Involving more Turkish women: Girls’ Day aims to resolve unemployment issue

The Girls’ Day project, which will be held nationwide across Germany on April 23, targets to increase the workforce participation of young immigrant German women, including those of Turkish background, and thus contribute to resolving the unemployment problem among the Turkish community in Germany.

In a speech delivered at a press conference held late March, the Turkish consul general in Berlin, Ahmet Basar Şen, underlined the importance of the Girls’ Day project, adding that raising awareness of the technical and engineering-related professions in the country will help young German women of Turkish origin gain a large advantage in the field, a move that will also help to reduce the unemployment rate in the Turkish community in Germany.

“The unemployment problem among our young people across Germany and in particular Berlin is an ongoing and still a serious issue. People with vocational education are less likely to remain unemployed,” Şen said in a talk with Sunday's Zaman, adding that technical vocational-oriented people are able to find more employment opportunities and encounter less unemployment problems.

Şen also called on members from the Turkish business world to join the activities of the Girls’ Day project, which is supported by the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TD-IHK) and the Turkish General Consulate in Berlin, and introduce their areas of expertise to students and young professionals in Germany.

Girls’ Day State Coordination Committee representative Almut Borggrefe extended her gratitude to Şen, as the Turkish Consulate in Berlin is the first diplomatic body to support the Girls’ Day project in Germany.

Stating that the aim of the project is not just to introduce to women the professions that are mostly ascribed to men, Borggrefe said the main goal is to draw the attention of those companies active in the technical sectors to the potential of female employees.

The target of the organizers of Girls’ Day is to reach out to more young women who are interested in technical professions as they believe women will have the opportunity to earn more than they otherwise can in other non-technical sectors.

The Girls’ Day project is the world’s biggest professional and career guidance project for young women in Germany. Initiated back in 2001, the project has so far reached out to more than 1.5 million young women in the country. In 2014, nearly 103,000 young women joined different activities in different technical
sectors. In Berlin, more than 6,000 women joined nearly 500 events as part of the project in 2014. A total of 100 companies including TD-IHK have been extending their support to the project.

Girls’ Day is a project where young women who have yet to choose their career paths have the opportunity to meet successful female figures in the fields of technology and science as well as in economy and politics and share their experiences and thus assess their own interests and strengths and find a field that matches their skills and interests.

A similar project is expected to be realized in Turkey as well. “The project is based on a 15-year-old model in Germany and we thus want to bring this model to Turkey and adapt this example to the social structure of the country. Turkey’s growing economy needs many more qualified personals,” Şen said, adding that it is not only men but also Turkish women as well who want to contribute to the country’s economic growth. The consulate is in negotiations with the Turkish authorities to implement the project in Turkey as well. Borggrefe also said the Girls’ Day project is ready to share its insights and experiences with similar projects planned in Turkey.