

# HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE TURKEY OF THE FUTURE

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Nihat Erdođmuş

This report is the summarized  
version of the main report.



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# HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE TURKEY OF THE FUTURE

## ABSTRACT

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This report handles important issues ranging from how to strategically manage the continuously increasing change in higher education to the possibility of a higher education structured on the basis of meeting contemporary demands, from organizing consultancy services suitable to the new career understanding to searches for sustainable sources of finance. This report consists of two primary sections: the need for change in higher education and the vision plan for higher education. The first section addresses preparing for the future in higher education and the need for change, and the second section presents a vision for higher education. The second section contains 12 thematic points regarding the vision for higher education. This section primarily addresses the themes of change and reorganization in higher education while paying attention to its importance, priority, and chain reactions. Afterward, a vision including themes such as access, educational settings, career, and employment skills in a higher education system that centers itself on students is provided. Following these are themes devoted to academicians. The final sub-sections address the themes of social and economic contributions, internationalization, and finance.

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## İLKE TURKEY OF THE FUTURE PROJECT

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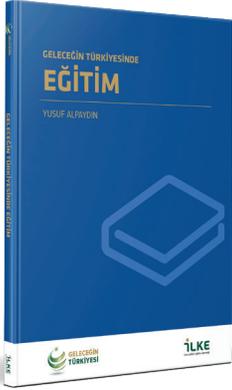
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### Nihat Erdođmuş

Prof. Erdođmuş graduated from the Bođaziçi University Department of Psychology in 1992. He earned his Master's from the İstanbul University School of Business Department of Behavioral Sciences in 1995. He earned his doctoral degree from the Sakarya University Department of Administration and Organization in 1999. He became an Associate Professor in Enterprise Management in 1999 and a Professor in the field of Administration and Organization in April 2005. He has been continuing his research as a faculty member at the Yıldız Technical University Department of Business Administration since 2015. In his research he focuses on the issues of developing institutional capacity structurally and administratively, managing change, administrative psychology, and the development and change of career identity. NGO management and higher education administration are among the issues he has been interested in recent years. He is Chairman of the İLKE Board of Trustees.

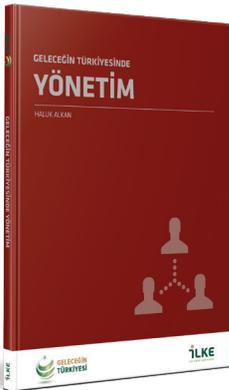


Having embraced the necessity of observing and understanding society, of producing analyses that acknowledge social needs, and of conducting studies oriented to social problems since the day of its inception, the İLKE Foundation for Science, Culture and Education believes in the importance of conducting studies relevant to humanity as a whole rather than any one particular group of people.

The current state of the deterioration in our intellectual productivity, inefficiency in realizing current potentials, and the expansion of problems building up in all spheres of life, riddled with many a vicious cycle, have reaffirmed the İLKE Foundation's conviction in studies oriented to field-research and problem-solving. To this end, we prepare reports by experts in their fields and provide them to the public in the fields of Education, Higher Education, Administration, Economics, Foreign Policy, Social Policy, Cultural Policy, and Civil Society.



As the İLKE Foundation, we aim to contribute to Turkey's vision for the future by adding the İLKE reports to our studies that promote principles and provide solutions, studies that check the world's pulse while simultaneously being informed by local dynamics. Within the purview of the Turkey of the Future project, we aim to provide guidance to policy-makers by developing coherent, functional, and sustainable strategy and policy recommendations based on data and knowledge in social, economic, cultural, and political spheres.



## Foreword

As the İLKE Foundation for Science, Culture and Education, we believe that NGOs and the studies conducted therein are critical for policy-makers, practitioners, and the society. Accordingly, we endeavor to shape our studies so to function as a bridge between decision-makers and society. It is evident that society's level of prosperity will rise when the structures and functions of civilian organizations are better understood and constructed.

As the İLKE Foundation, we attach importance to being an active part of the construction of a strong society with institutions such as İLEM, YEKDER, and İGiAD that are part of our organization and are conducting compelling and leading studies in their fields. In this, we endeavor to keep our finger on the pulse of the civilian sphere while proceeding with the understanding that a deeper comprehension of national issues is necessary. We strive to construct all our studies in a perspective that addresses, first of all, our country and the entire world, for the wind of globalization has left no door unopened and has connected even the most disjointed of things. With this care and understanding, we prepare policy notes and research reports comprising proposals for practical solutions in a variety of fields and present them to the public. While we believe in the importance of the accumulated knowledge of the past, we also believe that the day's circumstances must be analyzed properly as to equip ourselves with a strong vision of the future.

