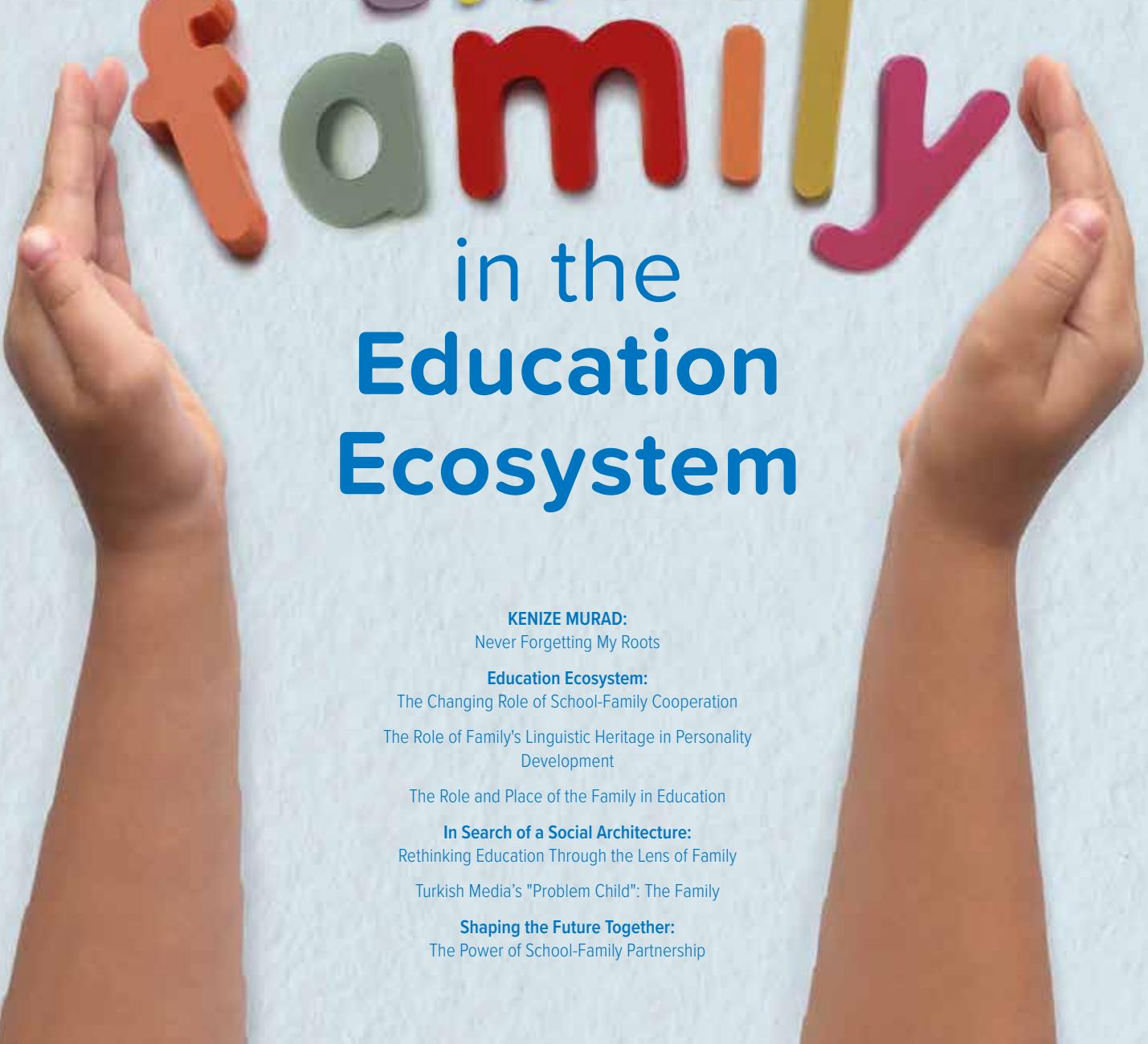


International

maarif

Year 6 ■ Issue 20 ■ July-August-September 2025

Journal



the
family

in the Education Ecosystem

KENIZE MURAD:
Never Forgetting My Roots

Education Ecosystem:
The Changing Role of School-Family Cooperation

The Role of Family's Linguistic Heritage in Personality
Development

The Role and Place of the Family in Education

In Search of a Social Architecture:
Rethinking Education Through the Lens of Family

Turkish Media's "Problem Child": The Family

Shaping the Future Together:
The Power of School-Family Partnership

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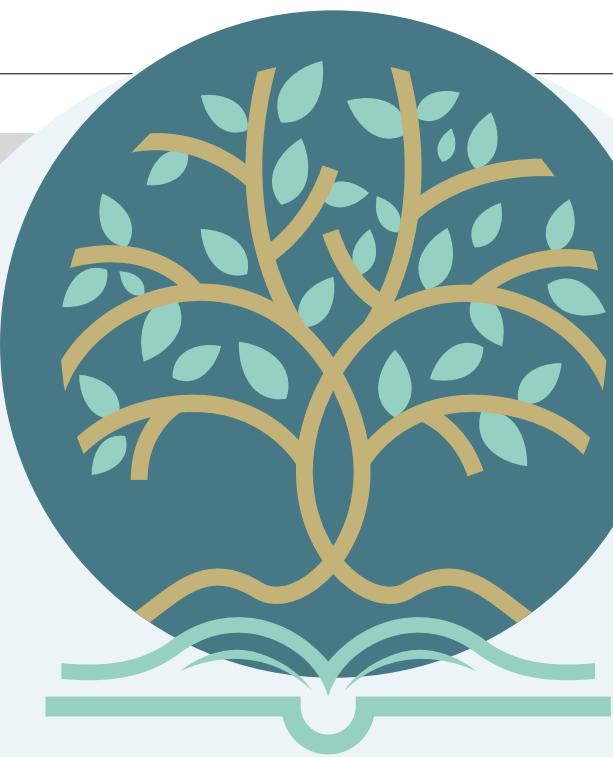
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DOSSIER

THE FAMILY in the Education Ecosystem

P.22

24 / From Local
Needs to a Global
Perspective in the
Education Ecosystem:
The Changing Role
of School-Family
Cooperation

Prof. Dr. Ahmet E. Bilgili

28 / The Role of
The Family's Linguistic
Heritage In Personality
Development

Dr. İpek Coşkun Armağan

34 / The Role And
Place of The Family In
Education

**Assoc. Prof. Dr.
Muhammet Öztabak**

40 / A Quest for
Social Architecture:
Understanding the
Family, Transforming
Education

Nurşen Tekgöz

46 / Turkish Media's
"Problem Child":
The Family

Halil İbrahim İzgi

50 / Shaping the Future
Together: The Power of Family-
School Collaboration

Dr. Merve Nur Kursav

56 / Assoc. Prof. Dr. Osman Sezgin:
"The Family Lies at The Very
Center of The Environment That
Shapes A Person's Education."

KENIZE MURAD: Never Forgetting My Roots

In this issue, as part of our
Maarif Interviews series,
we hosted at the Türkiye
Maarif Foundation a
widely acclaimed figure
in international literature
and journalism:
Kenize Murad.

Interview by: *Dilber Kurban*

16



04 / ALL HAPPY FAMILIES

Mahmut M. Özdił

EDUCATION AGENDA

05 / The International Family
Forum Brings 26 Countries
Together

05 / Worldwide 6 in 10 Children
Fall Behind Basic Literacy
and Numeracy Skills

06 / Sustainable Development
Congress 2025

07 / A Cyber Threat Warning for
Parents

08 / Maarif Graduates in Türkiye
Gather for Commencement

09 / Estonia Lifts School Phone
Ban and Embraces AI

09 / Beyond Rote Learning:
Turning Exam Culture into a
Learning Opportunity

CONTENTS

Year: 6, Issue: 20
July-August-September 2025



COUNTRIES AND CULTURES

An Island of Peace in Africa: **Tanzania**

Tanzania is a land that brings together all the images, dreams and feelings that come to mind when one thinks of Africa. It is a country rich with magnificent diversity and abundance. **P.74**



The Powerful Voice of Zanzibar **Siti Amina**

“Music is everything to me. It heals me and helps me overcome the challenges of life.” **P.86**

THE MASTERS WHO CARRY THE TRADITION

From Master Abdurrahman to Master Refa The Journey of a Walnut Tree

We invite our readers to witness how cultural heritage is carried into everyday life, to reflect on the value of making, the beauty of labor, and the continuity of tradition. We begin our conversation in one of Türkiye's ancient cities, Ahlat, with the art of handcrafted walking sticks. **P.88**



HISTORY OF EDUCATION

The First Primary and Art School For The Children of Darülaceze

Şûrâ-yı Devlet (Council of State) resolved to establish Darülaceze and laid out its founding principles. It was decided that children residing in this charitable institution would be taught basic religious and general knowledge, and that workshops would be established where they could learn a trade. **P.94**

INTERVIEW

The Struggle For Education In Palestine
A STORY OF HOPE

Abdullah Akbaba:
Education Is The Greatest Weapon of The Palestinian People **P.106**



PORTRAIT

An Intellectual Between Two Worlds: **Mehmet Şemsettin Günaltay**

Mehmet Şemsettin Günaltay is a prominent figure known not only for his political activities, intellectual transformations, and contributions to historiography, but also for his role as an educator and author of educational writings. **P.98**



CINEMA

102 / The Collapse of Authority in Youth Series: Where Do Family and School Stand in Digital Narratives
Aslı Zeynep Aydin

LIBRARY

108 / Books That Shed Light on the Future of Education

MAARIF DICTIONARY

110 / We will examine the names and meanings of materials frequently used in chemistry laboratories..
Eyyup Bostancı



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www.maarifdergisi.com
instagram.com/maarifdergisi
facebook.com/MaarifDergisi
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ISSN 2757-5624

Edition and Cover
Vizyon Basımevi Matbaacılık San. Tic. Ltd. Şti.
Beylikdüzü O.S.B. Mh.
Orkide Cad. No: 1/2
Beylikdüzü-İstanbul
+90 212 671 61 51

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SUNUŞ

The 20th issue of the International Maarif Journal meets its readers with a special focus on **“The Family in the Education Ecosystem.”**



Mahmut M. Özdiç

President of the Turkish Maarif Foundation

ALL HAPPY FAMILIES

Hundreds of scientific studies conducted in different geographies, different systems, and over different decades point to the same conclusion: The family is the most significant determinant of a child's academic success. The home climate, the family's sociocultural capital, and their attitude toward education have a far greater impact than the physical conditions of school buildings, curriculum design, teaching methods, or educational technologies. Any approach that views education solely as a process of imparting knowledge overlooks the foundation that the family silently builds.

Therefore, when considering how to provide our children with a better education, we must not neglect to consider the family. We must remember that the fundamental function of the family is the sense of belonging and security it provides. A person who does not feel safe will be terribly lonely and vulnerable to all kinds of abuse. A family environment in which a person can flourish freely cannot be achieved solely through rigid rules and the imitation of rigid behavioral patterns.

To the extent that we act with awareness of our responsibilities to the world and to each other, we can create a living space that respects human dignity, protects privacy, and does not neglect aesthetic sensitivity and basic needs. When a child finds a space within their family where they can feel safe, respected, and find meaning, school can build a world based on that sense of belonging.

In this issue of the International Education Journal, we consider the family as the fundamental foundation of education. This issue, which includes theoretical discussions alongside field applications, historical backgrounds as well as contemporary issues, serves as an invitation to seek that essence that makes "all happy families" similar in the famous opening line of Anna Karenina.

I thank all our contributing authors and our editorial team.

Mahmut M. Özdiç

President of the Turkish Maarif Foundation



The International Family Forum Brings 26 Countries Together

Held under the theme "Our Family, Our Future," the International Family Forum took place in Istanbul on 22-23 May 2025.

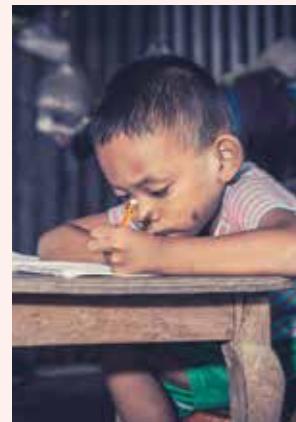
Hosted by Türkiye, the event brought together ministers responsible for family affairs from 26 countries to discuss key issues shaping the family structure in today's world, including digitalization, demographic change, and cultural transformation. In her opening remarks, Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş emphasized that strong families form the foundation of more resilient societies.

The panels addressed thought-provoking topics such as "Being a Family in the Age of Screens," "Mainstreaming Family-Oriented Policies," and "The Myth of Overpopulation." The forum stood out not only for its academic discussions but also for its cultural and social dimensions. Enriched with exhibitions and entrepreneurship fairs, the event aimed to promote the sharing of family-oriented policies at the international level and to develop common strategies. With this significant gathering, Istanbul became a dialogue platform hosting a global vision for the family.

Source: <https://iiff.aile.gov.tr/> ve <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/uluslararasi-aile-forumu-26-ulkenin-aleden-sorumlu-bakanlarini-istanbulda-bulusturacak/3571982>

■ Worldwide
6 in 10 Children
Fall Behind Basic
Literacy and
Numeracy Skills

According to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report 2025, 60% of primary school students around the world are unable to read simple sentences or perform basic addition and subtraction. This phenomenon of "learning poverty" affects not only low-income countries but also the US and other developed nations. The pandemic worsened an already existing crisis, turning learning poverty into one of the most serious educational failures of our time. Wealthy countries have not been spared. In the United States, the January 2025 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed that nearly one-third of eighth graders performed below the basic level, with reading scores at their lowest point in decades. UNESCO's 2025 Global Educa-



tion Monitoring (GEM) Report underscores the scale of this worldwide learning crisis: six out of ten children globally now finish primary school without reaching minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics.

Millions are going to school, yet learning levels are declining.

The crisis is particularly severe in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with Sub-Saharan Africa showing the slowest progress.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/6-in-10-children-cant-read-or-do-basic-math-why-theyre-attending-school-but-not-learning/article-show/121881568.cms?>

AN ACADEMIC APPROACH TO GLOBAL GOALS IN ISTANBUL:



Sustainable Development Congress 2025

Organized in cooperation with the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and Times Higher Education (THE), one of the world's leading academic ranking institutions, the 2025 Global Sustainable Development Congress was hosted in Türkiye for the first time this year, taking place in Istanbul.



Held at the Istanbul Congress Center from 16 to 19 June, the event brought together more than 5,000 participants from over 100 countries. The congress focused on the global responsibility of higher education institutions within the framework of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations.

Prof. Dr. Erol Özvar, President of the Council of Higher Education, emphasized that hosting the congress in Türkiye for the first time represents a historic achievement for higher education.

TRANSFORMATION AROUND SIX MAIN THEMES

The central focus of the congress was the role higher education can play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Sessions were organized under six key themes, where universities' concrete contributions to global challenges were discussed:



- **Cities and Communities:** Urban resilience and social integration
- **Digital Transformation:** The role of technology in sustainability
- **Education, Gender and Inequality:** Equal opportunity and inclusiveness
- **Energy and Industry:** Green transition and innovative solutions
- **Food, Land, Water and Oceans:** Protection of natural resources
- **Health and Well-being:** Rebuilding health systems

The congress served not only as a platform for academic presentations but also as a space for sharing experiences and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

SHOWCASING TÜRKİYE'S HIGHER EDUCATION: THE TURKISH UNIVERSITIES PAVILION

Universities from Türkiye introduced their educational opportunities and sustainability-focused projects to international stakeholders under the banner of the Turkish Universities Pavilion. This space stood out as an important platform aimed at enhancing the global visibility of Turkish higher education.

THE IMPACT RANKINGS 2025: THE RISE OF ASIA IN THE RANKINGS

At the congress, Times Higher Education announced the results of THE Impact Rankings 2025, which assess universities' performance against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Highlights included:

- Western Sydney University (Australia) took first place for the fourth consecutive year.
- Universitas Airlangga (Indonesia) was recognized as the most sustainable university among developing countries.
- Asian universities claimed the lead in 10 out of 17 goals.
- Eight countries entered the rankings for the first time: Botswana, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Estonia, the Maldives, Namibia, Papua New Guinea and Senegal.

Source: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/hub/global-sustainable-development-congress>

A Cyber Threat Warning for Parents

Cyber attackers target users of all ages, often trying to obtain personal information through phishing attempts. So how can parents protect their children from online threats? Here are seven practical measures you can take.

Experts have warned that cyberattacks increase during the summer holidays. Cyber attackers target users of all ages and often attempt to steal personal information through phishing scams. On social media, they use fake messages to trick users into revealing passwords and identity details. So how can parents protect their children from online threats? Here are seven practical measures you can take:

1 BE PART OF THE DIGITAL WORLD

Don't leave your child alone online. Know which social media platforms they use and, if possible, follow them on those platforms. This way, you'll have a closer look at who they're interacting with and what they're sharing.

2 TALK ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

Remember that your child may encounter cyberbullying online, or even unintentionally cause harm to others. Support them in developing empathy and communication skills so they can handle such situations responsibly.



3 EXPLAIN WHY PRIVACY MATTERS

Make sure your child understands that personal details like phone numbers, home addresses, school information, or passwords should never be shared online.

4 BUILD GOOD PASSWORD HABITS

Show your child how to set up strong passwords that aren't easy to guess by mixing letters, numbers, and special characters. Let them know their passwords are private and should stay that way.

5 NOTHING ONLINE REALLY DISAPPEARS

Help your child understand that posts and photos may not disappear online, even if they are deleted. Others can save or screenshot them. Encourage a "think twice before you post" habit.

6 CHECK BROWSER HISTORY

Checking your child's browser history from time to time can help you understand their online habits. If the history has been cleared, take it as

a cue for an open, calm conversation about what happened and how to stay safe online.

7 REVIEW APP PERMISSIONS

Regularly check what permissions the apps on your child's device ask for. Pay special attention to camera, microphone, and location access, and turn off anything that isn't necessary.

Source: <https://www.sabah.com.tr/galeri/ysam/dijital-dunyada-cocuklariniz-yalniz-birakmayiniste-10-maddede-alabileceginiz-onlemler/6>

Maarif Graduates in Türkiye Gather for Commencement



Maarif students who completed their university education in different cities across Türkiye came together at a commencement ceremony organized by the Türkiye Maarif Foundation (TMV). Held in the Foundation's courtyard, the event brought together 97 Maarif students to celebrate their graduation. The program was attended by TMV President Mahmut M. Özil, Istanbul Deputy Governor Mustafa Asım Alkan, members of the Board of Trustees and Board of Directors, foundation staff, and alumni.

Speaking at the ceremony, TMV President Mahmut M. Özil shared the foundation's achievements over its nine-year journey and its vision for the future. In his remarks, he emphasized that the Türkiye Maarif Foundation is not only an educational institution but also a steward of a shared commitment to humanity. "This is exactly what sets Maarif schools apart," he said. "Rather than applying the same model everywhere, we pursue an inclusive, re-

spectful, and needs-driven approach that speaks to each community in its own voice."

Addressing the 97 Maarif students who graduated from universities in Türkiye this year, Özil said they are proud not only of the students' academic achievements but also of the values they embody. He added that the graduates serve as cultural ambassadors between Türkiye and their home countries: "You are goodwill ambassadors not only of the Türkiye Maarif Foundation but also of Türkiye. Every connection you build, whether through friendship, knowledge, or shared values, will contribute to our shared dream of building a better world."

The program continued with the presentation of gifts to the graduates. Next, in remembrance of Palestinians whose rights to life and education have been denied, Palestine-themed planes were released into the sky. The ceremony concluded with group photos and a Bosphorus cruise.





Estonia Lifts School Phone Ban and Embraces AI

The country at the top of education rankings aims to equip students and teachers with world-class AI skills.

While many schools in England are banning smartphones, Estonia, seen as Europe's new education hub, asks students to use their devices regularly in lessons and plans to create personal AI accounts for them starting in September.

With a population of 1.4 million, the small Baltic nation has quietly surpassed neighboring Finland to become Europe's best performer in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

In the latest round of PISA, conducted in 2022 with results

released a year later, Estonia ranked first in Europe in mathematics, science, and creative thinking, and second in reading after Ireland.

There are multiple reasons behind Estonia's success, but its embrace of everything digital sets it apart. While England and other countries restrict phone use in schools over concerns about concentration and mental health, teachers in Estonia actively encourage students to use their own phones as learning tools.

Estonia is now launching a national initiative called AI Leap, which it says will equip students and teachers with "world-class artificial intelligence tools and skills." Licenses with OpenAI are being negotiated, which would make Estonia a testbed for AI in schools. The goal is to provide 58,000 students and 5,000 teachers with free access to top-tier AI learning tools by 2027.

Teachers will receive training in technology with a focus on self-directed learning and digital ethics, and educational equity and AI literacy will be prioritized. Officials say this will make Estonia "one of the smartest users of AI."

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/may/26/estonia-phone-bans-in-schools-ai-artificial-intelligence>

Beyond Rote Learning: Turning Exam Culture into a Learning Opportunity

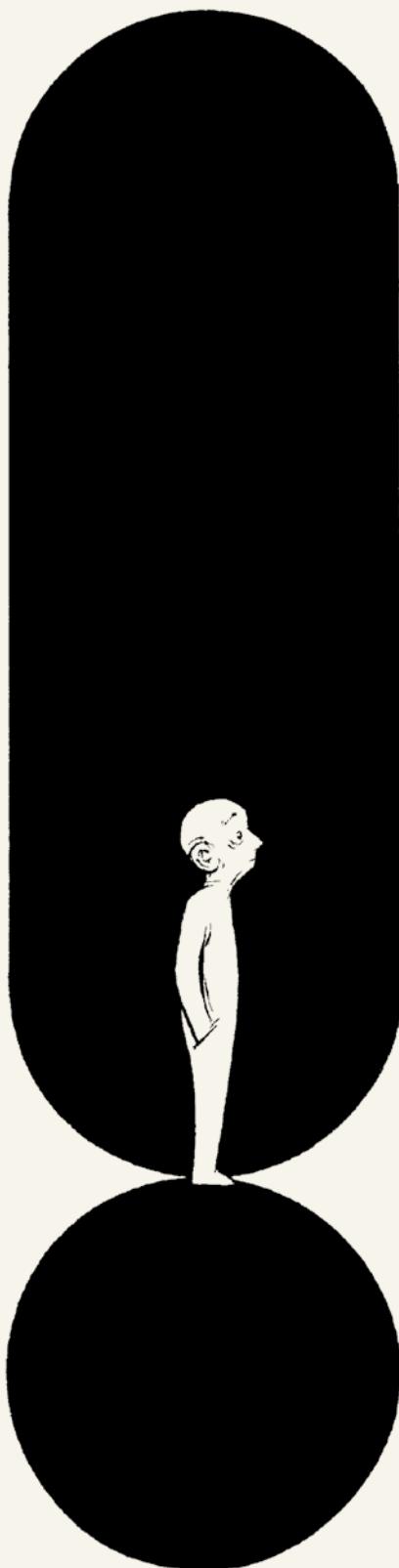


Today's exam-centered education system does more than measure learning; it creates a culture that rewards memorization and narrow focus. Research shows that, instead of emphasizing high-stakes tests, approaches such as frequent low-stakes quizzes, regular feedback, and spaced practice can markedly increase learning retention. In particular, more challenging assessments that include feedback have a stronger impact on learning and can improve long-term recall by about 10 to 30 percent. Reframing exams as "moments of learning," rather than mere measurement tools, supports more durable knowledge across contexts and over time.

Alongside this shift, spaced repetition (the spacing effect) and active retrieval (retrieval practice) help students build mental connections and develop practice-based skills, rather than relying on paper-only performance. Studies indicate that low-stakes, frequent testing, especially when used in classrooms, enhances students' long-term retention and metacognitive awareness. With this transformational approach, teachers can make exams the building blocks of learning and meaningfully strengthen educational quality.

Source: <https://www.teachingtimes.com/saving-evision-and-retention-from-damaging-testing-culture/>





23.5.2025
Shabani

GLOBAL LESSONS



ON HOW FAMILY-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT CAN TRANSFORM
EDUCATION



Family, school, and community partnerships help schools build a climate grounded in relational trust and enable all stakeholders to work together in their communities toward a shared vision for education. This shared vision is critical to transforming education systems.

The report examines the vital role that families and communities play in improving student and school outcomes, drawing on the perspectives of hundreds of students, families, school educators, and researchers.

