THE CENTURY OF TURKIYE EDUCATION MODEL MONITORING REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

takip
THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROJECT

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RESEARCH CENTER FOR EDUCATION POLICY

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To read the full report:

İLKE Foundation for Science,
Culture, and Education
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About the Research

The Century of Turkiye Education Model (Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli) (TYMM) is an educational framework developed by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to reshape the education system with a value-oriented and national perspective, offering an innovative and holistic approach to education policies and practices. The model goes beyond the mere transfer of knowledge; it aims to cultivate "competent and virtuous individuals" by supporting mental, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development.

The Education Policy Research Center (Eğitim Politikaları Araştırma Merkezi) (EPAM) of the İLKE Foundation launched the Monitoring and Evaluation Project (Takip ve İzleme Projesi) (TAKİP) to examine and assess the field implementation processes of the TYMM, which was put into practice in the 2024–25 academic year. In the first phase of this project, a field study was conducted to track teachers' processes of implementing and experiencing the TYMM. This report represents the first output of the TAKİP project, focusing specifically on teachers.

The report examines the reflections of the new model in practice during the 2024–25 academic year through teachers' perspectives, focusing on Turkish, Mathematics, and Science courses taught at the 5th-grade level. As part of the field research, in-depth interviews were conducted with Turkish, Mathematics, and Science teachers working in middle schools across different districts of Istanbul. The findings drawn from teachers' views were analyzed across critical dimensions such as the comprehensibility and applicability of the curricula, assessment and evaluation processes, and the interdisciplinary approach.

This field study, conducted with the support and authorization of the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education, was implemented by EPAM in collaboration with a team of academic experts in education. As a civil society organization, EPAM offers an independent and complementary perspective, contributing to the evaluation of how education policies align with societal needs and on-the-ground realities.

Objectives of the Project

- Laying the groundwork for the development of stronger and more inclusive curricula
- Generating guiding data for the future of education policies
- Bringing teachers' experiences into decision-making processes
- Supporting the creation of flexible, participatory, and continuously evolving programs
- Enhancing transparency and inclusiveness in education to increase stakeholder engagement
- Providing policymakers with a data-driven and pluralistic basis for decision-making

Executive Summary

Key Findings	Recommendations
 **The Need for Reform** Teachers largely viewed the TYMM reform as necessary, welcomed the new curricula positively, and demonstrated a sense of ownership.	**Participatory and Lasting Transformation** Teachers' belief in the necessity of reform should be seen as an opportunity and transformed into a participatory and sustainable process throughout implementation.
 **The Need for Support During the Transition** Teachers reported feeling unprepared and unsupported due to the abrupt shift to the new model and the lack of sufficient in-service training.	**Comprehensive Teacher Development** A continuous, practice-oriented professional development program should be designed around the philosophy and implementation strategies of TYMM. In-service training should not be limited to the pre-implementation phase but should continue regularly and practically throughout the process. Training programs should focus on enhancing curriculum literacy and strengthening assessment and evaluation skills, while teacher guidebooks should be prepared to facilitate lesson planning.
 **Infrastructure and Material Shortages** Inadequate physical and technological infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of materials have limited the implementation of activity-based practices.	**Infrastructure and Material Improvements** School buildings, laboratories, and technological equipment should be strengthened, and the number of classrooms increased to reduce class sizes to reasonable levels. Digital learning platforms should be developed, teacher guidebooks prepared, and the quality of educational materials improved.

Key Findings	Recommendations
 **The Assessment and Exam Dilemma** The misalignment between TYMM's process-oriented approach and the test-focused structure of national exams (LGS) has created concern.	**Alignment with the Examination System** The national examination system should be harmonized with TYMM's process-oriented approach, which emphasizes analytical thinking. Teachers should be granted pedagogical autonomy in assessment and evaluation practices.
 **Content Intensity and Time Constraints** Despite the reduction in the number of themes, content intensity has increased, and due to the abundance of activities and insufficient lesson hours, teachers have struggled to cover the curriculum in time.	**Optimization of Lesson Content and Time** The density of texts and activities should be reduced in line with students' developmental levels, with a focus on high-quality content. Lesson durations and weekly schedules should be reorganized to align with the activity-based structure.
 **A Sense of Disconnection from the Field** Teachers felt that the experts who designed the curriculum did not engage sufficiently with the realities of the field, leading to a widespread perception that their views were not taken into account.	**Participatory Curriculum Development** Curriculum development processes should more fully integrate comprehensive field needs assessments and teachers' perspectives. Establishing committees of teachers who design projects at the provincial and district levels could be beneficial in this regard. Parents should also be actively involved in the process, with greater emphasis on outreach and awareness-raising activities.
 **Low Student Readiness** In particular, the early introduction of abstract concepts was seen as misaligned with students' cognitive development levels, leaving their readiness insufficient.	**Phased Transition and Support Programs** Implementation should begin gradually, starting from the 1st grade, while at the 5th-grade level, activity-based practices using concrete materials should be increased in place of abstract concepts. Homework should be designed in alignment with students' developmental needs.

