

Education and Employment: A Comparative Analysis of Mainstream and Roma Policies in Turkey

By
Tugay Aslim

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Central European University
Department of Romani Studies

Supervisor:
Simona Torotcoi

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Date: 7th June 2024

Name (printed): Tugay Aslim

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tugay Aslim', written in a cursive style.

Abstract

The socio-economic integration of the Roma community, Europe's largest ethnic minority, remains a significant challenge across many countries, including Turkey. The lack of education among the Roma community in Turkey has a profound impact on employment opportunities. Education and employment are pivotal to the social inclusion and advancement of the Roma, serving not only as means for individual and community development but also as tools to combat systemic discrimination and poverty. This thesis delves into the current policy objectives and strategies employed by both the European Union and Turkey to address the educational and employment needs of the Roma population. By examining these policies, the thesis aims to assess their effectiveness in meeting the local needs of the Roma community and to compare the approaches of the EU and Turkey in fostering the socio-economic integration of Roma citizens.

The findings of this research highlight significant barriers to education and employment for the Roma community in Turkey, including low enrollment rates, high dropout rates, and pervasive discrimination. The analysis reveals that while both the EU and Turkey have developed strategic frameworks to address these issues, there are notable gaps in implementation and resource allocation. The thesis recommends enhancing access to quality education, expanding vocational training programs, combating discrimination, and promoting social inclusion. Additionally, it emphasizes the need for better integration of Roma-specific policies into broader national strategies and the importance of localized, targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by the Roma community.

Acknowledgments

I remember that before the RGPP I was very hesitant when I wanted to write about Roma policies in my mother tongue, but now I feel that things are better because Marton Rovid taught me where to start, Brigitta Doczi taught me how to write, and Simona Torotcoi taught me what to write. I thank them all, and I hope that with this flame that you have started, I will learn more and more and one day I will become a policy-maker.

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List of Abbreviations

EU: European Union

HDI: Human Development Index

MEB: Ministry of Education of Turkey

MYO: Vocational Education and Training

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

SMEs: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Introduction

The significance of education and employment in the lives of Roma individuals cannot be overstated. Education serves as the foundation for personal development, equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for active participation in society and the labor market. For the Roma community, access to quality education is crucial in breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion. Similarly, employment not only provides financial stability but also contributes to the social inclusion of Roma individuals, offering them opportunities to engage with wider society and to challenge stereotypes and prejudices.

Despite the recognized importance of education and employment, the Roma community in Turkey faces substantial barriers in both areas. On average, in 2022, only 8.5%¹ of Roma children made it to high school, indicating a significant gap in educational attainment which profoundly impacts their employment opportunities. Furthermore, a survey revealed that 77.5%² of Roma individuals struggle with unemployment, highlighting the barriers to employment linked to social exclusion, discrimination, and lack of skills and qualifications. This research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the policies and strategies implemented by the EU and Turkey to improve Roma education and employment outcomes. By comparing these approaches, the study seeks to identify best practices and areas for improvement, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective policies that can enhance the socio-economic integration of the Roma community in Turkey.

The thesis is structured into several sections, each focusing on a different aspect of Roma education and employment policies. The sections include an analysis of the EU's policy objectives for Roma education, an overview of general education policies in Turkey, a detailed examination of Roma education policies in Turkey, and an exploration of employment policies for Roma in both the EU and Turkey. Through this comprehensive analysis, the paper seeks to provide insights into the extent to which current policies address the specific needs of the Roma community and to identify areas for improvement. By addressing education and employment simultaneously, this research acknowledges that improvements in one area can lead to positive outcomes in the other, thereby fostering a more inclusive society where Roma individuals can thrive both academically and economically.

Duvar English. (2022, January 13). Roma in Turkey suffer from unemployment, hunger and extreme poverty: Study reveals. <https://www.duvarenglish.com/roma-in-turkey-suffer-from-lack-of-work-hunger-and-extreme-poverty-study-shows-news-60135>

Duvar English. (2022, January 13). Roma in Turkey suffer from unemployment, hunger and extreme poverty: Study reveals. <https://www.duvarenglish.com/roma-in-turkey-suffer-from-lack-of-work-hunger-and-extreme-poverty-study-shows-news-60135>

The Status of Roma Education and Employment in Turkey

The socio-economic integration of the Roma community, Europe's largest ethnic minority, remains a significant challenge across many countries, including Turkey. Education and employment are pivotal to the social inclusion and advancement of the Roma, serving not only as means for individual and community development but also as tools to combat systemic discrimination and poverty. The Roma community in Turkey faces significant barriers to education, characterized by low enrollment rates, high dropout rates, and limited access to quality education. These challenges are compounded by socio-economic factors, discrimination, and a lack of targeted support mechanisms. The employment landscape for the Roma in Turkey is marked by high unemployment rates, limited access to formal employment opportunities, and pervasive discrimination in the labor market. These issues are closely linked to educational attainment, underscoring the importance of education as a pathway to employment.

