Absences During School Year in Public Education System by School Level and Province, 2018–2019 MoNE (Sorted from Lowest Overall Average to Highest)

Province	Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
BİNGÖL	587	3.1	1,515	7.5	2,063	15.2
TUNCELİ	34	1.2	147	5.3	502	20.8
ORDU	830	2.4	2,667	6.7	6,731	19.6
GÜMÜŞHANE	99	1.9	345	5.7	1,258	23.2
ARTVİN	134	1.9	463	5.8	1,705	23.2
GİRESUN	526	2.9	1,434	7.0	4,451	21.9
TRABZON	1,359	3.5	2,858	6.8	8,938	23.8
KIRŞEHİR	260	2.5	573	4.8	2,899	27.1
ADIYAMAN	1,602	3.5	4,980	10.0	7,878	22.2
TOKAT	693	2.5	2,799	8.6	7,067	24.8
MALATYA	2,055	4.4	4,141	8.1	9,407	23.6
YOZGAT	554	2.6	1,610	6.5	5,368	27.3
BAYBURT	155	3.8	310	6.9	1,074	26.3
ELAZIĞ	967	3.0	2,920	8.0	7,684	26.1
ERZİNCAN	395	3.5	961	8.1	2,631	25.4
DÜZCE	774	4.1	2,068	9.5	4,011	23.8
RİZE	447	2.9	1,201	6.8	4,679	27.8
ZONGULDAK	864	3.1	2,556	8.2	7,317	27.3
HATAY	4,919	4.3	12,442	10.3	20,091	25.5
NEVŞEHİR	442	3.0	1,409	8.4	3,540	28.9
HAKKARİ	1,667	7.9	2,504	10.2	3,783	22.9
DENİZLİ	1,629	3.3	4,898	8.8	12,425	29.4
KAHRAMANMARAŞ	3,751	4.5	10,049	11.2	16,416	26.2
ARDAHAN	230	4.2	532	8.2	1,508	29.5
BİTLİS	1,906	6.4	4,739	15.1	3,584	20.7
OSMANİYE	2,596	6.8	4,054	10.3	7,543	25.2
ANTALYA	6,579	5.2	14,077	10.7	26,215	26.9
AMASYA	320	2.1	1,558	9.3	5,065	31.5
KOCAELİ	5,668	5.2	12,239	10.8	23,637	26.9
BARTIN	277	3.3	921	9.9	2,669	30.1
MERSİN	5,125	4.8	12,482	11.1	22,507	29.0
BATMAN	2,390	4.6	8,126	14.0	9,295	27.5
SAKARYA	3,156	6.2	5,815	10.6	13,342	29.6
KAYSERİ	3,280	3.9	9,033	9.8	22,434	33.0
KASTAMONU	602	3.9	1,963	11.0	4,755	32.2
ERZURUM	4,087	8.2	8,711	16.3	8,809	23.0
SİVAS	923	2.8	3,588	9.6	10,890	35.3

Province	Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
KARS	1,341	6.5	3,417	15.2	3,646	26.3
BİLECİK	403	3.9	1,271	11.5	3,087	32.8
SİNOP	463	5.1	1,241	12.5	2,689	30.6
SAMSUN	3,771	5.8	9,182	12.8	18,943	31.1
ÇORUM	895	3.5	2,888	10.2	8,613	36.2
Istanbul	60,379	7.9	111,244	14.1	157,019	28.0
MUĞLA	1,792	4.2	4,789	10.8	11,835	35.1
DİYARBAKIR	9,722	6.7	26,275	17.7	22,424	26.2
VAN	10,112	9.9	19,375	18.0	14,552	22.8
BURDUR	328	2.8	1,282	9.9	4,297	38.2
ADANA	8,940	6.3	23,063	15.6	28,233	29.1
KARABÜK	545	5.6	1,110	10.2	3,643	35.3
TEKİRDAĞ	4,801	8.6	8,257	14.7	11,181	28.5
ANKARA	14,829	5.7	38,043	13.7	67,859	32.6
AFYONKARAHİSAR	1,341	3.4	5,903	13.6	10,517	35.4
KİLİS	731	7.2	1,826	17.0	2,208	28.5
YALOVA	820	7.0	1,634	13.7	3,128	33.3
KARAMAN	398	3.0	1,928	13.2	4,643	38.6
ŞIRNAK	5,618	11.0	11,365	20.2	6,721	24.0
KÜTAHYA	938	3.9	3,598	13.4	9,451	38.2
MARDİN	6,504	8.9	15,670	20.3	11,755	26.3
NİĞDE	516	2.4	3,212	13.4	7,009	39.8
AKSARAY	1,041	4.1	3,461	12.8	6,591	38.9
ISPARTA	518	2.6	2,144	9.7	8,494	43.6
ESKİŞEHİR	2,553	6.9	5,607	14.2	11,771	35.4
UŞAK	706	4.1	2,752	14.6	5,874	37.8
BOLU	719	5.4	1,573	11.0	5,392	40.5
SİİRT	2,586	8.7	5,981	18.4	5,310	30.6
BURSA	11,170	7.1	26,085	16.2	42,310	34.6
MANİSA	3,672	5.1	11,686	15.0	21,908	38.8
BALIKESİR	3,497	6.9	7,109	12.7	18,095	39.6
AYDIN	3,421	6.7	9,173	16.9	14,427	35.7
KIRIKKALE	773	6.3	2,164	15.7	4,897	38.1
ÇANAKKALE	1,552	7.3	3,458	15.4	7,186	37.6
IĞDIR	1,623	10.4	3,557	22.3	3,213	28.0
ÇANKIRI	438	5.6	1,019	11.9	3,039	43.5
KONYA	8,728	6.7	24,116	16.9	35,918	38.6
GAZİANTEP	14,663	8.6	35,963	20.7	34,458	33.1
KIRKLARELİ	1,528	11.1	2,250	15.5	4,755	37.9
AĞRI	6,212	12.0	12,942	24.5	8,025	28.4

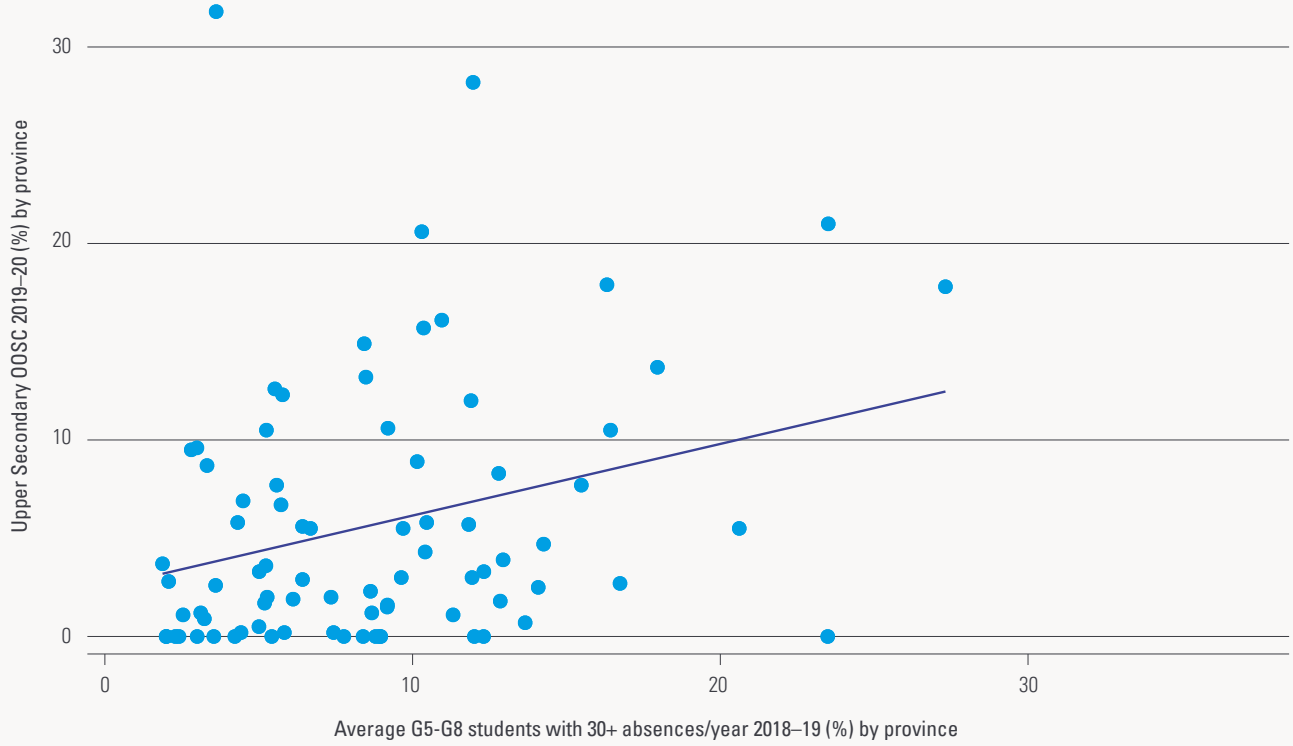
Province	Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
MUŞ	4,224	11.0	9,815	24.6	6,035	30.1
İZMİR	16,208	8.4	36,960	18.3	60,907	39.6
EDİRNE	2,397	15.7	3,586	22.1	4,493	34.4
ŞANLIURFA	60,821	28.4	85,240	41.2	31,436	32.2

Figure A12:
Comparison of Province-Level Measures of Upper-Secondary OOSC Rate with Percentage of Grade 8 Students with 30+ Absences, All Provinces in Türkiye