The İLKE Foundation has espoused the mission of preparing our country for the future, under the Turkey of the Future Project, as it has done in other studies. With the Turkey of the Future Project, we study Turkey's fundamental issues on a real basis and by observing the integrity of time and space. Our main effort has consisted of consistently challenging the difficulties encountered when handling the issues comprising the project, treating the problems holistically, and suggesting solutions not only concerning our country but also worldwide. We believe that understanding and communicating problems is an important obligation, for solutions will become possible only when we meet problems head on and understand them holistically. Having said that, we also appreciate the importance of consulting our constructs, methods, and outputs with experts being aware that studies pertaining to the future are open to speculation.

We initiated the "Turkey of the Future Project" in 2018 with this objective. With this project, we want to draw attention to the increasing importance of speaking about the future in an era of constant change. In the purview of the project, we develop medium-term vision proposals for Turkey through research reports in the fields of primary and higher education, economy, governance, foreign policy, social policy, cultural policy, and civil society. In the other part of the project, we provide specific diagnoses and policy suggestions related to the aforementioned fields and their subfields through Policy Notes and Analysis Reports.

We hope that the studies conducted in the purview of the Turkey of the Future Project will illuminate our road ahead in the relevant fields and contribute to the creation of a more sustainable order.

Lütfi Sunar

Chairman of the İLKE Foundation  
Coordinator of the Turkey of the Future Project

## **Introduction**

As an institution, the university possesses a long past and a deep-rooted tradition shaped by the notions of curiosity, investigating, existence, knowledge, the university, interpretation, criticism, autonomy, and responsibility. Such a past and tradition constitute both the strongest and the weakest side of the university. While the deep, systematic, and trustworthy knowledge formed after many years strengthens the university, its self-confidence and tradition can also result in resistance or delays in responding to change. The university's openness to change at an institutional level and capacity to achieve it with internal dynamics is very significant. In this context, the report's purpose can be described as suggesting a model for managing change in the higher education system using a strategic approach and as providing a vision of the higher education of the future.

## **Developments Affecting Higher Education**

Very important political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal changes are developing these days. In the political and economic spheres, the increase in globalization and interdependencies among countries and new centers of power emerging in an international space catch the eye. Technology is simultaneously changing rapidly and affecting all domains fundamentally. Developments in artificial intelligence, mobile communication, big data, the Internet of things, cloud computing, 3D printing, augmented reality, genetics, and biotechnology have been prominent in the field of technology. With technology, we are witnessing increased automation, flexibility in production, lean manufacturing, swiftness in decision-making processes, and more efficient uses of resources. These developments are causing significant changes in production styles, the business world, and

professions. New working environments are appearing and new professions emerging while others fade away. In the sociocultural sphere, changes in urbanization, population, family structure, identity, and values are being witnessed. In recent years, new approaches in management, especially in public administration, have been proliferating around the world. These approaches have the capacity to influence the administration and organization of higher education. As higher education prepares individuals for the future and for working life, it is influenced by political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal changes and developments; these developments in-

fluence the knowledge and abilities higher education will provide, meaning that it influences departments and programs.

### Higher Education with Respect to Basic Indicators

The higher education system has made important gains regarding units, students, faculty members, and number of publications. The basic indicators for higher education are given in Table 1. For developing strategies and policies for higher education, subanalyses are now needed to be made for each indicator. For example, aside from the number of universities, faculties, departments, and

Table 1. Basic Indicators in Higher Education

Indicator	Public	Foundation	Foundation VSs	Total
<b>Units</b>				
Number of Universities	129	72	5	206
Number of Faculties	1,335	455	0	1,790
Number of Colleges	359	105	0	464
Number of VS's	886	105	5	996
Number of Institutes	496	212	0	708
Number of Research Application Centers	2,616	606	1	3,223
Number of Departments	15,267	3,012	79	18,358
Number of Programs	17,669	11,502	458	29,629
Number of Divisions	29,908	2,378	0	32,286
Number of Programs	7,525	602	0	8,127
Number of Master's Programs	10,595	2,500	0	13,095
Number of Doctoral Programs	5,116	508	0	5,624
Number of Fine Arts Programs	124	15	0	139

1 VS = Vocational schools

Indicator	Public	Foundation	Foundation VSs	Total
Students, Faculty Members, Publications				
Total Number of Students	6,963,903	589,307	7,161	7,560,371
Total Number of (Excluding distance education)	3,377,687	589,307	7,161	3,974.155
Number of Faculty Members		105	0	464
Number of Students per Faculty Member (Excluding distance education)	137,614	23,170	339	161,123
Number of Students per Lecturer (Excluding distance education)		212	0	708
Number of International Students				50.4
Number of International Faculty Members				24.66
Turkey's Place in Publication Worldwide				125,138
Number of Articles Published in the SCI <sup>2</sup> , SSCI <sup>3</sup> , & AHCI <sup>4</sup> Indices (2017)				3,055
Budget Allocation (TL)	27,761,360,000			20
	124	15	0	28,357