The relationship between employment and education for Roma people living in Turkey is a complex issue. It requires careful examination. One of the key factors that affected this relationship is the level of discrimination towards the Roma population. On average, in 2022, only 8.5% of Roma children made it to high school.³ This low percentage indicates a significant gap in educational attainment which can have a profound impact on employment opportunities, knowing that people with higher levels of education have better job prospects.

Furthermore, the issue of unemployment is another major challenge for Roma community in Turkey. According to a survey, 77.5% of those interviewed for the survey had struggles with unemployment.⁴ This high percentage suggests there are employment barriers for the Roma community linked to factors such as social exclusion, discrimination, lack of skills and qualifications for job opportunities. These issues highlight the need to improve education and employment outcomes for Roma community in Turkey. Since their childhood, most Roma children do not attend school due to poverty, lack of parents' education, but also a lack of knowledge on how to study, connect with others, and navigate the necessary steps from high school to university. Despite facing challenges, many Roma families value education. A

³ Duvar English. (2022, January 13). Roma in Turkey suffer from unemployment, hunger and extreme poverty: Study reveals. <https://www.duvarenglish.com/roma-in-turkey-suffer-from-lack-of-work-hunger-and-extreme-poverty-study-shows-news-60135>

⁴ Duvar English. (2022, January 13). Roma in Turkey suffer from unemployment, hunger and extreme poverty: Study reveals. <https://www.duvarenglish.com/roma-in-turkey-suffer-from-lack-of-work-hunger-and-extreme-poverty-study-shows-news-60135>

recent study shows that despite many issues, as well as a lack of internet connection and squalid living conditions, 77%⁵ of Roma people continue to send their children to school. However, there are many Roma families and young people who believe that in the short run, if their children pursue education, they will lose some opportunities for employment.

The lack of education in Roma has significant consequences. It limits significantly their job opportunities and contributes to their economic hardship. Yücel Tural, the president of a Roma association and an expert on this issue, stated that “Roma cannot get involved in new jobs due to lack of education, and more and more Roma are begging on the streets”⁶ Addressing this issue requires a multitiered approach. It involves access to quality education for Roma, providing them with the necessary financial resources but also other support systems such as internet connection, and improving their living conditions (i.e., housing, basic needs).

Education and employment are addressed together in the context of the Roma community because they are intrinsically linked factors that significantly influence one another and collectively contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of the Roma people. Access to quality education equips Roma individuals with essential skills and knowledge, which are prerequisites for obtaining gainful employment. Conversely, stable employment opportunities enable Roma families to support the educational endeavors of their children, creating a virtuous cycle of empowerment that can lift communities out of poverty. Addressing education and employment simultaneously ensures a holistic approach to Roma inclusion, acknowledging that improvements in one area can lead to positive outcomes in the other, thereby fostering a more inclusive society where Roma individuals can thrive both academically and economically.

⁵ <https://www.duvarenglish.com/roma-in-turkey-suffer-from-lack-of-work-hunger-and-extreme-poverty-study-shows-news-60135>

⁶ Civil Rights Defenders. (2022, November 3). Roma in Turkey: Discrimination, Exclusion, Deep Poverty and Deprivation. <https://crd.org/2022/11/03/roma-in-turkey-discrimination-exclusion-deep-poverty-and-deprivation/>

Education Policies in the EU and in Turkey: The Place of Roma

This section examines the education policies and strategies adopted by the European Union and Turkey, with a particular focus on their approach to addressing the educational needs of the Roma population. In this section, I will compare and analyze the education policies of the EU and Turkey, highlighting their respective strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement in relation to the Roma community. I will conclude with an assessment of the extent to which these policies effectively address the specific educational needs of Roma individuals and provide recommendations for enhancing their impact.

Education Policies in the EU

The European Union has long recognized the importance of education as a cornerstone for the social inclusion and advancement of its largest ethnic minority, the Roma. The EU's policy objectives for Roma education are shaped by a commitment to combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities in education. This thesis examines the current policy objectives of the EU for Roma education, drawing on the European Commission's Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation 2020-2030.⁷

The EU's strategic framework for Roma education is grounded in the principle of fighting and preventing antigypsyism and discrimination. The European Commission (2020) aims to "cut the proportion of Roma with discrimination experienced by at least half - to ensure that by 2030 less than 13% of Roma experience discrimination" (p. 4).⁸ This objective underlines the EU's dedication to creating an educational environment where Roma students can thrive without the barriers of prejudice and social exclusion.

In addition to combating discrimination, the EU aims to reduce the socio-economic gap between Roma and the general population. The strategic framework sets a target to "Cut poverty gap between Roma and general population by at least half" (European Commission, 2020, p. 4). By addressing the root causes of poverty, the EU seeks to improve the conditions that often hinder Roma children's access to quality education.

⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_for_2020_-_2030_0.pdf

⁸ [eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_for_2020_-_2030_0.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_for_2020_-_2030_0.pdf)

Promoting participation through empowerment is another key objective of the EU's policy. The framework encourages the involvement of at least 90 NGOs in EU-wide coordinated Roma civil society monitoring (European Commission, 2020, p. 4). This initiative reflects the EU's approach to fostering a collaborative environment where Roma communities are active participants in shaping educational policies that affect them.

The EU also focuses on increasing effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education. One of the goals is to "cut gap in participation in early childhood education and care by at least half" (European Commission, 2020, p. 5). Early childhood education is crucial for setting the foundation for lifelong learning, and the EU recognizes the need to ensure that Roma children are not left behind from the start of their educational journey.

Lastly, the EU's policy objectives include the development of desegregation policies. Governments to take the necessary legal, financial, and administrative steps to end all forms of educational segregation of Roma children. Desegregation is essential for fostering an inclusive educational system where Roma students can learn alongside their peers from different backgrounds.

In conclusion, the EU's policy objectives for Roma education are comprehensive and ambitious, aiming to dismantle the barriers that have historically marginalized Roma students. Through a multifaceted approach that includes fighting discrimination, reducing poverty, promoting participation, ensuring access to early education, and developing desegregation policies, the EU is committed to ensuring that Roma children and youth can fully exercise their right to education.

General Education Policies in Turkey

With regards to the general education policies in Turkey, it can be stated that Turkey's education system has undergone significant transformations in recent years, with the government implementing a series of policy objectives aimed at improving general education. This thesis explores these objectives, drawing on the "Education Policy Outlook Turkey"⁹ and "Turkey's Education Vision 2023"¹⁰ documents.

⁹ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/b7c69f4c-en.pdf?expires=1717253380&id=id&accname=ocid77016197&checksum=5C1F8A01088D406914E7BC1D1AF708F5>

¹⁰ https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-10/_2023_VIZYON_ENG.pdf

The first objective is to enhance the quality and inclusiveness of education. The Turkish government recognizes that a well-educated population is crucial for economic growth and social cohesion. To this end, the "Education Policy Outlook Turkey" document outlines the government's commitment to "raising outcomes for all in terms of equity and quality" (OECD, 2020, p. 1). This involves improving access to education for disadvantaged groups and ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, receive a high-quality education.

Another key objective is to modernize the curriculum and teaching methods. The "Turkey's Education Vision 2023" policy document emphasizes the need to adapt the education system to the demands of the 21st century. It states that "measurement and evaluation methodologies will be streamlined to improve the quality of education" (MoNE, 2019, p. 35). This reflects a broader goal to ensure that students are not only knowledgeable but also possess the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for success in a rapidly changing world.

The third objective focuses on the professional development of teachers. Recognizing that teachers are central to the learning process, the Turkish government aims to provide them with the support and resources they need to excel in their roles. The "Turkey's Education Vision 2023" document asserts that "the professional development of teachers and school administrators will be restructured" (MoNE, 2019, p. 42). This includes offering ongoing training and development opportunities to help educators keep up with the latest pedagogical research and teaching techniques.

In addition to improving the quality of education, the government is also committed to expanding access to early childhood education. The "Turkey's Education Vision 2023" document sets a goal to "scale early childhood education services" (MoNE, 2019, p. 80). This is based on a wealth of research showing that early childhood education is critical for children's cognitive and social development and can have long-lasting positive effects on their academic and career success.

Finally, the government aims to leverage technology to enhance learning. The "Turkey's Education Vision 2023" document outlines an objective to "create an ecosystem for development of digital contents and skills" (MoNE, 2019, p. 72). This involves integrating digital tools and resources into the classroom to support interactive and personalized learning experiences.

In conclusion, Turkey's policy objectives for general education are ambitious and multifaceted, focusing on improving quality, inclusiveness, and modernization of the education system. By investing in teacher development, early childhood education, and digital learning,

the government aims to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the future.

Roma Education Policies in Turkey

The education of Roma in Turkey has been a focal point of both national and international policy objectives, aiming to improve access, inclusion, and quality of education for this marginalized community. The Republic of Turkey's recent strategic document, "Roman Vatandaşlara Yönelik Strateji Belgesi 2023-2030 (I) Aşama Eylem Planı 2023-2025" outlines a comprehensive approach to address these challenges over the next seven years. Similarly, the European Union's "Strategic Regional Policy Analysis in Western Balkans and Turkey: Secondary, Tertiary Education and Employability"¹¹ provides a broader regional perspective, emphasizing the importance of education for Roma's social and economic integration.

These documents agree that while Turkey has made significant strides in developing a comprehensive policy framework for Roma education, challenges remain in implementation and monitoring. Both documents highlight the need for targeted interventions, improved data collection, and the importance of addressing systemic discrimination to ensure effective educational inclusion for Roma communities in Turkey.