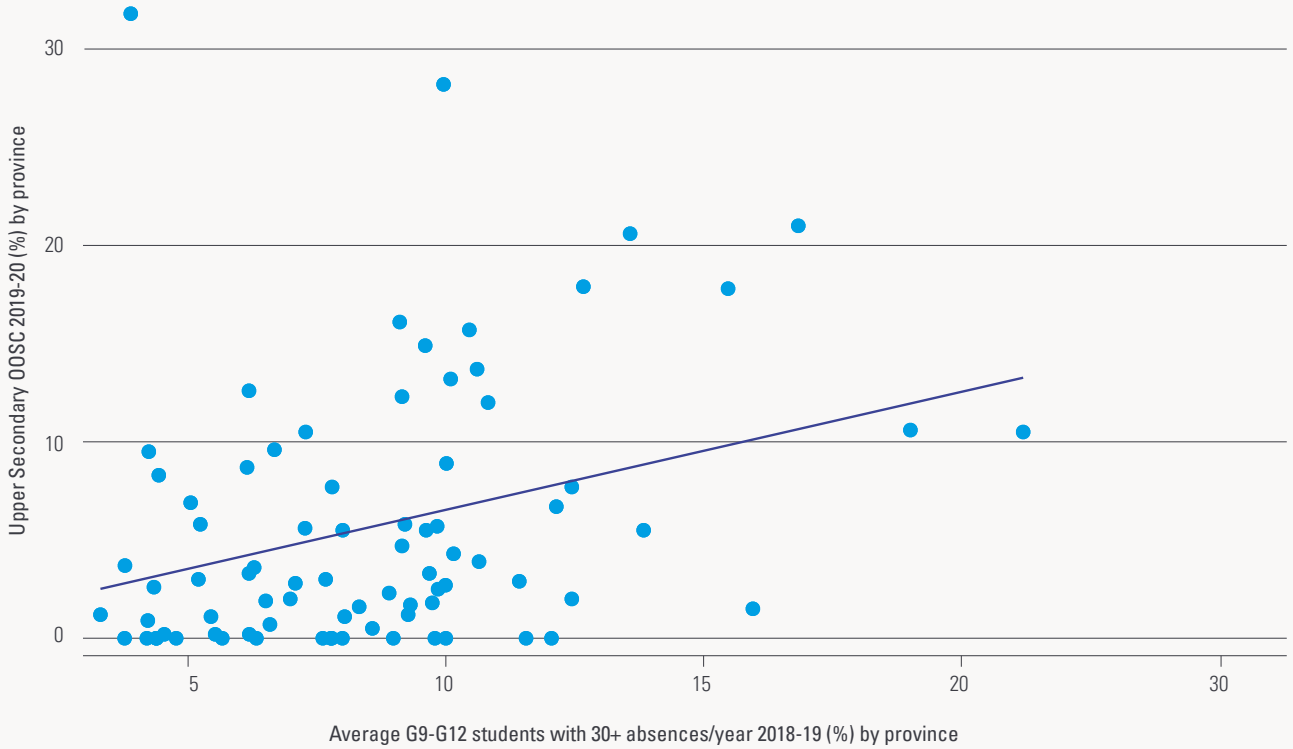
Source: MoNE, 2019–2020.

Figure A13:
Comparison of Province-Level Measures of Upper-Secondary OOSC Rate with Average Percentage of Grade 5–8 Students with 30+ Absences, All Provinces in Türkiye



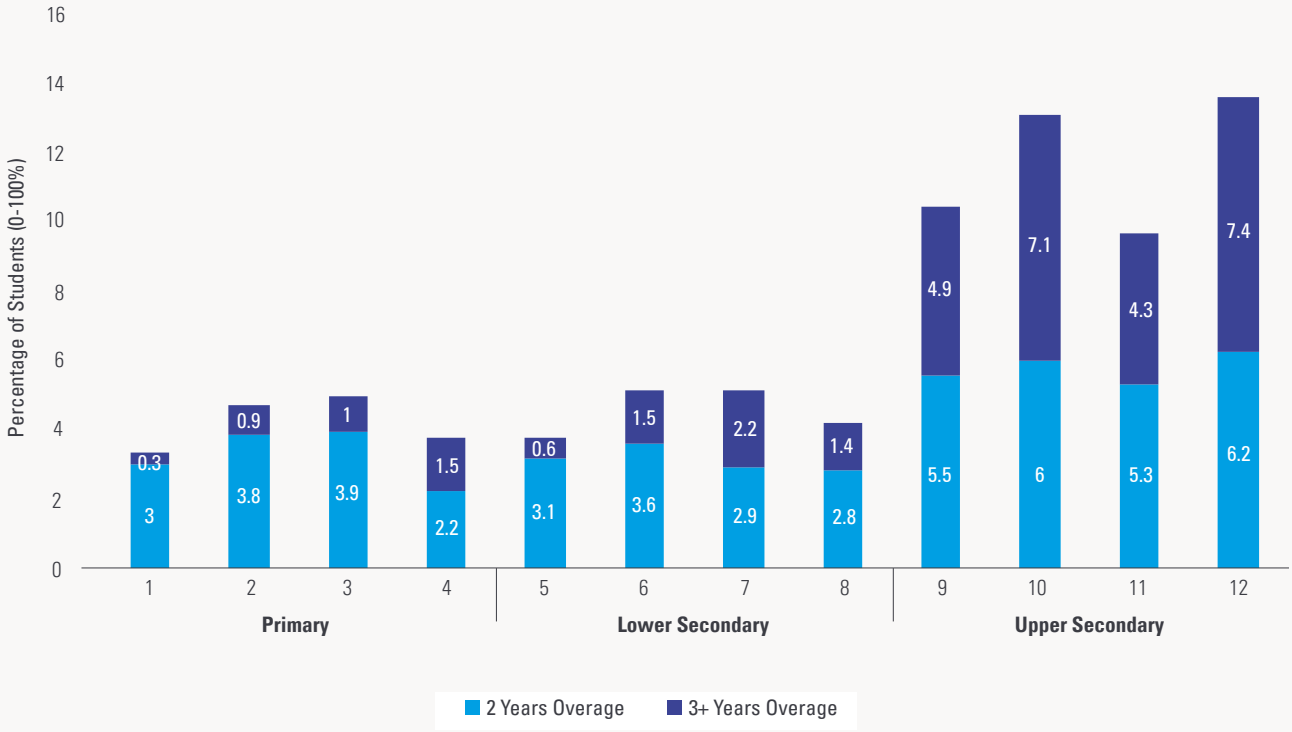
Source: MoNE, 2019–2020.

Figure A14:
Comparison of Province-Level Measures of Upper-Secondary OOSC Rate with Average Percentage of Grade 9–12 Students with 30+ Absences, All Provinces in Türkiye



Source: MoNE, 2019–2020.

Figure A15:
Percentage of Students by Over-age Category and Grade, 2018–2019 DHS



Source: DHS (2018).

Notes: The DHS (2018) sample size for 5–17 year-olds is 8,086.

Appendix B. Multivariate Analysis of Barriers

With the DHS data, it is possible to analyse the covariates of school enrolment using multivariate methods. The database includes information on family size, income and socio-economic status (SES), child work activities and early marriage. It is also possible to assess the relative importance of these different variables on school enrolment probabilities among Turkish children using statistical methods to identify barriers that stand out when controlling for other background features.

The analysis is not causal, and the results must be handled carefully regarding how each independent variable directly affects the school enrolment outcome. Furthermore, the DHS data include information on a limited set of barriers mainly related to household demand factors and do not inform about school quality or other supply-side factors. Despite these limitations, the statistical analysis makes it possible to focus on the household demand-side barriers in a "holistic" way to identify household and individual child factors significantly associated with school enrollment.

Following the summary in Section 4, two sets of analyses are summarized in this appendix:

- Predictors of enrolment among 5- and 6-year-olds: Many 5- and 6-year-olds are out of school, over-age enrolments in pre-primary, or are early entrants into primary. Therefore, this is a useful subset of children to focus on with follow-up statistical analysis, especially to assess the degree to which household factors affect pre-primary and primary enrolment differently.

- Predictors of enrolment among 14- to 17-year-olds: This is the age cohort with the highest proportion of out-of-school children, so it is essential to identify significant predictors of being in school in this age range and compare the relative importance of factors like SES and family size. Also, for these older children, the DHS data include variables for working in paid labour and early marriage, which are key barriers in this study.

B1. Methodology

The school enrolment dependent variable *Y* for child *i* in sampling cluster *j* is modelled as a function of a vector of child and family background variables (*X*):

$$Y_{ij} = \beta'_X \boldsymbol{X}_{ij} + (u_j, \varepsilon_i) \qquad (1)$$

Equation 1 is estimated using somewhat different techniques by age group. For the 5- and 6-year-olds, a multinomial logit (non-ordered) dependent variable is incorporated with three outcomes: not enrolled in school, pre-primary, and primary. For the 14- to 17-year-olds, the dichotomous dependent variable (1 = enrolled, 0 = not enrolled) is modelled with a probit specification. All estimations include robust standard errors based on the clustered sample design and region controls ("fixed effects").

The presented coefficients for the multinomial model are odds ratios, where values greater than 1.0 mean the variable has a positive effect on the probability of the outcome, and values between 0 and 0.99 correspond to negative associations. For example, of coefficient of 2.0 for urban location means that the odds of the outcome being positive are two times higher for urban children than for rural children. In contrast, a coefficient of 0.75 for males means the odds of the outcome are 75 per cent as likely for females.

In the 14- to 17-year-old modelling, the presented coefficients are marginal effects on the probability of being enrolled and can take on any value, positive or negative. For example, a marginal effect of 5.0 for urban location means that urban children are 5 per cent more likely to be enrolled in school than rural children. It should be restated that all variable effects represent the independent effect of the variable when controlling the effects of all other variables in the estimation.

The statistical modelling is based on standard econometric techniques for cross-sectional data, but it is important to clarify that the relationships between the dependent and independent variables are statistical "associations" rather than causal effects (or "determinants"). The fundamental problem with statistical modelling of non-experimental cross-sectional data is commonly referred to as omitted variable bias. For example, if children who do not work are more likely to be enrolled in school, it may not be because they have extra time to attend school, although time availability is almost certainly part of the explanation. However, it may instead reflect that their families have prioritized education and school participation for their children, in addition to having sufficient financial resources so they do not need the child to work. The only way to completely remove this issue—and be certain that *x* is causing *y*—is through experimental research designs with randomized assignments. These are simply not practical for

large-scale surveys where the research (and policy) interest lies in a whole range of variables related to children, their families and the environments in which they live.