2 SCI = Science Citation Index

3 SSCI = Social Sciences Citation Index

4 AHCI = Arts and Humanities Citation Index

research centers, their diversification and inclinations are also important. Priorities in higher education must shift from quantitative growth to issues like the functionality of institutions, compatibility between supply and demand, and student preferences.

### **Present Organization and Administration of the Higher Education System**

The overall organization of the current higher education system is shaped by Articles 130 and 131 of the 1980 Constitution and

the Higher Education Law No. 2547, dated November 6, 1981. Even though it has undergone some minor changes, Law No. 2547 has largely remained without any comprehensive or systematic changes. Law No. 2547 defines higher education institutions (universities and colleges) and their duties and bodies, with the central organization of the higher education system and the amassing of authority under the Council of Higher Education standing out. The Council of Higher Education, as a president-centered system, has been organized as the most central and powerful council of the higher

education system. In the context of the current organization and administration of the higher education system, the themes that come to the fore are the improper administration of universities, excessive authority of rectors, rectorate elections, autonomy of universities, difficulty of institutionalization, and lack of academic culture. Calls for the reorganization of and need for a cultural transformation in higher education in a manner open to inspection have come to be often voiced.

### **Hierarchical Organizational Culture in Higher Education Institutions**

Besides regulatory and structural problems and limitations, higher education institutions also possess problems in need of development and change from the point of organizational culture. If organizational culture is recognized as the unseen factors (the bulk of the iceberg) that affect the functioning of institutions, then determining these factors and understanding their impact gains importance. While the studies on organizational culture in higher education institutions in Turkey is few and far between, both the studies and their findings show a hierarchical culture to be prevalent. Organizational culture of the hierarchical variant is official and rigid, and the elements that hold individuals together are official rules and policies. The organizational strategies that embrace this culture are inactivity and inertia. Accordingly, hierarchical organizational culture clearly is unbecoming for higher education institutions and the need exists

for change. At the head of the fundamental components of a proper organizational culture for higher education institutions must be academic values, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and principles of governance.

In conclusion, among the factors that hamper change in the field of higher education are the long past and tradition higher education has, the hierarchical order created by the Higher Education Law, and the convenience of the Higher Education Council as a political instrument for governments. Another principal issue that delays change is that higher education has been adjusted through piecemeal improvements rather than holistically and systematically through a strategic framework, structural adjustments, or an appropriate organization. Such improvements and adjustments provide partial solutions and wind up inadequate at meeting the challenges, requests, and needs facing the higher education system. The higher education system in Turkey must be reorganized in light of the realities of the world and Turkey beyond myths, chauvinism, sloganizing, and ideological polarization. If those responsible do not or cannot initiate such planned and systematic change, a stronger wave of change will inevitably force itself upon the system. In higher education, as many factors are found facilitating change as those hindering it. If higher education is approached strategically and the process is managed as a planned transformation, the possibility of effecting change and achieving results in the higher education system will significantly increase.

## **Managing Change in Higher Education Using a Strategic Approach**

Developments in higher education necessitate handling higher education using a strategic perspective as well as the structural and administrative changes proper to this. In this context, the change must be guided by a principal strategic document focused on Turkey's priorities and reflecting a multidimensional, long-term, and institutional perspective and sustainability, in addition to the universality of science. In other words, the planned transformation of the higher education system in the framework of a model must be achieved in reference to a strategic document. In this context, the first theme of the higher education vision is about strategically managing change in higher education.

## **Universities' Mission From Tradition to the Future to Seek and Produce Meaning**

The second theme regarding the vision for higher education is universities' mission to seek and make sense of. Universities have existed as the institutions producing and disseminating knowledge of the highest order. With its instructive nature, knowledge assumes the roles of interpreting, explaining, establishing, and regulating humanity's relationship with itself, society, existence, and the universe. The significance attributed to the instructive nature of knowledge has provided universities with academic freedom from an institutional perspective

and great prestige from the perspective of its members. The actors who undertake the production of scientific knowledge and the higher education institutions that shoulder this production as symbolic placeholders assume the mission of actively updating and developing humanity's search for meaning relative to the expansion of human comprehension.