The Center for Universal Education at Brookings conducted this community-focused study, together with collaborators in 16 countries, to promote greater collaboration and partnership so that students receive equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education.

Using a community-centered approach to deepen conversations with families

The research drew on the Conversation Starter Tools (CST) methodology, a participatory approach used by schools and community organizations to understand beliefs about education, identify types of family-school-community engagement and the barriers to it, and measure relational trust among families, educators, and students. CST brings together data, dialogue, and facilitation to support stronger partnerships among families, schools, and communities. Perspectives were gathered across 235 schools from 9,473 families, 2,726 educators, and 9,963 students through exploratory surveys and dialogues (focus group discussions). The evidence and conversations surfaced opportunities to develop strategies and new directions that strengthen family, school, and community engagement. The six global lessons emerged from these data and dialogues across school, district, and national contexts on six continents.

Six global lessons

While each school, district, and country included in the study yielded unique findings, six compelling lessons stood out across geographies and contexts.

- 1  Start with beliefs
- 2  Position families as partners
- 3  Dismantle barriers together
- 4  Build trust
- 5  Make family-school-community engagement a system requirement
- 6  Disrupt power dynamics through community-centered research



The Six Global Lessons take a deep look at how to build stronger family-school-community partnerships through the perspectives of families, educators, and students who shared their beliefs, experiences, and levels of trust related to schools. The report also features case studies showing how country teams and civil society organizations used the CST process to strengthen their work on family, school, and community engagement.



Lesson 1:

What Is the School's Most Important Purpose?

Families tend to expect schools to deliver academic achievement, while teachers prioritize social-emotional learning. The gap is not only about expectations; it also reflects differences in how roles within the system are understood. Yet, as the report shows, when stakeholders begin talking about the meaning and purpose of education, that gap can become a strength and lead to a richer shared vision.



Lesson 2:

How Do Families Engage in Their Children's Learning and School?

The report stresses moving beyond a narrow view of engagement as simply attending parent-teacher meetings. It recommends recognizing many forms of participation, including supporting learning at home, taking part in school decision-making, and volunteering to enrich school life.



Lesson 3:

What Challenges Do Families Face in Engaging with Their Children's Learning or School?

Barriers include limited time, financial pressures, and school cultures that can feel exclusionary. Some educators view families as “uninvolved,” while families say this label is unfair. The striking takeaway is that empathy and understanding, not blame, are what strengthen trust.



Lesson 4:

Build Trust

The report argues that relational trust is not only emotional but also a pedagogical asset. Improvements in student achievement and school climate depend on establishing mutual trust among families, schools, and communities. Building that trust takes time, consistency, and mutual respect.



Lesson 5:

Make Engagement a Policy, Not an Option

A review of 33 education frameworks from 13 countries shows that family engagement is still not structured in a systematic and sustainable way. Policymakers need to move engagement from a “nice to have” to a core element of the system.

vision of what family-school-community engagement should look like in schools, and for fostering relational trust across groups so that vision can be put into action. The ongoing process of gathering data on beliefs and relational trust, creating dialogue around that evidence, and identifying new strategies and directions is vital for transforming education systems, and for ensuring that families, educators, and students remain at the center of that transformation.



Lesson 6:

Community-Centered Research and Co-creation

One standout feature of the report is its use of qualitative as well as quantitative evidence to inform decisions. Co-research, equal participation, and feedback through data visualization show how engagement can shift from “being represented” to “creating together.”

Figure 1:

Thousands of families, educators, and students from 16 countries came together to explore the critical role of families and communities in education.



Building Stronger Partnerships

Despite notable differences and nuances in family-school-community engagement practices and policies across schools, districts, and countries, a clear message emerged during the research and writing of the Six Global Lessons. The need for stronger family, school, and community partnerships became a consistent, universal rallying cry among every school and country team in the study. Although families, educators, and students hold different beliefs and perspectives about education, they consistently agreed that more, not less, engagement is essential to support students, and they want to see greater partnership and collaboration.

Understanding and mapping these beliefs are crucial for forming a shared

This global report carries important messages for countries like Türkiye, where family structures are strong but engagement often remains passive. Parental involvement should move beyond tracking assignments or checking grades and become a practice that contributes to school culture and shares responsibility for the learning process. Making that shift calls for multi-layered action: sustained support for teachers, more inclusive leadership from administrators, and greater curricular flexibility.

The Brookings report shows that engagement is not simply a matter of goodwill; it requires structural change. When families, schools, and communities are able to participate with their diverse knowledge, values, and expectations, transformation becomes possible not only for students but for all actors in education. For this reason, each lesson in the report serves as a roadmap for local policymakers, educators, and school leaders.

* This article is based on the report titled "Six Global Lessons on Transforming Education Through Family, School, and Community Engagement," prepared by Emily Markovich Morris and Laura Nora in collaboration with the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.

(Full text: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Six-Global-Lessons_final.pdf)



KENIZE MURAD: Never Forgetting My Roots

In this issue, as part of our Maarif Interviews series, we hosted at the Türkiye Maarif Foundation a widely acclaimed figure in international literature and journalism: Kenize Murad.

Interview by: *Dilber Kurban*





TMV President Mahmut M. Özdil
with Kenize Murad and Prof. Dr.
Akif Emre Öktem.

Her life journey is a story of quests, disappointments, and achievements. She has packed so much into a life that began as an adopted child in France that it is hard to believe when you hear her story. After her talk at the Türkiye Maarif Foundation, we had a brief but sincere conversation with her. Here are our notes from that conversation..

You were born to a mother who, as a member of the Ottoman dynasty, experienced the pain of exile. What was life like for you in France, where you settled? Could you tell us a bit about your childhood?

I attended a Catholic school. I grew up in a Catholic family, and I am sure they were very good people. In all, I had three adoptive families, and they were all kind. That said, they expected me to forget my roots and tried to

make me into a good little French girl.

Of course I never forgot my roots; I knew who I was. From a very young age I was told that my mother was a Turkish princess and my father an Indian prince. Yet they wanted me to forget that heritage, because they wanted me to adapt to their world, their culture, and their way of life. That was, quite simply, a mistake. At fifteen, I openly rebelled against these good and gentle people who were trying to change me and turn me into someone else.

At the same time, they instilled in me genuine values, and I am not sure I would have had them if I had grown up in India. The values I was given in France then were important: honesty, diligence, and justice. All of these were fundamental, universal values. Thanks to the education I received from these people, I also gained other im-



KENIZE MURAD: A Brief Biography

Kenize Murad (born June 15, 1940, in Paris) is the daughter of Selma Rauf Hanimsultan, a granddaughter of Sultan Murad V, and Damat Raja Seyyid Sacid Hüseyin Ali. Her father, Sacid Hüseyin Ali, served in India's Kotwara Legislative Assembly from 1936 to 1952 and was the Maharaja of Kotwara until 1991. Kotwara, in the Lakhimpur Kheri district of the Avadh (Oudh) region of Uttar Pradesh, is part of a historic cultural landscape shaped by the Nawabs who once governed a portion of the Mughal Empire. Her given name, "Rajkumari Kenize de Kotwara," was later registered as "Kenize Murad" in France and upon acquiring citizenship of the Republic of Türkiye.

At age 20, in her search for roots, Kenize Murad turned toward Islam and began studying the writings of great Sufi mystics. Beginning in March 1971, she entered publishing by contributing articles through the documentation service. She lived for periods in countries within her beat, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, and continued her work in Ethiopia after her time in Bangladesh. During the 1982 siege of Beirut, she worked in Lebanon as a war correspondent for three months. She also reported from Iran for more than a year during the period of turmoil that included the Iranian Revolution.

In her first novel, *De la part de la princesse morte* (*Saraydan Sürgüne*), published in France in 1987, she tells the story of her mother, who died in exile. The book became an

international bestseller, appearing in more than thirty languages and in 42 countries. In Türkiye, it drew wide attention and achieved notable success, as it was the first novel to portray the Ottoman Empire through the eyes of a member of the imperial family. After this debut, she published her second novel, *Le Jardin de Badalpur* (*Badalpur Bahçesi*), in 1998. In 2003 she brought out *Le parfum de notre terre, voix de Palestine et d'Israël* (*Toprağımızın Kokusu: Filistin ve İsrail'in Sesleri*), a work that seeks to understand the tragedies of both peoples and, through reportage, documents the lives of Palestinian and Israeli men, women, and children. Kenize Murad currently lives in Türkiye and continues her work.



During the interview at the Türkiye Maarif Foundation, Kenize Murad shared not only her professional experiences but also fascinating anecdotes from her life.



portant values, such as courtesy and respect for elders, which have become rare today. I repeat: had I been raised in India, I might not have acquired these very important values.

I am grateful to France for giving me those values, yet I am also angry that it tried to cut me off completely from my roots.

I did not come to Türkiye until I was 28, and I was able to travel to India and meet my father only after I came of age, at 22 (the age of majority was 21 at the time). In other words, I came to know my parents only as an adult, and that was not easy.

How did your education in France and your multicultural background shape your worldview and your career in journalism and writing?

The desire to search for my roots and to build connections had a profound impact

on my journey as a journalist and writer. Throughout my career, I have tried to introduce the lands of my origins, the Middle East and India, to readers in the places I lived and made my own, namely France and Europe. Realizing how little Europeans knew about these regions set me on this path. Across the West, I saw a pervasive mix of intolerance and ignorance, and a real lack of knowledge about these places. So I spent my life trying to explain and shed light. I believe I succeeded to some extent, yet when I look at what is happening today, I see there is still much work to be done.

Today, in many parts of the world, countless children are deprived of their right to education due to poverty and war. Do you think the international community has fallen short in addressing this universal problem? What solutions would you propose?

Wars are fought in the name of political and economic interests. If states and governments are shielded from serious criticism by institutions that uphold moral values, then it is impossible to avoid the suffering we face today. We are now confronted with those consequences. If the



press is not free to speak about the poverty and hardships people endure, despite government pressures, and if it cannot criticize state policies on these issues, then we face a profound problem. This becomes even more evident when it concerns the peoples of the Global South. What is especially shocking today is to see Europe show deep sensitivity toward the children who are dying in Ukraine, yet withhold that same compassion for the children dying in Gaza, while the West remains silent in the face of such devastation.

This is why education is so important. Increasingly, more organizations need to engage with these issues, to write, to speak, and to organize conferences about them. In today's world, where material and economic values dominate, such organizations must focus on spreading human values. In the past, these values were often conveyed through religion; yet today,

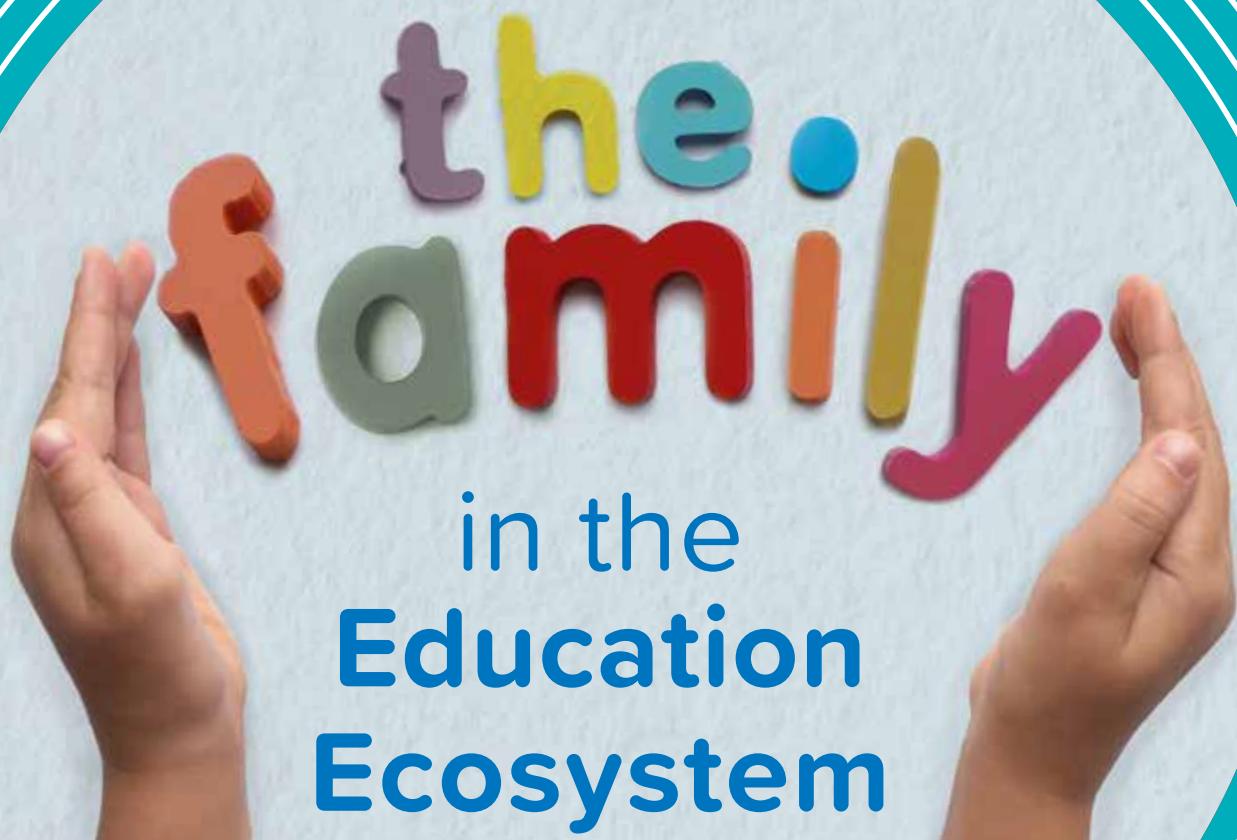


Following the interview, Türkiye Maarif Foundation President Mahmut M. Özil presented Kenize Murad with the Foundation's Vakif Duası plaque bearing the Maarif emblem.

at least in Europe, religious faith is no longer decisive, and the number of people who practice a religion continues to decline. Instead, ethics-based organizations that speak to human conscience can and should take the lead. People do not have to adhere to a religion; moral and human values can be universal for everyone. What

is needed is more organizations working on this foundation, with greater authority and visibility, offering young people and ideal to aspire to. Young people are ready to fight for justice. But if, as is the case today, nothing is offered to them, they will fall into despair and not know which path to take.

DOSSIER



the family

in the
Education
Ecosystem

Education is not merely a process of transmitting academic knowledge; it is also a comprehensive journey through which individuals acquire cultural, social, and moral values. One of the most essential building blocks of this process is the family. The education ecosystem offers a framework that treats learning and development as a whole, and within this framework, the family occupies a central role. As a child's first teacher, the family marks the starting point of a lifelong learning journey.

The family plays a critical role not only in transmitting knowledge but also in instilling values, developing social skills, and helping individuals adapt to society. Yet shifting social dynamics and rapid technological transformations are reshaping this role, calling on families to redefine their contribution and bring a fresh perspective to the education ecosystem.

In this issue, we explore the role of the family in education from multiple perspectives, examining in detail how families can be more actively engaged in learning processes and how this involvement shapes student outcomes. By highlighting policies that support family participation, examples of good practice, and the importance of family-school collaboration, we aim to provide a platform for re-thinking and strengthening the place of the family within the education ecosystem.



Prof. Dr.
Ahmet Emre Bilgili



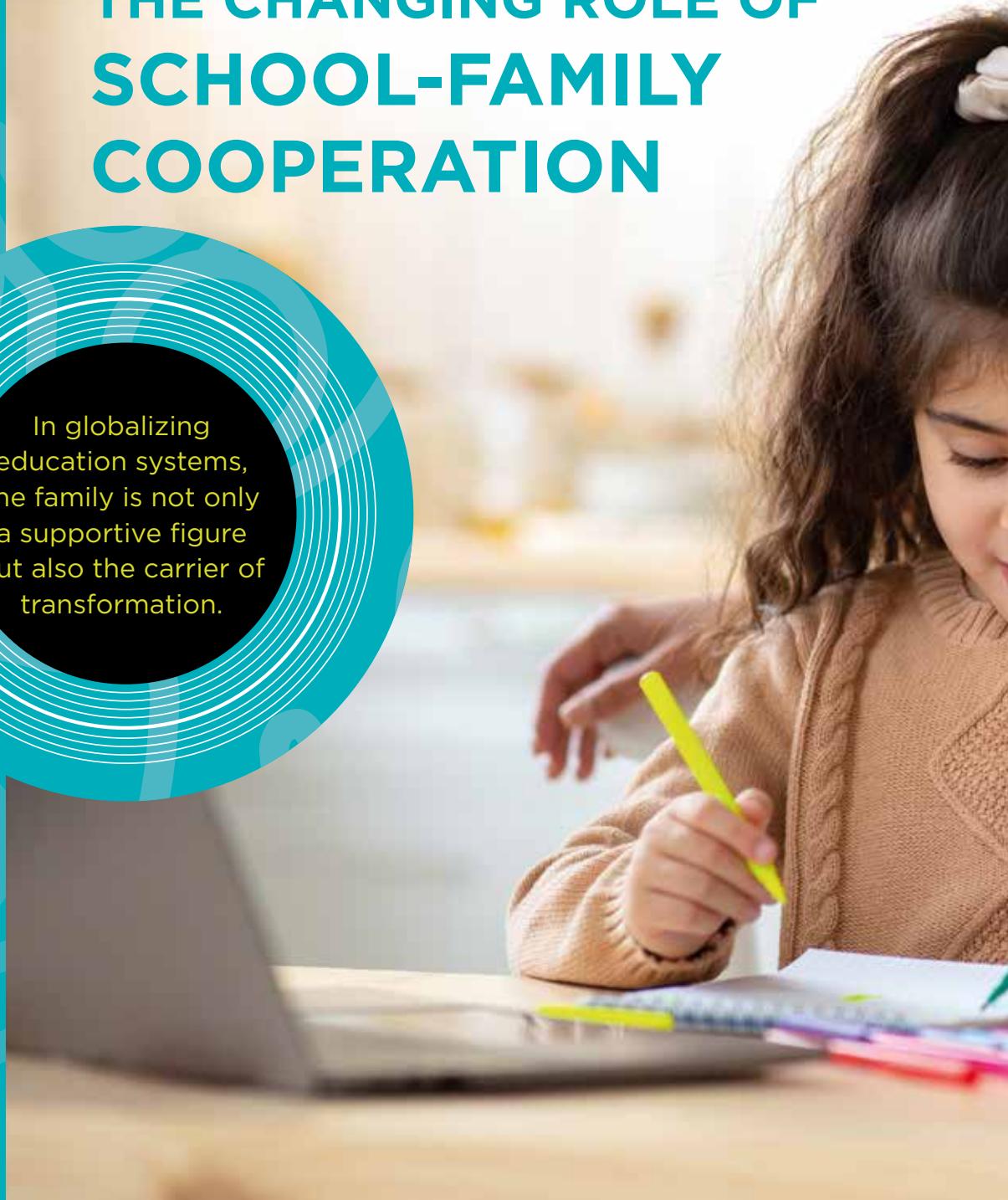
THE FAMILY

is the bearer of local values. For a student, becoming familiar with and internalizing the language, traditions, belief systems, and values of their own society is fundamental to identity development.

From Local Needs to a Global Perspective in the Education Ecosystem:

THE CHANGING ROLE OF SCHOOL-FAMILY COOPERATION

In globalizing education systems, the family is not only a supportive figure but also the carrier of transformation.





Schools and families are institutional structures found universally across all societies. Education is not only a sphere of individual growth but also an arena of social development. For this reason, both the school and the family stand as fundamental actors in shaping humanity's future. The harmony between the two is decisive for the development of both the individual and society. As the family serves as the cornerstone of every culture, and the school functions as the system built upon that foundation, their collaboration becomes indispensable.

Effective school-family communication contributes not only to a student's academic growth but also to their social and emotional development. For the student, such collaboration creates a more functional and supportive learning process. With strong communication, what happens at home can be understood more clearly in relation to performance at school. When families place importance on the educational journey, it boosts children's motivation and sense of belonging. At the same time, the trust built between teachers and parents makes it easier to identify and resolve potential problems at an early stage.

The school-family relationship is not only a pedagogical necessity but also a structural factor that directly shapes the quality of education. Strengthening this interaction generates shared benefits for students, parents, teachers, and school administrators alike. The ultimate aim of education is to ensure that all these stakeholders sustain a collaborative partnership centered on the child's development.

ACCULTURATION AND CURRICULUM ON THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL PLANE

Education is a carrier of culture. In this sense, the roles of both school and family become even more critical at the global level in transmitting cultural identity and values. The family is the bearer of local values. For a student, becoming familiar with and internalizing the language, traditions, belief systems, and values of their own society is

character development or the transmission of values within the family belong to the domain of local culture, themes such as global citizenship, digitalization, and human rights reflect global concerns. The curriculum must be designed with an approach that considers both dimensions together, integrating, blending, and reconciling differences. In this way, students can grow into individuals who preserve their local sense of belonging while at the same time engaging harmoniously with the global community.

FAMILY AND SCHOOL IN THE AXIS OF CHANGE

As institutions, both family and school are open to change yet remain conservative in certain respects. The transformation of the family is influenced by many factors, including urbanization, digitalization, socio-economic structures, parental roles, and lifestyles. For example, digital technologies have reshaped how parents engage with their children's learning processes. Home-based support systems are now increasingly structured through online platforms.

The school, likewise, is undergoing a profound transformation. Curriculum changes, the rise of hybrid and online models alongside face-to-face instruction, teachers assuming the roles of guides and mentors, and the spread of project-based learning approaches have shifted the school away from its traditional structure, turning it into a multifunctional learning environment.

Within this broader transformation, school-family collaboration is gaining a new definition, becoming more digital, more flexible, and more participatory. The alignment of family and school around shared goals in a child's developmental journey remains a key factor for the success of next-generation education models.

While school-family collaboration may produce short-term solutions, its true impact is revealed in long-term social transformation. For this reason, education policies must take a visionary approach to reimagining this relationship. The family should be regarded not merely as a supporter of education but as



THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND SCHOOL IS ONE OF THE KEY PILLARS SHAPING A CHILD'S IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND SENSE OF BELONGING.

fundamental to identity development. Otherwise, there is a risk of weakening cultural belonging and fostering alienation.

For this reason, the local values carried by families must be reinforced through the school and curriculum, enabling students to develop a consistent social identity. Yet today, education systems are shaped not only by local realities but also by international standards. Within this framework, aligning local curricula with global norms has become inevitable.

Reducing the risk of conflict between local and global cultural elements is one of the primary goals of sustainable education systems. While areas such as identity and



A balanced connection, carefully cultivated between local values and global norms, is essential for sustainable success in education.

a strategic partner, while the school should be redefined not simply as a transmitter of knowledge but as an institution that draws strength from the family to guide the child's development.

This approach provides balance in the face of increasingly demanding parenting practices shaped by urbanization and the pressures of educational environments. In particular, the economic and social challenges of metropolitan life make school-family solidarity even more crucial. Such collaboration serves not only the student's academic success but also acts as a protective shield for their psychological and social well-being.

GLOBAL SCHOOL NETWORK

In conclusion, school-family collaboration is no longer a pedagogical option but a strategic necessity for quality, inclusiveness, and sustainability in 21st-century education systems. Education policies that support this collaboration must include strengthening families, designing curricula that balance local and global priorities, and developing

IN THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL JOURNEY, THE ALIGNMENT OF FAMILY AND SCHOOL AROUND SHARED GOALS IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE SUCCESS OF NEXT-GENERATION EDUCATION MODELS.

multi-stakeholder governance structures. Only in this way can education become a system that not only serves the present but also builds the society of the future. Schools operating on a global scale bring together student profiles that are multicultural, multilingual, and spread across many geographies. In this context, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all model, education must prioritize ap-

proaches that are sensitive to local realities, flexible in design, and committed to fostering intercultural exchange. The principle of combining global vision with local implementation forms the foundation of these schools.

Yet the success of this structure is directly tied to the participation of families in educational processes. The family is not only a contributor to student achievement but also a stakeholder that can play an active role in shaping and implementing education policies. The democratization of school governance, parental involvement in decision-making, and the visibility of families in schools' social responsibility projects are all part of this understanding.

Building a global school network is not merely about opening educational units in different countries; it requires the ability to deliver meaningful, high-quality, and impactful education across diverse cultural contexts. At this point, education policies must develop models grounded in strong governance, sensitivity to local realities, and an emphasis on family participation.