B2. Multivariate results

Table B1 presents the results for the two sets of multivariate analyses using the DHS 2018 data. The left-hand side columns present the results for the multinomial logit outcome for 5- and 6-year-olds, with not enrolled in any school as the excluded (or reference) category, and coefficients that correspond to separately being enrolled in pre-primary (column 1) or primary (column 2). The right-hand side of Table B1 presents the results for current enrolment among 14- to 17-year-olds. This begins with all children aged 14–17 in the DHS sample and then presents separate results by gender.

For the 5- and 6-year-olds, the main findings include the following, with an emphasis on significant predictors of either the pre-primary or primary enrolment outcome:

1. Six-year-olds are much more likely than 5-year-olds to be enrolled in primary.

2. Children from households located in urban areas are more likely to be enrolled in primary school than children from rural households, although there is no significant difference for pre-primary enrolment.

3. Young children from households that conducted the DHS interview in Kurdish are much less likely to be in pre-primary than those from Turkish-speaking households, but there is no difference for primary enrolment probabilities.

4. SES is a strong predictor of pre-primary and primary enrolment, although it is somewhat inconsistent. Children from the lowest quintile (Quintile 1) are less likely to be in pre-primary or primary compared to the other quintile households; in other words, low SES is associated with higher rates of not being in school. The strongest SES predictor is for the highest SES children (Quintile 5), who are likelier to be in pre-primary or primary schools.

5. The household-reported measure of economic well-being ("family financial status") is not significantly associated with the child's enrolment probabilities.

6. Parental education is marginally associated with enrolment probabilities. The only significant predictor is for mothers with upper-secondary or higher education, whose children are much more likely to be enrolled in school than children whose mothers only completed primary education. The father's education is not significant for either enrolment outcome.

7. Children are much less likely to be enrolled in pre-primary when the father is not home.

8. Children are significantly less likely to be enrolled in pre-primary when they have more 6 to 13-year-old siblings, but there is no significant relationship between enrolment probabilities and the number of 0- to 5-year-olds, 14- to 17-year-olds or adults in the home.

9. The child's relationship with the head of the household is significantly associated with the probability of being enrolled in primary school but not pre-primary. More specifically, children who are grandchildren of the household head and children who are "other relations" (not child, brother/sister or grandchild) are significantly less likely to be enrolled in primary than children who have a parent who is the head of household.

10. The frequency the household reports that there is smoking inside the home is negatively associated with enrolment in pre-primary school, and the coefficient is marginally significant.

Overall, the results in Table B1 for the 5- and 6-year-olds yield few surprises and are generally consistent with the descriptive summaries provided in Section 4.4.3 review of barriers. One somewhat complicated factor is SES, which was shown in Figure 21 to have a slightly negative relationship with enrolment in primary school among 5-year-olds (i.e., poorer families are more likely to enrol their children early into primary than are higher SES families). The results in Table B1 do not test this idea directly but instead make the more important point that 5- and 6-year-olds from the poorest families (especially Quintile 1) are much less likely to be enrolled in any level of schooling than other children, especially those from Quintile 5 families.

The estimations for the predictors of current enrolment in school (at any level) for children aged 14–17 are presented on the right-hand side of Table B1. The three estimations correspond to the entire sample of 14- to 17-year-olds, followed by gender-specific samples.

The first set of main findings for the 14- to 17-year-olds are based on the national sample (all children):

1. Age is negatively associated with enrolment probabilities: 17-year-olds are about 10 per cent less likely to be enrolled than 14-year-olds, even when controlling other factors (like child labour);

2. Girls are marginally less likely to be enrolled than boys in the 14–17 cohort, and the difference is statistically significant. The effect size is about 2.5%, and again, this is a marginal effect after controlling for other factors in the model.

3. Kurdish-speaking children aged 14–17 have the same probability of being enrolled in school as Turkish-speaking children when controlling for other factors, but children from households where the DHS interview was conducted in Turkish are much more likely to be enrolled in school. The results in Table B1 simply mean that the differences in enrolment probabilities between the Turkish and Kurdish children are captured by other variables in the model, such as SES (Kurdish families in the sample are poorer than Turkish families).

4. SES is very strongly associated with current enrolment among 14- to 17-year-olds. Children from Quintile 5 families are 10.6 per cent more likely to be in school than children from Quintile 1 families, and each quintile level is associated with a higher probability of enrolment. However, the family-reported measure of SES is not significantly related to enrolment.

5. Parental education is significantly associated with enrolment for 14- to 17-year-olds. Children with parents with low levels of education are significantly less likely to be in school, and higher levels of education for the father are associated with somewhat higher enrolment probabilities.

6. The child's relationship with the head of household is also significantly associated with being in school. Standing out is the result for children aged 14–17 who are not related to the head of household, who were 20.4 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school in 2018.

7. Children aged 14–17 are significantly less likely to be in school in households with more children aged 0–5 years, but there is no relationship between school enrolment and the other measures of family size.

8. Smoking in the household is strongly associated with a lower probability of enrolment in school. Children in households that report "daily" smoking are 6.1 per cent less likely to be in school.

9. Child labour is strongly associated with lower school enrolment: children who report being engaged in "paid work" are 37 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school in the DHS sample, which is the most significant predictor of enrolment among 14- to 17-year-olds. However, only about 6 per cent of children in this age category report working.

10. Children who got married are 36.5 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school than non-married 14- to 17-year-olds, but less than 1 per cent of children in this age category reported marriage.

11. The child's enrolment probability is not different in households that report they have received (non-immigrant) benefits from the State.

Several interesting differences in the results between females and males are apparent in the separate estimations by gender (right two columns in *Table B1*). These include:

- Male enrolment probabilities are more influenced by age than females. Seventeen-year-old boys are 13 per cent less likely to be in school than 14-year-olds, while for girls, the difference is 7 per cent.

- Enrolment rates for 14- to 17-year-old boys are significantly related to the family's self-reported financial status level (How well is the family doing financially?). However, this measure is not associated with enrolment for girls, which may reflect a stronger household dependence on males to earn money in the labour force. So, when the family is doing well, the boys are in school, but their enrolment is more vulnerable to economic pressures and demand for child labour.

- There is significant gender alignment in the relationship between parental education and adolescent school enrolment. Female enrolment rates are much more affected by their mothers' education levels than by the fathers', while for boys, the fathers' education levels are marginally more important. Also, 14- to 17-year-old girls are nearly 10 per cent less likely to be in school when their mother is not at home, but male enrolment is not affected by a missing mother.

- Females unrelated to the household head are nearly 40 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school, which is likely to be capturing domestic helpers in the home.

- One surprising result is that male enrolment is more negatively affected by the number of young children (0–5) in the home than female enrolment. The probability of enrolment is also significantly lower for boys when they have more siblings aged 14–17.

- Female enrolment probabilities are even more negatively affected by smoking in the household than male enrolment. This variable may indicate traditional values in the home that may negatively affect female enrolment.
- Boys and girls who report work in paid labour are significantly less likely to be in school, but the effect is much larger for boys: working boys are 47 per cent less likely to be enrolled than non-working boys, while the difference is 27% for girls.
- The effect of early marriage on school enrolment is mainly relevant for girls, as almost none of the 14- to 17-year-old boys reported being married.
- Female enrolment is significantly higher in households that report receiving non-immigrant government benefits, while there is no significant relationship for boys, which suggests these programmes may be related to female education.

Table B1:
Multivariate Analysis: Covariates of Current Enrolment by Age Group and Gender for Turkish Children Ages 5–6 and 14–17, DHS 2018

Independent Variable	5- to 6-year-olds enrolment multinomial (excluded = out of school)		14- to 17-year-olds current enrolment = 1		
	Enrolled in Pre-Primary	Enrolled in Primary	All Children 14–17	Females Only 14–17	Males Only 14–17
Child's age:					
6 years old (compared to 5)	1.29	31.1**	----	----	----
	(0.82)	(11.40)			
15 years old (compared to 14)	----	----	-3.9*	-2.5	-5.9*
			(-1.98)	(-1.21)	(-2.31)
16 years old (compared to 14)	----	----	-4.2*	-4.3*	-4.8*
			(-2.22)	(-2.17)	(-1.94)
17 years old (compared to 14)	----	----	-10.1**	-7.2**	-13.2**
			(-5.16)	(-3.73)	(-4.45)
Child is female	0.69+	0.85	-2.5*	----	----
	(-1.76)	(-0.80)	(-2.20)		
Family lives in an urban area	1.26	1.83+	0.01	0.1	1.9
	(0.69)	(1.90)	(0.71)	(0.06)	(1.23)
Family SES (excluded = Q1)					
Quintile 2	1.95*	1.86+	3.8**	2.9*	4.2**
	(2.24)	(1.90)	(2.95)	(2.14)	(2.66)
Quintile 3	2.10*	1.60	5.8**	4.1*	6.0**
	(2.10)	(1.49)	(3.60)	(2.43)	(3.56)
Quintile 4	1.65	1.34	7.2**	5.2**	7.3**
	(1.29)	(0.69)	(4.52)	(3.02)	(4.20)
Quintile 5	4.15**	3.07*	10.6**	11.9**	7.9**
	(3.02)	(2.13)	(5.75)	(4.48)	(3.84)
Family financial status (scale)	1.02	0.98	0.3	-0.3	10.0**
	(0.31)	(-0.34)	(1.12)	(-0.95)	(2.86)
Interview conducted in Kurdish	0.02**	0.64	1.2	1.5	1.8
	(-16.97)	(-0.34)	(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.62)