Universities' mission of knowledge production has changed over time, and the produced knowledge has shifted from the objective of giving meaning to life to a more practical and utilitarian production of knowledge oriented toward technological and economic uses. In terms of an administrative system, scientific freedom, institutional autonomy, and principles of governance have been prominent in shaping universities' operations. Contemporary needs, demands, and challenges have led to areas of conflict among these principles as well. As a result, universities' mission to produce knowledge and institutional operation has been undergoing a transformation.

## **Higher Education Institutions Organized on the Basis of Diversity**

The reorganization of universities on the basis of diversity is the third theme under the vision for higher education. What is needed is a higher education organization that encompasses all institutions and has defined its other functions and procedures accordingly. This organization should possess a diversity that will be able to meet the demands of knowledge production and professional acquirements. The fundamen-

## HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE TURKEY OF THE FUTURE

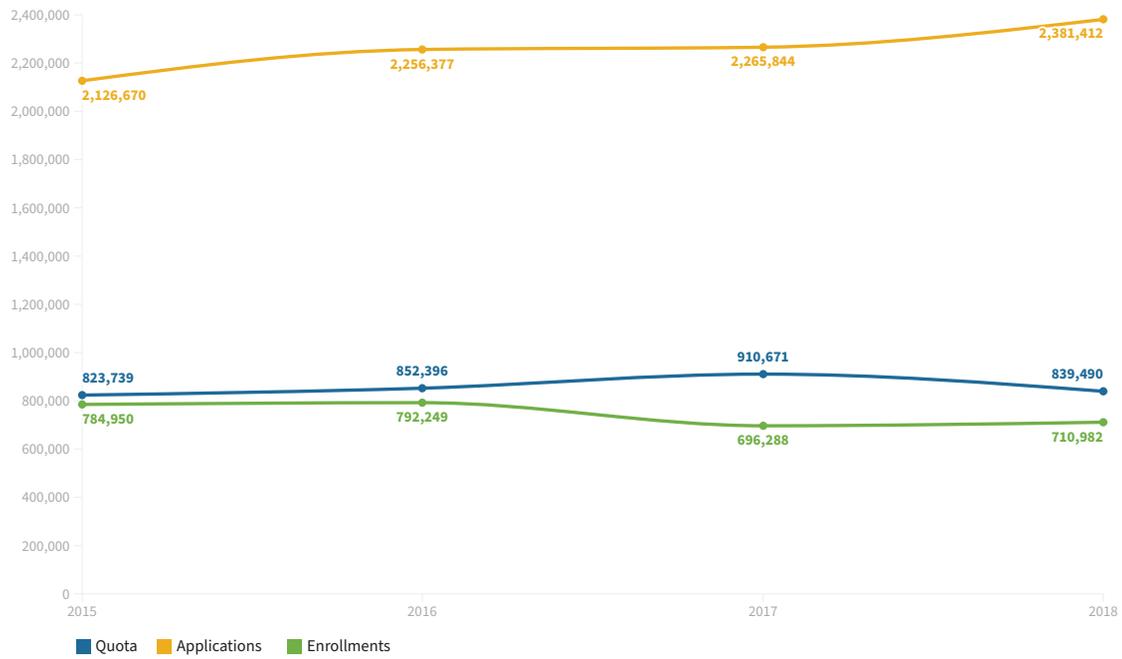


Figure 1. Higher education quotas, applications, and enrollments according to years.

(Higher Education Information Management System, 2018)

tal approach in the organization of higher education institutions should be to provide wide institutional latitude to higher education institutions and, in this context, enable them to develop strategic plans and designate their own priorities. This system, necessitates that universities create accountable and transparent bodies and focus on output controls rather than input controls. Higher education institutions have a need for academic and executive administrators at all levels who can manage institutional organizations and embrace the administrative approach. This is why the organization of higher education institutions is a leading basic administrative matter that must be handled in accordance with management development.

### Parent Institutions with High Regulative and Inspective Capacities

When considering the breadth and diversity achieved by the higher education system in Turkey, there is a need for regulative and inspective parent institutions. The fourth theme is how these higher educational parent institutions that will assume regulative and inspective roles should be organized. The model for the upper organization of higher education should be developed using a decentralized approach and requires intermediary organizations that support universities without harming their autonomy. The institutions and councils that comprise the upper organization of higher education and their missions, responsibilities, and relation

to higher education and other institutions must be adjusted by considering university autonomy, accountability, and transparency.

In order to develop strategies and policies regarding higher education, subanalyses must be made for each indicator. For example, aside from the number of universities, faculties, departments, and research centers, the diversity these represent and their inclinations also have importance. Priorities in higher education must shift from quantitative growth to qualitative issues like the functionality of higher education institutions, the compatibility of supply and demand according to enrollment quotas, and student preferences. Access to higher education and change in the student profile is addressed under the fifth theme of the vision for higher education.