Dr. İpek COŞKUN
ARMAĞAN*



THE FAMILY

provides support in times of crisis, connection in the face of loneliness, and guidance in the search for meaning. If there is one thing with which we can most closely identify the family's essence, it is surely its linguistic heritage.

The social and emotional resilience of a society does not rest solely on legal texts, economic stability, or institutional reforms. At its foundation, it depends on the family as the very fabric of human relationships. Language is the home of being, and the family is the custodian of that home.

* Institute for Social Studies,
General Coordinator





THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY'S **LINGUISTIC HERITAGE** IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Linguistic heritage is an existential concept encompassing all elements of a nation's or society's language, its words, idioms, proverbs, spelling rules, and sound patterns. The richness and diversity of this linguistic heritage stand as the strongest determinants of that community's cultural wealth, its capacity for interaction, and the foundations of its unity and cohesion.

In the words of the late Hilmi Ziya Ülken, language is the soul of a nation and the vessel of its culture. In particular, a society's linguistic heritage plays a key role in keeping collective memory alive and ensuring its transmission. The broader and richer the repertoire, the easier it becomes to preserve and pass on memory. Yet if a society's linguistic heritage narrows, dries up, and loses its diversity, the risk of a kind of social aphasia emerges¹. In such a case, transmission is disrupted, the growth of language comes to a halt, and memory begins to fade, leading to a decline in that society's cognitive and social development. This, in turn, can trigger many social crises. For instance, in a community where linguistic unity and richness have diminished, every event or phenomenon may quickly turn into conflict, as the society has lost its ability to form shared concepts and definitions. In societies without shared concepts and definitions, individualization rises rapidly; people begin to assign personal meanings to words and definitions become subjective. Once everyone defines things according to their own perspective, confusion of meaning arises, and we reach a deadlock in understanding what others are saying or intending. In today's age of intense digitalization, where social media algorithms further reinforce individualization, the consequences of this phenomenon can be even more severe. To redirect this trajectory toward the benefit of individuals and society, and

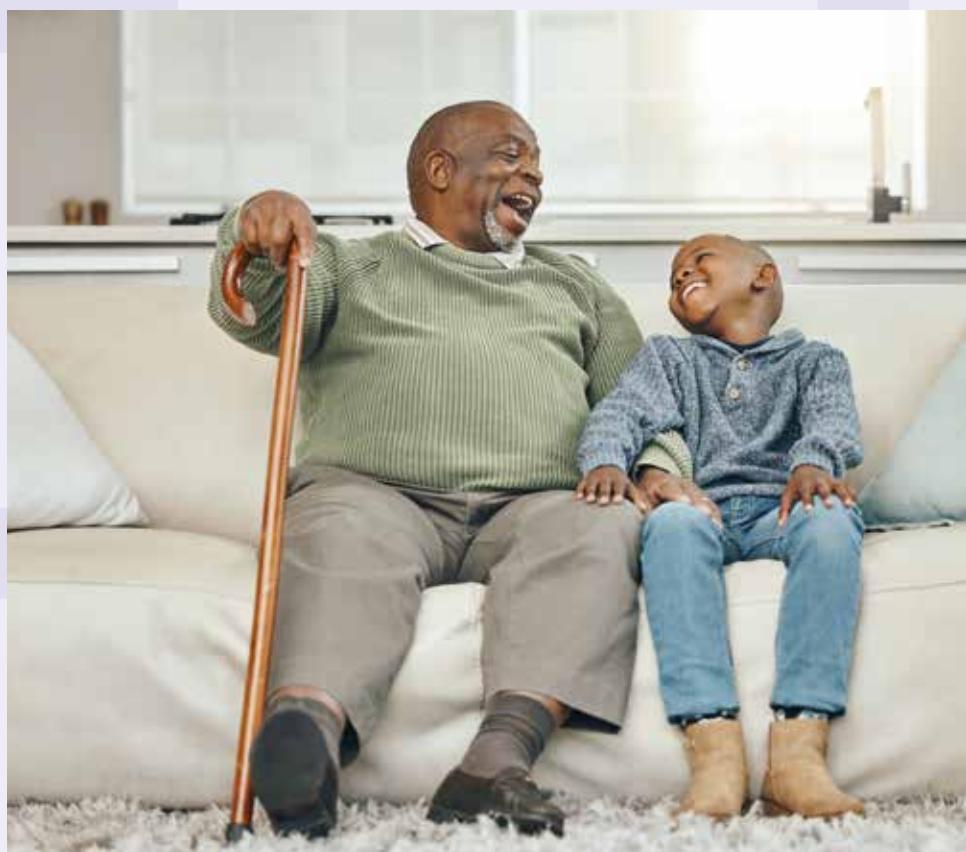
to enrich and diversify a community's linguistic heritage within a shared space, one of the strongest tools we still have is the family. The social and emotional resilience of a society does not rest solely on legal texts, economic stability, or institutional reforms. At its foundation, it depends on the family as the very fabric of human relationships. Language is the home of being, and the family is the custodian of that home.

THE FAMILY'S LANGUAGE CODES

In today's digital age of loneliness, the fam-



THE FAMILY'S VOCABULARY FORMS THE FOUNDATION OF BOTH THE POSSIBILITIES AND THE LIMITATIONS OF A CHILD'S LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT.



¹ Aphasia is a condition caused by brain damage that impairs a person's ability to speak, understand, read, or write.



ily remains the first and strongest space where an individual can form emotional connections. The family provides support in times of crisis, connection against isolation, and direction in the search for meaning. If there is one thing with which we can most closely identify the family's essence, it is surely its linguistic heritage. Language is the sole vehicle of intergenerational transmission and bonding. In

particular, oral language culture is vital to the family's life cycle. From the womb, a child is exposed to language; once born, they begin to make sense of the world first through their mother's words. From this point on, children who grow up with a rich linguistic repertoire develop stronger comprehension and interpretive skills compared to their peers. One of the key educational sociologists of the 20th century, Basil Bernstein, described this through

the concepts of restricted and elaborated language codes. Based on extensive field-work, Bernstein found that children of working-class families often used narrow sentence patterns, limited vocabulary, and repetitive language structures, what he called restricted codes. By contrast, the children of middle- and upper-class families were more exposed to conceptual, abstract, logically structured language with greater vocabulary variety, which he defined as elaborated codes. Bernstein linked academic and social inequalities



CHILDREN BUILD THEIR PERSONALITIES THROUGH CONVERSATION, BECAUSE IN FAMILY DIALOGUE THEY LEARN THAT WHAT MATTERS MOST IS NOT THE INFORMATION SHARED BUT THE RELATIONSHIPS SUSTAINED.

in education to whether children grew up with restricted or elaborated codes. Children raised with elaborated codes are at a significant advantage in developing higher-order cognitive skills compared to peers raised with restricted codes. This finding was echoed decades later in the famous sociolinguistic study by Betty Hart and Todd Risley in the 1990s, known as the "30 Million Word Gap". The researchers followed children from three types of families, professional (white-collar), working-class, and families receiving welfare, from seven months to three years of age. For two and a half years, they recorded the number of words children were exposed to in their home environments. By the end of the study, children in professional households had heard about 45 million words, those in working-class families about 26 million, and those in welfare-recipient families only 13 million. Crucially, higher-income children were exposed not just to more words but also to richer vocabulary, more positive feedback, and more open-ended conversations. In contrast, children from low-income households more often encountered prohibitive or directive expressions such as "Don't do that!" or "Be quiet!"

From the very start of life, children growing up in welfare-dependent families faced a 30-million-word gap compared to those raised in professional households.

This gap has been shown to explain later differences in academic performance, social development, and even career success. Many subsequent studies have pointed to the same conclusion: a family's vocabulary forms the foundation of both the possibilities and the limitations of a child's own linguistic capacity. Today, this challenge is made even greater as children from lower-income families are increasingly exposed to digital screens, placing them at a further disadvantage.

THE IMPACT OF FAMILY CONVERSATIONS ON PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

In an age where we are drawn to fleeting moments on phone screens and spend less time truly living, face-to-face conversations are becoming ever more precious. Especially when these conversations take place within the wide atmosphere of familial love, they can have remarkable effects on children's personality development. As renowned social psychologist Sherry Turkle notes, children build their sense of self through conversation, because in family dialogue they learn that what matters most is not the information exchanged but the relationship sustained. Family conversations are where children first discover that others are different from themselves yet worthy of understanding. It is where they first learn to put them-

selves in another's place, often a sibling's. Taking part in such conversations means imagining another mind, using gestures and expressions, and enjoying the playfulness of humor in dialogue. Family settings are the most fertile ground for learning these human subtleties. Schools matter too, but the home is the place where children spend their first and longest formative years. Family conversation is also one of the most powerful means of building bonds, both the bond of family and the





bond of meaning that underpins personal-
ity. For this reason, families must have the
capacity for words and dialogue. Rebuild-
ing family bonds is not only about restor-
ing relationships; it is also about recon-
structing the world of meaning. The family
is not merely a place where a child's needs
are met; it is the first space where the
question of why life is worth holding onto
arises. One of a parent's deepest respon-
sibilities is not only to guide a child in find-
ing direction but also to awaken in them

a longing for something deeper, a layer of
meaning, a sense of purpose. To achieve
this, parents must form meaningful con-
nections with their children and help them
manage their desires. Without meaning,
life appears uncertain and empty. Without
meaning, children become anxious and
young people feel adrift. As emphasized
at the beginning, strengthening social and
personal resilience requires reinforcing
these bonds, and at the heart of this is
the family's role in restoring the bonds

of language and meaning. To foster such
bonds, families need more opportunities
for intergenerational conversation, where
different age groups interact; they need
to strengthen the habit of listening; they
need to bring children and elders together
more often, experiences that nurture both
language and compassion. And in the eve-
nings, family time must increasingly mean
less screen time. Without these bonds, it is
unrealistic to expect the healthy growth of
personality or the renewal of society.



Assoc. Prof. Dr.
Muhammet
ÖZTABAK*



THE FAMILY
is the first and most influential institution in a child's educational journey. Education does not take place only at school; a child's development begins at home and extends throughout a lifetime.

* Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation University Faculty Member

THE ROLE AND PLACE OF THE FAMILY IN EDUCATION

Collaboration between school and family produces not only individual benefits but also social impacts. As the level of education rises, societies cultivate individuals who are more conscious, productive, and responsible.





Education is a lifelong process that extends from cradle to grave. It aims not only at the development of the individual but also at ensuring social cohesion and progress. Education is the means by which a society's values and norms are transmitted to individuals through socialization, enabling them to adopt and internalize these values and thereby sustaining the continuity of the community. It is a holistic process that encompasses schools, teachers, peers, families, and society at large, and every part of this whole can be considered an educator of the individual.

Education begins first in the family and then continues with the school, the social institution responsible for an individual's formal learning. Schools hold a central place in human life as the setting where education is delivered in a structured and direct way. Since children spend much of their lives between family and school, these two, together with the student, must function in harmony and collaboration as complementary elements of education. The success of any education system depends on these components supporting one another and working in coordination toward shared goals.

The school closely monitors not only the student's academic performance but also every aspect of their education and development. Schools must be able to keep pace not only with local social changes and needs but also with the shifting demands of an increasingly globalized world, adapting continuously and offering effective solutions. To sustain a dynamic structure capable of meeting these societal expectations, it is essential to strengthen school-family collaboration and interaction.

Family involvement plays a critical role in a student's success at school. Families contribute not only to their children's academic achievement but also to their social, emotional, and behavioral development.

School-family collaboration not only supports the student but also enhances the quality of the educational environment and contributes to the overall development of society.

SCHOOL-FAMILY COLLABORATION: SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION

Research shows that family involvement enhances student achievement, strengthens motivation, and fosters positive attitudes toward learning. Effective collabora-

tion is built on mutual trust, open communication, and shared responsibility. When families maintain regular communication with teachers, they gain a clearer understanding of their children's needs, while teachers are able to provide more meaningful support to students.

Moreover, collaboration between school and family produces not only individual but also social benefits. As education levels rise, societies foster individuals who are more conscious, productive, and responsible. Healthy relationships established within the school-family-community triangle enhance not only students' academic achievement but also their broader life skills.

Schools organize various activities to spark students' interest and keep them motivated. When families take part in these

**THE FAMILY
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TO REINFORCE WHAT
THEY LEARN AT
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THEY GAIN OUTSIDE OF
CLASS TIME.**





THROUGH THE CARE
AND SUPPORT THEY
RECEIVE FROM THEIR
FAMILY, CHILDREN
FEEL SAFER AND
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IN TURN, HELPS THEM
ACT WITH GREATER
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**FROM A
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AS ECONOMIC CONDITIONS,
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PARTICIPATION.**

activities, students engage more actively in the process. For instance, a student attending a book event with their mother, or helping out with a spring festival or school fair alongside their father, creates moments that make the child feel truly part of the school. In this way, being at school becomes not merely an obligation but an enjoyable and meaningful experience. Such experiences strengthen students' sense of belonging and positively affect their academic success. Collaboration between teachers and families also eases the student's adjustment to school and boosts motivation. At the same time, it allows the school to identify problems early and work with families to address them. As a result, academic or behavioral challenges students face can be resolved more quickly and effectively.

For school-family collaboration to be effective, it is essential to build a relationship of mutual trust, clearly communicate the

school's vision, mission, and goals to families, express expectations on both sides, ensure regular exchange of information about the student, and establish a strong system of guidance and counselling.

SCHOOL-FAMILY COLLABORATION

The family is the first and most influential institution in a child's educational journey. Education does not take place only at school; a child's development begins at home and continues throughout life. Within this process, the guidance of the family greatly influ-

ences both academic and personal success. A family's contribution to a child's education is not limited to schoolwork; by providing emotional support, motivation, and a sense of security, it strengthens the child's commitment to the learning process.

Through the care and support they receive from their family, children feel safer and more valued. This, in turn, helps them act with greater confidence at school and remain open to learning new things. Research has shown that family involvement enhances student achievement and has a positive impact on the overall learning process.

The family environment allows children to reinforce what they learn at school through the experiences they gain outside of class time. Families can also detect potential difficulties in their children's educational journey at an early stage and intervene in a timely manner. In this way, both

academic and behavioral problems can be addressed before they escalate.

EDUCATION POLICIES AND THE FAMILY

A child takes their first step into social life through the family, and with family support develops not only educationally but also socially, emotionally, and physically. This enables the individual to grow into a more balanced, socially adapted, and resilient person. The family carries many roles and functions, including ensuring the continuation of generations, meeting material and spiritual needs, providing education, and shaping social status.

When parents support their children's learning at home, it has a positive effect on school success. Educational activities carried out in the home not only strengthen family bonds but also spark children's interest in learning, making them more engaged in the process.

Before school-family collaboration can be effective, healthy communication must first be established between parent and child. Without the child's trust and support, the family's contribution to the educational process remains limited. For this reason, involving the child in this partnership is an important factor that enhances success.

In the educational process, strong collaboration between school and family significantly supports both the academic success and personal development of the student. Parents' active participation in this process is directly linked to their children's achievement. In particular, when families take part in home-based learning activities, such as reading books together or studying lessons, the positive impact becomes even greater.

Various studies show that students achieve greater success when parental involvement is high. Moreover, when this involvement begins early in a child's educational journey, it leads to more positive long-term outcomes.

Some of the key benefits of family involvement for children include improved reading skills, a more positive attitude toward school, reduced absenteeism, the de-

velopment of homework habits, a stronger connection between school and home, and children perceiving their parents as guides in the learning process. Overall, school-family collaboration enhances students' academic performance, supports their social development, boosts their motivation, and contributes to the overall quality of education.

Healthy communication between school and family is a vital element in supporting student success. Yet there are also obstacles that can hinder this collaboration. Although school-family cooperation is highly important, in practice certain challenges arise. Chief among these are differences in perspective between teachers and parents. When families and teachers hold differing expectations of the child, the process can become more difficult.

It has been noted that many of the factors complicating this process stem primarily from emotional concerns. Building an atmosphere of trust and viewing the school as a learning space for families as well are crucial for ensuring that collaboration functions effectively. Families should be provided with sufficient information and reassured that their children feel safe and supported at school.

That said, school-family collaboration does not always develop under ideal conditions. At times, certain circumstances may arise that hinder cooperation. The obstacles to school-family collaboration can be grouped under four main categories: those stemming from the family, from the student, from the school or teacher, and from society.

Among the obstacles originating from families, the most notable is parents' negative school experiences in the past. Such experiences may lead them to develop distant or unfavorable attitudes toward the school. In addition, being invited to school primarily for financial contributions can create reluctance toward participation. Lack of time, particularly for working parents, is another barrier. Families with lower levels of education may also avoid involvement in school activities because they feel inadequate.

On the family side, low levels of education, financial hardship, and lack of time stand out as major barriers. The social and cultural background of families also has a direct impact on this process. By addressing and improving these factors, family participation can be increased. A lack of family involvement is regarded as a serious obstacle in children's education, underscoring the importance of guiding families and actively including them in the process.

Factors related to the student also influence the level of family participation. Younger children often want to see their parents involved in school activities, but this need may diminish as they grow older. For students with special needs, learning difficulties, or exceptional talents, parental support is critical. However, if the school's approach toward these students is negative, it can in turn discourage families from participating.

Obstacles stemming from the school or teachers include a lack of attention to communication with families or indifference toward collaboration. Such attitudes can cause families to become disengaged and distance themselves from the school.

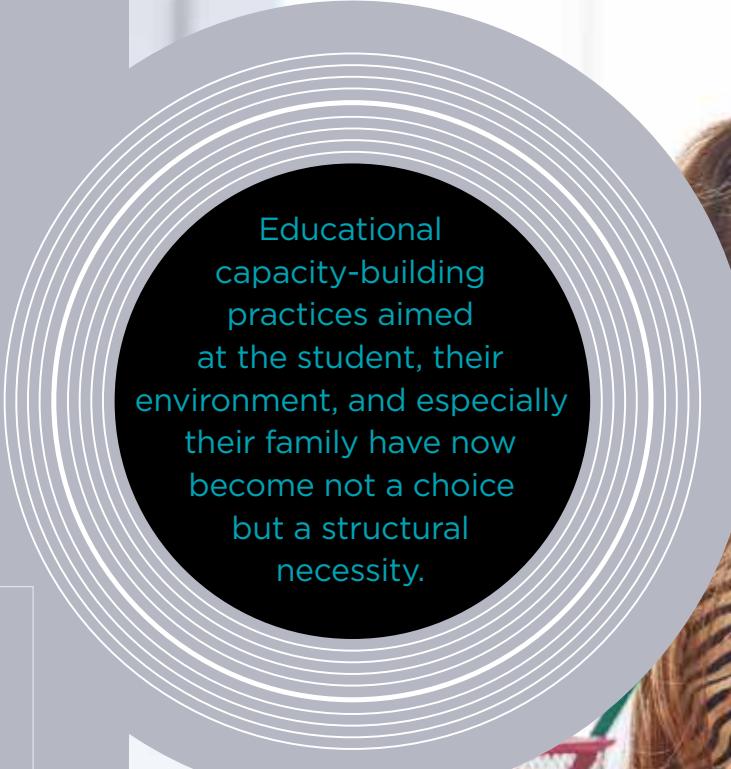
From a societal perspective, macro-level factors such as economic conditions, cultural structures, the political climate, and styles of school governance can either facilitate or hinder family participation. For example, schools run with rigid rules may leave little room for family involvement.

In conclusion, active family participation in the educational process is of great importance for students' academic and social development. Yet factors such as low levels of education, financial hardship, and limited time can negatively affect this involvement. For this reason, guiding families, developing supportive policies, and taking steps to strengthen school-family collaboration are critical requirements for ensuring equity in education. Accordingly, teacher training programmes emphasize the need to devote special attention to family participation and encourage teachers to establish effective and constructive communication with parents.



Nursen Tekgöz*

A Quest for Social Architecture: **UNDERSTANDING THE FAMILY, TRANSFORMING EDUCATION**



Educational capacity-building practices aimed at the student, their environment, and especially their family have now become not a choice but a structural necessity.



THE FAMILY

is far more than a biological union or an emotional refuge; it is the individual's first place of learning and the primary threshold for their transition into social life.

* Department of Sociology,
Istanbul University



In modern society, as expectations of the education system steadily increase, one of its greatest challenges lies in managing the multifaceted effects produced by the transformations taking place within the student's family and social environment. The long-standing relationship of complementarity between the family and the education system, once seen as stable and self-reinforcing, is now being tested by new pressures and changing dynamics.

Disruptions within the family increasingly lead children not only to carry their developmental needs into the school environment but also to expect the school to compensate for them. This dynamic has broadened the role of educational institutions, stretching the boundaries of the system with social expectations that extend well beyond pedagogy. For this reason, solutions cannot be confined to school-centered approaches alone; the pedagogical function of the family itself must also be reconsidered. Indeed, the family is far more than a biological unit or an emotional refuge, it is the individual's first site of learning and the primary threshold to social life. Often overlooked in its pedagogical role, the family endures as one of the silent yet indispensable pillars of the education system.

The pedagogical function of the family also shapes how knowledge, values, and a sense of belonging are internalized. The first bonds established within the family serve as a learning ground that molds the individual's way of understanding and making sense of the world. It is within this micro-social sphere that the individual first develops an awareness of history, law, society, and cultural norms. The family thus provides not only the foundation of the individual's sense of "self" but also the framework for perceiving the "other," offering the essential atmosphere in which social cohesion can take root. When communication within the family weakens, it strikes at the very heart of the individual's capacity for socialization. Such a rupture unsettles

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behavioral patterns, distorts value orientations, and erodes the sense of belonging. This rupture generates risks on multiple levels: at the micro level, it threatens the cohesion of the family itself, while at the macro level, it poses a serious challenge to social continuity and undermines the effectiveness of the education system.

The weakening of socialization within the family directly increases both the structural and functional burden on educational institutions. Children who lack sufficient emotional, normative, and social support at home enter schools not simply to acquire knowledge, but to compensate for incomplete aspects of their development. As a result, schools are no longer only sites of pedagogy; they are transformed into secondary care spaces where individual

deficits are addressed. In doing so, they become not just arenas of learning, but also the silent repositories where wider social fractures accumulate.

This transformation recasts teachers from mere transmitters of academic knowledge into carriers of far more complex roles, guardians of emotional regulation, builders of social bonds, and stabilizers of psychological balance. Teaching is no longer confined to the delivery of a curriculum; it has become the interface where the fractures spilling over from family life accumulate and demand resolution. Such expanding expectations push teachers beyond their professional boundaries, bringing with them structural strains of burnout, role conflict, and the erosion of belonging.



BRINGING THE FAMILY FROM THE PERIPHERY TO THE CENTER OF THE SYSTEM

Current data show that the role of teachers in supporting students' emotional well-being has expanded beyond a supplementary function, often turning into a burden that strains the very sustainability of the system. For an education system already grappling with structural inequalities, scarce resources, and the pressures of digital transformation, this added weight creates a multilayered strain, pedagogical, institutional, and emotional all at once.

The picture that emerges makes it clear that critiques of the education system cannot be limited to curriculum or content reform alone; they must also address the redefinition of the broader social burdens

the system is asked to carry. Many current approaches that place the child at the centre fail to support educational development in a holistic way or generate long-term social impact when they exclude the family and social context. For a child grows within a relational ground, and the most critical link in that ground is, without question, the family. The family, therefore, should not be treated as an external object of education policy but as an internal, transformative actor within the system itself. For this reason, capacity-building practices aimed at the student, their environment, and especially their family have become not a matter of choice but a structural necessity.

In several countries, models have been introduced that position family members not as passive bystanders but as active par-

ticipants in the educational process. These practices offer concrete examples of how this structural need can be met in the field. Within such approaches, the school is redefined as a multilayered social hub, a place where social relations are rebuilt, cultural norms reinforced, and a shared sense of belonging cultivated. In this way, the school functions as an interface, bridging the child's individual development with the familial context that surrounds it and the institutional framework that sustains it. The significance of these models lies not only in their pedagogical content but also in how they reconceptualize the social role of educators. In this framework, teaching evolves into a form of agency that can engage with fragile social fabrics, interpret family dynamics, and remain responsive to the lived

realities of students. This transformation keeps the teacher at the center of education, while simultaneously embedding education more firmly at the heart of society itself.

