



9 Education as an Aspiration

The girls discussed their aspirations and life plans both in the focus groups and during in-depth individual life-history interviews. Through the interviews, girls have highlighted the importance of a school education and the importance of being an educated young woman in German society.

The participants discussed the fact that education is a fundamental aspect of a good life. If they have a good education, they may have better labor opportunities in the future and a better life as a result. In the interviews, most participants pointed out that, in their lives, the most important factor in their life is to study and have a good career. After obtaining education and skills for a good work, they can think of other aspects of their lives.

Tuğba#00:14:06-2# Okuyan insanların yaşamının daha kolay olduğunu öğrendim yani onlar o kadar ee sonradan o kadar zorluklar çekmiyorlar zum beispiel benim annem şimdik meslek sahibi değil, liseden sonra okula devam etmedi üniversiteye gitmedi onun için şimdik mesleği yok yani bütün yaptıkları boşuna gitti. Onun için ben birşey başarmak istiyorum, sonradan zorluklar çekmeyeyim diye. Zum beispiel dedemde şey, fabrika gibi bir yerde çalışıyor böyle Kohle'yi şey yapıyorlar, o yani öyle çok zor işler yapıyorlar, çünkü okulda gitmedikleri için okumadıkları için, onun için ben okumak istiyorum, öyle bana olmasın diye. #00:14:52-5#

Tuğba: Your environment, I learned that people who studied have easier lives, so that much later, they do not have difficulties. My mother doesn't have an occupation. After she completed high school, she didn't go to school, she didn't go to university. That is why she doesn't have an occupation, that is why all she did is wasted. That is why I want to succeed at something, in order to not have difficulties later. For example, my grandfather worked in a factory, coaling, doing very hard jobs. They are doing hard jobs because they didn't go to school and they didn't study. That is why I want to study, so I don't have to do the same.

In the below quote, Tuğba says she would like to study more to have an occupation because she has realized the kind of difficulties people have if they do not study and do not have an occupation. Their difficult situation in Germany might also play a role for them to raise their voices to be accepted as part of German society. Girls interpreted that a 'better education would bring more opportunities to be accepted in German society'. Girls used the observed experiences of their relatives in order to plan their future prospects.

In the following quotes, girls highlighted the fact their families are advising them to choose high-rank careers as opposed to jobs considered to be low rank in the societal hierarchy.

Ceren: Benim annem der ki sen evde temizlik yapma başkaları senin için yapsın, sen öyle yüksek bir (.) amtta (devlet dairesi) çalış diye. Abitur bitirmiş oluyoruz, üniversiteye gidiyor olacağız, güzel bir üniversite olsun. Evet, babam şey der, ben bu hataları yaptım sen benim gibi sürünme yani hayatını kurtar, öyle der.

Ceren: My mother says, "don't do the cleaning, let others do for you" and, "you work at a very high workplace". We might finish Abitur and go to university, a good university. Yes, my father says, "I made mistakes, don't suffer like me, save your life".

Participants had high inspirations and aspirations for a career. In different focus group settings, participants mentioned they would like to further their education and go to do Abitur, which allows one to access higher education, or gain a vocational education and have a good job. Even in the Hauptschule interviews, girls highlighted that they try hard to do Abitur in order to have good vocational training. Participants perceived that having a lower level of education will not give them a life they value.

Ayşe: Benim annem ve babam için aşağılanmamak çok önemli. Ben diyorum o zaman, ben iş sahibi olursam, herkes der bu kız okumuş, herkes söyler.

Ayşe: For my mother and father, to not be insulted is very important. I say that when the time comes and I have a job, everyone would say that girl studied, everyone would say.

The data revealed that their parents, or other people in their surrounding environment, verbally supported girls for getting a good education. It was not possible to examine how solid was the support that girls received from their families for school education or future planning. The quotes revealed only that their parents had supported them from a young age to study and have high career aspirations. Education for the girls have meaning, which includes aspirations of being emancipated, to be independent and to live a life with their own resources to have an active role in Germany.