The higher education system must transform into a model that meets the expectations and needs of different students while maintaining university values and autonomy. Higher education in Turkey is witnessing quotas going unfilled and a decrease in the ratio of enrollment. Higher education institutions must consider this phenomenon of unfilled quotas when establishing new departments and reorganizing existing ones. To be able to meet students' demands, the change in the distribution of newly enrolled students and graduates in the subfields of education must also be closely monitored.

### **An Understanding of Education and Learning that Adds Value to Students**

The sixth theme under the vision for higher education relates to what kind of value

must be added to students in graduating them. Besides objectives such as producing answers to humanity's search for meaning, contributing to worldviews, and providing a cultural tradition, higher education institutions also have the purpose of providing professional knowledge and skills. Higher education institutions, depending on their missions, must provide philosophical, social, cultural, and artistic gains to students at various amounts in addition to the professional knowledge and skills peculiar to their fields. By creating an educational environment consistent with up-to-date understandings and methods of learning, universities must prepare students for life and have them graduate by adding value to them.

### **Consulting Services Compatible with the New Career Understanding**

Career consulting will have an important function in students' ability to find the right profession/career and acquire the right skills to dive into working life. Accordingly, career consulting in higher education is addressed as the seventh theme. The issue of how students will manage their careers is one of the foremost issues occupying their minds. Choosing and making decisions about a career are important requirements for students because students will find themselves matching jobs to themselves and choosing a career in this time of increased uncertainty and flexibility more often as they themselves develop over time. This is the reason why the skill of making career decisions must be developed. Another function of career consulting is rais-

ing students' career awareness, determining career paths in their future work, and supporting plans for personal education and development experiences to respond to these. In this context, career consulting must be re-organized toward increasing self-awareness and acquiring employment skills, and expertise in career consulting must be provided in higher education institutions.

### Highly Qualified and Devoted Faculty

The eighth theme under the vision for higher education is on increasing the qualification and devotion of faculty. While significant increases in the number of faculty members in Turkey can be seen, the need for more still exists.

Despite qualitative changes based on different fields, a disparity in the distribution

of faculty members according to sub-fields remains conspicuous. Faculty members in the fields of business, administration, and law, which have the highest level of disparity among faculty members, constitute 9% of the total faculty members, whereas associate degree students constitute 38.5% and undergraduates 26.9% of the total. The exact opposite is present in the fields of health and welfare. While faculty members here constitute 25% of the total, associate degree students constitute 16.4% and undergraduates 9.1%. In this context, the future position of faculty members teaching in departments whose enrollment quotas are not being filled and who are less preferred must be evaluated now. Accordingly, the disparity between the supply and demand of faculty members in sub-fields is conspicuous as an issue that must also be closely monitored.



Figure 2. Percentages of faculty members at public and foundation universities.

(Higher Education Information Management System, 2018)

Increasing the quality of faculty members requires an increase in faculty members and researchers with PhDs. Even though increases have occurred in research, scientific production, and performance in universities over the years, the numbers

and ratios appear insufficient for meeting expectations. This is confirmed by comparisons with developed countries. Higher education needs to develop policies for cultivating human beings and prioritizing the required fields. Systematically improving