POSITIONING THE FAMILY AS AN ACTOR, NOT A PROBLEM

The transformation of the teaching profession inevitably calls for a rethinking of teacher education systems. Today's teacher requires a professional identity equipped not only with pedagogical knowledge but also with literacy in social policy, cultural sensitivity, effective family communication, and the capacity for emotional labor. Such a shift cannot be achieved through curriculum updates alone; it demands a redefinition of the institutional meaning and purpose ascribed to teaching itself.

A critical point must be emphasized here: expectations of transformation should not cast the family merely as a site of deficiency or a source of problems. The changes families undergo are rooted in multilayered social, cultural, and economic dynamics. Identifying the factors that erode communication, disrupt normative continuity, and weaken the processes of socialization requires an analytical understanding

of the contexts that sustain them. The education system can, of course, play a role in this process; yet the deeper solution lies in a social architecture that reconstructs the family within the framework of social policy, repairs the relational fabric, and remains attentive to cultural codes.

A STRATEGIC TURNING POINT IN LOCAL KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION ON THE FAMILY

In the Turkish context, approaches to the family must not be confined to individual well-being or the parent-child relationship alone; they should also be grounded in a relational social ontology. The structure of the family in Türkiye extends beyond the nuclear model often assumed in Western literature, reflecting instead a multilayered form of social organization. Kinship ties, intergenerational fluidity, neighborhood-based social intimacy, and the memory carried by extended families are often treated as symbolic, yet they are far more than that. These structures serve as powerful carriers for the transmission of norms from one generation to the next. A child's value system is shaped not only by parents but also by aunts and uncles, grandparents, and even the silent

presence of ancestral memory inscribed on gravestones. Any educational policy or discourse on the family that fails to recognize this distinctive fabric is not only inadequate in addressing the social context but also limited in its capacity for meaningful impact.

Yet in Türkiye, much of the research on the family is either conducted with narrowly representative samples or relies heavily on translated versions of externally developed scales. Family relations, however, carry a high degree of cultural embeddedness and can only be fully understood through indigenous concepts and context-specific methods of measurement. The limited explanatory power of imported frameworks points not only to a representational problem at the academic level but also to the fragility of the knowledge base on which education and social policy are built. This fragility becomes even more pronounced when the family is at stake, for the family is a uniquely relational institution, one that exists through the production, reproduction, and intergenerational transmission of relationships. Relationship itself is the most fundamental source of social resilience, and the family is the space where it first takes shape. For this reason, both scientific inquiry and policymaking require a knowledge production system that is rooted in the local context, long-term in perspective, and methodologically plural.

A HOLISTIC FAMILY-EDUCATION APPROACH FOR NORMATIVE CONTINUITY

The need for locally grounded knowledge production that situates the family within its historical and social context is becoming an increasingly urgent and strategic necessity. Encouragingly, this awareness has begun to find reflection in recent institutional steps. The declaration of 2025 as the "Year of the Family" by the Presidency, and the extension of this process into a ten-year perspective, signals a commitment to strategic continuity in family-oriented policymaking. Likewise, the establishment of the Family Institute, announced in the Official Gazette in December 2024, marks an important institutional milestone, creating the opportu-





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FOUNDATIONAL PILLAR
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SUCCESS.**

nity for an original research platform that will support scientific knowledge production on the family.

To create meaningful and lasting change, family-centered initiatives must be guided by a collaborative and multi-level governance model that brings together civil society, local governments, and other key stakeholders around a shared vision. The family is not merely something to be protected but a vital capacity that must be actively rebuilt to help restore the social fabric. Doing so requires a relational architecture that strengthens trust and sustains the intergenerational transmission of values.

Before any inclusive approach can take root, the position of the family in public discourse must be critically re-examined. Today, most conversations around the family tend to orbit issues such as gender roles, authority dynamics, or lifestyle conflicts. As a result, the deeper structural and cultural dimensions often slip out of view. Yet the family is neither a mere vessel for conservative agendas nor a form of resistance to modernization. On the contrary, it is a foundational social institution, one that enables psychological resilience, fosters a sense of belonging, and sustains the capacity to generate shared values. Any serious engagement with the family must therefore

reach beyond the past and speak also to the social ruptures of today and tomorrow. For the transformation of the family is not confined to abstract values alone, but reverberates through everyday practices, individual choices, and evolving forms of dependency, each a layer in the complex mirror the family holds up to society.

For this reason, education policies must not be confined to institutional frameworks or individual outcomes alone. Policy design must take into account the broader social fabric, normative structures, and relational contexts in which individuals are embedded. If education is to equip individuals not only with cognitive skills but also with social adaptability, psychological resilience, and the capacity to generate values, then the true

Thinking about education, rebuilding the education system, requires focusing on the family and rethinking the family.

foundation for this vision lies in strong and functional family structures.

THE NEED FOR A NEW POLICY PARADIGM

Reimagining education and rebuilding the education system requires placing the family at the center of our thinking. Yet this process must avoid both nostalgic narratives of the past and the constraints of one-size-fits-all universalist models. What is needed is a comprehensive approach grounded in data, attuned to cultural context, and shaped by a multi-stakeholder governance model. Only then can we ensure both the holistic development of the individual and the normative continuity of society. Otherwise, the education system will remain burdened with the task of compensating for functional gaps originating in the family, increasingly drifting from its core mandate and facing the risk of overstretching its institutional capacity. This is why the time has come to move beyond policy frameworks that treat family and education as separate domains. What we need instead is a strategic model that recognizes the family as a prerequisite and foundational platform for all educational policy. After all, the family is not merely a relic of the past; it is the bearer of the future. To rethink the family is, to reimagine the very fabric of society.



Halil İbrahim İzgi*

Once celebrated in Turkish cinema and television dramas as a healing force, the family is now either erased from media narratives or portrayed as the root cause of individual struggles. This shift is not merely a matter of representational choice, it reflects broader global marketing strategies and projects of social engineering.

* Writer, Storyteller

NEŞELİ GÜNLER
(HAPPY DAYS)
DIRECTED BY
ORHAN AKSOY



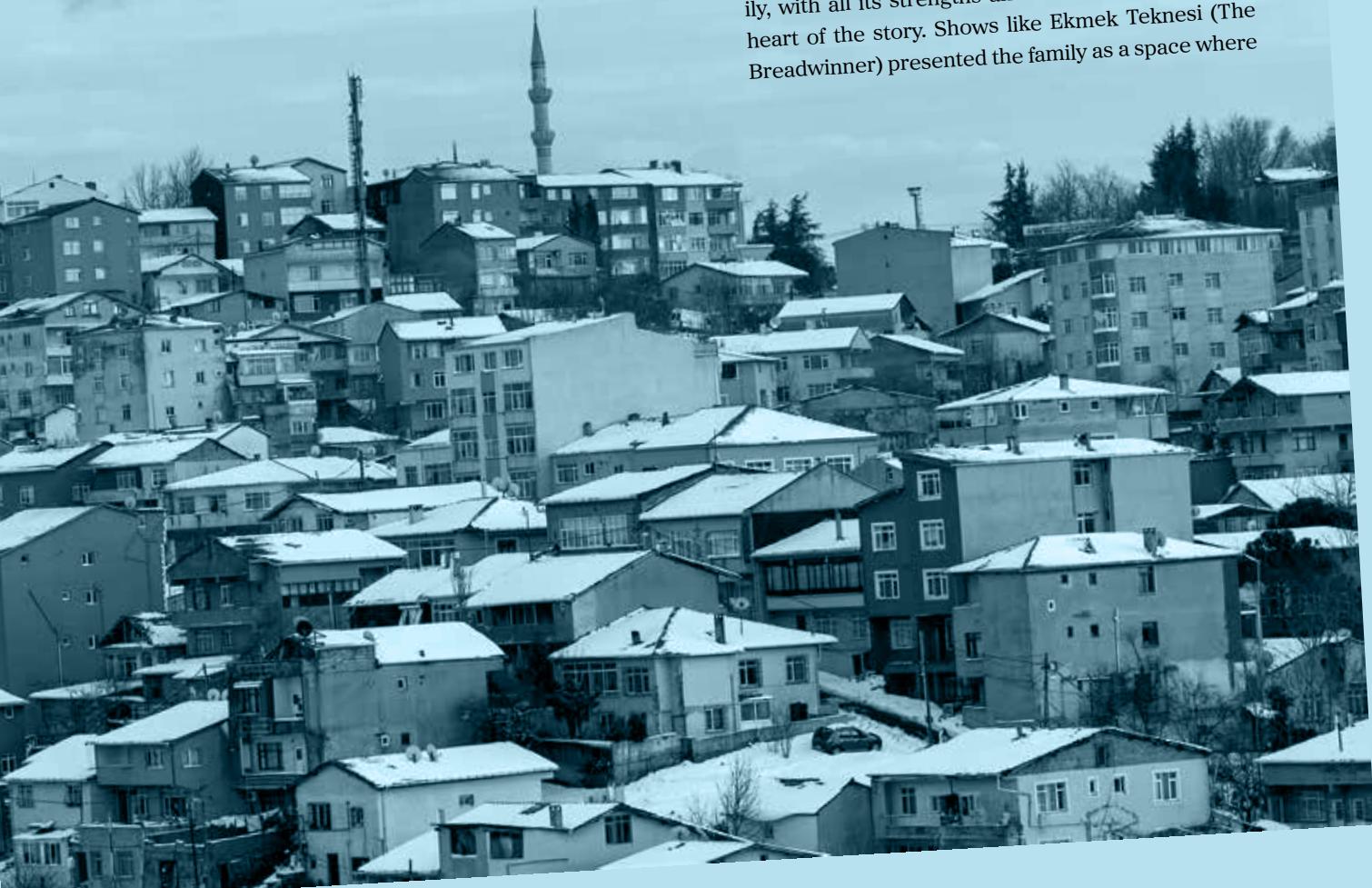
TURKISH MEDIA'S "PROBLEM CHILD": THE FAMILY

BİZİM AİLE
(OUR FAMILY)
DIRECTED BY
ENGIN ORBEY



The way family has been portrayed in Turkish media has long moved in step with society itself, ever since the early days of cinema and television in Türkiye. Especially during the Yeşilçam era, the family was not just seen as a biological unit, but was idealized as a space of solidarity, moral values, and emotional healing. Movies like *Neşeli Günler* (Happy Days) and *Bizim Aile* (Our Family) offered us a world where even the deepest conflicts within the family were ultimately resolved through love.

This way of portraying the family continued into the television era. In long-running TV series, the family, with all its strengths and flaws, remained at the heart of the story. Shows like *Ekmek Teknesi* (The Breadwinner) presented the family as a space where



SHOWS LIKE EKMEK TEKNESİ PORTRAYED THE FAMILY AS A FOUNDATION FOR BOTH SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION. BUT OVER TIME, THIS "INNOCENT ERA" GAVE WAY TO MORE FRAGMENTED, INDIVIDUAL-CENTERED NARRATIVES.

both social bonds and personal growth could take root. But over time, this "innocent period" gave way to more fragmented, individual-focused narratives.

Over time, media became more than just a space for storytelling; it also turned into a carrier of ideological and economic codes. Global marketing strategies, the rise of individualism, and the spread of digital culture have shaped four dominant models of how the family is portrayed. In today's TV series,



Recent years have seen a shift, especially in historical dramas, toward bringing the family back into view. These series bring values like selflessness, loyalty, community, and solidarity back into focus.

protagonists are no longer tied to a family, but to their own so-called "journeys to freedom". Ideals like belonging, responsibility, and shared life have been replaced by characters who are celebrated for their solitude. These figures are shown gaining freedom by cutting ties, disowning their past, and learning to stand alone. The family, in turn, is pushed out of the frame, made invisible.

Some stories frame the family not as a source of comfort, but as the origin of a per-





son's trauma and unhappiness. Stories often suggest that trauma, pressure, and emotional wounds all begin at home. Such narratives open the door for the individual to move away from responsibility and into a position of blame. Once seen as a place of healing, the family becomes a burden the individual feels compelled to run from.

In other cases, the family is idealized to a degree that feels detached from real life. The warm, understanding families portrayed in old neighborhood dramas now read like a romantic fantasy to today's viewers. These depictions of the "good old days" in a way reinforce the sense that such times are long gone, casting doubt on the relevance of today's family structure.

Many of these productions depict families living under the same roof, yet barely communicating, with each member absorbed in their own loneliness. In these portrayals, generational conflict is often exaggerated, and the family begins to resemble a kind of prison. Daytime TV programs in particular build their narratives around domestic abuse, violence, and neglect, contributing to a collective memory in which the family is almost coded as a "dangerous institution."

Behind this shift lie not only aesthetic or thematic choices, but also economic interests.

The world of marketing now focuses less on collective structures and more on individual loneliness, turning needs that could once be met through family solidarity into products to be purchased. During Ramadan



TODAY, THE FAMILY IS EITHER MADE INVISIBLE, CAST AS THE SOURCE OF BLAME, OR IDEALIZED AS A NOSTALGIC FAIRY TALE. AND YET, THE FAMILY REMAINS ONE OF THE KEY PILLARS OF SOCIAL BONDS, CULTURAL CONTINUITY, AND MENTAL WELL-BEING.

and religious holidays, family themes are revived in nostalgic ways, but only as part of seasonal advertising strategies. As a result, the family is reduced to a symbol, not of lived reality but of its functional value within marketing discourse.

Hopeful signs about the family, however, have not entirely vanished. In neighborhoods like Kuzguncuk, streets once used as filming locations for shows such as *Perihan Abla* and *Ekmek Teknesi* have become pop-

OVER TIME, THE MEDIA HAS BECOME NOT ONLY A SPACE FOR STORYTELLING, BUT ALSO A CARRIER OF IDEOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC CODES. GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGIES, THE CULTURE OF INDIVIDUALISM, AND DIGITALIZATION HAVE LED TO THE EMERGENCE OF FOUR DOMINANT MODELS OF FAMILY REPRESENTATION.

ular settings for wedding photography. By choosing these spaces, individuals seeking to hold on to memories of the past try to keep their emotional connection to family alive. Such symbolic acts can be seen as a quiet form of resistance against the solitary individual model promoted by mainstream media.

Recent years have seen a shift, especially in historical dramas, toward bringing the family back into view. These series bring values like selflessness, loyalty, community, and solidarity back into focus. These narratives show that family members are not defined solely by dysfunctional relationships, but also by their capacity to heal together. This trend points to the possibility of healthier and more layered representations of the family.

Representations of the family in the media are not merely narrative choices; they are powerful tools with the potential to shape and transform society.

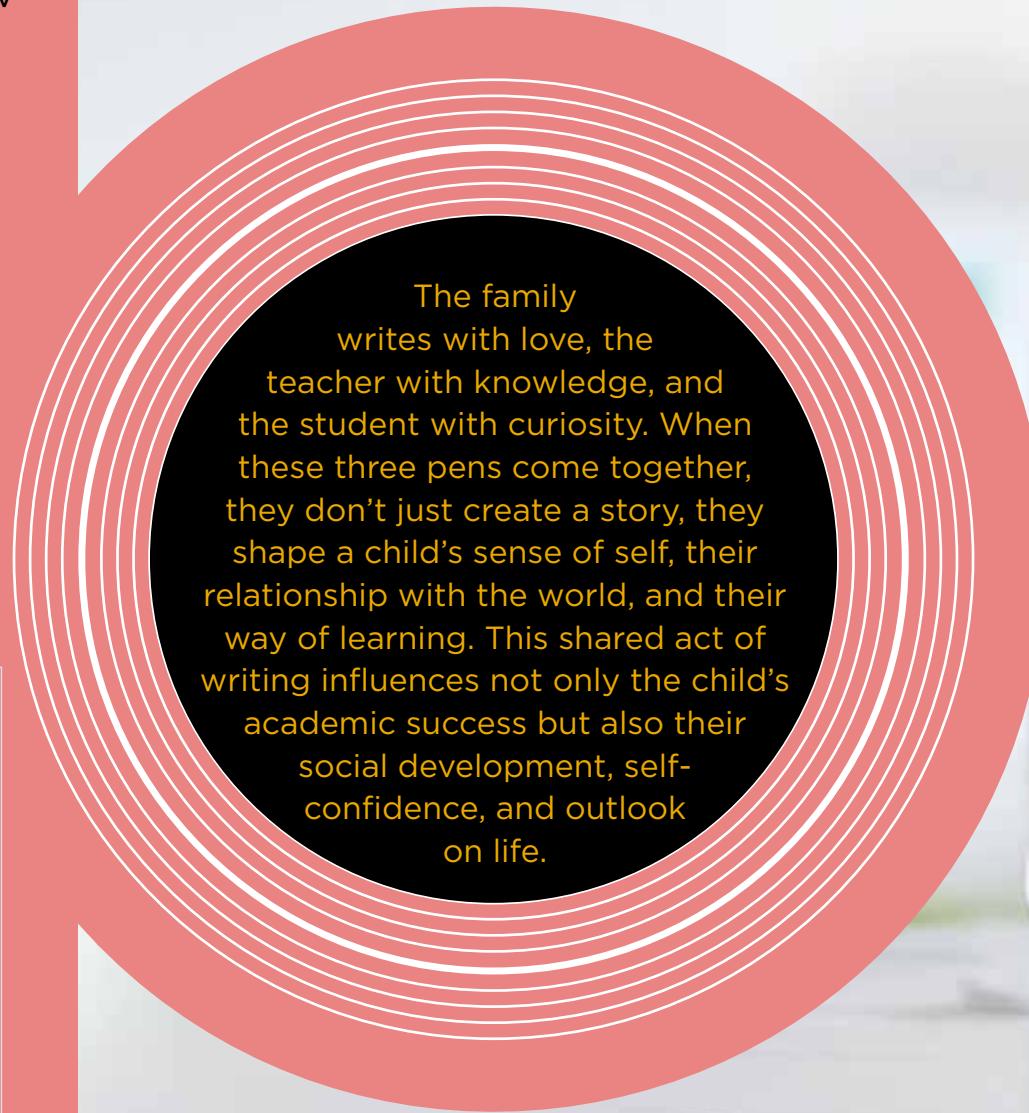
Today, the family is either made invisible, cast as the source of blame, or idealized as a nostalgic fairy tale. Yet the family remains one of the key foundations of social bonds, cultural continuity, and mental well-being.

The media must step into a reconstructive role, one that seeks not just to show conflict but to represent the family as a space where healing is possible and where human relationships can take root. Because representation is not only a way of reflecting reality, it is a way of building it. And the future of society depends on the quality of that construction.



Dr.
Merve Nur Kursav*

Shaping the Future Together: **THE POWER OF FAMILY-SCHOOL COLLABORATION**



The family writes with love, the teacher with knowledge, and the student with curiosity. When these three pens come together, they don't just create a story, they shape a child's sense of self, their relationship with the world, and their way of learning. This shared act of writing influences not only the child's academic success but also their social development, self-confidence, and outlook on life.

THE FAMILY, the teacher, and the student are parts of a whole, together, they form the foundation that makes education sustainable. Each one strengthens the other; their meaning grows as they walk the path together.

* CPM Educational Program and Dartmouth College



THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLES OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Recent studies have shown that family-school collaboration has a positive impact on students' academic and social success, regardless of their socio-economic background or individual needs (Stefanski et al., 2016; Witte et al., 2021). One of the most systematically developed examples of this approach can be found in the United States. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), enacted in 1965, made family engagement a federal requirement by mandating that schools develop policies to support student achievement. By 2010, 39 states and the District of Columbia had incorporated family engagement into their legal frameworks, making family-school collaboration a key component of education reform efforts (U.S. Department of Education, 2024; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education supported the publication of the Dual Capacity-Building Framework, which emphasized that family-school partnerships should build the capacity of not only students but also adults involved in the process. The framework is structured around what it defines as the "Four Cs": Capabilities, Connections, Confidence, and Cognition (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

THE BOSTON EXAMPLE: SYSTEMATIC TRANSFORMATION IN FAMILY-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

In 2012, the state of Massachusetts defined family-school partnerships as one of the core components of the teacher evaluation process and established this area as a systematic policy priority (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE], 2012). One of the most notable examples of this policy in action can be seen in Boston Public Schools (BPS), the state's largest district. BPS appointed a Family and Community Engagement Coordinator in every school, developed a 12-hour professional development program for teachers focused on family involvement, and integrated fam-



ily-school collaboration into its teacher evaluation system (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). Learning Guides for Families, prepared for each grade level, have created a shared foundation for understanding during parent-teacher conferences. In this way, family engagement has extended beyond extracurricular activities to become embedded in curriculum, assessment, and school improvement planning.

A SCHOOL'S STORY OF TRANSFORMATION: THE STANTON EXAMPLE

According to the Partners in Education report (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013), family engagement has been shown to improve students' academic performance, social skills, and school connectedness, while reducing absenteeism and behavioral issues, and increasing graduation rates (Witte et al., 2021). A concrete example of these outcomes can be found in Stanton Elementary School in Washington, D.C., which was placed in a turnaround program in the 2011-2012 academic year due to low performance. As part of its transformation strat-

egy, the school conducted 450 home visits to build trust-based relationships between teachers and families. Academic Parent-Teacher Team (APTT) meetings and individual conferences were held for every class. Dur-

ing this process, families overcame negative perceptions of the school and were provided with reading and math activities they could implement at home. Within a year, parent participation rose from 12% to 55%, while students' math scores increased by 18 points and reading scores by 9 points. These results demonstrate that trust-based relationships and targeted parental support can yield lasting academic gains in a short time. This trajectory offers a valuable reference point for developing family-school partnership models within the context of educational reform in Türkiye.

A healthy family-school relationship helps children feel safe and supported. This sense of security encourages open communication with their families, allows them to feel more at ease in the school environment, and helps them cope more effectively with challenges. Such a relationship not

only enhances students' well-being, but also creates a more collaborative and empathetic learning atmosphere for teachers.

According to numerous studies (Epstein, 2018; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013), effective family-school partnerships should not be limited to the exchange of information; they must be built on trust, mutual responsibility, and shared growth. While the impact of these relationships is not always directly measurable, research consistently shows that strong family-school engagement, when considered alongside factors such as effective leadership, student-centered teaching, and a positive school climate, contributes significantly to student success. For instance, a study conducted in Texas found that students whose parents visited the school more frequently had an average score of 70.3% on the STAAR mathematics test, while

the scores of students whose parents visited less often were significantly lower (Enih, 2018). Additionally, parent-school interactions such as school visits and supporting homework at home play a decisive role in academic achievement.

FAMILY-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION

It has been observed that family-school interaction tends to weaken as students move from early childhood to higher grade levels, which can negatively affect students' adaptation to school (Witte et al., 2021). For this reason, strong family-school relationships are important not only in primary education but also during the high school years (Christenson & Reschly, 2010). Adolescence is a period marked by growing individualisation, a stronger desire to make

independent decisions, and an increased need to be heard. In this stage of life, the bonds built between students, families, and schools must be grounded in openness, trust, and mutual respect. Growing up in an environment where they feel listened to and not judged supports young people not only academically but also emotionally and socially. Activities targeting this age group should include content that reflects their interests and makes them feel seen. Family-inclusive events such as career days, literacy workshops, student-produced podcasts, and short film screenings offer young people opportunities to both explore their own potential and share that journey with their families. When families engage in these processes not only as guides, but also as listeners, learners, and supporters, they help strengthen young people's self-confi-



dence and their connection to society. In Türkiye, such practices at the middle and high school level can be expanded through collaboration between guidance services, school administrations, and teachers.

**DISCOVERING MATH TOGETHER:
CURRENT APPROACHES TO FAMILY-SCHOOL COLLABORATION**

When designed around hands-on experiences, math activities for families can strengthen the bridge between everyday life and classroom learning. Two widely used examples from the United States, Family Math Night and the Bedtime Reading Routine, reflect this approach. Family Math Night events are typically held at schools in the evening. Classrooms, hallways, and multipurpose spaces are transformed into math stations tailored to different age groups.

Families and children participate together in game-based activities, solve problems, and discuss strategies. At the end of



A STUDY CONDUCTED IN TEXAS SHOWED THAT STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS VISITED THE SCHOOL MORE FREQUENTLY HAD AN AVERAGE SCORE OF 70.3% ON THE STAAR MATHEMATICS TEST, WHILE THE SCORES OF STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS VISITED LESS OFTEN WERE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER.



the event, children are encouraged to share what they learned with their families. In this way, the learning process extends from school to home and is reinforced through shared experience. Similarly, math-based bedtime reading activities help children revisit mathematical concepts within the context of home routines. These repeated interactions can gradually contribute to visible improvements in student achievement. For example, in the Bedtime Learning Together (BLT) study conducted in the Chicago area, 587 first-grade students and their families participated. The study found that children whose families read math-related bedtime stories at least once a week using the Bedtime Math app demonstrated greater gains in mathematical knowledge than those who read non-math-related texts (Berkowitz et al., 2015). In light of such examples, it is possible to further enrich existing practices in Türkiye by developing fun, inclusive, and effective family-school collaboration programs.