Independent Variable	5- to 6-year-olds enrolment multinomial (excluded = out of school)		14- to 17-year-olds current enrolment = 1		
	Enrolled in Pre-Primary	Enrolled in Primary	All Children 14–17	Females Only 14–17	Males Only 14–17
Mother education (excluded = primary complete):					
No education	0.67	0.96	-3.9**	-6.2**	-1.2
	(-1.20)	(-0.13)	(-2.67)	(-2.93)	(-0.65)
Primary incomplete	0.49	0.98	-4.3	-7.3*	-3.8
	(-1.23)	(-0.03)	(-1.49)	(-2.30)	(-0.88)
Lower secondary incomplete	1.79	3.16	-2.8	----	-5.8
	(0.91)	(1.22)	(-0.55)		(-1.11)
Lower secondary complete	1.39	1.09	-0.4	4.7*	-11.8*
	(1.08)	(0.27)	(-0.11)	(2.18)	(-2.15)
Upper secondary incomplete	1.76	2.19	-1.5	0.5	-3.3
	(0.95)	(1.44)	(-0.35)	(0.14)	(-0.51)
Upper secondary or higher	2.57*	2.83*	3.8 (1.19)	4.0	1.1
	(2.37)	(2.34)		(1.30)	(0.32)
Mother missing	0.60	1.14	-5.7+	-9.8*	0.7
	(-0.30)	(0.10)	(-1.83)	(-2.41)	(0.21)
Father's education (excluded = primary complete):					
No education	0.95	1.09	-2.0	0.6	-5.5+
	(-0.09)	(0.13)	(-1.00)	(0.29)	(-1.85)
Primary incomplete	0.40	0.82	-13.6**	1.1	-29.1**
	(-1.22)	(-0.26)	(-2.99)	(0.37)	(-4.97)
Lower secondary incomplete	0.88	1.48	4.3	3.6	2.8
	(-0.24)	(0.72)	(1.48)	(1.01)	(0.89)
Lower secondary complete	1.17	1.24	2.7	1.6	3.8+
	(0.48)	(0.68)	(1.43)	(0.70)	(1.92)
Upper secondary incomplete	1.28	1.90	4.6	3.3	4.5+
	(0.47)	(1.06)	(1.59)	(0.98)	(1.66)
Upper secondary or higher	1.22	1.30	3.6+	3.7+	2.3
	(0.67)	(0.83)	(1.83)	(1.65)	(0.97)
Father missing	0.02	0.43	-1.7	-3.6	1.6
	(-16.38)	(-0.61)	(-0.73)	(-1.35)	(0.67)
Child relationship to head of household (excluded = child):					
Grandchild	0.63	0.40*	2.4	3.3	-3.9
	(-1.12)	(-2.19)	(1.04)	(1.61)	(-1.07)
Other relative	0.41	0.08**	5.5+	5.0*	2.5
	(-1.23)	(-3.38)	(1.85)	(2.38)	(0.58)
Sibling	0.35	----	-3.4	1.9	-15.4*
	(-1.32)		(-0.73)	(0.60)	(-1.95)
Not related	0.14	0.48	-20.4*	-39.3**	-2.3
	(-1.49)	(-0.69)	(-2.25)	(-2.61)	(-0.30)

Independent Variable	5- to 6-year-olds enrolment multinomial (excluded = out of school)		14- to 17-year-olds current enrolment = 1		
	Enrolled in Pre-Primary	Enrolled in Primary	All Children 14–17	Females Only 14–17	Males Only 14–17
Child relationship to head of household (excluded = child):					
Number of persons aged 0–5	0.85	1.12	-1.7*	-0.8	-2.2*
	(-1.01)	(0.84)	(-2.13)	(-1.07)	(-2.08)
Number of persons aged 6–13	0.70**	0.98	0.01	-0.8	1.0
	(-2.95)	(-0.18)	(0.17)	(-1.30)	(1.22)
Number of persons aged 14–17	1.09	1.05	-0.2	1.5	-1.9+
	(0.40)	(0.27)	(-0.15)	(1.42)	(-1.89)
Number of persons aged 18+	1.14	1.14	-0.01	0.4	0.3
	(1.08)	(0.97)	(-0.02)	(0.08)	(0.63)
Frequency of smoking in households (scale)	0.65+	0.95	-6.1**	-6.5**	-2.5+
	(-1.71)	(-0.21)	(-4.25)	(-4.23)	(-1.86)
Child engaged in paid labour	----	----	-37.0**	-26.6**	-46.9**
			(-10.09)	(-5.29)	(-9.14)
Child is married	----	----	-36.5**	-36.3**	----
			(-2.65)	(-2.61)	
Household receives benefits (non-immigrant)	----	----	4.6	5.6**	1.8
			(1.15)	(3.32)	(0.32)
Explained variance (R^2)		0.31	0.34	0.37	0.40
Sample Size		1,197	2,541	1,218	1,323

Source: DHS 2018

Notes: The presented coefficients are odd ratios for the multinomial logit estimations (for 5- to 6-year-olds). For the dichotomous dependent variable for current enrolment for 14- to 17-year-olds, the coefficients are marginal effects that represent the percentage change in the probability of being enrolled in the current school year, calculated at global sample means. Estimations also include controls for region and month of survey. All estimations are based on weighted data; **Significant at $p < 0.01$ level; *Significant at $p < 0.05$ level; +Significant at $p < 0.10$ level.

Appendix C. Global Summary of Barriers

Table C1:
Barriers that Affect Out-of-School Children

Barriers that Affect OOSC	
Socio-cultural, human capital and health-related barriers (Demand-side)	**Gender-related values** • Chastity, honour and gender-based norms (including child, early and forced marriages) • Family's expectations about a child's future being shaped by gender roles • Child's domestic responsibilities
	Human capital • Language • Not valuing education • Poor performance at school • Previous education background/norms

	Health-related reasons
	• Disability
	• Illness
	• Psycho-social effects (compared to previous living conditions)
	  • Stigma of extreme poverty
	  • Engagement in different forms of labour
	• Psycho-social effects of traumatic experiences
	  • Being forced into criminal activities
	  • Being the survivor or witness of a crime
	  • Survivor or witness of violence (in or out of school)
	  • Survivor or witness of sexual abuse and incest
	• Pregnancy

	Family structure (size of the family, parents at home, fostering, etc.)
	Social cohesion • Bullying • Lack of friends • Difficulties in integration with the local community • Hostility from the local population • Security concerns
Economic barriers (Demand-side)	**Poverty and lack of resources** • Food security • Cost of living • Not being able to afford school expenses • Reliance on child labour as a family coping strategy
	Migration and family mobility • Problems with registration and ID numbers • Urge to change city

Barriers that Affect OOSC	
School Administrative Regulations-related barriers (Supply-side)	Enrolment/new registration • Access to information (families and schools) • Refusal of the children by the school • Misplacement of children in terms of age and grade
	School Calendar
	Maximum age of school enrolment
	Non-attendance
	Grade transitions
School Supply, Quality and Relevance-related barriers (Supply-side)	School supply • Location • Pre-primary level • Open education (quantity, access, relevance, quality, job opportunities aspects) • TVET (quantity, access, relevance, quality, job opportunities aspects)
	School resources • School fees • Physical conditions (water, electricity, food, toilets, etc.) • Class size • Mixed-gender classes • Transportation to and from school • Learning materials (difficulty level, relevance, language, etc.)
	Teacher quality • Skills, capability, expertise • Attitude • Communication with children and parents (including language)
	Security in the school • Bullying • School climate (violence, discipline problems, addictive substances, etc.) • Relationship between community and students/parents
Governance, Finance and Institutional Barriers (Supply-side)	Public spending on education and budget allocation

Appendix D. Approved Safeguarding Procedures

Objective

This document describes implementing safeguarding procedures during the in-depth Interviews (IDIs) for the out-of-school children (OOSC) study. Initially, the planned modality of having focus group discussions with children was transformed into in-depth Interviews to comply with social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance includes the roles that members of the research team should perform and the tools and procedures to report child protection concerns detected during the in-depth interviews conducted through phone calls.

The objectives are twofold:

- a) To ensure the safety of children and prevent physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and maltreatment of children by any parties involved in this study whose actions UNICEF is responsible for, including volunteers, translators, researchers, etc.

- b) To establish guidelines to ensure an appropriate response to potential child protection concerns that may arise during the implementation of the IDIs.

This guidance follows UNICEF guidelines on conducting research and studies with children concerning ethical considerations to guarantee the best interests of the children involved in the study.[78,79]

What is Child Safeguarding?

All children, independent of where they live and what their circumstances are, have the right to be protected, nurtured and free from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Respecting and supporting this right is the essence of child safeguarding.

For the IDIs, 'child safeguarding' refers to all actions that UNICEF and partners take to keep safe all children and beneficiaries reached during the implementation of the OOSC study. It also includes proactive measures to ensure children and beneficiaries are not harmed due to any direct or indirect contact with the staff implementing the study.

Child safeguarding encompasses the prevention of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and maltreatment of children by any of the parties involved in the study and for whom UNICEF is responsible, including volunteers, translators, researchers, etc. If and when a child safeguarding concern arises, researchers should be provided with guidance on how to respond appropriately and what the procedure to inform relevant authorities is (where required), ensuring that the child's best interests are considered first and foremost.

Key Principles of Child Safeguarding:

- **The best interest of the child**[80] is a child rights principle derived from Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which says that "in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration."

- **Confidentiality** implies taking all measures required to guarantee that all information regarding children is kept safe and accessible only to relevant authorities and under specific circumstances in the child's best interest.

- **Do no harm** means to avoid exposing children to additional risks or injury through action or inaction. This principle means stepping back from an intervention to look at the broader context and mitigate potential adverse effects.

- **Empowerment** implies children are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and provide informed consent, for example: "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process, and this directly informs what happens."

- **Prevention** means ensuring all necessary actions are undertaken before harm occurs, for example: "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is. I know how to recognize the signs and what I can do to seek help."

78 UNICEF, procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis.

79 Ethical research involving children (Innocenti, 2013).

80 The Child Protection Law (5395) identifies children as 'individuals below 18 years of age' (Article 3). Article 11 of the Turkish Civil Code also states that the 'age of majority is 18' ("anyone who completed the age of 18").

- **Proportionality** implies the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented, for example: "I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, and they will only get involved as much as is necessary."

- **Protection** means ensuring support and response mechanisms are in place for children in need of care, for example: "I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I can take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want."

- **Partnership** implies offering local solutions through working closely with local authorities, civil society organizations and communities.

- **Accountability** means ensuring accountability and transparency in safeguarding by ensuring clear communication and information sharing.

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) - Do's and Don'ts Before the IDIs (UNICEF Staff):

1. Ensure all relevant parties understand that UNICEF has zero tolerance for child abuse and that all of us share collective and individual responsibilities to identify and mitigate actual and potential safeguarding risks.