A discussion on life plans was also part of the interviews to deeply understand their motivations. In a different focus group and individual interviews, participants highlighted the importance of independence. All participants involved in the project had high career aspirations and goals. Some participants highlighted that they would like to live a life without being dependent on anyone. Girls conceptualized being independent in various spheres of their lives. Education is one aspect that is viewed as a tool to access a good career choice. Good career

choices could support women economically to be independent and empower them to raise their voices.

Ayşe: Ben üniversiteye gitmek istiyorum. Pilot olmak istiyorum.

Ayşe: I want to go to university. I want to become a pilot.

Manolya: Doktor olmak istiyorum da başaramamaktan korkuyorum (). Ama abitur yapmak istiyorum önce ondan sonra daha belli değil, ondan sonra ne yapacağım.

Manolya: I want to become a doctor but I am afraid of not succeeding. But I want to do abitur first. Later, it will be clearer what I will do.

Ayça: Ben de abitur yapacağım ama ondan sonrası belli değil. Kimseye muhtac olmayalım, kimseden birşey beklemeylem, kendi hayatımızı kendimiz elimize almamız için.

Ayça: I will also do abitur but I don't know what I will do later. I don't want to depend on anyone, or accept anything from anyone, to get my own life in my own hands.

The discussion is continued in the quotes below. It revealed that girls' educational aspirations are strongly linked to those of being emancipated women. Interestingly, the girls highlighted having freedom and being independent as their main aspirations. The participants also argued that being independent and having freedom is much more important than having money. They were aware of gendered roles and their life experiences had shown them that being an emancipated woman is more acceptable in German society. According to their interpretations, being independent is safer than depending on someone.

Nil: Bağımsız olmak. Komple yeni bir sayfa açıyorsun, sadece sen varsın, hani seni kurtaracakta, düşürecede hiç kimse yok, hiç bir insan yok kendi ayaklarının üzerinde yaşamayı öğreniyorsun, hani bir Insel'e (adaya) gider insan kendi, hani yetenekleriyle ayakta kalmaya çalışır ya kendi ayaklarının üzerinde durmak. Bir evim olsun, işim olsun, param olmasın ama kendimi yürütebileyim (1:56:50-9) kendimi. İstedğin yere gideceksin, istediğin şeyleri yapacaksın, ayağına kilitli, hani ayağına bir (3) ya, darf keine Klemme sein (kelepeçe olmamalı) (1:57:32)

Nil: Being independent. Besides liking, I don't know anyone, one opens a completely new page, there is only you, there is no one to save you or fail you, there is no one, you learn to live on your own two feet. Like when you go to an island, you are yourself with your own talents, you try to stand, standing on your own two feet. I would like to have a house, I would like to have a job. I wouldn't have money but I would take care of myself first. You will go wherever you want, you will do whatever you like, and there will not be any chains to your feet.

Deniz: Aynen öyle. Mesela telora çok önemli, anlıyor musun, hayatta istediğin şeyi (3) alacaksın, anladın mı “weiß du was ich meine” (ne dediğimi biliyor musun) öyle (1:57:46-8) hani şey yönden hayatımda yapmak istediğim şeyi yapmak isterim. Deniz: *Exactly. For instance, tolerance is important, do you understand? You will get what you want in life, do you understand? Do you understand what I mean? (she said once again in German), so that’s the way I would like to do things.*

Also, the data reveals that informal education opportunities could encourage girls to overcome their limits to achieve better educational opportunities. Mainly, the girls emphasized that their free time activities involved sports and spending time with their families and friends. The participants also highlighted there were not many activities in their neighborhood or they were not well informed about these activities.

When their teachers offered them free time activities, they engaged in these activities. In the following quotes, Ayşe emphasized that she did not find a place for herself after school. The reason for this lack of integration could be that girls are not able to find activities that are culturally relevant, or that the activities offered might be inconvenient. Extra-curricular activities could be a crucial way for girls to find valuable activities and to enhance their educational process outside school education.

Ayşe: Almanya’da çok gezecek yer yok.

Ayşe: There are not many places to go in Germany.

Interviewer: Sizin katılabileceğiniz gençlik aktiviteleri var mı? Onlara katılabiliyor musunuz?

Interviewer: Are there any youth activities you can take part in? Can you participate in those?