Many families talk about math with their children throughout the day, often without even realizing it, while comparing prices at the market, measuring ingredients in the kitchen, planning time, playing games, or thinking through strategies. These moments may seem incidental, but in fact, they are powerful learning opportunities. Bringing meaning to these moments and making their educational value visible is only possible through intentionally designed, interactive activities. This is where structured math activities offered to families can transform the ordinary into something extraordinary. These activities challenge not only children but parents as well. Especially when the tasks involve reasoning, parents sometimes struggle to follow the thought processes their children use. But it is precisely in these moments that families move beyond simply witnessing their child's cognitive effort, they begin to feel it from within. This experience becomes more than a problem-solving exercise; it turns into a shared journey of empathy and discovery. And such moments don't just transform learning, they transform relationships too.

Through these activities, children begin to see the adults in their lives, teachers and parents who often appear as figures of authority, as teammates and co-thinkers. Learning is no longer confined to the classroom; it comes to life in the kitchen, the living room, and the school hallway, becoming a shared, lived experience. And perhaps most importantly, these activities strengthen the bond between child and family. Communication within the home deepens, and children feel not only supported academically but also seen and valued emotionally. This kind of environment lays a strong foundation for children to grow into open-minded, resilient, and emotionally grounded individuals who are at peace with the world around them.

SHAPING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

What ultimately emerges is a shared story, a future written together. When young people grow up in an environment where their voices are heard and their ideas valued, they step into the future with confidence, not just the present. The family, the teacher, and the student are all parts of a whole, each one gives strength to the others, and their journey gains meaning only when taken together. This is not an individual path, but a collective and deeply intentional work, a story co-authored by student, parent, and teacher alike. And it is only by walking this path side by side that the story finds its true meaning.

When opportunities are shared, voices are heard, and responsibilities are carried together, children grow not only as learners, but as individuals who feel valued. Across Türkiye, when environments rooted in trust, understanding, and collective creation are nurtured, it is not only achievement that grows, but also a sense of belonging and hope. For this reason, as stakeholders in education, we must commit not only to individual outcomes, but also to the bonds we build together and the shared future they enable. Because meaningful family-school collaboration is not a luxury, it is a vital necessity for our children (Witte et al., 2021). True success lies in the solidarity we build, together.

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Interview by:
Bekir Bilgili
Songül Hatice Demirhan

OSMAN SEZGIN:
**“THE FAMILY LIES
AT THE VERY
CENTER OF THE
ENVIRONMENT THAT
SHAPES A PERSON’S
EDUCATION.”**



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of Guidance and Psychological
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Former Deputy Minister of
National Education (Türkiye)

MODERN

have reopened the discussion around the duties, authority, and responsibilities of the family, the most fundamental institution in which individual identity is formed. In the shadow of digitalization and globalization, the family's role in a person's development calls for a substantial redefinition. In this issue, we sat down with educator and thinker Prof. Dr. **Osman Sezgin** to explore the place of the family in education in depth. Sezgin argues that it is not only the family, but also the concepts of culture and character formation that must be revisited, and that the family must be restored to its rightful place as shaped by tradition. Opposing modern impositions on the family-education relationship, Sezgin shares with our readers his insights on how to respond to these pressures and reclaim an authentic educational path.

Professor, where exactly does the family stand in an individual's development?

What kind of rupture has occurred between classical and modern societies?

We can speak of three fundamental factors that influence, indeed determine, education: **heredity, environment, and time**. In Western literature, this has been reduced to two elements: heredity (nature) and environment (nurture). Yet without the third, time, with both its qualitative and quantitative dimensions, the equation remains incomplete. These three factors function together, in a multiplier relationship. If one is zero, the result is also zero.

We can examine the environment under three main categories: the physical environment, the socio-anthropological environment (the human-made environment), and the social environment, which itself includes subcategories such as family, school, peers, workplace, and even

military service. Since today's discussion is centered on the family, we will focus primarily on that dimension.

We possess a social structure that places neither the individual nor society wholly at the center. Our understanding is that a virtuous society is composed of virtuous individuals, and a virtuous individual is raised within a virtuous society. Thus, the individual and society are perceived in a balanced way. In other words, the individual is not sacrificed to society, as in some Eastern cultures, nor is society sacrificed to the individual, as in many Western cultures. Our conception of the family is built upon this very balance between the individual and the community. According to this un-

derstanding, a child's character is formed within the family. The family is not merely a place that

nourishes the child; it is also a center that guides, educates, and models behavior. Today, however, under the influence of Western culture, our family and education systems have granted excessive space to the child's so-called individuality, leaving them without direction. This is why, in the past, young men like Kinali Hasan could march to martyrdom at the age of thirteen, while today, we see seventeen-year-olds who, overwhelmed by anxiety as they prepare for university entrance exams, are rushed to emergency rooms with heart palpitations, heavy sweating, and chest and back pains, only to be diagnosed, after tests and examinations, with panic disorder, anxiety disorders, or mood disorders. What we are witnessing is not simply a pedagogical problem but the result of a **cultural rupture**, a kind of rootlessness.

***“If you cannot educate the parents,
you cannot educate the child.”***



How should we understand the concept of “family” today? And why is this definition so important?

Concepts are the carriers of a worldview. As Thomas Kuhn put it, “Knowledge is like language. It is either the property of a community, or it is nothing.” He is absolutely right. The fundamental problem of today’s so-called “plural world” countries can be seen precisely in this. Their academics often produce knowledge using the concepts and notions of Continental Europe and North America, attempting to address their own local issues through the frameworks, methods, and philosophies of science that belong to those regions. Yet every philosophy of science, every method, every concept and notion represents the culture, the problems, and the solutions of the context in which it emerged. They are invented or derived for that place, and they carry its cultural imprint. Viewed from this perspective, the philosophies of science, methodologies, and conceptual frameworks produced in Continental Europe and North America tend to be materialist/positivist, monist, and reductionist. Consequently, whether in psychology or sociology, when we approach the family, every definition, from its roles, functions, and responsibilities to its status in society, is shaped in line with those intellectual traditions. We may take as examples some of the terms frequently discussed today: burnout, gender, and culture. We may take as examples some of the terms frequently discussed today: burnout, gender, and culture. The issues these terms represent are specific to Western societies; when they are transplanted and forced to “fit” into our

own context, they disrupt the harmony and systems of reference within our society. At that point, we are confronted with what may be called compulsory or imposed cultural change. The concept of the family has also been framed within this paradigm. For instance, it is often defined in this way: “The smallest unit of society, formed by the union of a male and a female, consisting of parents and children.” But when each element of this definition is examined carefully, it becomes clear that the same elements are present in the animal kingdom. In other words, there appears to be no essential difference between the definition of the human family and the structures found among animals. This is because the prevailing scientific outlook in Western societies is materialist and positivist, and thus compelled to make definitions of this kind. If a proper definition of family is to be made, then in addition to the elements in the definition above, one must also include all of its tangible and intangible qualities, as well as its functions and, crucially, the institution of marriage. Put differently, the home established by human beings must, in both

its qualitative and quantitative aspects, be defined through marriage. For marriage to be valid, it must not only take place between the opposite sexes, but also within the bounds permitted by religion. The vows made in marriage are, in essence, considered to be made before the Creator (Allah), and thus represent the most solemn promise that can be given. This definition is not merely religious; it is also humanistic, ontological, historical, and cultural. From the very first human being to the present day, it has remained unchanged. Yet I must sadly note that, as with many other concepts today, the notion of marriage has also been objectified, reduced to a mere social formality, and thereby stripped of its original meaning, scope, and principles.

The very reason for the family’s existence is to safeguard humanity’s ability to live humanely; to ensure the healthy continuation of generations; to provide spouses with peace and tranquility; to foster socialization; to complete the individual’s psychological integrity; to secure psychological resilience and flexibility; to teach the value of unity and togetherness while compensating for individual shortcomings through shared life; to transmit and sustain moral principles; and to serve as a source of strength and stability in economic terms.

In family life, the unity and harmony established between husband and wife, between parents and children, and among siblings is of paramount importance. Without this, the family cannot secure its future, maintain its existence, or fulfill its role as it should. Otherwise, what emerges is a fragmented, broken, and above all non-func-

***“The family is
more than an
institution; it is
where character
is forged.”***



tional family. For this reason, from the very formation of the family, it is essential to ensure unity of purpose, aim, and ideal, as well as to practice moral principles such as justice, loyalty, fidelity, patience, respect, and intentional love within family life. Equally indispensable is the proper application of duties, authorities, and responsibilities within the family. One of the greatest threats facing families today, beyond the diminishing significance attached to family itself, is the weakening or loss of internal unity. Especially since the rise of materialist, positivist, monist, and reductionist approaches in science, the conceptual frameworks that underpin reference systems, including those related to the family and its functions, have suffered both loss and emptiness. Concepts such as "mother, father, sibling, elder brother, elder sister" have come to denote not only age difference but also a loss of function. Yet in our cultural tradition, these words also signified roles and responsibilities: a mother was not only the one who bore children, but the very center of compassion; a father did not merely represent authority, but was the bearer of dignity and justice. Indeed, this is beautifully expressed in *Divanü Lügati't-Türk*: "If the man is corrupted, the family collapses; if the mother is corrupted, the state falls."

How does this conceptual confusion affect education?

It can be said that education begins with the choice of a spouse. In order for young people to make sound and accurate decisions in choosing a partner, they should ask questions as far-sighted, abstract, and subjective as: "Could this person be the mother of my child?" or "Could this person be the father of my child?" If they approach the decision with such criteria, the margin for error will be greatly reduced. As a Turkish proverb puts it, "The tired cannot choose a horse, and the bachelor cannot choose a wife." In other words, as the intensity of need increases, the margin for error grows and the solution becomes more difficult.

"A value that is neither seen, felt, nor lived cannot be transformed into education."



Nowadays, the age of marriage has unfortunately risen into the thirties. This creates significant challenges for child-rearing, both from a demographic perspective and from a psychological one. The fact that today's families often have only one child poses a dual problem: on the one hand, it raises concerns for the future of the family and of the lineage, and on the other, it places the only child, growing up without siblings, into a sociological, psychological, and existential situation that can be quite difficult.

Everyone who marries should first recognize that everything they do in their role as a mother or father will be internalized by their children, whether already born or yet to come, without any special effort. In other words, every action parents take in daily life, whether consciously or unconsciously, becomes a measure for their children. Put simply, parents serve as role models.

The quality of relationships established between siblings within the family is of great importance both for the happiness of the family and for determining whether the siblings grow into well-adjusted adults. In

order to foster positive relationships, it is first necessary to identify the factors that either prevent healthy bonds from forming or disrupt those that have already been established.

The relationships formed between siblings carry great importance, as they have a profound impact on later life. When two siblings develop an excessively dependent and demanding bond, marked by egotistic, egocentric, or even narcissistic and domineering traits, it becomes very difficult for them to build positive relationships with others in adulthood. Likewise, whether male or female, an adult who cannot detach from their siblings is a sign of immaturity.

Parents who are able to treat their children with fairness provide them with the foundation to build balanced relationships with others throughout their lives. What matters here is that parents truly understand what justice means and how to apply it in their interactions with siblings in order to be fair. When fairness is absent, emotional favoritism can lead to the birth and growth of hostility among siblings. When

parents single out one child as the “favorite” of the household, feelings of resentment and enmity inevitably take root among the others. A child who is favored for being the eldest, the youngest, or simply the most attractive ultimately pays a heavy price, for everything gained through parental favoritism is offset by a lifetime of rejection and resentment from siblings. Even in adulthood, a person who has achieved remarkable success may still carry the sting of having always been second or third in childhood, unable to fully savor their achievements. Of course, it is not possible to point to a single cause behind such feelings. Every child needs love, care, and a sense of being valued. Yet this affection and compassion must remain measured; it must not turn into misplaced indulgence. When love and care are expressed through overprotection, they risk stifling the child’s abilities and potential, and preventing the development of genuine self-confidence.

When viewed from the perspective of family-school collaboration, what kind of picture emerges?

From the standpoint of family-school collaboration, the principle applies that “if you cannot educate the parents, you cannot educate the child.” Accordingly, the school must concern itself not only with the education of the student but also with the education of the parents. Unfortunately, in many nuclear families today, parents do not fully understand what it truly means to be a mother or a father. They attempt to resolve situations and experiences with whatever knowledge they happen to have at the moment, or through purely rational approaches. As a result, serious mistakes are made, in child-rearing as well as in marital relationships, leading to instability and sometimes irreparable harm. The alarming rise in divorce rates, and the growing number of children who, despite having living parents, can be described as “fathered orphans” or “mothered orphans,” represent some of the most difficult areas of family-school collaboration. Particularly troubling are cases where, after having chil-



“A family that does not share a table cannot share a dream.”



dren, parents divorce: fathers who become what global discourse calls “single fathers” and mothers who become “single mothers.” The very need for such terms is itself a stark indicator of the disintegration of family life.

When it comes to family-school collaboration and the education of our children, there is unfortunately another issue, one that is extremely difficult to prevent, and that is social media. Parents, schools, and teachers have been sidelined, or in other words rendered passive, while children, from as early as six months of age, have increasingly become beings raised and educated by social media itself. This, in turn, becomes the source of numerous problems and mistakes in children’s psychological, pedagogical, sociological, and cultural development. Let me share an example I personally observed: A mother and father had come to a restaurant for a meal. Their six-month-old baby was in a stroller. Onto the stroller’s handle, they had

attached a device to hold a mobile phone, and on it they played a cartoon for the baby. While the parents ate their meal, the six-month-old sat in the stroller watching the cartoon. In other words, children are no longer the children of their parents, they have become the children of cartoons and social media (!).

In modern families, there seems to be a child-centered structure. Is this a healthy direction?

Children raised in this way often develop unbalanced communication with their parents. They may speak to their mothers and fathers as if they were friends, or even as if they were servants, and at times they may even scold them. They accuse their parents of ignorance and express distrust in their knowledge. This imbalance leads children to speak to their parents in imperatives, seeing them less as caregivers and more as servants.

Because many parents do not truly understand what it means to be a mother or father, they often end up doing more harm than good despite their good intentions. Let me share a few examples I have personally witnessed: a family asks their child “What color car should we buy?” when purchasing a vehicle, or they arrange their household according to the child’s wishes. Can such weighty matters really be left to the decision of a child whose will and judgment are not yet developed, simply so they might feel included in family decisions? This is not freedom; it is a lack of direction. A child raised in this way grows up without knowing their limits, easily breaking down or giving up at the first obstacle they encounter. So what should the standard be in such cases? In our culture, there is a beautiful principle that guided family communication and decision-making: **“In service, the mother takes the lead; in respect, the father.”** This balance builds both authority and love. A child raised in such a structure learns how to show respect both to themselves and to society.

Professor, what concrete suggestions would you offer for passing on these values within the family?

In terms of both status and the process of communication and education, the first priority should be for schools and families to share same goals, purposes, and ideals. If children encounter one set of morals, customs, traditions, standards, and aims at home and a different set at school, the result can be imbalance, confusion, inconsistency, uncertainty, and even personality disorders. Therefore, schools and families must work together in unity on these matters. In addition, families can organize regular shared meals. For example, **families could establish a weekly family meal.** This meal should be treated with importance in every respect. Everyone sitting at the same table, beginning together with courtesy and prayer, carries real significance. Around that table, children learn manners, patience, and decency. Another activity I recommend for families is

“The modern world has over-individualized children, and as a result, it has left them profoundly alone.”

a shared reading hour. Families can read short passages from classic texts together, reflect on them, and invite children to explain what they understood or to share their own interpretations. For instance, stories from the *Masnavi*, sections from *Kutadgu Bilig*, poems by Yunus Emre, or anecdotes of Nasreddin Hodja can be read aloud. These works transmit not only knowledge but also a philosophy of life. Along with the words themselves, patterns of behavior are also passed on to the child. To these suggestions, I would add one more: families and schools should work together to set **common goals**. A true family cannot emerge from individuals who live under the same roof yet dream entirely different dreams. Where there is no shared feeling, no shared purpose, and no shared values, loneliness only grows.

Today’s children are growing up in a digital universe. How should families approach this?

Most parents do not understand their children’s digital lives. They impose bans, but they do not provide guidance. Today’s children are not simply “Generation Z”; they are **digital natives**. A parent who does not know the games their child plays, the content they watch, or the accounts they follow cannot truly communicate with them. In this gap, children learn either from their peers or from random online content. If families do not enter this world, they will be exclu-

ed from their child’s world. Digital literacy is therefore no longer just a necessity for young people, it is a **requirement for mothers and fathers** as well.

Professor, could you touch on how the exam-centered structure of our education system affects the family?

Today’s education system is built on **American pragmatism**, with the central question being, “What is it good for?” As a result, discussions revolve only around success, grades, and careers. Yet our educational tradition aims at **raising the complete, virtuous person**. The true goal of education should be to cultivate good citizens and **good human beings**. This is the human ideal described by Yunus Emre, Mevlana, and Haci Bektaş. At the foundation of this ideal lies integrity of character. Without individuals of character, neither the family can be peaceful and happy, nor the society strong and enduring.

So how can this integrity be achieved, and how can the family be restructured to realize these goals?

First, we must make the right diagnosis: this is a cultural earthquake. Physical earthquakes destroy cities, but they can be rebuilt. **Moral earthquakes**, however, shatter the soul of society, and their repair takes not one or two years but generations. That is why we must act without delay. The state, NGOs, educational institutions, and families must launch a new **cultural mobilization** together, placing the family at the center, rebuilding values, and integrating those values into education.

Thank you very much, Professor. This has been a rich and inspiring conversation.

I also thank the Maarif Foundation and Maarif Journal for their sensitivity and contributions in the field of education. Without considering family and education together, we cannot build a healthy future. Publications like this are not only steps toward addressing the present, but also **toward shaping tomorrow**.





DR. ROBERT JENKINS

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Education can serve as a catalyst, a springboard for promoting social justice both within societies and on a global scale. It holds the potential to empower individuals and communities, and access to employment can be made possible through education.

Former Director of Education and Adolescent Development, Programme Division (UNICEF); Graduate School of Education, Harvard University



would like to thank the organizers of this prestigious conference for bringing such an important issue to the agenda and for giving me the opportunity to share my reflections on the relationship between education and social justice. I believe it is of great importance to listen to the perspectives of my colleagues and participants and to focus together on finding solutions.

In the context of this discussion, social justice may be simply defined as the condition in which every child's equal opportunity to access and benefit from fundamental rights and opportunities is fulfilled.

Education holds tremendous potential, not only within individual nations but also at regional and global levels, to influence and advance the state of social justice. I am confident that everyone in this forum would agree that schools play a vital role in promoting social justice; yet, if overlooked or misdirected, they can just as easily reinforce inequality and exclusion.

FACTORS THAT DEFINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

There are three key elements in any school system that define the relationship between education and social justice: 1. The level of access to education for all children, 2. The content that is taught (the "what") as well as how it is taught (the "how"), 3. The pedagogical approach applied within every school and at every level. It is crucial to recognize how these three elements are interconnected and whether the system, as a whole, promotes social justice and upholds other human rights. There is also a strong link between education and other rights such as learning, health, protection, and participation. Therefore, the importance of education is not only about the level and quality of access, the content, and the pedagogy, but also about how these dimensions connect to the broader realization of every child's human rights. In this regard, I would define the relationship between education and social justice as follows: Education holds the potential to act as a springboard for children to access a broad range of rights, and at the same time, it contributes to the development of a more just society as a whole.

Education can serve as a catalyst, and as I mentioned earlier, a springboard, for promoting social justice both within societies and on a global scale. It holds the potential to empower individuals and communities, and access to employment can be made possible through education. By equipping every child with the skills needed to realize their potential, education can break the cycle of poverty. It can also foster social cohesion through the promotion of shared values and principles of inclusion. Moreover, education has the power to proactively reduce disparities and address systemic inequalities within societies. However, the extent to which education can fulfill this role is directly linked to the level of support provided to teachers within every education system. This support is a crucial determinant of whether education can truly act as a driver of social justice.





Malagasy
school students
during class.
Madagascar.

The economic resources of schools, their physical conditions, and the quality of their teaching staff may vary from region to region, and these differences inevitably affect education. In addition, the curriculum may risk failing to represent certain groups within society or to be inclusive, which poses a challenge for marginalized communities.



EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION

To ensure that education can truly serve as a catalyst for promoting social cohesion, we must first address the persistent challenges to equal access, challenges that arise in many countries and at the global level. Around the world, children face a range of barriers to education. These barriers are often linked to socioeconomic status, geographic location, gender, language, and disability. Such factors continue to hinder the ability of many children to access their right to education and learning. Moreover, disparities in school funding, physical infrastructure, and the quality of teaching staff across regions further affect educational outcomes. In addition, when curricula fail to represent and include all segments of society, they risk reinforcing exclusion and marginalization for certain groups.

The disparity in public funding between high-income and low-income countries is further exacerbated by household spending: families in low-income countries allocate a greater share of their limited resources to education compared to those in high-income countries

From a broader perspective, one of the most significant achievements in global education over the past 50 years has been the substantial increase in primary school enrolment rates and the progress made toward achieving gender parity at the primary level.

However, this notable success in enrolment has not been matched by similar progress in learning outcomes. In many regions, particularly those with a high concentration of low-income countries, improvements in learning levels have lagged behind. Marginalized children, who often face challenges in both accessing education and experiencing quality learning, remain the most affected by the global learning crisis.

For education to truly realize its potential in promoting social justice, every

child must not only be enrolled in the education system but also have equitable access to meaningful learning opportunities that equip them with essential skills. Unfortunately, for millions of children, these opportunities remain a distant prospect. When we compare average indicators from low-income countries with those from high-income countries, stark disparities become evident. Differences in the duration of schooling, per-child investment in education, and the overall quality of learning outcomes all have a clear and direct impact on education's ability to serve as a driver of social justice.

INEQUALITIES HINDER GLOBAL JUSTICE

If we consider a child's learning journey, we can clearly identify critical turning points where urgent action is needed. For instance, when children first start school, roughly three-quarters are at a similar developmental level. However, by age 10, only half of them globally can comprehend a simple story, an important milestone in the learning journey. By age 15, just three out of ten possess the necessary skills expected at the secondary level. And by the age of 18, only one in four young people has acquired the full set of skills needed for employment.

The efficiency and effectiveness of public spending on education are critical to realizing the full potential of education as a force for social justice. As previously noted, the level of available resources also matters. When examining public spending trends over the past two decades, one can compare the trajectories in high-income countries with those in upper-middle,



For education to realise its potential in promoting social justice, every child must have equitable access not only to the formal education system but also to diverse learning opportunities that foster the development of a broad range of skills.



DR. ROBERT JENKINS

Former Director of Education and Adolescent Development, Programme Division (UNICEF); Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

Dr. Robert Jenkins is a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and has over 30 years of experience in international development and humanitarian programming across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

From 2019 to 2024, Dr. Jenkins served as the Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development at UNICEF. Prior to this role, he was the UNICEF Representative in Jordan (2014-2019) and Deputy Director of the Policy and Strategy Division at UNICEF Headquarters (2009-2014).

Between 1995 and 2009, Dr. Jenkins held various programme and management positions within UNICEF, serving in Uganda (1995-1997), Bangladesh (1997-2000), Myanmar (2000-2003), India (2003-2006), and Mozambique (2006-2009).

He holds a master's degree from the London School of Economics and a doctorate in Education from the University of Bath.

Dr. Jenkins is a Canadian national. He is married and has a daughter and a son.

lower-middle, and low-income countries. What we observe is not only a disparity in absolute spending levels, but also a striking divergence in trends over the past two decades, indicating that inequalities between these countries are not narrowing, but in fact widening.