Insights from the Field

Teacher Attitudes

- Teachers generally perceived the TYMM reform as necessary and positive, showing a sense of ownership; however, the unprepared transition and overall complexity made the process challenging, generating anxiety and uncertainty.
- While some teachers were enthusiastic at the outset, they struggled upon encountering the program's details, leading to disappointment and feelings of inadequacy.
- Among participants, views differed regarding the program's clarity and feasibility; some considered it overly academic and terminology-heavy, while others expressed no such concerns
- The program's contemporary, skills-based, student-centered, and real-life-oriented structure was highlighted as its strongest aspect.
- Teachers' attitudes and approaches to adopting and implementing TYMM varied depending on individual factors such as anxiety, uncertainty, idealism, conviction, and openness to change.

Teaching and Learning Processes

- Teachers identified TYMM's activity-based, student-centered, and experiential learning approach as a key strength, emphasizing its positive impact on student participation and motivation.
- A process-oriented and skills-based assessment approach was adopted; however, the format of national exams, time constraints, and unclear criteria limited the effectiveness of these practices.
- Schools' physical infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient resources were seen as the most significant barriers to implementing contemporary learning processes.

Challenges in Implementation

- Due to the brevity, superficiality, and theoretical nature of in-service training, teachers were not adequately prepared for the program and had to manage certain aspects of the process through their own individual efforts.
- Teachers reported feeling unsupported, with notable gaps in curriculum literacy and familiarity with the new terminology.
- Physical conditions, shortages of materials, overcrowded classrooms, and time constraints hindered the effective implementation of the program.
- Although teachers expressed openness to innovation, many continued their old practices, and their grasp of curriculum literacy and new concepts remained insufficient.
- The pressure of national exams overshadowed the student-centered approach.

Field-Specific Findings

Turkish

Positive Observations

- The development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills was regarded as one of the strengths of the program.
- Teachers noted that the new curriculum established strong connections between subjects.
- The usability of EBA (Education Informatics Network) as a supplementary resource, the appropriateness of its content for students' levels, and teachers' ability to design original activities based on visual memory were highlighted as positive features.

Challenges and Criticisms

- The program's language was often described as overly academic and ornate, leaving teachers feeling unprepared and inadequate when translating it into classroom practice.
- Although the number of themes was reduced, the increased content load prevented timely completion of topics and hindered the effective implementation of activities. Time constraints emerged as one of the most frequently cited challenges in the field.
- The reduction of grammar topics, the removal of certain subjects, and the reliance on implicit instruction were criticized; teachers expressed concerns that students would struggle to grasp key concepts and face difficulties learning other languages.
- Assessment processes were found insufficient, with criticisms focusing on the limited scenarios provided and the exclusion of grammar topics.
- A misalignment was noted between the process-oriented approach to assessment and the test-based structure of national exams, fueling concerns that this discrepancy may negatively affect students' exam performance.
- Teachers stressed that effective implementation of the program requires students in each class to be at a comparable and sufficient academic level. Infrastructure-related issues—such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of round tables, absence of.
- Turkish workshop classrooms, poor sound insulation, internet disruptions, and small classroom sizes—were identified as major barriers to carrying out Turkish lessons effectively.

Mathematics

Positive Observations

- The student-centered structure of the program was seen to increase students' engagement in the lessons. The strong interdisciplinary dimension was viewed positively, with teachers noting that ensuring content integration across different subjects enriched students' learning experiences.
- The skills-based design, the use of open-ended questions, and the emphasis on linking concepts to daily life were strongly supported innovations according to teachers.