2. Review the questions, methodology and approach that will be used for and during the IDIs, make sure that the consultancy team and translators are aware and understand child safeguarding and ensure that the IDIs take place in a safe and child-friendly tone and in a language that is age and culturally appropriate and sensitive.

3. Assess and map the available response services in the interviewee's location and ensure that respective focal points for referral are identified and trusted.

4. Develop a reporting structure including a reporting template for incidents of the self-reporting or reporting of child concerns by third persons.

5. Ensure that a 'Safe Person' is identified and that her/his role is communicated to the interviewee in a manner that will make them feel that they will receive help and support.[81] Access to this person can be ensured by sharing an email or phone number to ensure concerns can be raised after the IDIs. This person will be the focal point for reporting.

6. Assignment of the Safe Person:

   6.1 For **Interviews with children at risk of dropping out:** The Safe Person will be appointed by UNICEF among UNICEF staff;

   6.2 For **Interviews with Out-of-School children:** The Safe Person will be appointed by ASAM[82] among the ASAM staff;

   6.2 For **Interviews with children in conflict with the law:** The Safe Person will be appointed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) among the MoJ staff after the dates of the interviews are set.

7. In case of the absence of a Safe Person in the interviews, the interview will be conducted by the Data Collectors who have a background in psychology and childcare.

   7.1 **If the parent and child consent to the voice recording before the interview**, the voice record will be shared with UNICEF, ASAM or MoJ staff based on the classification of the interviews mentioned in Point 6. The links for the interview voice records will be shared only with the Safe Person assigned by UNICEF, ASAM or MoJ, considering the data protection procedures.

   7.2 **If the parent and child do not consent to the voice recording before or during the interview**, two Data Collectors will be involved in the interview. While the Data Collector will be interviewing the child, the other Data Collector, a psychologist, will be observing the interview regarding the safeguarding procedures.[83]

81 To see roles of the Safe Person, look at the section: ***After the IDIs (Roles of the Safe Person)***

82 Association for Social Development and Aid Mobilization (ASAM) is an independent, impartial and non-profit association to assist refugees and asylum-seekers living in Türkiye.

83 MM applies GDPR information security standards globally. In accordance with GDPR data protection rules, personal data should be stored with limited access. Therefore, the voice record will not be downloaded by the Safe Person; it will be listened to through Microsoft OneDrive, which is managed by MM and Tandans in line with the data protection standards. The voice record will be deleted one month after sharing it with the Safe Person.

During the IDIs (for the Data Collector):[84]

1. First, ensure all children have the consent form to participate in the IDI authorized by his/her parent or caregiver.

2. Communicate in clear terms and terminology that is child-friendly the names and roles of everyone involved and the role of the Safe Person.

3. Confirm with the child before starting the interview whether s/he is in a safe place or alone.

4. Monitor the reactions through the intonation of the children

5. **In case the Safe Person is appointed:**

   5.1 Ensure that the Safe Person is on the line and within range in case an intervention is required. The Data Collector and the Safe Person will be ready 15 minutes before the interview.

   5.2 If an issue related to an imminent danger arises, do not abruptly interrupt the IDIs or point out the situation explicitly; rather, have the Safe Person intervene and leave the conversation moderation to the Safe Person.

6. **In case of the absence of the Safe Person:**

   6.1 If an issue related to an imminent danger arises, do not abruptly interrupt the IDIs or point out the situation explicitly. Take a note regarding the safeguarding issues and end the interview smoothly. Then, inform UNICEF immediately.

   6.2 If there is a voice recording of the interview, share the record immediately with UNICEF.

7. Ensure the confidentiality of the child.

After the IDIs (Roles of the Safe Person):

1. When concern about a child arises, the Safe Person will be the focal point, as communicated at the outset of the IDIs. The person will carefully listen to the child/or adult and treat the concern with confidentiality in a safe and trusted call. *(Safe Person List is provided as Annex 1)*

2. It is important that the Safe Person:

   - Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief;
   - listens carefully to what is being said and offers comfort statements, particularly when a child discloses sexual abuse, for example, 'I am sorry this happened to you' or 'it is not your fault';
   - does not ask detailed, probing or leading questions
   - tells the child that they will take what is said seriously

3. The Safe Person will explain the next steps to the child/adult[85] and confirm the response. Depending on the child's age, this step would include asking what type of help is wanted and whom the child feels comfortable having involved. Ensure the child understands that they will keep the information confidential to keep her/him safe.

4. The Safe Person will document the incident, ensure the child/adult is referred to local services, and ensure follow-up until care or an appropriate response is received.

5. **In the case of UNICEF staff being the Safe Person:** To start the referral to local services, the Safe Person will contact the authorized person in the location of the interviewee/in the phone or video call where the IDI is conducted and will inform about the case according to the guidance of school, youth centre, community centre, etc.

6. **In the case of ASAM staff being the Safe Person:**

   6.1 For Syrian Children: To start the referral to local services, the Safe Person will contact the authorized person in the location of the interviewee/in the phone or video call where the IDIs are conducted and will inform about the case according to the guidance of school, youth centre, community centre, etc.

   6.2 For Turkish Children: The Safe Person will directly contact UNICEF staff to start the referral to UNICEF. UNICEF staff will contact the authorized person in the location of the interviewee/in the phone or video call where the

84 The current guidance focuses only on implementing the safeguarding procedures while conducting in-depth Interviews (IDIs). For other aspects related to the implementation of IDIs, refer to the existent MM guidelines. In case of violation or misconduct by MM staff, MM internal procedures should be implemented, and the UNICEF focal point should be informed.

85 See the section "Reporting Child Protection Concerns" below.

IDIs are conducted and will inform about the case according to the guidance of the school, youth centre, community centre, etc.

7. If the child is in immediate danger, the Safe Person must contact emergency services identified as part of the risk mitigation preparations (referral pathways).

REMEMBER: SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY!

- **Everyone** who works with children has a responsibility to keep them safe.
- If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone who comes into contact with them** has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Who is the Safe Person?

The Safe Person is an individual designated by UNICEF to guarantee the implementation of the current safeguarding procedures. Their roles are described above. This person can be either a staff member or an experienced person from a designated partner (i.e., ASAM – Association for Social Development and Aid Mobilization – MoJ – Ministry of Justice). The list of the designated Safe Persons is included in the Table of Annex 1.

The Safe Person should be present during the implementation of the IDIs. Only in exceptional cases where the initially designated Safe Person cannot participate in the IDIs will another suitable Safe Person be appointed to fulfil that role in their place. In case the Safe Person is unavailable at the time of the interview, the voice record of the interview will be shared with the Safe Person.[86] If there is no voice recording, the Data Collector will conduct the interviews with another Data Collector, a psychologist as an observer. UNICEF will be informed about the safeguarding issues occurring during the interview.

Identifying child protection concerns[87]

all involved in the IDIs need to know what are considered high-risk child protection cases. The Global Child Protection Risk Assessment Guide[88] provides an easy-to-use reference to the types of harm and vulnerabilities that signal child protection risks. While there is no single universally accepted definition for each type of harm or vulnerability and a considerable degree of overlap between some terms (e.g., 'abuse' and 'exploitation'), the following list of definitions will help individuals to gain a basic understanding of the kinds of harms that children may face.[89]

The Safe Person should conduct the initial screening,[90] but it should not be analysed or determine the type of risk of the children because it requires an in-depth assessment by a specialist. All those implementing the IDIs must know[91] what child protection risks exist and note and report them to the Safe Person.

Types of Harm

Abuse: A deliberate act of ill-treatment or an omission that can or is likely to harm a child's safety, well-being, dignity and/or development. Somebody may abuse a child directly (by inflicting harm) or indirectly (by failing to prevent harm). Children may be abused in person, in a family, community, in an institutional setting or via online tools/social media/ traditional media. They can be abused by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. An adult or adults, or another child or other children may abuse them.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Emotional maltreatment of a child can take place in the shape of implying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued insofar as meeting the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

86 MM applies GDPR information security standards globally. In accordance with GDPR data protection rules, personal data should be stored with limited access. Therefore, the voice record will not be downloaded by the Safe Person, and it will be listened to through OneDrive, which is managed by MM and TNADANS in line with the data protection standards. The voice record will be deleted in one month after it has been shared with the Safe Person.

87 Southeast Türkiye Child Protection Sub-Working Group (SE Türkiye CPSWG); Child Protection Identification Guidance for Frontline Humanitarian Workers

88 The risk assessment guide is part of the Inter-Agency Guidelines for Case Management & Child Protection. It is available here: http://www.cpcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CM_guidelines_ENG_.pdf.

89 A glossary of all protection sector terms and acronyms is available here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/195XhH5hu_LxX-FixUqkeIK4_akNChvqxIPQD-WDY3Ck/edit?usp=sharing.

90 Initial screening refers to the initial enquiries regarding the child and his/her family data and the nature of the concern reported.

Sexual Abuse: This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities (regardless of whether or not the child is aware of what is happening). The activities may involve physical contact, including both penetrative or non-penetrative acts, or they may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in watching or producing pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Physical Abuse: This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing actual or possible physical injury or suffering to a child or failing to protect a child from that harm.[92]

Exploitation: This involves the abuse of a child where some form of remuneration is involved or whereby the perpetrators benefit in some way, e.g., monetarily, socially, politically, etc. Exploitation constitutes a form of coercion and violence detrimental to the child's physical and mental health, development, and education. Two main types of child exploitation are economic and sexual. Child labour and recruitment of children for armed forces or groups are examples of child exploitation.

Neglect: This is the persistent and deliberate failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological and/or emotional needs. Neglect may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food and clothing; shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate caretakers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Violence: There are various definitions of violence depending on the focus and approach (legal, medical, sociological, etc.). The UN Study on Violence Against Children (2006) draws on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and, therefore, defines violence as "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse". By this definition, the term violence encompasses many other harms listed in this document. Similarly, WHO defines violence against children in the World Report on Violence and Health (2002) as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity."

Domestic Violence: Any physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence between the victim of violence and the perpetrator of violence or between the family members and the people who are considered as a family member (whether they live or do not live in the same house). Children can suffer if they witness domestic violence and/or if a parent suffers from domestic violence.