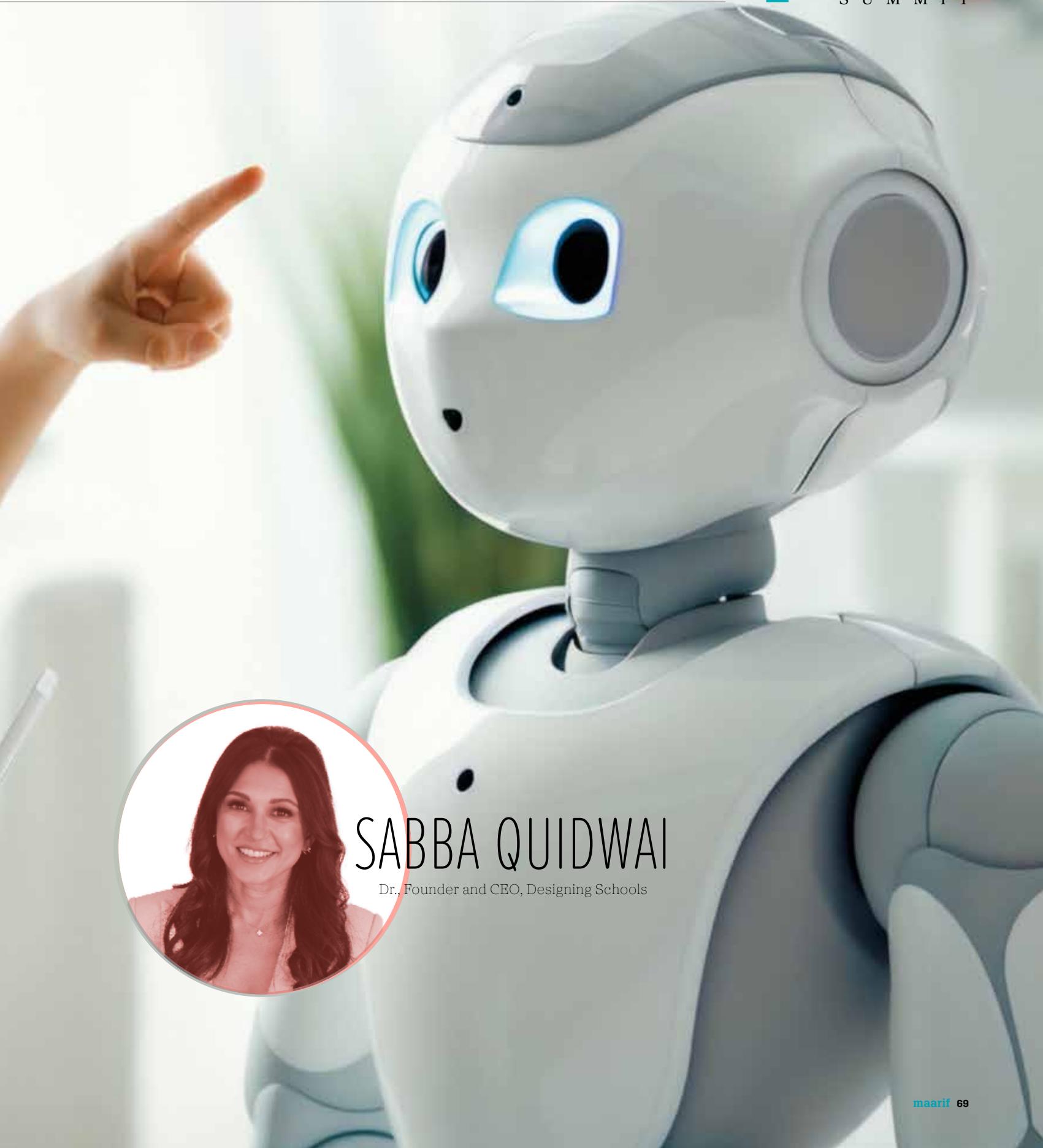
The disparity in public funding between high-income and low-income countries is further exacerbated by household spending: families in low-income countries allocate a greater share of their limited resources to education compared to those in high-income countries. This financial pressure on households in low-income countries, combined with limited public funding, significantly constrains the potential of education to advance social justice. In many ways, this represents a social justice issue in its own right, one that plays out on a global scale.

In conclusion, for education to fulfil its potential in promoting social justice, it is essential to address disparities in access to and the quality of education both across and within countries. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of education systems, alongside increasing the level of available resources, will be of critical importance. Equally vital is the careful consideration of both what is taught and how it is taught, as these constitute key elements in ensuring that every child benefits from a socially just and inclusive education system.



The Integration of
Artificial Intelligence
into Education:
**A THREAT OR AN
OPPORTUNITY?**

There remains considerable confusion surrounding artificial intelligence. In the field of education, we observe ongoing efforts to ban, restrict, or impose strict regulations on the use of AI. However, such attempts appear increasingly unfeasible in practice.



SABBA QUIDWAI

Dr., Founder and CEO, Designing Schools



In the first part of my talk, I would like to focus on students and young people, followed by adults and educators. This structure will allow me to share my reflections on how each group can be empowered in different areas. I am a former history teacher, and today, our work centers on integrating Artificial Intelligence and technology into education. At the heart of this work lies a fundamental question: How can we cultivate a culture of innovation that also creates space for empathy?

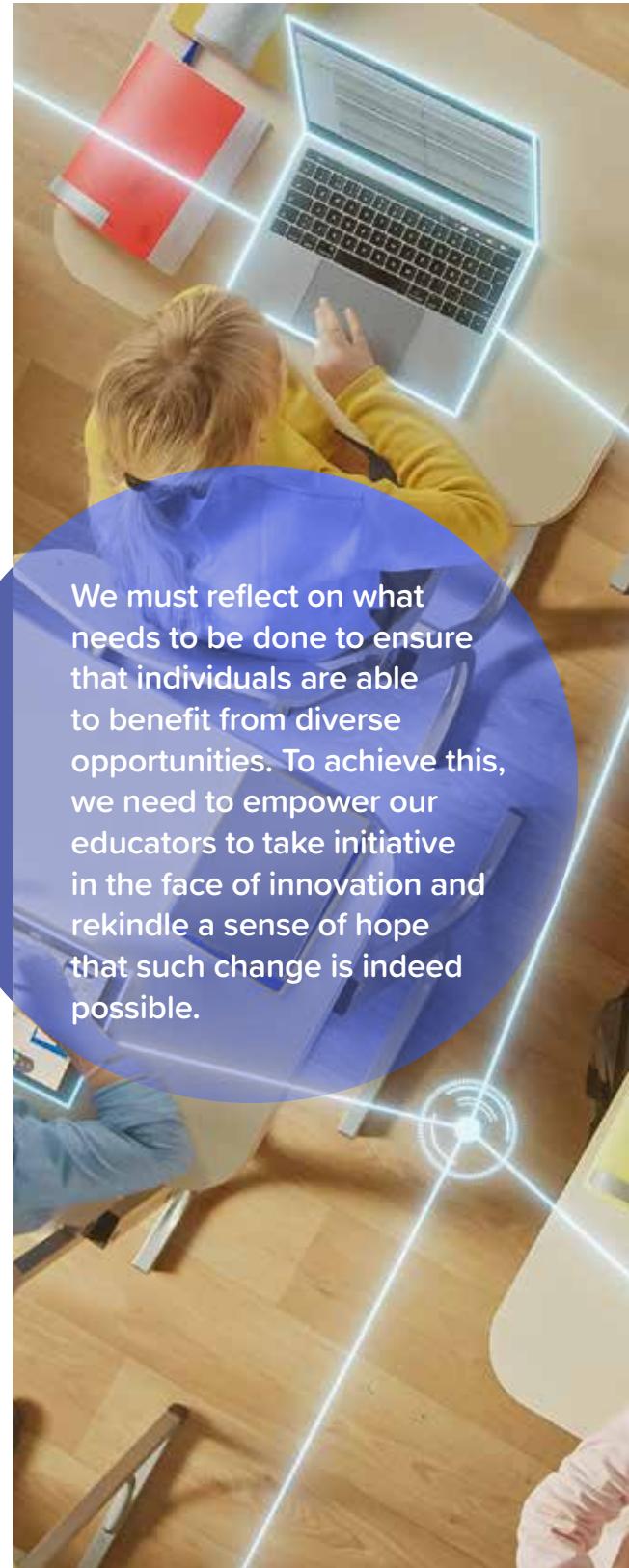
If we do not speak openly about our challenges, we cannot identify the factors that concern, motivate, or inspire us. I would like to frame sustainability as a concept that goes beyond environmental factors. True sustainability requires harmony across all dimensions of human action. We call for prosperity and justice for all humanity, but how can we pursue economic growth and development without harming the planet or people? How can we preserve the Earth and the values we hold dear while striving for equitable progress?

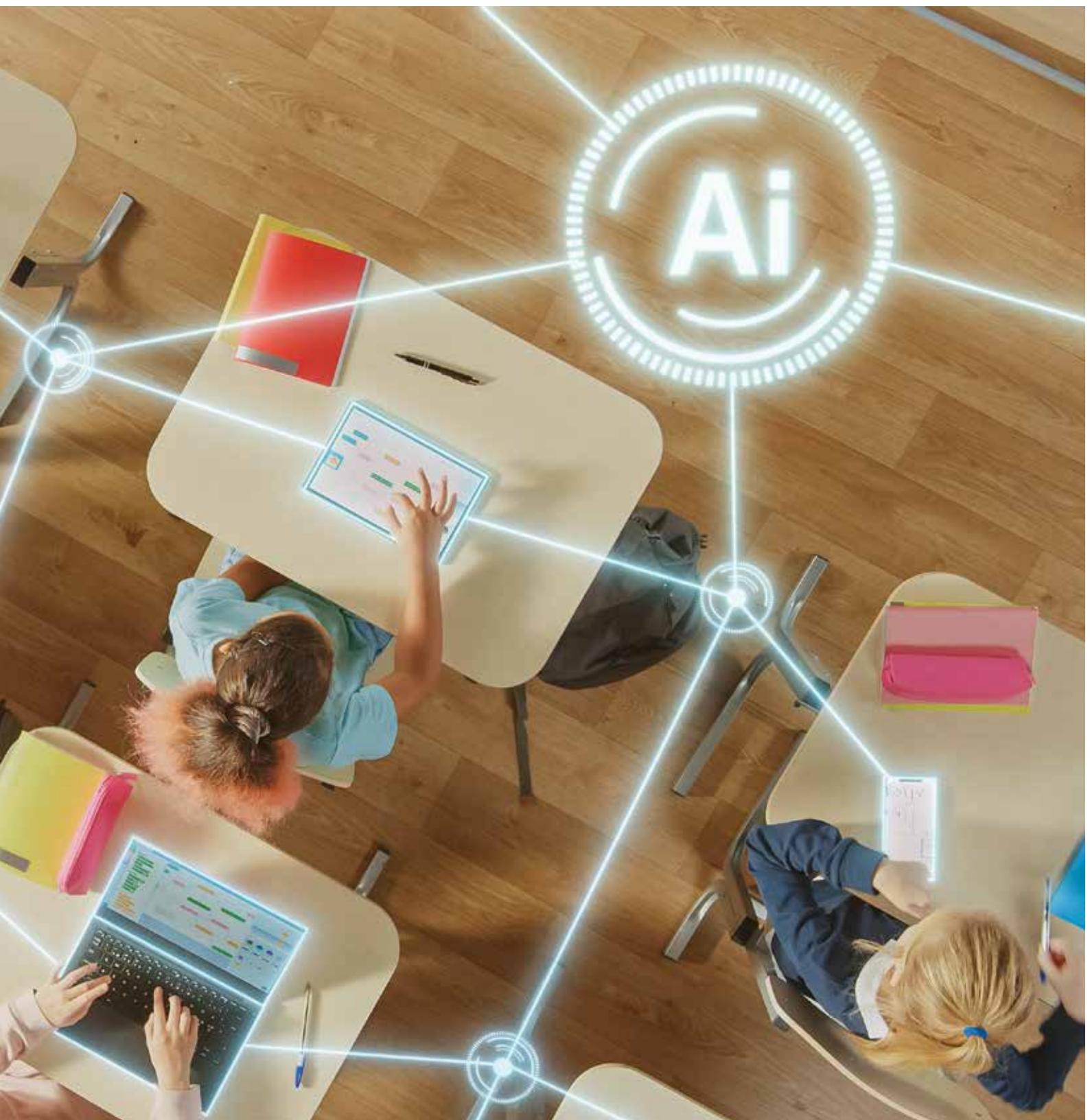
CAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS?

The concepts of prosperity and sustainability are gaining increasing attention in today's world. A growing body of research offers perspectives on how artificial intelligence might address the complex challenges we face, both now and in the future. With the capabilities it provides, AI has the potential to help build a society of prosperity beyond what we can currently imagine. It holds the promise of improving lives in ways that could make everyone's future better than their present.

Personally, I believe that the word "can" plays a crucial role in how we express ourselves. Rather than saying "We will achieve this," I find it more accurate and empowering to say "We can achieve this." Building on this perspective, we must reflect on what must be done to ensure that people are truly able to benefit from the diverse opportunities available to them. To this end, we need to enable our educators to take initiative in creating and embracing innovation and we must rekindle a sense of hope that such transformation is indeed possible.

We often hear limiting expressions that begin with "We can't do this because..." Such statements of restriction are common, they exist everywhere and always will. The real opportunity lies in our ability to see beyond these limitations and to identify alternative pathways and solutions across different fields. There are many strategies that could be







discussed in this regard. However, I would like to focus on a specific example to explore the factors that influence what people believe is possible within their own contexts.

A few months ago, we were invited to an event that brought together student leadership teams from 15 different international schools.

The goal of gathering nearly 260 students from these schools was to explore one central question: How can we design an experience that integrates artificial intelligence into community service projects with a focus on sustainability? Our aim was to help students, many from IB and equivalent schools, develop an understanding of the unique role AI can play in fostering integrity, ethics, and meaningful community engagement.

Design thinking, grounded in empathy and similar guiding principles, seeks to bring everyone into the conversation. The version of design thinking we use in our teaching is truly a unique experience.

DESIGN THINKING

In this particular experience, we employed a method known as design thinking. What makes design thinking distinct from many other approaches is that it does not begin with an answer or a solution. It begins with empathy. It does not start by telling you what to do. Rather, it begins by encouraging a kind of inquiry, inviting people within a community to talk to one another. As you know, we often remain in our own silos. Educators speak primarily with other educators. Administrators are not always part of conversations with students. Community members are frequently left out altogether. Design thinking, grounded in empathy and similar guiding principles, seeks to bring everyone into the conversation. The version of design thinking we use in our teaching is truly a unique



experience. It is not simply a method for creating a prototype or testing a solution. It represents a fundamental shift in mindset when approaching education. We may not have an answer, and we may not yet know what the solution will be. But design thinking allows us to focus on how we might find a path forward. With comfort in ambiguity, we can begin taking steps, one at a time, toward a meaningful solution.

At the outset, the students were presented with a list of topics they might want to work on. This list included a wide range of areas such as environmental responsibility, creating better school environments, health and well-being, community relationships, and volunteer-based resources.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND HUMAN STRENGTHS

In this context, we conducted three workshops with the students. The first focused on exploring the respective strengths of artificial intelligence and human beings. In this session, we examined what effective collaboration between humans and AI might look like, particularly when deciding when and where to use specific tools.

The second workshop focused on making a specific topic actionable using both AI and individual skills. In this process, design thinking proved to be especially effective. It is easy to get lost among different ideas, but the key is to turn them into concrete projects through structured planning, whether over five days, five weeks or five months. Through this workshop, we saw that such planning could be done in a clear and time-efficient manner.

The third workshop focused on presentation and pitching. Based on this experience, I would say this: do not just talk about your ideas. Show people what you plan to test, how you intend to implement it, and what your first steps will be.



Do not only talk about your ideas. Show people what you intend to test, how you plan to implement it, and what your first steps will be.

The earlier this kind of approach is introduced, the easier it becomes to carry these skills into adulthood. These strategies help individuals develop the confidence to navigate the complexities, challenges and uncertainties that are a constant part of today's world. They support our ability to manage the many variables we frequently encounter in adult life.

This approach is also highly significant in terms of human development, as it enables individuals to gain a broader perspective. Today, we see that employers increasingly value skills such as problem-solving and creativity. The integration of artificial intelligence into the workplace does not mean that human values have lost their importance. People continue to seek honesty and ethical integrity in those

around them. The key question is whether we can motivate others to uphold these principles.

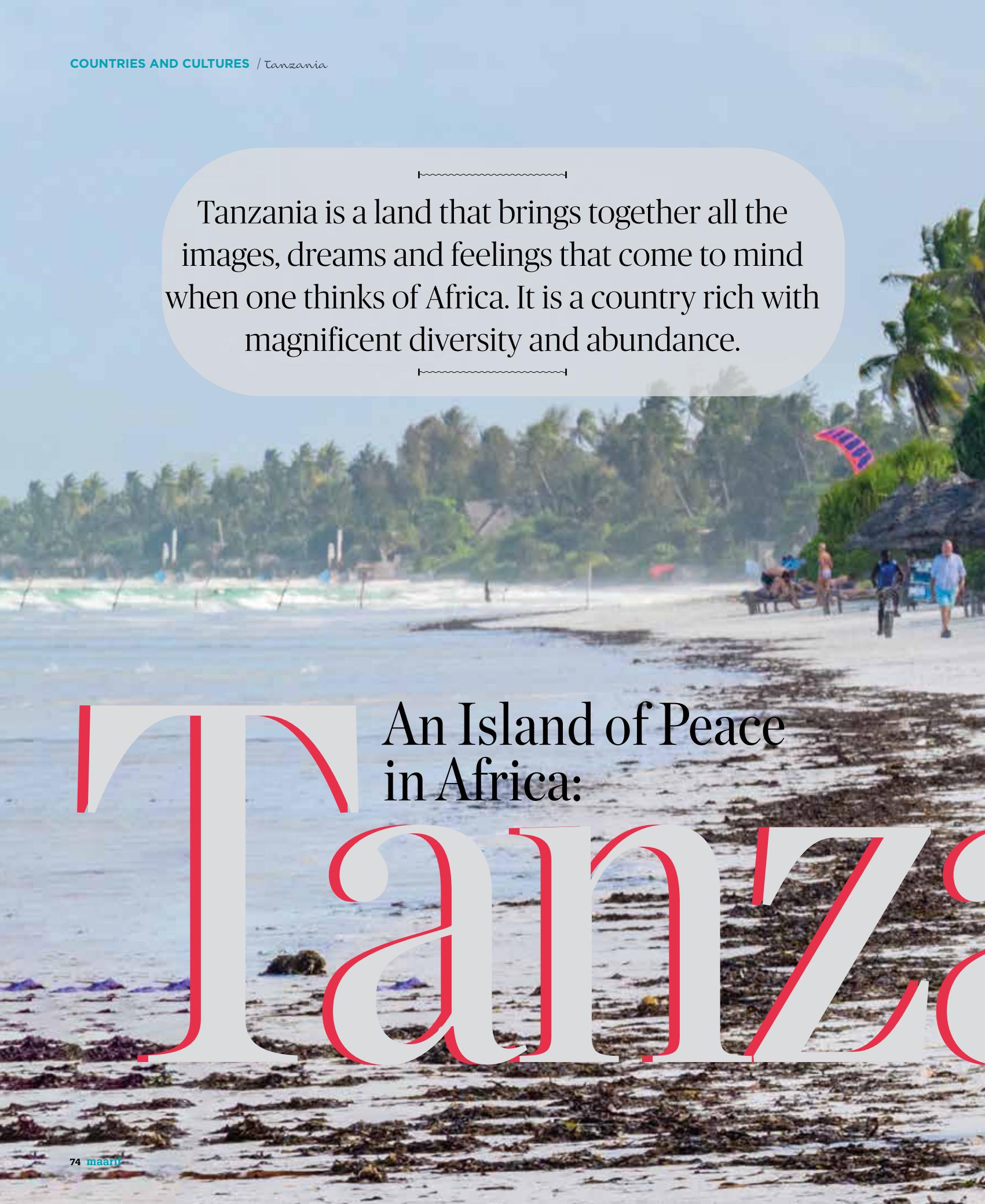
In this study, I witnessed some of the best presentations I have seen, despite the students' young age.

Yet there remains considerable confusion surrounding artificial intelligence. In the field of education, we continue to observe attempts to ban, restrict or impose strict regulations on its use. However, such measures do not appear to be feasible in practice.

What is most important for young people at this stage is the ability to cope with the complexities of decision-making in a safe space, together with adults who care for them and believe in them, and to be meaningfully included in this process. In such an environment, they can fail safely and learn repeatedly from these tools.

When you grant them this agency, it can be truly exciting to witness the range of diverse perspectives and ideas they bring forward.

Tanzania is a land that brings together all the images, dreams and feelings that come to mind when one thinks of Africa. It is a country rich with magnificent diversity and abundance.



An Island of Peace in Africa: Zanzibar



Bekir Bilgili

Tanzania is a country that brings together all the images, dreams and emotions that come to mind when one thinks of Africa, offering a wealth of magnificent diversity. In this land, one can encounter both the modern face of Africa and the most authentic aspects of human life, preserved in the traditions of hunter-gatherer communities untouched by the disruptive effects of modernity. On the slopes of Arusha, leaning against Mount Kilimanjaro, the air enchants visitors with its delicacy, filled with the aromas of countless blossoms. In Dar es Salaam, one can experience a paradise shaped by the gifts of a tropical climate. Zanzibar, once a major trading hub from the Assyrian era through the period of colonization, evokes the feeling of being in a North African Muslim city. At the same time, with its unspoiled nature, it reminds you in the most genuine way that you are part of this world.

Perhaps what I have shared so far serves more as a prelude that summarizes what should have been said at the end. To be honest, it is not easy to capture the feelings that Tanzania evokes in me within the limits of a single travel essay.

Tanzania is a united republic formed by the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. During the colonial era, the territory remained under German control until the late 19th century and subsequently came under British rule following the First World

War. Tanganyika gained its independence in 1962 under that name, while Zanzibar achieved independence in 1963. In 1964, the two countries decided to unite, and the name "Tanzania" was created by combining the initial syllables of their names.

A HISTORY MARKED BY HARDSHIP

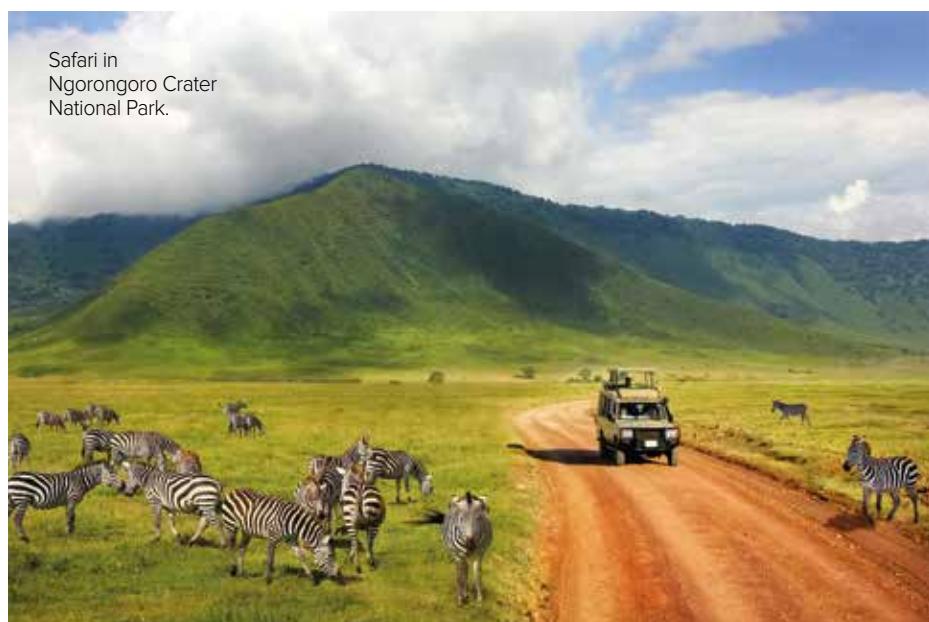
Due to its proximity to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, Tanzania is one of the few Sub-Saharan African countries where urbanization emerged at an



early stage. The spread of Islam along the Tanzanian coast beginning in the 8th century demonstrates that this region was by no means isolated from the wider world. Muslim merchants played a significant role in the establishment of cities in the area. By the early second millennium, Swahili settlements had become vital hubs, linking African civilizations with neighboring coastal towns and fostering the growth of trade. The renowned traveler Ibn Battuta described Kilwa, located in southern Tanzania and at its height between the years 1200 and 1500, as one of the most prosperous and advanced cities in the world.