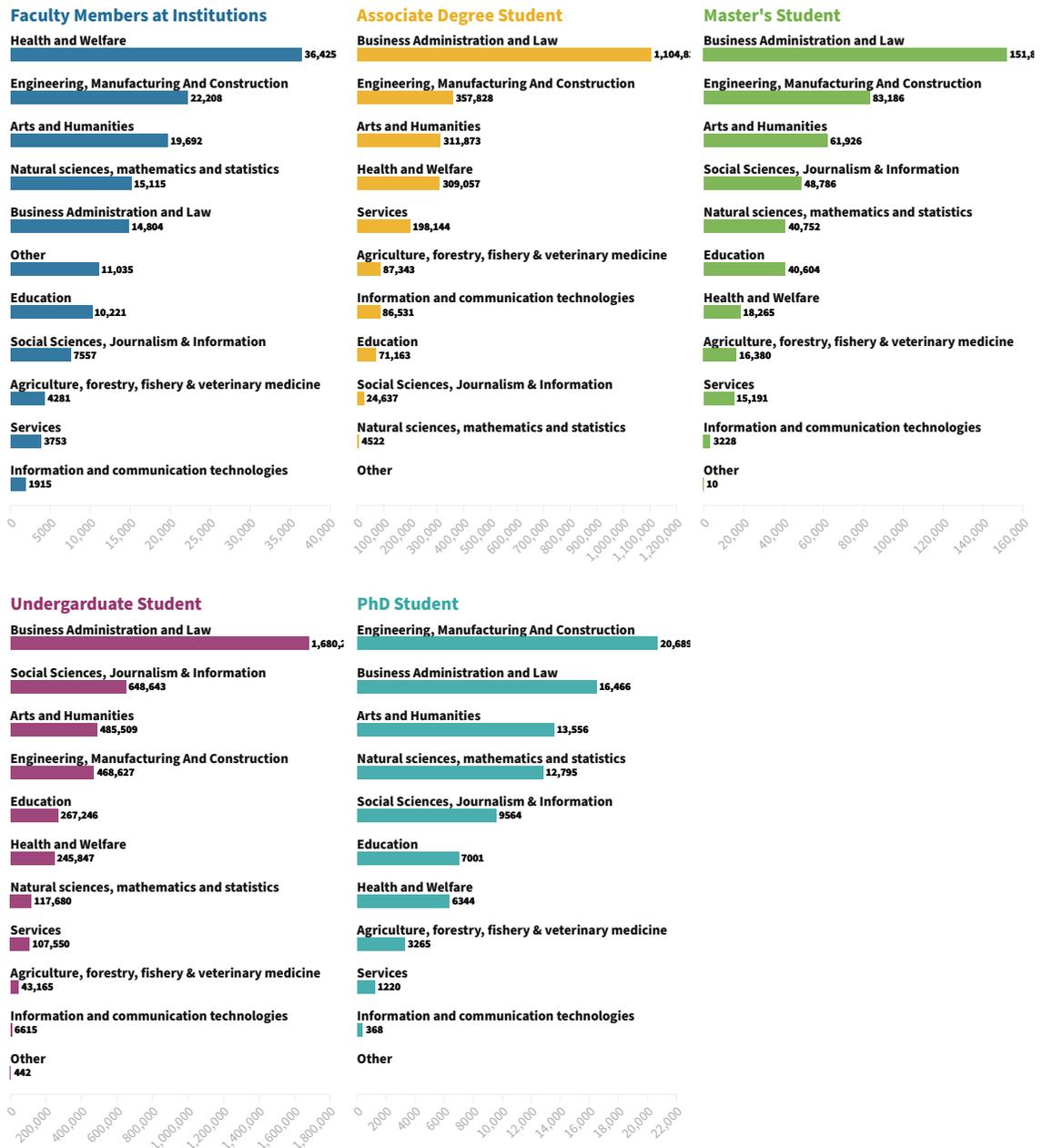


Figure 3. Faculty members and students with respect to department  
(Higher Education Information Management System, 2018).

research capacity and the productivity, performance, and motivation of faculty members has priority among the leading issues in higher education.

### **A Higher Education Ecosystem with a Highly Developed Capacity for Research and Knowledge Production**

Increasing the research and knowledge production capacity of higher education institutions in an ecosystem comes under the ninth theme. The necessity of increasing scientific productivity and performance by improving the research capacity of higher education institutions is clear. In recent years, Turkey has been in the interval of 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of international scientific production. In the process of scientific research, issues such as utilizing expertise through team efforts, researching with an interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial understanding, forming collaborations through participation in scientific networks, leading technological development, and providing solutions to socioeconomic problems have come to the fore. Due to the high value produced as a result of research, awareness on the importance of research and research universities throughout the world has increased. For this reason, countries assign particular importance to research and research universities. The relevance of increasing the number and quality of graduate programs in order to increase research capacity should also be addressed. Diversifying and increasing fi-

nancial resources in order to increase research capacity in higher education is also important.

### **Higher Education Institutions Contributing Socially and Economically**

The issue of how to increase higher education institutions' social and economic contributions is addressed under the tenth theme. Universities make social and economic contributions through the creation of human capital and production of knowledge. Problems facing the world and humanity at large place significant responsibilities on universities, being institutions of the highest order in the production of knowledge. Universities, by virtue of their mission, must not be limited to their respective regions or countries but also must be interested in international problems and the search for solutions. As such, universities' social and economic contributions can be at global, national, or regional levels.