Worst Forms of Child Labour: This term is defined in ILO Convention No. 182. It must be prohibited for all people under the age of 18 years and includes the following:

- All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children
- Using, procuring or offering a child for prostitution, producing pornography or performing pornographic acts.
- Using, procuring or offering a child for illicit activities or the production/trafficking of drugs.
- Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm children's health, safety or morals (commonly referred to as "hazardous work"). Hazardous work is work which, by its nature or by the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm children's health, safety and morals and which must be prohibited for children under the age of 18 years. ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation No. 190 gives some indication as to what work should be prohibited:
  - Work that exposes children to physical, emotional or sexual abuse
  - Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools or work that involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads
  - Work in an unhealthy environment that may expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health
  - Work under particularly difficult conditions, such as long hours at night or work that does not allow for the possibility of returning home each day.

91 Supervisors, Data Collectors and Safe Persons.

92 The definitions of the types of abuse draw heavily from the Save the Children child protection definitions, available here: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7586/pdf/sc_child_protection_definition_20071.pdf , SE Türkiye CPSWG – Task Force for Review and Harmonization of Identification Tools – October 2017.

Reporting child protection concerns (only for the safe person)

When a potential child protection concern is recognized, the research team member (i.e., Supervisor or Data Collector) who recognizes this concern should inform the Safe Person. Reports can be made during the implementation of the IDIs or at the end, depending on the circumstances.[93]

The Safe Person would inform the authorized person[94] of the partner in the province for that specific IDI, who is in charge of reporting any child protection concerns. The authorized person will implement the formal procedure to report a case to the relevant authorities if needed.

The authorized person is responsible for starting any formal process s/he thinks is necessary. If needed, the Safe Person could provide information to the authorized person about the different ways to report child protection concerns to the relevant authorities (see the section below: How to Report a Child Protection Concern).

Procedure on How to Report a Child Protection Concern

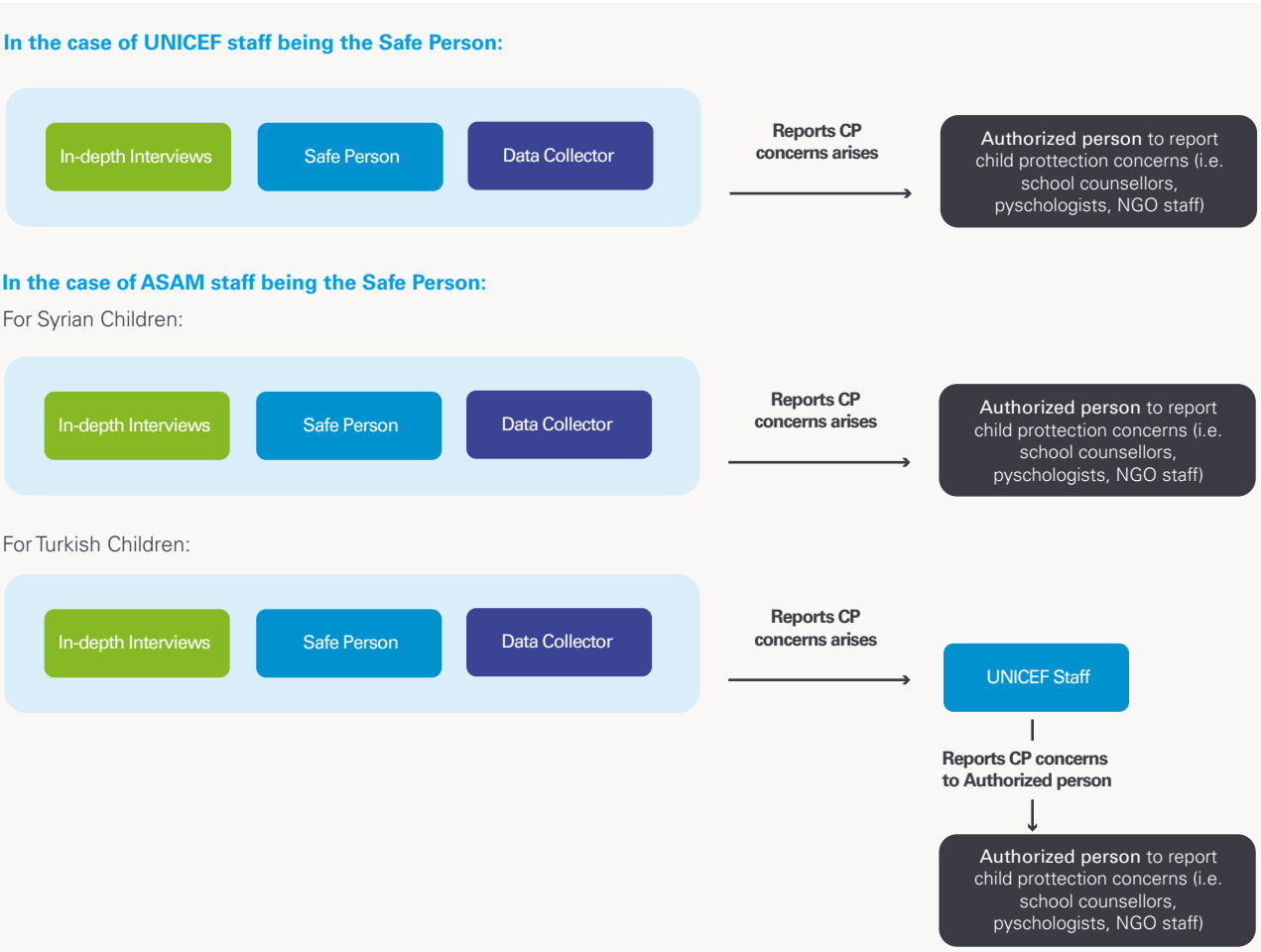


Table 1 shows the details of the persons responsible for reporting and following up on the case.

93 For the IDIs to which a Safe Person is not assigned, the Supervisor of the research team will also inform UNICEF's focal point about the number of cases reported to the Safe Person in a specific IDI at the end of the IDI. However, no personal information will be shared during this communication. For the IDIs conducted with a Safe Person, please follow the instructions under "In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) – Do's and Don't's".

94 The authorized person in charge of reporting child protection concerns will vary according to the type of children and the location where IDIs are conducted. For instance, school counsellors are the authorized persons in schools. See Table 1 for more details.

How to Report a Child Protection Concern

The responsibility to report a case to the relevant authorities lies with the authorized person where the IDIs are conducted, as described in previous sections (e.g., a school counsellor in schools). However, anybody can use this section to provide information to the authorized person about ways to report a case in case needed.

In Türkiye, under the Child Protection Law, specific agencies and individuals have a statutory obligation to notify CP cases, namely, judicial and administrative authorities, law enforcement officers, health and education institutions, non-governmental organizations, officers in other public institutions and agencies, Mukhtars, those who are informed that a child needs protection, local public administrators, and law enforcement officers.

In addition, the children themselves or the person(s) responsible for their care can apply to the Social Services and Child Protection Agency for the child to be protected.

Notification should be done through the following agencies:

- Provincial Directorates of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFSS)
- ALO 183 Help Line
- Social Service Centres of the MoFSS
- Child Judge/Prosecutor's Office
- Police or Gendarmerie

Special Considerations for Notification:

- Notification can be done via ALO-183, a phone call to the Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Police/ Gendarmerie, or an in-person application.
- The applicants need to provide basic information regarding the situation of the children (who is the child (if it is known), where the incident happened (if known), when it happened, what the situation of the children is, etc.). Depending on the risk levels, on-site visits are planned.
- If an individual prefers to apply directly to the Ministry, the applicant should go directly to the Social Services Centres of the Ministry at the local level (please check the address information of the centres via https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/iletisim/bakanlik-iletisim-bilgileri/merkez-teskilati/).
- After receiving the applications at the centre, Social Workers classify them according to their reasons and record them in the database.
- Social Workers inform ***Response and Assessment Units*** once the process is initiated.

Response to the Notifications:

- Upon notification of a Child Protection concern, Social Services will conduct the necessary enquiry regarding the notification received immediately.[95]
- Based upon the social inquiry carried out by Social Services, specific protective and supportive measures can be taken, as per Article 5 of the Child Protection Law.
- Protective and supportive measures should be taken regarding consulting, education, care, health and shelter to protect the child. Such measures can be taken by the juvenile judge either of his/her own accord or upon the request of the child's father, mother, guardian, the person responsible for the care and supervision of the juvenile, the Social Services and Child Protection Agency or the Public prosecutor.[96]

Table D1:
Reporting Child Protection Concerns Arising in the IDIS

Partner for the IDIs	Tools	Safe Person	Authorized Person	Where to Report (for informative purposes)
MoNE	See Annex 1	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Provincial Focal Points	An authorized person will know the formal procedures to report a case. If needed, you can also provide information about the content of this section, "How to Report a Child Protection Concern."
MoJ	See Annex 1	MoJ Staff	Detention Centre Psychologist	
NGOs – for Syrian Children	See Annex 1	ASAM Staff	ASAM Staff	
NGOs – for Turkish Children	See Annex 1	ASAM Staff	UNICEF Staff	

95 Child Protection Law, article 6 (2).

96 Ibid, article 7.

ANNEX 1
ASAM FOCAL POINTS – Managers and Deputy Managers of ASAM Centres

ASAM Deputy General Coordinator: aysegul.eris@sgdd-asam.org
ASAM Deputy General Coordinator: buket.divrak@sgdd-asam.org
ASAM Programme Coordinator: ilker.guney@sgdd-asam.org