In 1498, when Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and arrived in Tanzania, Europeans set foot on these shores for the first time. The Portuguese established an extensive colonial network in the region. However, Sultan Seyyid Said of Oman gradually consolidated his power, eventually driving the Portuguese north of the Ruvuma River. In 1840, the Sultan moved his capital to Zanzibar and expanded his authority as far inland as Lake Tanganyika.

Following the period of Arab rule, the territory became a German colony from the 1880s until 1919. After the First World War, control passed to the British. The period of British colonial rule ended in 1962 on the mainland and in 1963 on Zanzibar.





A hotel in Dar es Salaam



As a united republic, Tanzania today stands as one of the most stable countries in Africa. The inter-tribal conflicts that have plagued other parts of the continent have long been left behind here. With roughly half of its population Muslim and the other half Christian, the country has fostered a social cohesion grounded in mutual respect and trust.

DAR ES SALAAM: TANZANIA'S GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

The first stop on my journey to Tanzania was Dar es Salaam, an important port city and the country's gateway to the world. Built on the site of a small fishing village called Mzizima, the city rose to prominence in 1862 when Sultan Seyyid Majid, the son of the Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Said, developed the area and commissioned the construction of a palace. From that time onward, it came to be known as Dar es Salaam.

Dar es Salaam means "abode of peace." With its natural harbor, the city has been an important trading center throughout history and, with a population exceeding seven

million, it is today the largest city in East Africa. Although the capital was officially moved to Dodoma in 1974, Dar es Salaam has lost none of its significance. It continues to serve as the country's hub for art, culture, media, and finance. As one of the fastest-growing cities in the world, Dar es Salaam immediately impresses visitors with its intense activity from the moment they leave the airport and move into the heart of the city. The urban landscape is being reshaped with new infrastructure, transportation networks, and multifunctional buildings. Informal settlements are giving way to modern housing and business centers, profoundly transforming the city's economic and social life. In this transformation, China plays a leading role, as it does in many other major African cities. Chinese companies and brands dominate the urban space, reflecting a preference in Tanzania, as in other African countries, for building economic ties with China rather than with Western powers that historically exploited the continent. Leveraging its



THOSE WHO SEEK THEIR FORTUNE IN THE SEA

As I sit down for breakfast, I notice hundreds of people gathered along the ocean shore, moving with urgency and purpose. Excited by the unexpected scene, one I had only seen in documentaries, I quickly grab my camera and head toward them. I witness the intense effort of local fishermen pulling in the nets they had cast into the sea the night before using small wooden boats. Watching this struggle unfold is truly captivating. I wait with anticipation, eager to see the day's catch. When the nets are finally drawn to shore, I am amazed by the sea's generosity. It is hard to believe that so much abundance can exist beneath the surface. I see fish I cannot even name, their sizes astonishing. After sharing the harvest among themselves, the fishermen pack their baskets and head off to the market, grateful for what the sea has offered them. Being a part of their early morning rhythm, even for a short while, was an unforgettable experience.

capital and human resources, China benefits substantially from this dynamic. At the same time, Tanzania's growing economy presents significant opportunities for international investors, including those from Türkiye.

True to its name, Dar es Salaam is a calm and peaceful city. Behind the modern buildings that now define much of its skyline, poverty still persists in many neighborhoods, yet people continue their lives with hope and serenity. The majority of the city's population is Muslim, though Christian communities and



groups adhering to local beliefs also form a significant share. The presence of churches and mosques standing side by side is a striking reflection of the climate of peace that characterizes the city. The cultural heritage of Dar es Salaam has been profoundly shaped by Arabs and Indians. Today, Muslims of Arab and Indian descent occupy an important place in the city's economic and cultural life. While many are largely detached from their ancestral traditions, they have become an integral part of Tanzania's eclectic culture. In the postcolonial period, Tanzania declared Swahili, known as Kiswahili, as its official language. Derived from the Arabic word *sawā’ili*, meaning “people of the coast,” Swahili carries numerous Arabic loanwords. It is carefully preserved as the national language and is respected as a unifying force that sustains national cohesion.

Dar es Salaam was not one of the main stops on my journey. I stayed there for just one night before heading to Arusha. My friends met me at the airport around 2 a.m., and we began our drive to the place where I would be staying. Ledge Hotel is a peaceful retreat located on the shores of the Indian Ocean, where bungalows are arranged in harmony with the surrounding nature. The hotel's garden resembles an arboretum. In

We pay a courtesy visit to H.E. Mr. Bekir Gezer, the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye in Dar es Salaam. During our conversation, the Ambassador kindly shared his insights and experiences regarding Tanzania and the city of Dar es Salaam.

this space, a remarkable variety of trees and plants native to Tanzania surround you with a refreshing and calming presence, stretching all the way toward the ocean. At night, the atmosphere becomes even more magical. Beneath this lush canopy, the natural symphony created by the sounds of insects, birds and other creatures brings the place to life in a way that soothes both body and spirit.

In the early morning, I head down to the restaurant for breakfast. Located at the center of the hotel complex, the restaurant is built in a traditional African style, with a thatched roof and open sides that allow the ocean breeze to flow through. In all its grandeur, the Indian Ocean stretches out before you. With white sands beneath leaning palm

trees, it is almost impossible to resist the allure of the sea.

In the afternoon, together with Mr. Cengiz Polat, the Tanzania Representative of the Maarif Foundation, and Mr. M. Taha Sirakaya from the local office, we paid a courtesy visit to H.E. Mr. Bekir Gezer, the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye in Dar es Salaam. During our conversation, the Ambassador kindly shared his insights and experiences regarding Tanzania and the city of Dar es Salaam.

Although Dar es Salaam is Tanzania's most important city in terms of international connectivity, it attracts fewer tourists compared to Arusha and Zanzibar. Nonetheless, it remains a key destination for safari enthusiasts. While the Serengeti in the north is renowned for its large animal populations, **Mikumi National Park**, located closer to Dar es Salaam, offers the opportunity to observe an even greater diversity of wildlife. Another remarkable feature of Dar es Salaam is its stunning coastline, with miles of breathtaking beaches along the Indian Ocean. **Kipepeo** and **Coco Beach** are among the city's most popular seaside spots. If you wish to purchase local products during your visit to Tanzania, the best place for shopping is **Kariakoo Market**. Here, you can find everything from traditional clothing and handmade souvenirs to modern electronic items. **The National Museum of Dar es Salaam** is also a must-see. It houses a wide range of documents and artifacts that provide insight into Tanzania's history and its colonial past.

A PARADISE ON EARTH: ARUSHA

Early in the morning, I am picked up from my hotel by Patrick, the driver from the Maarif Foundation's Tanzania office, for my journey to Arusha. Although the city's ongoing infrastructure works have caused heavy traffic and I briefly worry about missing my flight, Patrick, who knows the backroads well, manages to get me to the airport right on time. After a one-hour flight in a small propeller plane, I arrive in Arusha. As I step off the aircraft and breathe in the crisp air, I am overcome by the freshness of it. Situated at the

A View of Arusha from the Gran Meliá Hotel



foothills of Mount Meru, on the eastern branch of the **Great Rift Valley**, Arusha enjoys a cool climate throughout the year thanks to its elevated plateau location.

Located at the crossroads of world-renowned natural landmarks such as **Serengeti National Park, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Lake Manyara National Park, Olduvai Gorge, Tarangire National Park, Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru, Arusha** has become a meeting point for nature enthusiasts from around the globe. During my visit, I was struck by the vibrant tourism activity in the city. I learned that in late May and early June, Arusha attracts large numbers of safari enthusiasts who gather there to witness the world's greatest land mammal migration, as herds move from the Serengeti toward the Masai Mara in Kenya.

Compared to Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, Arusha is the city that most closely matches the image of Africa I had in mind. Indigenous Africans, most of whom belong to various tribes, make up a significant portion of the local population. At the same time, the city is home to a considerable Arab-Indian mixed community. In particular, many white Europeans can be seen in the city's upscale venues. With its mild climate and unique natural beauty,

Arusha offers an appealing environment for Europeans seeking a peaceful retirement. Large estates, mostly owned by British and other Western nationals, are scattered across the lush hills surrounding the city.

Arusha was established in the early 20th century by the Germans for the purpose of administering their colonial territories. Compared to the coastal cities, it does not have a very long history. Until 1961, when Tanzania gained independence from the United Kingdom, the city remained under German and later British control. Missionary activity is still notably present in Arusha today. Numerous international schools operate in the city, and these institutions are typically preferred by the socio-economic upper class. The school complex where the Turkish Maarif Foundation carries out its educational activities was formerly operated by a German foundation known as SOS and was later transferred to Maarif.

Although the areas surrounding Arusha are vibrant with nature-based tourism, the city itself remains relatively calm. Arusha offers several important cultural sites where visitors can engage with African heritage more closely. One such place is the **Arusha Cultural Heritage**



A TURKISH INVESTOR IN ARUSHA

While in Dar es Salaam, I had noticed promotional materials for a company called Nyssa Balloon, and I came across their name again in Arusha. As someone from Nevşehir, the brand immediately caught my attention, since "Nyssa" is the ancient name of my hometown. Together with Mr. Ahmet Demir, the Director of the Maarif School in Arusha, I arranged a visit to the company. We were warmly welcomed by the owner, Mr. Serdar Kahraman, and his wife, Mrs. Damla Kahraman. Mr. Kahraman and his partners in Türkiye have brought more than 30 years of experience in hot-air balloon tourism in Cappadocia to Arusha. For nearly 15 years now, they have been organizing balloon safaris over the Serengeti, and the company has secured a place among Tanzania's leading firms in this field. During our enjoyable conversation, we discovered that we shared many mutual friends. Mr. Serdar talks at length about the advantages Tanzania offers for Turkish investors. Although the slow pace of bureaucracy can pose challenges in the early stages, once established, he noted, Tanzania proves to be one of the most profitable countries in the world for tourism investments.

The Great Migration, Serengeti National Park

Center. Designed with architectural inspiration drawn from African symbols, the center functions as a unique art gallery. It houses an impressive collection of original African artworks, many of which are available for purchase and are locally produced. The museum features some of the finest examples of African painting and sculpture. Within the center complex, workshop spaces have been allocated primarily for artists with disabilities. These workshops allow visitors to observe the creative process behind many of the works displayed in the gallery.

For those familiar with the profound influence of African painting and sculpture on modern Western art, being in this museum is truly a privilege. Artists such as Gauguin, Picasso, Brancusi and Kirchner were drawn to the depth of African art, which remained untouched by the disruptive effects of modernism. African sculptures and masks, rather than imitating natural forms, conveyed a powerful sense of presence and mass. This capacity to express form without direct replication fascinated many modern artists and offered them a new path of artistic exploration.

The sculptures and masks in the museum sometimes depict a single object while others, crafted with remarkable intricacy, offer



vivid representations of Tanzania's natural environment and historical narratives. From works illustrating the horrors of the slave trade to carvings portraying the Great Migration, the largest movement of land mammals on Earth, many pieces display a striking aesthetic sensitivity carved into wood. This art form, commonly referred to as "**Makonde Carving**," is closely associated with the Makonde people and is traditionally learned through a master-apprentice relationship. It

often involves the use of dense hardwoods like ebony. To call this craft merely artisanal would not do it justice. The pieces go beyond simple imitation, reflecting the distinct perspective and creative expression of each artist. While one artist, Shoody Mohammed, was working on a sculpture, I had the opportunity to speak with him. He has been carving for 15 years, having learned the art from his elders. In Africa, art is part of daily life and is typically passed down through generations. Masks and sculptures hold deep significance in rituals, worship and everyday practices. For a brief moment, I watched in awe as the hard block of wood in Shoody Mohammed's hands was transformed into a stunning work of art.

In the garden of the center, members of the **Maasai tribe**, dressed in their traditional garments, sing and perform their dances throughout the day. Their musical talent and innate sense of rhythm are truly remarkable. Accompanied by songs and dance, I leave the Arusha Cultural Heritage Center.

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In the garden of the center, members of the Maasai tribe, dressed in their traditional garments, sing and perform their dances throughout the day, showcasing the enduring vitality of their cultural heritage.



A member of the Maasai tribe in front of the Arusha Cultural Heritage Center



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There are not many historical monuments to visit in Arusha's city center. The city is better known for the natural riches that surround it. The closest national park is Arusha National Park, although most tourists use Arusha as a base to access the Ngorongoro Crater and the plains of the Serengeti.

One of the more interesting places to visit in the city is the Maasai Market. This vibrant and lively market resembles a tin-roofed version of the traditional covered bazaars found in other parts of the world. A wide range of local clothing and handcrafted souvenirs can be found here. Around the market, one cannot help but notice the abundance of minibuses, which serve as a key mode of public transportation in the city. These vehicles are known locally as daladala. The word dala means "five shillings," and since the original fare for the minibus was ten shillings, people began calling them daladala. Although prices have increased over time, the name has remained in common use.

In recent years, hotels in Arusha have begun to market not just accommodation but what has become popularly known as an "experience." Within vast estates and coffee plantations, guests can take part in the coffee harvest or collect the eggs they will eat for breakfast in the morning.

As I enjoy dinner on the terrace of the Gran Meliá Hotel at sunset, I surrender to the breathtaking view of Mount Meru, covered in every shade of green. A quiet sadness sets in as I reflect on my early departure from Arusha the next morning.

A TIMELESS LAND OF TALES: ZANZIBAR

After a one-hour journey on a small 12-seater propeller plane from Arusha, I arrive in Zanzibar. While these small aircraft are frequently used for domestic travel in Tanzania and may seem intimidating at first, their low altitude offers a unique advantage: a breathtaking aerial view of Tanzania's diverse topography. Zanzibar, located about 35 kilometers from Dar es Salaam, can also be reached by ferry, making it an accessible destination from the mainland.

Zanzibar, which has an autonomous local government in domestic affairs, has an economy based primarily on spice production and tourism. Its narrow, history-filled streets and stunning turquoise waters attract large numbers of visitors each year. Although most of the population is concentrated on Unguja Island, Zanzibar is in fact an archipelago consisting of 54 islands. Unlike the mainland, Zanzibar was opened to settlement in very early periods, and Islam began to spread across the islands at an early stage. Located in the southern part of the island, the Kizimkazi Mosque in the village of Dimbani is the oldest mosque in East Africa. It was built in 1107 by Sheikh Said bin Abi Amran for settlers from Shiraz. Surrounding this historic mosque are the graves of seyyids who had come to the region for jihad.



Girls returning from school in the streets of Zanzibar

One of the most significant cultural legacies Zanzibar has contributed to humanity is the Swahili language. Now recognized as the national language of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the African Union, Swahili was initially used by Africans arriving on the island to communicate with the local inhabitants. Meaning “language of the coast,” Swahili is a blend of Bantu languages and Arabic, reflecting the region’s long history of cultural exchange and maritime trade.

STONE TOWN

The historical center of Zanzibar is known as Stone Town, and it is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The name “Stone Town” comes from the island’s natural coral rock, which was used in the construction of many of the buildings. Between 1830 and 1873, Stone Town was a major hub for the East African slave trade, during which approximately 600,000 people were sold into slavery. Today, visitors can see the remains of this dark chapter in history, including former slave

chambers and a stone monument depicting four chained individuals. After the abolition of slavery in 1873, the Anglican Cathedral of Christ Church was built on the site where slaves were once sold. The church remains one of the most visited landmarks in Stone Town today.

Darajani Market is one of the busiest and most vibrant places in Zanzibar. Spanning a large area, the market offers everything from clothing to fresh fruits and vegetables, making it a central spot for meeting everyday needs. However, the combination of the



An artist painting in the streets of Zanzibar



PRISON ISLAND

As I mentioned earlier, Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous region made up of 54 islands. These islands, scattered across the Indian Ocean, are among the most stunning in the region. Naturally, it is not possible to visit each one during a short stay, so we must choose. Owing to its historical significance, we decide to visit Prison Island. We arrange transport with one of the boats located directly in front of the Tembo Hotel, where I am staying in Zanzibar. After a bumpy half-hour ride through the waves, we reach the island. Once used as a prison, the island's buildings have now been converted into cafés and exhibition spaces displaying archival materials

Giant Aldabra tortoises, gifted to the Sultan from the Seychelles in the 19th century



island's heat and humidity can make the strong scent of exposed fish somewhat overwhelming for those unaccustomed to it.

Another must-see site in Zanzibar is the Old Fort, built in the 17th century by the Sultanate of Oman as a defensive structure against Portuguese colonial incursions. Today, the inner courtyard of the fort serves as a vibrant space for artistic activities and the exhibition and sale of traditional handmade crafts. At almost any time of day, visitors can watch musicians, painters and sculptors practicing their art within the historic walls of the fort.

While wandering through the maze-like alleyways of Stone Town, one of the most striking features is the doors of the houses. Known as "Zanzibar doors," these intricately carved entrances were traditionally selected even before the rest of the house was built. Although most of the designs reflect elements of Indian cultural influence, some doors are inscribed with verses from the Qur'an to bring blessings and prosperity. These verses are often framed by motifs resembling rising ocean waves, while carvings of frankincense trees or date palms were traditionally added to the doors of wealthy families.



Tanzania's Enchanting Blue Gem: Tanzanite

Tanzanite is a precious stone renowned for its captivating blue color and can be found only in a small area near Mount Kilimanjaro. Since its discovery, this unique gemstone has gained immense popularity and significance, becoming a global symbol of elegance and luxury.

Discovered in 1967 by Ali Juuyawatu of the Maasai tribe in the Mererani Hills near Arusha, Tanzanite rose in prominence when the renowned American jewelry company Tiffany & Co. recognized its potential and introduced it to the international market. Today, there is even a museum in Zanzibar that visually presents the stone's journey from extraction to becoming a finished piece of jewelry. During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Muhammet Kaşif, owner of Johori Treasures, one of the largest Tanzanite stores in Zanzibar, to discuss the significance of this remarkable gem.

Mr. Muhammet Kaşif, of Indian descent and a native of Zanzibar, is engaged in the trade of Tanzanite on the island. From him, we learn about the stone's journey, beginning with the mines in Arusha and continuing through its transformation into fine jewelry.

According to Mr. Kaşif, Tanzanite is in fact more valuable than diamond. He explains that its lower price on the global market is due to the fact that it is mined only in a very small area near Kilimanjaro, which prevents the establishment of a large international market. He notes that the stone has attracted particular interest from German and Chinese buyers, and he believes that its value will increase even further as it becomes more widely recognized.





and objects related to its history. Although originally intended as a detention facility, the site was later used as a holding area for enslaved people. Today, the island draws attention for its natural beauty and biodiversity. Its most beloved residents are the giant Aldabra tortoises, gifted to the Sultan in the 19th century from the Seychelles, who now roam the island freely.

SAND ISLAND

Zanzibar is surrounded by numerous islands, both large and small. One of the most fascinating among them is the Sandbank, a stretch of pure white sand located in the middle of the turquoise sea. It is a popular destination for swimming and relaxation. However, you cannot visit the island at just any time of day, nor are you guaranteed to find it when you do. The Sandbank appears and disappears with the tides, sometimes vanishing completely beneath the waves. To reach the island, one must hire a boat from Zanzibar. That is exactly what we do. After about a half-hour journey across the waves of the Indian Ocean in what



Haji Abdullah, who is familiar with Turkish visitors and therefore introduces himself as "Haci Abi", provides us with detailed information about the many spices and fruits grown on the farm.

could best be described as a motorized canoe, we arrive. The view is breathtaking. Surrounded by crystal-clear water, the sandbank offers a picture-perfect setting. After spending around two hours enjoying the sea and the sun, we leave the island behind.

SPICE GARDEN

No visit to Zanzibar would be complete without exploring one of its many spice gardens. With this in mind, we visit a small family-owned farm. We are welcomed by Haji Abdullah, a warm and friendly local who is familiar with Turkish visitors and affectionately refers to himself as Haci Abi. He provides detailed information about the many spices and fruits grown on the farm. As we walk through the garden, we also have the chance to taste some of Zanzibar's wonderfully flavorful fruits straight from the tree. At the entrance of the garden, visitors can purchase both raw spices and fruits as well as locally made products such as soaps, medicines and creams made from these natural ingredients.



SHOPPING

Zanzibar feels like an open-air museum where strikingly authentic items are on display. These are far from ordinary tourist souvenirs. Especially for those interested in visual art, the paintings available here are true works of art. There is remarkable depth in these pieces, and one would never guess that they are created by street artists. A wide range of themes, from scenes of daily life to depictions of African wildlife, are portrayed on canvas, sometimes through realistic detail, other times through abstract expression. A recurring element is the African woman's face, often painted as a symbol of strength and dignity. These portraits reflect pride in African identity, and the women are portrayed with striking presence and character. Beyond painting, a variety of handmade items catch the eye, including jewelry, bags, colorful fabrics in different textures and patterns, leather goods and intricately carved wooden objects.

I would highly recommend engaging in bargaining when shopping. In Zanzibar, bar-

gaining is not considered unusual or impolite. If you and the seller cannot agree on a price, it is common for the seller to eventually ask, "What would you like to offer?" This creates an opportunity to reach a mutual agreement.

There are so many places to see in Zanzibar that describing them all would go beyond the limits of this article. In Stone Town, you can visit the Tanzanite Museum, as well as the house where Freddie Mercury was born, which has now been turned into a museum displaying his personal belongings and photographs from his life in Zanzibar. Among the other natural wonders you may encounter are the **Mangrove Lagoon** and the towering baobab trees. Surrounded by a tropical zone influenced by tides, Zanzibar is home to widespread mangrove vegetation, which can be found in many parts of the island.

In addition to Zanzibar's iconic red starfish, the island is also home to the rare Red Colobus Monkey, a species found only in Zanzibar. The best place to see these monkeys in their natural habitat is **Jozani Forest**.

My journey to Zanzibar has left a deep

and lasting impression on me. I could never have imagined a place on Earth where life could be so simple, yet so full of color. As you walk through its streets, you feel as though you have stepped outside of time. Everywhere around you are people who smile easily and live contentedly with what they have. In the narrow alleys of the island, a quiet and peaceful stillness prevails. It is as if this place has remained suspended in time, waiting patiently for those who wish to escape the overwhelming chaos of the modern world and simply reconnect with themselves.

Tomorrow morning I have a flight to catch. But for now, I want to spend my last evening in Zanzibar watching the sunset by the sea. The sun sets slowly, as children run along the shore and fishermen prepare their boats in a quiet rush.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Cengiz Polat, the Country Representative of the Turkish Maarif Foundation in Tanzania, to Mr. M. Talha Sirakaya from the local office, and to other friends who supported me at every stage of my journey in Tanzania.

The Powerful Voice of Zanzibar

SITI AMINA

“Music is everything to me. It heals me and helps me overcome the challenges of life.”

During my stay in Zanzibar, I learned that one of the island's renowned artists, Siti Amina, would be visiting the Maarif schools. I took the opportunity to go to the school in hopes of interviewing her. Amina is one of the foremost representatives of an intriguing musical style known as Taarab, a genre unique to Zanzibar that blends influences from many different cultures. She arrived at the school with her oud, and although I could not understand the Swahili lyrics of the songs she sang with the children, I could feel that they conveyed the deepest emotions of her people. The enthusiastic way in which the students joined in only strengthened this impression.

Blending the notes of Taarab with modern genres, Siti Amina has crafted a distinctive style of her own. Aware of the rich roots that nourish her music, she embodies the portrait of a strong female artist. The brief interview I conducted with her also offered valuable insights into the culture of Zanzibar.

As an artist born and living in Zanzibar, how would you describe Zanzibar's culture?

Zanzibar's culture is truly unique, formed through the blending of many different traditions. Its most defining feature is the ability to bring all these differences together and create from them a harmony that is beautiful, distinctive and refined.

In that sense, Zanzibar seems a bit like Istanbul, does it not?

Yes, indeed. Much like Istanbul, Zanzibar has a texture that brings together traces of many different cultures and civilizations into a single whole.

Turning to your art, perhaps a classic question: how did your interest in music begin?