Challanges and Criticisms

- Students' readiness for abstract concepts was low, and gaps in operational skills were observed.
- Addressing geometry at the beginning of the academic year was considered pedagogically problematic, as 5th-grade students' abstraction skills were not yet sufficiently developed. In contrast, themes like data analysis—closely tied to daily life—were evaluated more positively.
- Students with weak reading skills struggled with skill-based math questions. Teachers noted that students particularly had difficulties with content requiring abstraction, highlighting the need to restructure activities in line with developmental levels.
- A lack of guidance and teaching materials posed a significant challenge in the program's implementation.
- Textbooks were deemed inadequate in terms of topic sequencing, clarity of explanations, and integration with EBA.
- Overcrowded classrooms, insufficient infrastructure, and limited time made it difficult to benefit fully from the new program. While teachers supported the hands-on, experiential learning structure, they emphasized serious time constraints in applying it effectively in the classroom. The allocation of five weekly hours was considered insufficient.
- A misalignment was identified between the program's assessment approach and the national examination system. Moreover, relying solely on open-ended questions restricted teachers' pedagogical flexibility and limited the variety of question types, reducing the overall effectiveness of assessments.
- Teachers reported that field data had not been sufficiently incorporated into program revisions, and seminar sessions were too brief and lacking in substance. Many teachers continued to rely heavily on habits from previous curricula, which, while easing the adaptation process, also hindered the full implementation of the program's innovative aspects in the classroom.

Science

Positive Observations

- The streamlining of the program, along with its content and coherence, was generally welcomed.
- The skills-based design encourages classroom activities and student-centered practices.
- The shift toward open-ended questions in assessments was noted to support students' interpretive and critical thinking skills.

Challanges and Criticisms

- The reduction of content was viewed negatively by some teachers.
- Introducing abstract topics such as cell, mass, and weight in the 5th grade was seen as challenging for students. Teachers emphasized the importance of considering the role of both added and removed content within the learning sequence, highlighting the need to revisit the exclusion of topics such as "classification of living things".
- Shortages in physical infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient laboratories and materials limited the program's implementation.
- The abundance of activities, combined with limited instructional time, created practical difficulties.
- Students' lack of readiness, collaboration, and sense of responsibility negatively affected group work. Deficiencies in students' prior mathematical knowledge were also observed to directly hinder science learning.
- Teachers frequently pointed to the lack of digital platforms, practice examples, and guiding materials as major shortcomings.
- Greater use of field data in curriculum development processes was emphasized as a need. While open-ended questions encourage critical thinking, gaps in reinforcement activities and the dominance of multiple-choice items in the LGS (Central Examination for Transition to High Schools) created a sharp contradiction.

Conclusion

The Century of Türkiye Education Model (TYMM) has been introduced as a strategic step to carry Türkiye's educational vision into the future. Aiming to reshape the education system with a **value-oriented and national perspective**, the model provides an innovative and holistic framework for education policies and practices.

This study, which analyzes the Turkish, Mathematics, and Science curricula from a multidimensional perspective based on teachers' views, highlights both the strengths and areas for improvement of the program, offering comprehensive insights for policymakers, practitioners, and curriculum developers. In doing so, it seeks to support decision-making processes and ongoing improvement efforts through a **data-driven approach**.

Findings indicate that while teachers generally displayed a **positive attitude** toward the curriculum reform—and the strong belief in its necessity fostered a sense of ownership—the **challenges and complexities** of the transformation process at times led to negative reflections.

Within the scope of the study, themes were identified based on participant perspectives, findings were analyzed, and discussions were framed in light of the existing literature. The results underscore the importance of teachers embracing innovative approaches, while also pointing to the need for structural interventions in areas such as **curriculum content, implementation guidance, material infrastructure, assessment and evaluation, and stakeholder collaboration**.

The philosophy and pedagogical framework of the program hold strong potential; however, its success will depend on the simultaneous strengthening of field support mechanisms, guiding materials, implementation examples, and stakeholder integration. **Simplifying the program, adapting it more closely to field realities**, and shaping it through teachers' professional experience emerge as essential requirements.

As EPAM, through the TAKİP project, we aim to continue systematically examining the reflections of the Century of Türkiye Education Model in practice in our future studies.

Needs-Oriented, Evidence-Based, Inclusive

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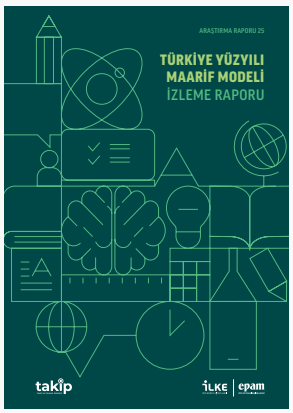

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EPAM conducts needs-oriented, evidence-based, and inclusive studies with the aim of strengthening the field of education in Türkiye and building a body of knowledge that contributes to ensuring equity and justice in education.

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