IDIs SAFE PERSONS/FOCAL POINTS

Province	Institution	Group	Safe Person	Focal Point
Izmir	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Istanbul	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Gaziantep	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Adana	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Bursa	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Muş	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Kars	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Trabzon	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Samsun	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Van	MoNE – DG Basic	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Izmir	MoNE – DG Religious	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Istanbul	MoNE – DG Secondary	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Adana	MoNE – DG Secondary	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Muş	MoNE – DG Secondary	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Kars	MoNE – DG Religious	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Trabzon	MoNE – DG Secondary	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Konya	MoNE – DG Secondary	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Van	MoNE – DG Secondary	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Adana	MoNE – DG TVET	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Bursa	MoNE – DG TVET	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Samsun	MoNE – DG TVET	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Izmir	MoNE – DG Religious	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Istanbul	MoNE – DG Religious	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Gaziantep	MoNE – DG Religious	Children 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Konya	MoNE – DG Religious	Children 10–13	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Şanlıurfa	MoNE – DG Religious	Children 10–13 & 14–17	UNICEF Staff	MoNE Staff
Izmir	MoJ	Children 14–17	Detention Centre Psychologist	The MoJ staff in the face-to-face interviews to be identified by MoJ.
Istanbul	MoJ	Children 14–17	Detention Centre Psychologist	The MoJ staff in the face-to-face interviews to be identified by MoJ.
Istanbul	NGOs	Children 10–13	ASAM Staff	For Syrian Children: ASAM Staff For Turkish Children: UNICEF Staff
Istanbul	NGOs	Children 14–17	ASAM Staff	For Syrian Children: ASAM Staff For Turkish Children: UNICEF Staff
Muş	NGOs	Children 14–17	ASAM Staff	For Syrian Children: ASAM Staff For Turkish Children: UNICEF Staff
Samsun	NGOs	Children 14–17	ASAM Staff	For Syrian Children: ASAM Staff For Turkish Children: UNICEF Staff
Gaziantep	NGOs	Children 10–13 & 14–17	ASAM Staff	For Syrian Children: ASAM Staff For Turkish Children: UNICEF Staff

ANNEX 2
REFERRAL FORM TO THE AUTHORISED PERSON

The Safe Person fills in this form.

Section A – Basic referral details (to be completed in all cases)			
Date of Referral			
Do you consider the child to be at risk of significant harm?	☐ Yes ☐ No		
If a child or young person is at immediate risk of significant harm, an immediate telephone referral to SSCs through 183 help line should be made.			
Family Name:		**First name:**	
D.O.B.:		**Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Unborn	
Home Address			
Postcode:		**Telephone:**	
NHS Number:			
Child/young person's ethnicity:			
If other, please specify:			

Child/young person's first language or preferred means of communication?		**Is an interpreter or signer required?**	☐ Yes ☐ No
What is the child/young person's nationality?		**What is the child/young person's religion?**	
Immigration Status (only for non-Turkish):			
Is the child/young person disabled?	☐ Yes ☐ No	**Details:**	

Are you aware of any of the following difficulties being experienced by the child/young person and family?			
Domestic Abuse	☐	Parental Substance Misuse	☐
Parental Mental Illness	☐	(Risk of Child) Sexual Exploitation	☐
(Risk of) Female Genital Mutilation	☐	(Risk of) Radicalisation	☐
No Recourse to Public Funds	☐	Other:	

Section B – Referrer details	
Name of Referrer	
Designation/ Title	
Department & Agency	
Telephone	
Email address	

Section C – Reason for referral
What are you worried about?

Actions taken:
(indicate what actions, if any, have been taken so far)

Section D – Household details

Please list below the names and details of all children and adults who are currently residing with the child/ young person.

Family name	First name	Date of Birth (DD/MM/YY)	Ethnicity	Relationship to child/young person	Tick if you are also referring this child
					☐
					☐

Section E – Parent/ Carer details

Name	Date of Birth (DD/MM/YY)	Relationship to child/young person	Ethnicity	First Language	Parental Responsibility
					☐ Yes ☐ No

Is an interpreter/signer required?	**Mother**	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Father	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Other main carers	☐ Yes ☐ No
Are any of the main carers disabled?	**Mother**	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Father	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Other main carers	☐ Yes ☐ No

Section F – Consent to make a referral to the Children's Social Care/Disabled Children Services

If the professional believes a child is at risk of significant harm, they have a duty to make a referral to Social Services. These referrals do not require consent, but it is good practice to inform an adult with parental responsibility that the referral is being made, UNLESS doing so would place the child at risk of significant harm or may lead to the loss of evidence, for example, destroying evidence of a crime or influencing a child about a disclosure made. For all other referrals consent should always be sought from an adult with parental responsibility for the child/young person (or from the young person themselves if they are competent) before making the referral.

Wishes and Feelings of the Child:

Is the child aware of the referral: yes/no?

How does the child feel about the referral?

What are the wishes and feelings of the child?

Wishes and Feelings of the Family:
Is the family aware of the referral: yes/no?
How does the family feel about the referral?
What are the wishes and feelings of the family?

Section G – Services working with this family			
Please list below the details of other professionals/ agencies currently or recently involved with the child/ young person (please include names and contact telephone numbers if possible).			
School	**Name**	**Address**	**Phone No.**

ANNEX 3
CHILD PROTECTION

The Concept of Child Protection

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), ratified by the Government of Türkiye, recognizes the right of every child to protection.

Child Protection is defined as:

Child Protection Working Group (CPWG): the global level forum for coordination on child protection in humanitarian settings, as "the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children".

UNICEF: the prevention and response "(…) to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage." UNICEF's approach to child protection aims at creating an "(…) environment, where girls and boys are free from violence, exploitation, and unnecessary separation from family; and where laws, services, behaviours and practices minimize children's vulnerability, address known risk factors, and strengthen children's own resilience." It is a human rights-based approach and recognizes the importance of prevention. It emphasizes governments' accountability and focus on supporting national capacities. It also recognizes the role of children in order for them to enhance their protection.[97]

97 UNICEF, Child Protection Strategy, article 2.

Child Protection National Legal Framework

Child Protection in Türkiye is mainly regulated by the Child Protection Law (Law No.5395) and the Social Services Law (Law No. 2828).

The objective of the Child Protection Law is to regulate the procedures and principles regarding the protection of children who need protection or who commit crimes and ensure their rights and well-being. The Law includes:

- measures to be taken concerning children in need of protection
- principles and procedures of security measures to be taken when children commit crimes
- clauses regarding the establishment, duties and capacities of Juvenile Courts

The Child Protection Law (Law No. 5395) defines children in need of protection as *"any children whose physical, mental, moral, social or emotional development and personal safety is in danger, who are neglected or abused, or who are victims of crime."*[98]

The Social Services Law (Law no.2828), in its article 3, uses a similar definition but adds the following: *"children (…) who have only one parent or have no parent; whose mother or father or both cannot be identified; who have been abandoned by their parents or any one of them; who have been neglected by any one of their parents and have no guidance hence being exposed to all kinds of social risks and addictions such as prostitution, beggary, alcoholic drinks, or narcotic substances."*[99]

In addition to these two important pieces of legislation, child protection decisions are also regulated by other laws, as follows:

- Civil Law,
- Civil Code, Articles 42, 50, 56
- Constitution, articles 58, 60 and 62
- Penal Law No. 5237
- Fundamental Law of National Education No. 1739
- Primary Education Law No. 222
- Labour Law
- Fundamental Law of Health
- Law on Population Planning
- Public Health Law
- Law of Police Powers
- Law on Protecting Minors from Obscene Publications

98 Child Protection Law (Law No. 5395), article 3.

99 Social Services Law (Law no.2828), article 3.

Appendix E. The Breakdown of All Interviews Based on Province and Target Groups

Phase II – Turkish

Province	Type	Dimension	Dimension details	Original Plan		Remote Interview Methodology			Actual		Remaining	%	
				# of FGD	# of kill	Method	# of FGD	# of ID	# of FGD	# of ID			
İzmir	Children	Dimension 5	OOSC 14–17 yo	1		Phone call		4		3	1	75%	95%
		Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		4	0	100%	
		Children in Conflict with Law		1		Face–to–face		4		1	3	25%	
	Parents	Dimension 5	At–risk 10–13 yo	1		Phone call		4		7	–3	175%	
	SVEP	Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At–risk 10–13 yo				1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			4	Video call		2		2	0	100%	
		Children in Conflict with Law			2			2		2	0	100%	
İstanbul	Children	Dimension 3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1		Phone call		4		7	–3	175%	117%
		Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1				4		6	–2	150%	
		Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		4	0	100%	
		Dimension 5	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		4	0	100%	
		Children in Conflict with Law		1		Face–to–face		4			4	0%	
	Parents	Dimension 3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1		Phone call		4		4	0	100%	
		Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1				4		4	0	100%	
		CwD		1				4		8	–4	200%	
	SVEP	Dimension 3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	Teachers	N/A		0			0		0		0	N/A	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video call		3		4	–1	133%	
		Children in Conflict with Law			2			2		3	–1	150%	
		CwD			3			3		3	0	100%	
Gaziantep	Children	Dimension 5	At–risk 10–13 yo	1		Phone call		4		5	–1	125%	170%
		Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		3	1	75%	
		Child Labour		1				4		12	–8	300%	
	Parents	Dimension 4	At–risk 6–9 yo	1				4		4	0	100%	
		Dimension 5	OOSC 10–13 yo	1				4		5	–1	125%	
		Child Labour		1				4		14	–10	350%	
	SVEP	N/A		0		Online FGD	0				0	N/A	
	Teachers	Dimension 4		1		Phone call	1				0	100%	
	KIIs	KII	At–risk 6–9 yo		2	Video call		2	1	2	0	100%	
		Child Labour			1			1		1	0	100%	
Adana	Chidren	Dimension 3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1		Phone call		4		5	–1	125%	107%
		Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1				4		3	1	75%	
		Dimension 5	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		5	–1	125%	
		Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		3	1	75%	
	Parents	Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1				4		3	1	75%	
		Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		7	–3	175%	
	SVEP	Dimension3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1			1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video call		3		3	0	100%	