### **A Higher Education Effective at International Mobility and Collaboration**

The eleventh theme is on internationalization in higher education. In recent years, the number of international students has sharply increased and continues to do so. Student mobility occurs from countries with a young and dense population to those with a developed higher education. For Turkey to become a center of attrac-

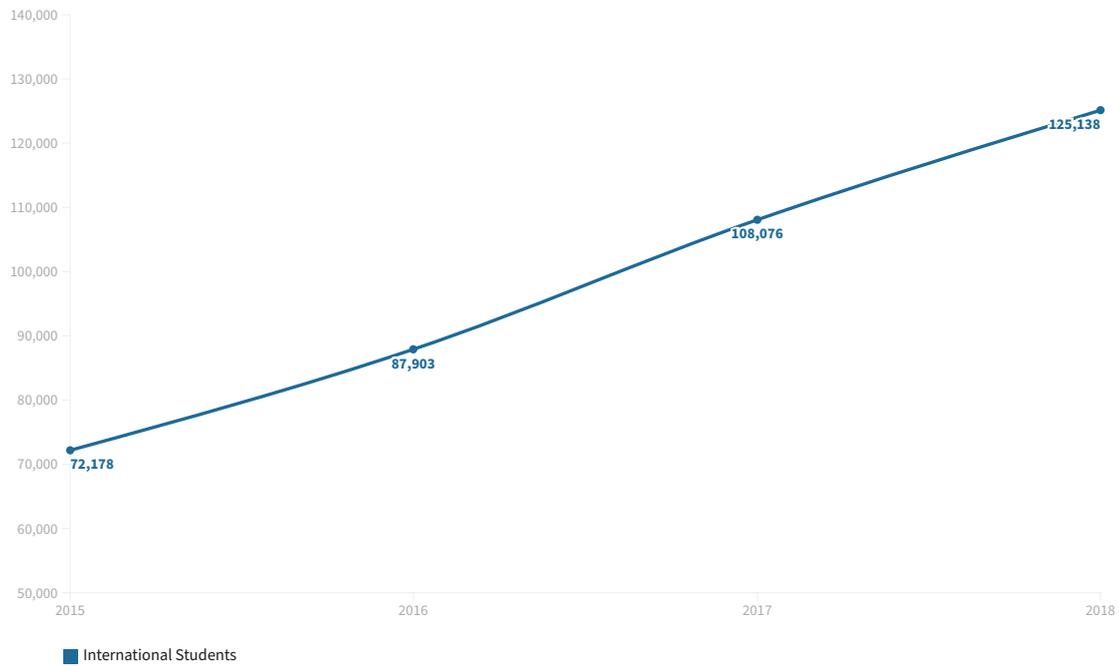


Figure 4. The number of international students in Turkey according to years  
(Higher Education Information Management System, 2018).

tion for international students and faculty, efforts to increase the capacity for internationalization in higher education institutions must continue at an increased rate. In this context, issues such as increasing the number of students and faculty participating in international mobility programs, funding opportunities for international students, and opportunities in foreign language education are prominent. An issue that requires attention in the internationalization of higher education is improving international collaborations. Another important issue that needs improvement in the internationalization of higher education is the length of diploma equivalency procedures for degrees earned abroad.

## **A Higher Education with Sustainable Financial Resources**

The twelfth and final theme in the vision for higher education is on financial sustainability in higher education. The higher education budget has shown a stable increase in recent years. Likewise, the number of universities and students have simultaneously increased. Higher education institutions' income is largely sourced by the central administration. The financing of higher education is mostly dependent on public resources not only in Turkey but also throughout the world. This process will benefit from implementing performance criteria to a certain degree and creating competition for the distribution of public resources to universities.