The Turkish government's strategy document emphasizes the importance of inclusive education for Roma children, stating that it needs to "ensure that everyone benefits from public services in an equal and fair manner without any discrimination or negligence, the human-oriented service understanding has been made transparent" (Republic of Turkey, 2023, p. 3). This quote highlights the commitment to providing equal and fair access to public services for all citizens, including the Roma, without discrimination or neglect. The policy aims to create a transparent, human-centered service approach, ensuring that Roma children can benefit from the education system on equal terms with their peers.

The European Union's analysis complements this by identifying key challenges and opportunities for Roma education in the region. It notes, "across the region of Western Balkans and Turkey, the coverage of education among Roma is narrow, and ethnic gaps are wide" (European Union, 2024, p. 10). This statement underscores the significant disparities in educational attainment between Roma and non-Roma populations, highlighting the need for

¹¹

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358183412_Strategic_Regional_Policy_Analysis_in_Western_Balkans_and_Turkey_Secondary_Tertiary_Education_and_Employability

targeted interventions to close these gaps and promote equal educational opportunities. To further explore these challenges and opportunities, a SWOT analysis of Roma education is provided in the table below.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis on Roma, Education and Employability in Turkey

SWOT analysis on Roma, Education and Employability in Turkey	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roma educated youth has increased, a great potential for role models and the development of Roma Youth Civil Society. - Two MPs from Roma community in Turkey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rooted discrimination, low engagement and lack of accountability from government; - Persistence of poverty, financial difficulties and structural exclusion for Roma; - Current structure and processes for enrolment to secondary and tertiary education is a barrier for Roma access to quality education;
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young Roma educated in other countries can act as role models. - Large Roma population in Turkey (can also become a challenge as the initiatives are costly). - Donor projects and funding in the field of Roma education (like REF) bring opportunities for young Roma education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other minorities that are stronger and taking up attention/resources; - Too many NGOs that are not effectively engaged/working and misuse of NGO status for political interests

Source: European Union. (2024). Strategic Regional Policy Analysis in Western Balkans and Turkey: Secondary, Tertiary Education and Employability.

Before delving into the SWOT analysis, it is essential to understand its purpose and significance. The SWOT analysis provides a structured framework to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to Roma education and employability in Turkey. This analysis aims to offer a comprehensive overview of the current situation, highlighting both the internal and external factors that influence the socio-economic integration of the Roma

community. Readers should keep in mind that this analysis not only identifies the existing challenges but also uncovers potential areas for improvement and strategic opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance the educational and employment outcomes for Roma individuals. By understanding these elements, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders can develop more effective and targeted interventions to support the Roma community in Turkey.

On the other hand, one of the strategic objectives outlined in the Roma Turkish policy document is to ensure full inclusion of children and youth from the Roma community in quality preschool, primary, and secondary education (Republic of Turkey, 2023, p. 24). This objective focuses on increasing Roma children's participation in all levels of education, from preschool to secondary, as a foundation for their future success and integration into society.

Furthermore, the European Union's report emphasizes the importance of employability and the transition from education to the labor market. It suggests that "immediate actions should be taken to ensure access to employment in public administration and increase the number of Romani teachers and Romani staff of VET centers" (European Union, 2024, p. 9). This recommendation highlights the need for affirmative measures to improve Roma's employment prospects, including increasing their representation in the education and public administration sectors.

In conclusion, both the Republic of Turkey's strategy document and the European Union's policy analysis underscore the critical importance of education for the Roma community's social and economic integration. By addressing the challenges of access, inclusion, and quality of education, these policies aim to create a more equitable and inclusive society for Roma in Turkey and the broader region.

Employment Policies in the EU and in Turkey: The Place of Roma

The section is organized to first explore the EU's strategic framework and policy objectives aimed at enhancing Roma employment, followed by an examination of Turkey's national strategies and action plans. The analysis highlights the key goals, challenges, and initiatives undertaken by both the EU and Turkey to improve employment outcomes for Roma individuals. The results underscore the importance of tailored interventions, the elimination of discrimination, and the promotion of inclusive employment practices to foster socio-economic integration and empowerment of the Roma community.

Employment Policies in the EU

The European Union has long recognized the need to address the socio-economic exclusion and discrimination faced by Roma, Europe's largest ethnic minority. This thesis explores the EU's current policy objectives for Roma employment, drawing on the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation for 2020 - 2030, and the Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation.

The EU Roma strategic framework for 2020 - 2030 sets ambitious goals for the inclusion of Roma in the labor market. One of the key objectives is to "increase effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment" (European Commission, 2020, p. 5). This objective acknowledges the employment gap between Roma and the general population, aiming to cut this gap by at least half by 2030. The framework emphasizes the importance of providing Roma with the necessary skills and opportunities to participate fully in the labor market.

The Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 further supports this objective by urging Member States to adopt national Roma strategic frameworks that include measures for increasing effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment (Council of the European Union, 2021, 8). This includes tailoring individualized, holistic action plans for unemployed and inactive Roma, supporting first work experience, job placements, apprenticeships, and career development, and facilitating the transition from education to employment.

Understanding EU action on Roma inclusion provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by Roma in accessing employment. It highlights that "the paid work rate for Roma aged 20 to 64 years is 43%, much lower than the EU average (70% at that time)" (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2023 p. 2). This stark difference underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve Roma employment rates.

The Strategic Framework and the Council Recommendation emphasize the role of education in improving employment outcomes for Roma. By ensuring access to quality education and vocational training, the EU aims to equip Roma individuals with the skills needed to succeed in the labor market. This approach is crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion that many Roma face.

In conclusion, the EU's policy objectives for Roma employment are centered around increasing access to quality and sustainable employment, improving education and training opportunities, and addressing the discrimination and barriers that Roma face in the labor market. These objectives are supported by both the EU Roma strategic framework and the Council Recommendation, which provide a roadmap for Member States to improve the socioeconomic inclusion of Roma.

Roma Employment Policies in Turkey

Turkey's current policy objectives for employment are strategically outlined in the Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2028)¹², reflecting the nation's aspirations towards achieving a robust and inclusive labor market. This plan, orchestrated by the Presidency of Strategy and Budget, underscores the importance of fostering a dynamic and competitive economy through various employment strategies. The primary goal is to enhance the quality and inclusiveness of the job market, ensuring that employment opportunities are accessible to all segments of society, including the youth, women, and the disabled.

One of the pivotal objectives highlighted in the plan is the promotion of entrepreneurship and the support of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as key drivers of employment. The Presidency of Strategy and Budget (2023) suggests that bolstering the entrepreneurial ecosystem and providing comprehensive support to SMEs will significantly contribute to job creation and economic diversification. This approach not only aims to

¹² <https://gensed.org/assets/attachments/dosyalar/12.Ulusal-Kalk%C4%B1nma-Plan%C4%B1.pdf>

stimulate economic growth but also to foster innovation and competitiveness in the Turkish economy.

Furthermore, the plan emphasizes the importance of aligning education and vocational training programs with the needs of the labor market. According to the Presidency of Strategy and Budget (2023), enhancing the relevance and quality of education and training systems is crucial for equipping the workforce with the necessary skills and competencies required in a rapidly changing job market. This strategy is expected to reduce skill mismatches and improve the employability of job seekers, thereby contributing to a more efficient and dynamic labor market.

Another key aspect of the employment policy is the focus on digital transformation and the green economy as areas with significant potential for job creation. The Presidency of Strategy and Budget (2023) acknowledges that investing in digital skills and green jobs will not only address the challenges posed by technological advancements and environmental concerns but also open new avenues for sustainable employment. This forward-looking approach aims to prepare the Turkish workforce for the jobs of the future, ensuring that the economy remains competitive and resilient.

Lastly, the plan underscores the need for social inclusion and equal opportunities in the labor market. The Presidency of Strategy and Budget (2023) highlights the commitment to eliminating barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups and ensuring that all individuals have access to decent work. This commitment to social justice and equity is fundamental to achieving a more inclusive and cohesive society.

In conclusion, Turkey's current policy objectives for employment, as outlined in the Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2028), reflect a comprehensive and strategic approach to fostering a robust, inclusive, and dynamic labor market. By focusing on entrepreneurship, education and training, digital and green jobs, and social inclusion, Turkey aims to create a competitive and sustainable economy that benefits all its citizens.

Roma Employment Policies in Turkey

The employment of Roma citizens in Turkey has been a focal point of the government's social policy initiatives, as outlined in the "Strategy Document for Roma Citizens 2023-2030 Phase I Action Plan 2023-2025" by the Republic of Turkey (2023). This thesis aims to analyze

the current policy objectives for the employment of Roma in Turkey, highlighting the strategic aims, challenges, and potential impacts of these policies.

The policy's first objective is to enhance Roma citizens' employability by improving their access to education and vocational training. The government recognizes the importance of equipping Roma individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications to compete in the labor market. This approach not only aims to reduce unemployment rates among the Roma population but also seeks to empower them through education, thereby fostering social inclusion and reducing poverty.

Secondly, the policy focuses on eliminating barriers to employment for Roma citizens. This includes addressing discrimination in the workplace and ensuring equal opportunities for all. The government plans to implement awareness-raising campaigns among employers and the public to challenge stereotypes and prejudices against the Roma community. By promoting a more inclusive work environment, the policy aims to facilitate the integration of Roma individuals into the workforce.