Phase I – Syrian

Province	Type	Dimension	Dimension details	Original Plan		Remote Interview Methodology			Actual		Remaining	%	
				# of FGD	# of kill	Method	# of FGD	# of ID	# of FGD	# of ID			
Bursa	Children	Dimension 3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1		Phone call		4		4	0	100%	114%
		Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1				4		8	–4	200%	
	Parents	Dimension 4	At–risk 6–9 yo	1				4		3	1	75%	
		Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1				4		3	1	75%	
	SVEP	N/A		0		Online FGD	0				0	N/A	
	Teachers	Dimension 4	At–risk 6–9 yo	11			1		1		0	100%	
		Dimension 7	At–risk 10–13 yo	1			1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video call		3		4	–1	133%	
Hatay	Children	Dimension 3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1		Phone call		4		6	–2	150%	123%
		Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1				4		5	–1	125%	
		Child Marriage		1				4		6	–2	150%	
	Parents	Dimension 3	OOSC 10–13 yo	1				4		5	–1	125%	
		Child Marriage		1				4		4	0	100%	
	SVEP	Dimension 6	OOSC 14–17 yo	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At–risk 10–13 yo	1			1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video call		3		3	0	100%	
		Child Marriage			1			1		1	0	100%	
Ankara	Central KII	KII			7	Video call		7		7	0	100%	100%
		CwD			1			1		1	0	100%	
		Child Labour			2			2		2	0	100%	
		Child Marriage			1			1		1	0	100%	
Trabzon	KIIs	Other refugees			0	Video call		0		1	–1	100%	100%
Samsun	KIIs	Other refugees			0	Video call		0		1	–1	100%	100%
TOTAL				43	36		10	168	10	206	–36	121%	

Appendix E. The Breakdown of All Interviews Based on Province and Target Groups

Phase II – Turkish

Province	Type	Dimension	Dimension Details	Original Plan		Remote Interview Methodology			Actual		Remaining		%
				Number of FGD	Number of KII	Proposed Method	Number of FGD	Number of IDI	Number of FGD	Number of IDI			
İzmir	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	İZMİR TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	67%
	Children	Child Marriage		0		Phone Call		0		1	-1	100%	
	Children	Children in Conflict with Law		1		Face-to-face		4		4	0	100%	
	Parents	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	
	Parents	CwD		0		Phone Call		0		1	0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			4	Video Call		4		2	2	50%	
	KIIs	Children in Conflict with Law			2	Video Call		2		3	-1	150%	
İstanbul	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	İSTANBUL TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	99%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Children	Children in Conflict with Law		1		Face-to-		4		0	4	0%	
	Children	Child Marriage		1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	
	Children	Open Education		1		Phone Call		4		3	1	75%	
	Parents	Open Education		1		Phone Call		4		3	1	75%	
	Parents	CwD		1		Phone Call		4		5	-1	125%	
	Parents	Child Marriage		1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	
	Teachers	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			1	Video Call		1		4	-3	400%	
	KIIs	Child Labour			0			0		2	-2	200%	
	KIIs	CwD			2	Video Call		2		3	-1	150%	
	KIIs	Children in Conflict with Law			2	Video Call		2		6	-4	300%	
	KIIs	Child Marriage			1	Phone Call		1		0	1	0%	
	KIIs	Open Education			2	Video Call		2		2	0	100%	
Bursa	Children	Dimension 3	At-risk 10-13 years old	0		Phone Call		0		1	-1	100%	BURSA TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		3	1	75%	100%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		4	0	100%	
	Parents	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		5	-1	125%	
	Parents	CwD			0			0		1	0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video Call		3		3	0	100%	
Kars	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	KARS TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		5	-1	125%	75%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		2	2	50%	
	Parents	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		2	2	50%	
	Teachers	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video Call		3		3	0	100%	
Van	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		5	-1	125%	VAN TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	79%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Parents	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		4	0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			5	Video Call		5		5	0	100%	
Trabzon	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	TRABZON TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		4	0	100%	83%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		3	1	75%	
	Parents	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		4	0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video Call		3		3	0	100%	
Samsun	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		2	2	50%	SAMSUN TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	58%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		4	0	100%	
	Parents	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			4	Video Call		4		4	0	100%	
Adana	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	ADANA TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		2	2	50%	68%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Children	Child Labour		1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Parents	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		6	-2	150%	
	Parents	Child Labour		1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	
	Parents	CwD								1	0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			2	Video Call		2		2	0	100%	
	KIIs	Child Labour			1	Video Call		1		1	0	100%	
Konya	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		2	2	50%	KONYA TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	75%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		5	-1	125%	
	Parents	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call	"	4		3	1	75%	
	Parents	Dimension 3	OOSC 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	Child Labour			0	Video Call		0		1	-1	100%	
	KIIs	KII			6	Video Call		6		6	0	100%	

Phase II – Turkish

Province	Type	Dimension	Dimension Details	Original Plan		Remote Interview Methodology			Actual		Remaining		%
				Number of FGD	Number of KII	Proposed Method	Number of FGD	Number of IDI	Number of FGD	Number of IDI			
Konya	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	75%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		5	-1	125%	
	Parents	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call	"	4		3	1	75%	
	Parents	Dimension 3	OOSC 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	Child Labour			0	Video Call		0		1	-1	100%	
	KIIs	KII			6	Video Call		6		6	0	100%	
Şanlıurfa	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		3	1	75%	ŞANLIURFA TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	57%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		0	4	0%	
	Parents	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Teachers	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	Teachers	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Online FGD	1		1		0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			4	Video Call		4		4	0	100%	
Muş	Children	Dimension 6	OOSC 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	MUŞ TOTAL
	Children	Dimension 5	At-risk 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		4	0	100%	72%
	Children	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		2	2	50%	
	Parents	Dimension 3	OOSC 10-13 years old	1		Phone Call		4		1	3	25%	
	Parents	Dimension 7	At-risk 14-17 years old	1		Phone Call		4		4	0	100%	
	KIIs	KII			3	Video Call		3		4	-1	133%	
Ağrı	Children	Child Marriage		0		Phone Call		0		1	-1	100%	OTHER PROVINCES
Ordu	KIIs	Child Labour		0		Video Call		0		1	-1	100%	100%
Ankara	Central KII	KII			5	Video Call		5		5	0	100%	ANKARA TOTAL
	Central KII	CwD			1	Video Call		1		3	-2	300%	200%
	Central KII	Child Labour			2	Video Call		2		4	-2	200%	
	Central KII	Child Marriage			1	Video Call		1		3	-2	300%	
	Central KII	Children in Conflict with Law			1	Video Call		1		2	-1	200%	
	Central KII	Open Education			1	Video Call		1		1	0	100%	
	TOTAL			64	59		12	267	12	190	80	72.4%	

Appendix F. Summary of the Barriers

The barriers defined based on the quantitative and qualitative data are presented below. The asterisks in the boxes aim to show the relevance of that particular barrier to children in a particular dimension. The number of asterisks for each barrier shows the severity/weight of the impact of that barrier on the educational prospects of the children in the national population under different dimensions of exclusion. One star refers to a low level of impact, two stars refer to a medium level of impact, and three stars refer to a high level of impact of the barrier on children in a particular dimension.

Domain	Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
		D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Gender-based Norms-Related Barriers	Family expectations from children shaped by gender norms	**		*	***	**
	Children's domestic responsibilities	**	*	*	***	**
	Childhood, early and forced marriages (mostly girls)	*		*	***	**
Human Capital- Related Barriers	Not valuing education	**		**	***	***
	Insufficient language skills	*			*	
	Low academic performance	**	*	**	***	***
Family Structure	Family structure	*	*	*	*	*
Health-Related Barriers	Disability of the children	***	**	**	***	**
	Illness of the children	**	**	***	**	***
	Psycho-social effects: the stigma of poverty	*	*	*	*	*
	Traumatic effects	**	*	**	***	***
	Pregnancy (for girls only)	*			**	*
Social Cohesion- Related Barriers	Friendship circles	**		*	***	***
	Difficulties in integration into local community and social life	**	*	*	**	*
	Security concerns	*	*	**	**	**
	Peer bullying					
Economic Barriers: Lack of Resources and Poverty	High cost of living	***	*	**	***	**
	School-related expenses	***	**	***	***	***
	Child labour	***	*	**	***	**
Economic Barriers: Migration and Family Mobility	High levels of household mobility, mainly due to seasonal work	**	*	***	**	***
	Difficulties in adaptation to a new school due to family mobility		*	**		**
School Enrolment-Related Barriers	Lack of information by the families	*			**	**
	Lack of information about Vocational Education Centres	**		*	**	*
	The inflexibility of address-based school enrolment system (primary and lower-secondary levels)	**	*	*		
	Local placement system (upper-secondary level)				**	**
	Student transfer system (upper-secondary level)				**	**
	Over-age enrolment	***		**	***	**

Domain	Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
		D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Non-Attendance- Related Barriers	Non-attendance	**		*	***	***
Grade Transition-Related Barriers	Grade transition	**		*	***	***
School Supply- Related Barriers	Pre-school-related costs		*			
	Negative perceptions about vocational schools				**	***
	Commuting time/distance to school	**		*	**	**
	Lack of transportation to school (including school services and education with transport)			**	**	***
School Resources-Related Barriers	Insufficient physical conditions of the schools		*	*		*
	Big class size		*	*		**
	Existence of mixed-gender classes	**		*	**	**
	Learning materials	*	*	*	*	*
	Curriculum	*		*	***	***
Teacher Characteristics-Related Barriers	Limited communication between teacher and children	**	**	**	***	**
	Teachers' attitudes	***	**	**	***	**
	Teachers' educational competencies	*	**	*	*	*
Barriers Related to Security in School and on the Way to School	Bullying/school environment	**	*	**	***	***
	Bullying/on the way to school	**	*	*	**	**

Note: The Number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Demand-side Barriers						
Domain	Observed Barriers	Dimensions of Exclusion				
		D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Economic barriers	Lack of equipment and internet		*	**		***
	Loss of income	**	*	***	**	***
	Child labour	**		***	**	***
Socio-cultural barriers	Increasing domestic responsibilities	**	*	***	**	***
Social cohesion	Socio-emotional stress	*	*	***	*	***
Human capital	Lack of support from parents		**	**		*
	Lack of equipment and internet		*	**		***
COVID-19 Pandemic and Supply-Side Barriers						
School supply	Insufficient supply of equipment and internet		**	**		**
	Lack of communication with the parents		*	**		**
	Interruption of apprenticeship opportunities in VECs			**		**
	Freezing school transfer operations			**		**
School resources	Suspension/delay of activities and projects	*	*	*	*	*

Note: The number of * refers to the severity/weight of the impact of the barriers.