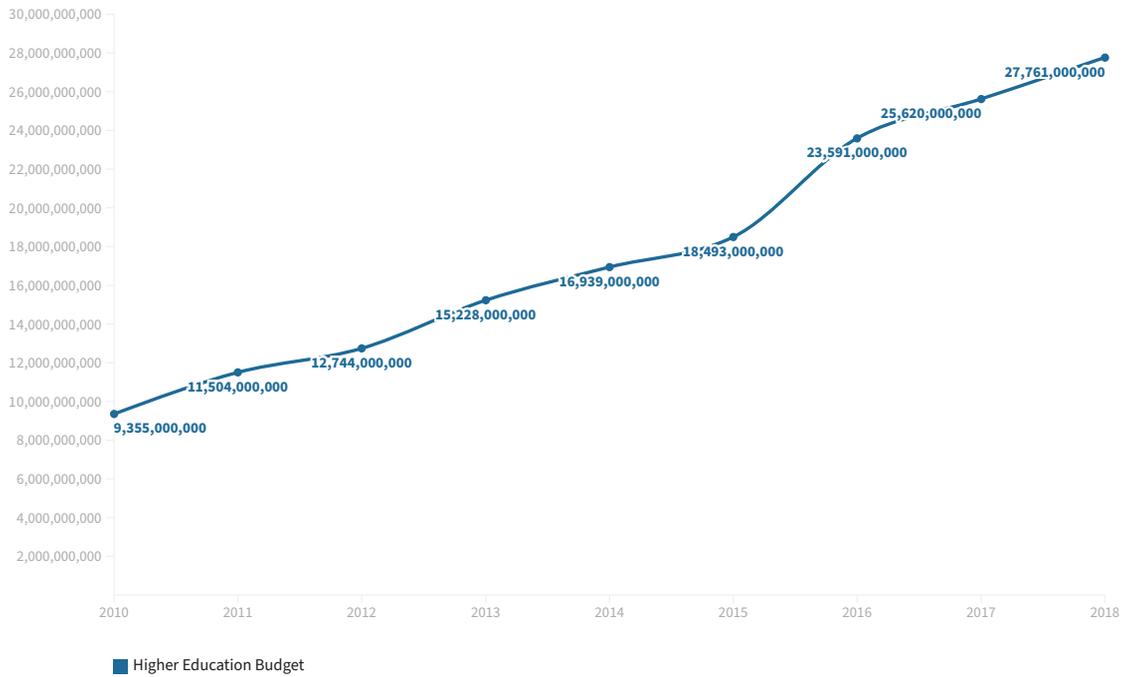


Figure 5. Change in the higher education budget according to years

(Created according to the Ministry of National Education).

Current budgets becoming insufficient for increasing the quality of education and capacity for research must be emphasized, and increased financing for higher education will become an important issue in the coming years. Considering the fact that almost all higher education institutions are financed by public resources, universities clearly must also come up with their own additional resources beyond public ones.

### Conclusion

Higher education institutions must be organized on the basis of diversity and other functions and procedures of the higher education organization must be defined with respect to this. This organization must comprise a diversity that can meet the demands

of research and knowledge production and the procurement of professional skills.

Besides objectives such as producing answers to humanity’s search for meaning, contributing to its worldview, and providing a cultural tradition, higher education institutions must also supply the diversity required for providing professional knowledge and skills. In the organization of higher education institutions, broad institutional autonomy should be given and institutions should be able to make strategic preferences by defining their priorities. In this system, higher education institutions should be made to create accountable and transparent structures, and focus should be placed on output controls rather than input controls. Another critical issue in the organization of higher

education institutions is having organization be addressed simultaneously and consistently with management development.

Considering the size and diversity the higher education system in Turkey has achieved, the need exists for parent organizations that take on the roles of making predictions, developing strategies, regulating, and inspecting. The institutions and councils that comprise the upper organization of higher education and their missions, responsibilities, and relations with higher education and other institutions must be adjusted by considering university autonomy, accountability, and transparency.

In conclusion, the focus of the report emphasizes the necessity and urgency for managing change in higher education and providing a holistic vision concerning the future of higher education using a strategic approach. Higher education institutions must be able to achieve planned change through their inner dynamics by considering macro developments and changes in the field of higher education. A model on managing change that has been prepared with a strategic approach and possesses a vision for the future will be a critical development in carrying higher education to the future.

# HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE TURKEY OF THE FUTURE



## TURKEY'S HIGHER EDUCATION VISION

**1** Turkey must manage change in higher education by using a strategic approach.

**2** Universities must have a mission from tradition to the future to seek and produce meaning.

**3** Higher education institutions must be organized on the basis of diversity.

**4** Higher education must have upper organizations with a high capacity for regulation and inspection.

**5** The higher education system must be capable of responding to student demands.

**6** Higher education must have an understanding of education and learning that adds value to students.

**7** Higher education institutions must have consultation services consistent with the new career understanding.

**8** Higher education institutions must have highly qualified and devoted faculties.

**9** The higher education ecosystem must have a high capacity for research and knowledge production.

**10** Higher education institutions must make social and economic contributions to society.

**11** Higher education must be effective in international mobility and collaborations.

**12** Higher education must possess sustainable financial resources.

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The report handles important issues ranging from how to strategically manage the continuously increasing change in higher education to the possibility of a higher education structured on the basis of meeting contemporary demands, from organizing consultancy services suitable to the new career understanding to searches for sustainable sources of finance. This report consists of two primary sections: the need for change in higher education and the vision plan for higher education. The first section addresses preparing for the future in higher education and the need for change, and the second section presents a vision for higher education. The second section contains 12 thematic points regarding the vision for higher education. This section primarily addresses the themes of change and reorganization in higher education while paying attention to its importance, priority, and chain reactions. Afterward, a vision including themes such as access, educational settings, career, and employment skills in a higher education system that centers itself on students is provided. Following these are themes devoted to academicians. The final sub-sections address the themes of social and economic contributions, internationalization, and finance.