Furthermore, the action plan emphasizes the importance of supporting Roma entrepreneurs and small businesses. The government intends to provide financial assistance and advisory services to Roma individuals who wish to start their own businesses. This initiative not only aims to create employment opportunities for the Roma community but also seeks to stimulate economic growth and development in regions with high Roma populations.

The policy also acknowledges the need for targeted interventions in regions with high concentrations of Roma citizens. By tailoring employment programs to the specific needs and challenges of these communities, the government aims to ensure that the benefits of economic development are equitably distributed. This localized approach is crucial for addressing the unique barriers to employment faced by Roma individuals in different parts of the country.

In conclusion, the "Strategy Document for Roma Citizens 2023-2030 Phase I Action Plan 2023-2025" represents a comprehensive approach to improving the employment prospects of Roma citizens in Turkey. By focusing on education, combating discrimination, supporting entrepreneurship, and implementing targeted interventions, the policy aims to promote social inclusion, reduce poverty, and foster economic development. However, the success of these initiatives will depend on their effective implementation and the ongoing commitment of all stakeholders to address the challenges faced by the Roma community.

To conclude, in the Strategy Document for Roma Citizens in Turkey 2023-2025 Phase I Action Plan, the education problem is indirectly linked to employment and discrimination. However, it is shown in the strategic goals that employment can be achieved entirely through

education. When looking at the budget of the Strategy Document, there is no indication of any numerical expression, meaning there is no allocation of a budget for this strategy document. Upon examining the other sections of the Strategy Document, it is evident that each institution will continue with its existing tasks. For instance, when there is an existing vocational training program, Roma will also be included. By following such a strategy, it would give an impression and a report that the strategy document is being implemented, without any specific funds allocated for Roma. In this case, the relevant institutions will not comprehend the seriousness of the situation or exert any effort for Roma. Consequently, vocational training will have almost no contribution to employment. The lack of contribution so far is easily understood from the existing employment rates of Roma.

A Comparative Analysis of Education and Employment Policies for Roma

This paper examines the policy objectives and strategies of both the European Union and Turkey regarding the education and employment of Roma citizens. The analysis reveals several observations about the differences and the key challenges in establishing a stronger coordination between these strategies, to effectively address the needs of the Turkish Roma community.

Turkish mainstream education and employment policies are more ambitious and comprehensive, aiming to enhance overall quality and inclusiveness. In contrast, Roma-specific policies are more targeted but lack the same level of ambition and integration into broader national strategies. For example, "Turkey's Education Vision 2023" emphasizes modernizing the curriculum and teacher development, while the "Roman Vatandaşlara Yönelik Strateji Belgesi" focuses on increasing school attendance and vocational training for Roma children.

One significant issue with Roma-specific policies in Turkey is the lack of dedicated budget allocation. The "Roman Vatandaşlara Yönelik Strateji Belgesi" does not specify a budget, which undermines the effectiveness of its implementation. In contrast, mainstream policies often have clear financial plans and resources allocated to achieve their goals. There is a need to better integrate Roma-specific policies into the broader national frameworks. While mainstream policies like the "Twelfth Development Plan" focus on entrepreneurship and digital transformation, Roma policies should align with these broader goals to ensure cohesive and inclusive development. On the other hand, mainstream policies do not target Roma and other minorities. Integrating such a perspective can help address the unique challenges faced by the Roma community more effectively.

Both mainstream and Roma-specific employment policies emphasize vocational training. However, Roma policies are more focused on providing immediate employment opportunities through vocational courses, while mainstream policies aim for long-term skill development and alignment with labor market needs. For instance, the "Strategy Document for Roma Citizens" highlights the importance of vocational training to improve employability but lacks a long-term vision for career development.

Discrimination and social exclusion are pervasive issues that affect the Roma community's access to education and employment. Both the EU and Turkish policies recognize

this, but the approaches differ. The EU's strategic framework includes specific targets to reduce discrimination, while Turkish policies often address these issues indirectly through broader social inclusion initiatives.

Both EU and Turkish policies acknowledge the barriers to employment faced by the Roma community, such as lack of skills and discrimination. However, the solutions proposed differ. The EU framework includes measures such as job placements and apprenticeships, while Turkish policies focus more on vocational training and entrepreneurship support without as much emphasis on structured employment pathways.

The EU's strategic framework for Roma education is centered on combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. It sets specific targets to reduce the poverty gap and increase participation in education, particularly in early childhood. The EU also emphasizes the development of desegregation policies and the involvement of Roma NGOs in policy monitoring. In terms of employment, the EU aims to increase access to quality and sustainable employment for Roma by cutting the employment gap and improving education and training opportunities.

Turkey's general education policies aim to enhance the quality and inclusiveness of education, modernize the curriculum, focus on teacher development, expand access to early childhood education, and leverage technology. The employment policies in Turkey's Twelfth Development Plan prioritize entrepreneurship, aligning education with labor market needs, digital transformation, and social inclusion.