Ayça: Katılmadım da, önceden bir kere katılmıştım da şimdi son zamanda katılmadım. Eem mesela yaz tatilinde öğretmenimiz bir tane kağıt vermişti, broşür, (.) ondan vermişti, eem mesela eem Rhein’in orda, altstad (tarihi şehir merkezinde) ta, orda işte, (.) Heinrichheine –Allee deniliyor işte, eem, spor filan yapıyorlardı, Atletik filan ona katılabiliyorduk filan, öyle bir teklifte bulundu. Burda olanlar gidebilsin diye.

Ayça: I didn’t participate before. I participated once, I didn’t go recently. For instance, during our summer vacation, our teacher gave us a brochure, for a place near Rheine, the old town. The place is called Heinrich Heine-Allee. They do sports, athletics, so we could join. It was offered like that, for those who could go.

Interviewer: Sizler Almanlar'ın veya başka ülkelerden insanların olduğu yerlere gidiyor musunuz?

Interviewer: Do you go to places where there are Germans and people from other countries?

Ayça: Tabi mutlaka Almanya'da yaşadığımız için, kesinlikle gidiyoruz.

Ayça: Yes of course, as we live in Germany, we definitely go.

The girls highlighted that mosque-related activities were the only activities they were attending. These activities were not what girls preferred to attend in the beginning. Also, girls did not find these activities relevant to their needs. The grounded concept could be a lack of public space that supports young peoples' educational process.

Interviewer: Onun dışında neler yapıyorsunuz mesela? Türk derneklerinin veya camilerin yaptıkları aktivitelere katılıyor musunuz?

Interviewer: What else do you do? Do you attend activities at Turkish associations or mosques?

Kızlar: Evet katılıyoruz ((yüksek bir ses tonu ile))

Girls: Yes we do ((with a high tone of voice)).

Cemre: Annem zorla götürdü () ((gülüşmeler))

Cemre: My mother took me by force (laughter).

Ceren: Beni de annem götürdü ama sonra güzeldi, eğlenceliydi arkadaşlarla öyle vakit geçiyor.

Ceren: My mother also took me there but later it was good, fun. It was a good time with friends.

Ayça: Camiye gidiyorduk, her Cumartesi filan işte öğreniyorduk sonra tiyatro oyunu yaptılar, işte bir olayı ee oynadık. İlk ben de ilk öyle birşey katıldığımda öyle oldu zaten. O zamandan beri zaten benden sonra küçük yeğenlerim de gitti ilahi filan söylediler.

Ayça: We were going to the mosque, we were learning every Saturday, we were doing theater, we played. When I participated for the first time that happened. Since then, after me, my small cousins went to sing carols.

Young people in urban areas met with obstacles to approaching social activities. Free time activities would also positively influence girls' education and life achievements. Girls would benefit from extra-curricular activities as they would enhance their educational opportunities to build a meaningful life in Germany.

Elif #01:06:52-0# Ya burda nasıl diyeyim, bizim yaşımızda, bizim yaş grubumuzdaki, (3), insanlara çok birşey şey yapmıyorlar, angebot (aktivite) yapmıyorlar Türkiye’de mesela kafeler var gençlerin gittiği burda ((Menge’de- semtin adı)) bir tane kafe var, sadece oma’lar var, sadece yaşlı yaşlı insanlar var,oraya gidip (gölüşmeler) #01:07:13-9#

Elif: How can I say here, they don't do things for people of our age, they don't offer anything. For example, in Turkey there are cafés for young people, here in Menge (the name of neighborhood where this young lady is living), there is only one café where young people go. There are only grandmothers there, only old people going there (laughs).

Demet#01:07:36-2# Annem şey getiriyor, flier (broşür) bakıyoruz tatilde ne angebotlar (olanaklar) filan var, hep bakıyorum hep böyle küçük çocuklar için veya nasıl Theaterstück für ältere ((yaşlılar için tiyatro gösterileri))#01:07:48-1#

Demet: My mother brings brochures, we look for summer offers and such. I am always looking. It is always for little children or, for example, theaters for older people.

As a result, girls need various types of support to organize their lives in order to approach their educational goals, improve their lives, raise their voices and live the good life they value. School education should incorporate informal education possibilities to enhance opportunities for girls.