Turkey's strategic document, "Roman Vatandaşlara Yönelik Strateji Belgesi 2023-2030 I. Aşama Eylem Planı 2023-2025," outlines a comprehensive approach to Roma education and employment. It focuses on inclusive education, eliminating employment barriers, supporting Roma entrepreneurs, and targeted interventions in regions with high Roma populations.

Upon analyzing the policies from the EU and Turkey, it is evident that both entities recognize the importance of addressing the educational and employment needs of the Roma community. However, there are differences in their approaches. The EU's policies are broad and encompass the entire region, setting ambitious targets for reducing discrimination and poverty among Roma. The EU's framework is also notable for its emphasis on civil society participation and desegregation in education.

In contrast, Turkey's policies, while comprehensive, are more localized and tailored to the specific conditions of the Roma in Turkey. The Turkish policy document reflects a detailed action plan that includes strategies for education and employment, with a clear focus on inclusivity and the elimination of discrimination. It also highlights the importance of supporting

Roma entrepreneurs and targeted interventions, which suggests a nuanced understanding of the diverse needs within the Roma community.

When comparing Turkey's general policies on education and employment with its specific policies for Roma, there is a convergence in the emphasis on quality education, inclusiveness, and alignment with labor market needs. Both sets of policies aim to modernize the education system and enhance employment opportunities through various strategies. However, the Roma-specific policies go further by addressing the unique challenges faced by the Roma, such as discrimination and social exclusion.

In conclusion, while Turkey's policies for Roma education and employment share similarities with the EU's policy objectives, they are distinct in their localized and targeted approach. The Turkish policy document appears to be in line with the general policies on education and employment, indicating a concerted effort to integrate Roma-specific needs into the broader policy framework. This integration suggests that Turkey's policies are designed to meet the local needs of the Roma to a significant extent, although the success of these policies will ultimately depend on their effective implementation and the ongoing commitment to address the challenges faced by the Roma community.

Recommendations

This research thesis has explored the current state of education and employment policies for the Roma community in Turkey. By analyzing the strategic vision documents "Turkey's Education Vision 2023" and "Roman Vatandaşlara Yönelik Strateji Belgesi 2023-2030 I. Aşama Eylem Planı 2023-2025," it has become evident that there is a need to redraft and align policies targeting the Roma population with mainstream national policies. This alignment is crucial to ensure an inclusive and cohesive approach to addressing the unique challenges faced by the Roma community while leveraging the existing infrastructure and resources available through mainstream initiatives.

The following recommendations aim to provide a framework for integrating Roma-specific policies into the broader national strategies for education and employment. By adopting a holistic and student-centered approach in education and promoting customized employment programs and enhanced access to vocational training, these recommendations seek to empower the Roma community and facilitate their successful integration into the educational system and labor market.

Furthermore, these recommendations emphasize the importance of decentralized implementation, allowing for flexibility and localized adaptation to cater to the diverse needs of Roma communities across different regions of Turkey. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are also proposed to ensure the continuous improvement and effectiveness of these policies. Through the implementation of these recommendations, Turkey can take a significant step towards achieving its vision of an inclusive and equitable society, where the Roma community is empowered to reach its full potential and contribute to the nation's progress.

Recommendations for Education

Based on the "Turkey's Education Vision 2023" document, here are some recommendations to redraft education policies for Roma in Turkey so that they align with mainstream education policies and work together cohesively:

Inclusive Education Ecosystem

1. Adopt the vision's holistic "education ecosystem" approach that views education as an integrated system involving students, parents, teachers, and schools. This would ensure Roma education policies are not isolated but integrated with the mainstream system.
2. Follow the vision's principle of "unity in plurality" to embrace diversity and overcome the "us vs. them" divide between Roma and non-Roma communities. Promote the idea that education is a shared national responsibility.

Student-Centered Approach

1. Implement the vision's student-centered approach, recognizing Roma children as the "common denominator" and focusing policies on nurturing their hopes, joy, and innocence, just like other Turkish children.
2. Provide guidance and support for Roma families to create a nurturing environment for their children's education, as envisioned for all Turkish families.

Empowering Teachers

1. Invest in training Roma and non-Roma teachers to act as "master teachers" who can adapt the curriculum framework to the specific needs of Roma students, polishing their hidden potential as treasures.
2. Promote the vision's view of teachers as the "main players" in education, empowering them to reconstruct curricula for Roma students based on their unique personalities and strengths.

Flexible and Localized Implementation

1. Adopt the vision's approach of having universal concepts but localized practices. Allow flexibility in implementing Roma education policies based on the specific needs and contexts of different Roma communities across Turkey.

2. Decentralize implementation by promoting a "school-oriented system" where individual schools can tailor Roma education policies to their local Roma populations, just as the vision envisions schools as the core units of the education ecosystem.

By integrating these recommendations derived from Turkey's Education Vision 2023, Roma education policies can be redrafted to align with and complement mainstream Turkish education policies in an inclusive, student-centered, and teacher-empowered adaptable manner.

Recommendations for Employment

To redraft employment policies for Roma in Turkey in alignment with mainstream employment policies and ensure cohesive operation, the following recommendations are proposed, inspired by the strategic objectives and actions outlined in the "Roman Vatandaşlara Yönelik Strateji Belgesi 2023-2030 I. Aşama Eylem Planı 2023-2025" document:

Integration into National Employment Strategies

1. Integrate Roma-specific employment initiatives within the broader framework of Turkey's national employment strategies. This ensures that policies targeting Roma employment are not isolated but are part of a comprehensive approach to improving employment across all demographics.
2. Utilize the national employment policy's infrastructure, such as job centers and online employment platforms, to specifically target and support Roma individuals seeking employment, ensuring they benefit from the same resources as the general population.

Customized Employment Programs

1. Develop customized employment programs that consider the unique challenges and skills of the Roma community, like the approach of providing "istihdam garantili meleski eğitim kursları" (employment-guaranteed vocational training courses). These programs should be designed to bridge the gap between the specific needs of Roma individuals and the demands of the labor market.
2. Encourage entrepreneurship and cooperative models among the Roma community by providing targeted support and training, drawing inspiration from the initiative to promote women's cooperatives within the Roma community. This approach aligns with mainstream policies aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and small business development.

Enhanced Access to Vocational Training

1. Increase access to vocational training and education for Roma individuals, ensuring that these opportunities are aligned with mainstream vocational training initiatives. This includes tailoring vocational training programs to the specific needs and cultural aspects of the Roma community while ensuring they meet the standards and requirements of the broader labor market.
2. Implement mentorship and apprenticeship programs that connect Roma individuals with experienced professionals in their fields of interest. This aligns with mainstream policies that emphasize practical, on-the-job training as a pathway to employment.

Strengthening Labor Market Integration

1. Strengthen mechanisms for the integration of Roma individuals into the labor market through comprehensive support services, including job matching, career counseling, and post-employment support. This mirrors mainstream employment policies that focus on holistic support for job seekers.
2. Promote inclusive hiring practices among employers, encouraging them to recognize the value of diversity in the workplace. This can be facilitated through incentives for companies that actively hire and support Roma employees, aligning with broader efforts to promote inclusivity and diversity in the labor market.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of employment policies targeting Roma individuals. This framework should be integrated with mainstream employment policy evaluation mechanisms to ensure consistency and facilitate the sharing of best practices.
2. Use data and feedback from the monitoring and evaluation process to continuously refine and adapt employment policies for Roma individuals, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in the context of changing labor market dynamics.

By adopting these recommendations, employment policies for Roma in Turkey can be redrafted to align with and complement mainstream employment policies, ensuring a more inclusive and effective approach to improving employment outcomes for the Roma community.

Conclusion

This research thesis has provided a comprehensive analysis of the status of Roma education and employment in Turkey, juxtaposing it with the broader context of European Union policies and strategies. Through a detailed examination of policy documents and strategic plans, this thesis has illuminated the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that shape the socio-economic integration of the Roma community in Turkey. Drawing upon the insights garnered from this analysis, this conclusion synthesizes the key findings, reflects on the implications of these findings, and offers recommendations for future policy and research.

The thesis has identified several critical insights regarding the education and employment of Roma in Turkey. While both the EU and Turkey have developed strategic frameworks and policies aimed at improving the socio-economic integration of the Roma, there are notable gaps in implementation, monitoring, and the allocation of resources. The thesis highlights the need for more targeted, localized, and inclusive policy interventions. Discrimination and social exclusion emerge as cross-cutting themes that significantly impact the education and employment outcomes of the Roma community. Addressing these systemic issues is crucial for advancing the socio-economic integration of Roma in Turkey.

The findings of this thesis have profound implications for policymakers, educators, employers, and especially civil society organizations. They underscore the urgency of adopting a holistic, multi-sectoral approach to address the complex challenges facing the Roma community. Moreover, the thesis emphasizes the importance of fostering an inclusive society where Roma individuals have equal opportunities to thrive academically and economically.

Future research should focus on evaluating the impact of specific interventions on the education and employment outcomes of the Roma community in Turkey. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of policies and programs over time. However, a shortcut to this would be the creation of new Roma policies that would ensure that Turkey's mainstream education and employment policies are implemented at the same time as the policies designed for Roma. Additionally, comparative studies involving other marginalized communities could offer broader perspectives on addressing socio-economic integration challenges.

In conclusion, this thesis has shed light on the critical challenges and opportunities related to the education and employment of the Roma community in Turkey. By offering a detailed analysis and actionable recommendations, this research contributes to the ongoing efforts to promote the socio-economic integration of Roma. Achieving this goal requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, guided by a commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice after the establishment of new policies/practices.

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