For me, music is life itself. Melodies run through my veins. Music is everything to me. It heals me and helps me overcome the difficulties of life. In fact, music heals and beautifies everything it touches. With music, one can easily escape from troubles. When people ask me when I first be-





Even though I couldn't understand the lyrics of Siti Amina's songs in Swahili, I could feel that they carried the deepest emotions of her people. The way the children at the school sang along with such joy only strengthened this feeling.

came interested in music, I usually answer, "while still in my mother's womb." Although all the members of my family loved music, none of them were musicians. My grandfather, who was also a politician, wrote poetry. My aunts would sing constantly at home. I believe these experiences influenced me. Later, encouraged by my cousin, I began to pursue music professionally.

From my observations, people in Zanzibar seem to be highly talented in many forms of art, particularly painting and music. What do you think explains this?

Zanzibaris truly are very gifted individuals. Many visitors to the island often remark on

how kind and talented the people of Zanzibar are. I believe this has much to do with Zanzibar's long history as the capital and trade center of East Africa. Over the centuries, Zanzibar became a meeting point for migrants, merchants and artists from across the world. This cultural convergence created a unique richness where diverse traditions nourished and inspired one another. Zanzibaris have achieved great success not only in trade and the arts, but also in sports. Many artists from Zanzibar have released albums with globally renowned labels such as Columbia Records. Zanzibar is one of the oldest centers of civilization in East Africa. The first television

and the first theatre in the region were both established here. What we must do is support this talent and contribute, as much as we can, to the continued growth of Zanzibari art and culture.

How would you define the genre of music you make?

The music I perform is called Taarab, a style unique to Zanzibar. In fact, it reflects the full richness of Zanzibar's cultural heritage.

From what I understand, you write the lyrics of your songs yourself. What do they talk about?

Most of my songs focus on the role of women in society. As a woman, it wasn't easy for me to make music or follow my dreams within my own culture. That's why I've dedicated myself to encouraging and supporting women, and I express this through my songs. They speak of refusing to be humiliated, of healing, of standing strong, of never giving up on your dreams. Only recently, as I've started to heal, I've begun writing love songs too.



From Master Abdurrahman to Master Refa

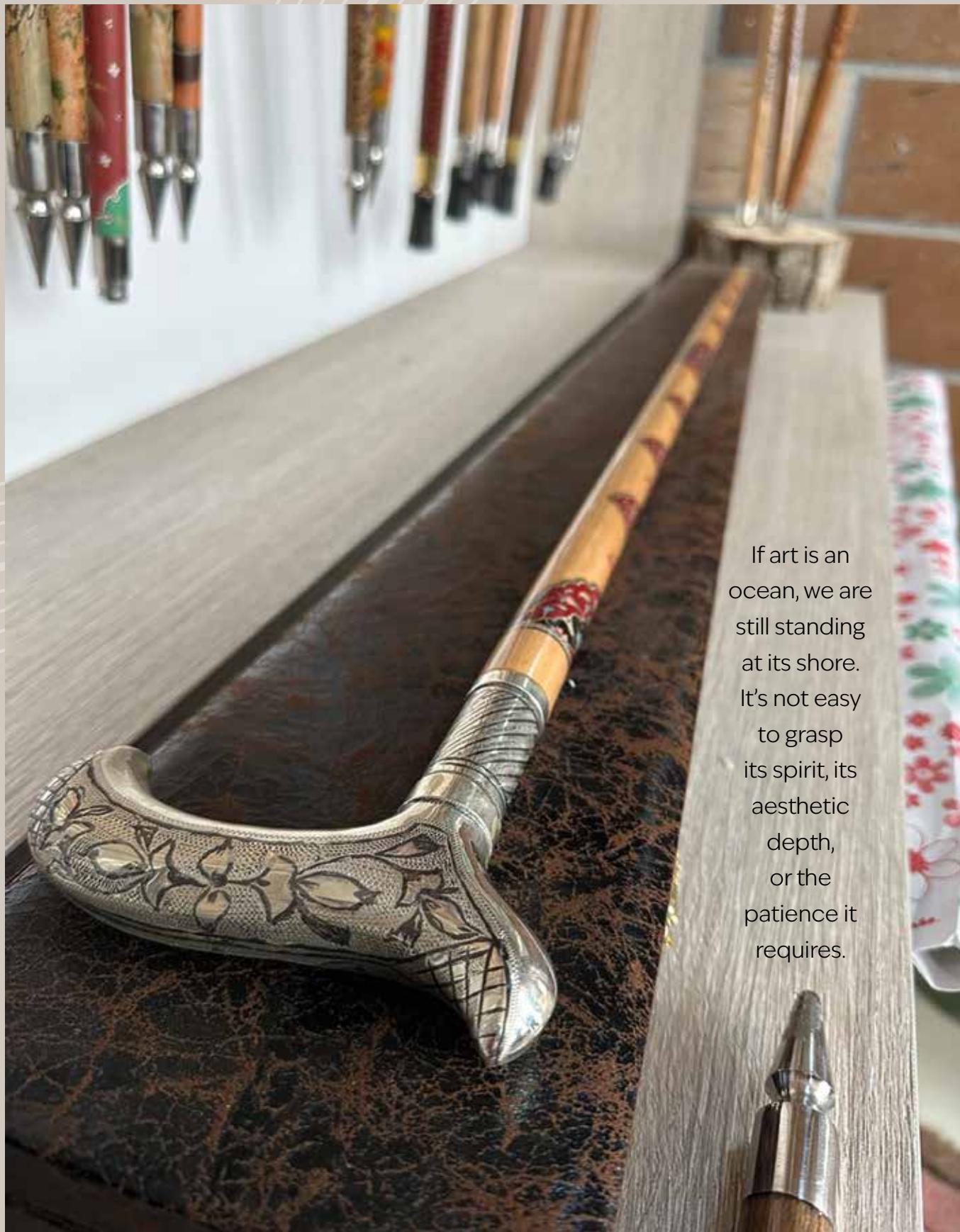
The Journey of a Walnut Tree

A timeless form of learning where knowledge is passed not through words, but through practice; where skill, craft, and etiquette are handed down from master to apprentice. The Masters Who Carry the Tradition focuses on the master-apprentice relationship, where mastery is shaped by knowledge, and labor is refined through patience. In this section, we aim to shed light on the transmission of craft and art across generations, an essential yet often overlooked dimension of non-formal education. We invite our readers to witness how cultural heritage is carried into everyday life, to reflect on the value of making, the beauty of labor, and the continuity of tradition.

We begin our conversation in one of Türkiye's ancient cities, Ahlat, with the art of handcrafted walking sticks.

Interview by:

Dr. Firdevs Kapusizoğlu



If art is an ocean, we are still standing at its shore. It's not easy to grasp its spirit, its aesthetic depth, or the patience it requires.

Refa Usta, if you don't mind, let's begin by talking about how you got started in this craft. We know you were introduced to it through your father, but we'd love to hear more of the details.

Walking stick-making is a family tradition for us. We spent our apprenticeship and journeyman years here in this workshop, under the guidance of our father. He actually started out as a carpenter, crafting furniture from walnut wood. At one point, he also took an interest in making walking sticks. Back then, there was a solid market for walking sticks. For a while, we managed both furniture making and walking stick crafting at the same time. But eventually, we began to focus more on the art of walking stick-making and gradually gave up the other work. We've been making walking sticks in this workshop for nearly 40 years now. In a way, we're helping keep this traditional craft alive.

A walking stick can be a third leg for some, and a style statement for others. What does it mean to you?

Throughout history, the walking stick has taken on many meanings. At times, it was a support tool for the elderly; at others, an elegant accessory that completed one's attire. In many cultures, it symbolized nobility and authority. Over time, it evolved into a form of traditional craftsmanship that reflects the spirit and values of the communities it belongs to.

Inspired by this tradition, we strive to create designs that speak to both the aesthetic sensibilities and the spirit of today's people. When we first started, walking stick production was limited to around 35 models. But after 40 years of dedication and exploration, we have developed over 100 unique designs. In addition to classic styles, our collection includes walking sticks adorned with animal figures and special pieces crafted from bone.

One of the most distinctive features of Ahlat walking sticks is the masterful craftsmanship that blends walnut wood with buffalo, ram, or cattle horn. Both walnut and horn have long been favored for their dura-

I believe that such handicrafts are not merely about producing functional items; they are also cultural records that carry the traces of a civilization.

bility and visual appeal. Bone, known for its hygienic properties, is believed to accelerate blood circulation when in contact with the human body and does not harbor bacteria. For these reasons, it was historically used in prayer beads, combs, and palace ornaments. By embracing this tradition, we continue to follow in the footsteps of our ancestors in our choice of materials.

In our production, walnut wood stands out as the primary material. The "root walnut" harvested from trees over 500 years old in the Hizan district of Bitlis is especially





If a master relies solely on what he learned from his father or his own master, what he practices is craftsmanship. But if he adds his own interpretation to that knowledge, develops new designs, enhances variety, and brings beauty to his work, that is when craftsmanship turns into art.

and aesthetic sensibility we pour into our work are being recognized. At this point, our walking sticks have reached not only across Türkiye, but to many countries from the Middle East to Europe.

You don't view your work solely as a craft, but also as a form of cultural expression, incorporating traditional art forms like tezhip and ebru into your walking sticks. Was this perspective your own, or did you inherit it from your father?

The craft of cane-making I inherited from my father was, of course, rooted in solid craftsmanship. But over time, I realized I needed to bring my own interpretation into the trade as well. The walking stick craftsmanship I inherited from my father was, of course, rooted in solid artisanal foundations. But over time, I realized I needed to bring my own vision to this profession. Because I believe that such handicrafts are not merely about producing functional items; they are also cultural records that carry the traces of a civilization.

If a master relies solely on what he learned from his father or his own master, what he practices is craftsmanship. But if he adds his own interpretation to that knowledge, develops new designs, enhances variety, and brings beauty to his work, that is when craftsmanship turns into art. What we do is exactly that. It is art.

prized. Many of our bespoke walking sticks are crafted from walnut trees that are nearly a thousand years old. For instance, our sword-hilted or illuminated (tezhip-style) walking sticks are made using this exceptional wood and traditional techniques. In our illumination designs, we collaborate with Meryem Uguz Kaplan, an academic expert in this field. We also incorporate carving and pyrography techniques. In this way, each walking stick becomes not only a functional object but also a cultural work of art.

Your walking sticks have reached prominent individuals and institutions both in Türkiye and abroad. How did you achieve this?

We infuse each piece with a unique spirit through traditional techniques. Over the

years, we've participated in numerous fairs both at home and internationally, which gave us the opportunity to grow and expand our market. Thanks to these fairs, our walking sticks have found their way not only to individual customers, but also to government institutions and prominent figures.

Today, we receive special orders from many institutions, including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of National Defense, the Land Forces Command, and Roketsan. Our walking sticks featuring swords, in particular, attract great attention. These pieces are often presented as gifts to foreign state guests, which is both a great honor for us and a testament to the value placed on our craft. It fills us with pride to see that the effort, dedication,

This approach is not a choice for us but a necessity. In order to pass this art down from generation to generation and to sustain our own livelihood, we must keep creating and bringing in new ideas. Because the moment the production of new designs and different models stops, that form of art faces the risk of disappearing. Just like the art itself, the artist cannot endure stagnation. To remain part of the market, to stay strong in the face of competition, and to add value to our craft, we must maintain this sense of dynamism.

We have dedicated great effort and hard work to this cause. We are working not only for ourselves but also for the future of the walking stick craft. In a sense, this is a historical responsibility. In the past, there were 15 workshops in Ahlat, but unfortunately, most of them had to close down because they did not train apprentices. Today, very few people remain in this field, and most of them work alone. As for us, we continue our production while also striving to train new masters who will keep this tradition alive.

How do you incorporate historical motifs into your walking sticks?

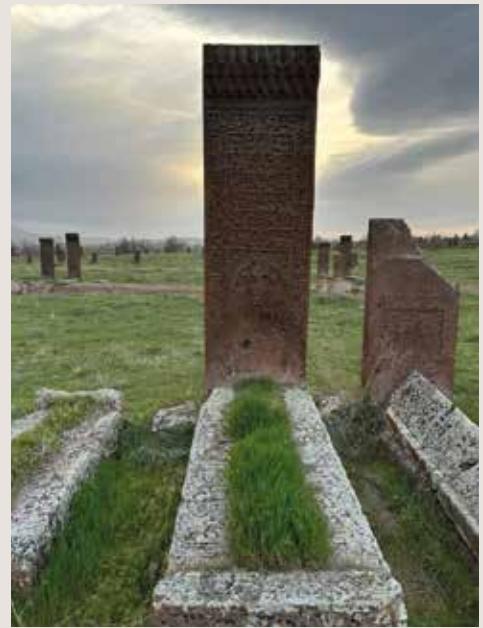
Ahlat walking sticks traditionally consisted of five basic forms and plain bodies. We enriched this tradition by drawing inspiration from many sources such as Seljuk tombstones, the Bitlis Şerefiye Mosque, mausoleums, and motif research conducted at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University. Diamond patterns, serpents, geometric interlocks, and botanical ornaments... Each pattern carries a story. During the design process, we often have to ruin at least five to ten sticks just to find the right proportion, line depth, and surface texture. It may seem simple, but this is where true mastery is gained.

How do your personal experiences influence your designs?

At times, I feel like a director or a painter; every detail I encounter during my travels imprints itself in my memory like a pattern. In this sense, both domestic and international trade fairs are priceless. Getting to know new geographies and exchanging ideas with



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The craft of cane-making I inherited from my father was, of course, rooted in solid craftsmanship. But over time, I realized I needed to bring my own interpretation into the trade as well.

other masters has a direct impact on the quality of our craftsmanship.

The sourcing of materials also shapes our designs. We procure the walking stick velvet from one city and the box from another. The chrome tips and sword accessories come from Denizli, some types of wood from Bursa, and we source water buffalo horn from wherever it can still be found in Türkiye, as the species has become increasingly rare. I once crafted a full-horn walking stick entirely from water buffalo horn and received the Ministry of Culture's Excellence Award for it. When the late Haluk Dursun Beyefendi saw our work, he said, "How did we come to know you so late?" and proposed that I be granted



the title of Living Human Treasure. Sadly, he passed away shortly after, so the proposal could not be realized. May he rest in peace.

Would you say that the art of walking stick making has shaped you as well?

Absolutely. The art of walking stick making demands patience and perseverance. It leaves no room for error, because even the slightest flaw becomes obvious on the stick.

So you constantly strive for perfection. Over time, that mindset becomes part of your character. That's what happened to me. I was a sergeant during my military service and I had zero tolerance for injustice. I still try not to make mistakes in my daily life, and I speak up when I see others make them. The meticulousness you develop while crafting a walking stick inevitably spills over into your social life. And this isn't unique to me. It's something I've seen in all true artisans.

If you were to compare mastery to a four-leaf clover, what would those four leaves be?

Talent, patience, perseverance, and passion. You can't do without any of them. It takes about a month to complete a walking stick. You finish one, and the next day you begin again. This cycle has continued for forty years, and I've never once said "enough." Because you can't do this work without love. If you love what you do, you master it. If you love it, you don't give up.

Vision is just as important. When I first tried to steer the art of walking stick making in a new direction, I faced a lot of criticism. Some even dismissed our handcrafted work as "machine-made." They tried to discourage me, but I never gave up. If I had backed down at that time, we wouldn't have the more than one hundred unique designs we have today. Stepping beyond classical stick-making helped bring visibility to this craft. Thanks to trade fairs, we reached a global audience. We explored new forms inspired by the special requests of our customers.

There are no boundaries in art. I simply try to do the best I can, and the journey is still ongoing.

Your father was your first master. Have you been able to train apprentices who will carry on this tradition? Are young people interested



Today, in order for these traditional arts to survive, they must be brought into formal educational settings. State universities are now taking this matter seriously.

in this craft? Is it still possible to learn through the master-apprentice relationship today?

Unfortunately, this is a challenge not only in walking stick making but in many traditional crafts across Anatolia. That's why we now refer to them as "endangered handicrafts." Young people understandably prefer an easier and more comfortable life. But engaging with art is a demanding and deeply meaningful journey.

There are people who have been working in my workshop for nearly ten years. Yet I still wouldn't say they've fully grasped the craft. If it were another profession, maybe they could have become professionals in just a few years. But art doesn't work that way. If art is an ocean, we are still standing at its shore. It's not easy to grasp its spirit, its aesthetic depth, or the patience it requires.

In the past, when families entrusted their children to a master craftsman, they would say, "Their flesh is yours, their bones are ours." They didn't expect any payment in re-

turn. They simply wanted their child to learn a craft. Today, when you try to take on an apprentice, the first question you're asked is, "How much will you pay?" But art requires patience, effort, and time. And that puts a great deal of strain on artisans, both financially and emotionally.

Handicrafts are not merely remnants of the past. They are living parts of our history. The patterns carved into walking sticks are just as valuable as those etched into stone walls. These crafts are among the most vivid examples of how the legacy of the great civilization our ancestors built is carried into the present. That is why I believe handicrafts deserve the same respect we show to historical monuments. Yet today, many artisans are left to fend for themselves. Far from receiving support, they must fight hard simply to stay afloat.

Why do you think it is important to include traditional handicrafts in the education system?

Today, in order for these traditional arts to survive, they must be brought into formal educational settings. State universities are now taking this matter seriously. I myself recently completed the Handicrafts Department at Ahlat Vocational School. It was a well-equipped program in terms of workshops, materials, and teaching staff. I had the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of a wide range of techniques, from carpet and rug weaving to tezhip, from ceramics to carving and pyrography.

Still, I believe that artisans should be exempt from the national university entrance exam threshold when applying to these departments. Individuals with hands-on mastery would benefit much more from an education model that allows them to focus directly on the finer aspects of the art. In this way, traditional crafts can be kept alive, and educational institutions can be enriched with knowledge that is grounded in real-life experience.



THE FIRST PRIMARY AND ART
SCHOOL FOR THE CHILDREN OF
DARÜLACEZE:

DARÜLACEZE PRIMARY SCHOOL (EST. 1896)

At its meeting on 7 September 1886, the Tanzimat Department of the Şûrâ-yı Devlet (Council of State) resolved to establish Darülaceze and laid out its founding principles. It was decided that children residing in this charitable institution would be taught basic religious and general knowledge, and that workshops would be established where they could learn a trade.



*This excerpt is taken from the entry authored by Nuran Yıldırım in the Turkish Education Encyclopedia (Türk Maarif Ansiklopedisi).



The school graduated twenty students in 1947, and by 1952, its enrollment had reached 144. At school ceremonies during these years, the Darülaceze Anthem would be performed.

The Darülaceze School was established on January 31, 1896. Textbooks were procured in April of the same year, and classes were organized in accordance with the Ministry of Education's primary school curriculum. Instruction began with thirty-seven boys and twenty-eight girls. The school operated under the supervision of Akif Bey, the Director of Darülaceze, and employed a head teacher (muallim-i evvel), an assistant head teacher (muallim-i sâni), a teaching assistant (muallim muavini), and a dormitory supervisor (mubassir).

Children who had turned seven and transitioned from the nursery (irzahane) to the orphanage attended the school. By 1906, forty-eight students had graduated, and six had attained the title of hafiz. That same year, there were 152 students enrolled, with 130 boys and 22 girls. After school hours, students were required to spend four additional hours in one of the workshops to learn a craft. Those who completed their schooling continued working in the same workshop they had attended during their education for another four years. Upon completion, they were awarded a certificate of competence (ehlyetname). The workshops were essentially an extension of the school.

A CURRICULUM THAT PREPARES FOR LIFE

The school was divided into sections: sibyan (preparatory), ihtiyat (intermediate), ibtidâ (primary), and kism-i mahsus (special section). In the boys' section, there were three teachers, one assistant teacher, and three dormitory supervisors. In the girls' section, which was located in a private area of the mosque, there was one female teacher and one female dormitory supervisor. A supervisor of instruction and workshops was responsible for both the school and the vocational training units. Beginning with the

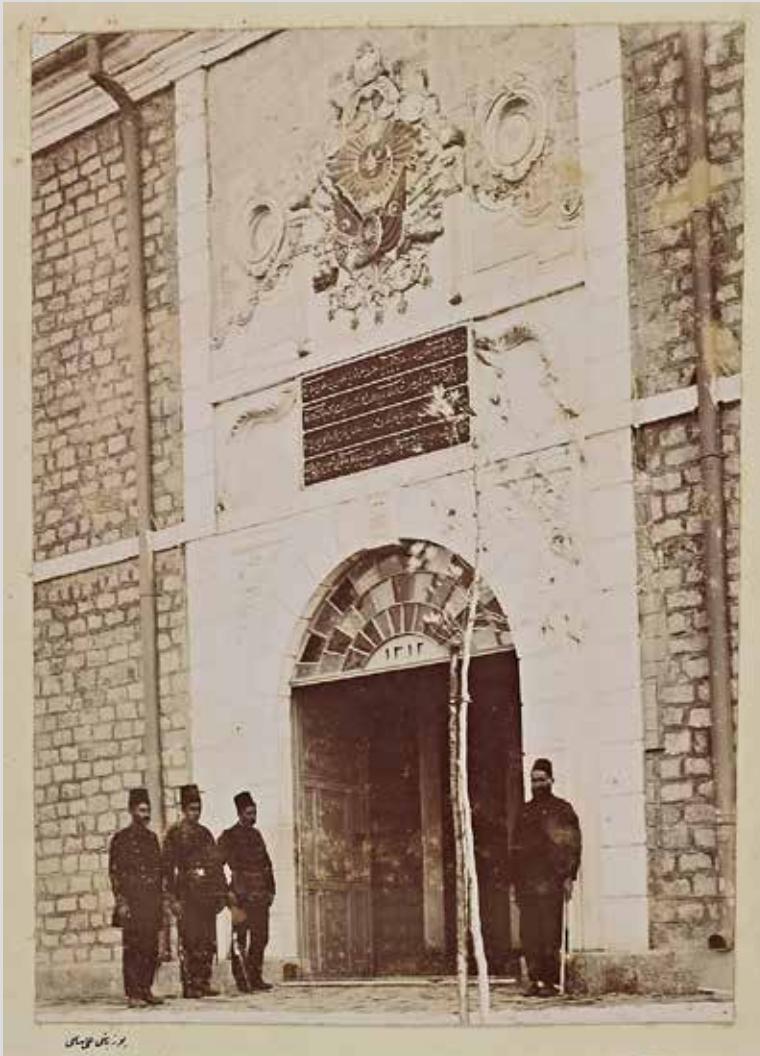


Sibyan section, students studied subjects such as the alphabet, moral advice, ethics, mental arithmetic, reading, arithmetic, word transcription (on slate boards), children's poetry, selected chapters of the Qur'an, and prayers committed to memory. In religious instruction classes, students were taught how to perform ablution and prayer. The ethics treatises were also studied during reading lessons. In addition, subjects such as grammar, calligraphy, drawing, catechism, dictation, tajwid (rules of Qur'anic recitation), mathematics, history, geography, geometry, and health education were offered. In the Qawâ'id-i 'Osmâniyye and composition classes, students learned how to write letters, official

statements, promissory notes, and endorsements. In the final year, books on vocational subjects were also included in the curriculum.

According to the Darülaceze Regulation (Talimatname) that came into effect in 1914, the school's teaching staff included teachers, a music teacher, a dormitory supervisor (mubassir), custodial staff (hademe), a shoemaking master, a tailoring master, and a woodworking master. The teachers were responsible for delivering lessons in line with the curriculum and for properly educating the students. The dormitory supervisor was tasked with ensuring that the children behaved in accordance with good morals and national values, studied their





The school, which had twenty graduates in 1947, had 144 students in 1952. During these years, the Darülaceze March was sung at school ceremonies.

Over time, the school evolved into a childcare center. Today, the childcare center operating within Darülaceze admits children aged 0 to 6.

were children of local gardeners. Around fifteen Darülaceze students who earned diplomas went on to attend secondary schools in Nişantaşı and Şişli, while five continued to Taksim High School. The school graduated twenty students in 1947, and by 1952, its enrollment had reached 144. At school ceremonies during these years, the Darülaceze Anthem would be performed. The school was still operating in 1973.

Over time, the school evolved into a childcare center. Today, the childcare center operating within Darülaceze admits children aged 0 to 6. Abandoned children found in hospitals, mosques, or parks are brought to the institution by the police. However, since the number of abandoned children is low, most of the children admitted come from families or are referred by the Provincial Directorate of Social Services under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Children who arrive here and reach the age of three are transferred to the Child Protection Agency. Currently, fifty children are cared for at the Darülaceze Children's Home.

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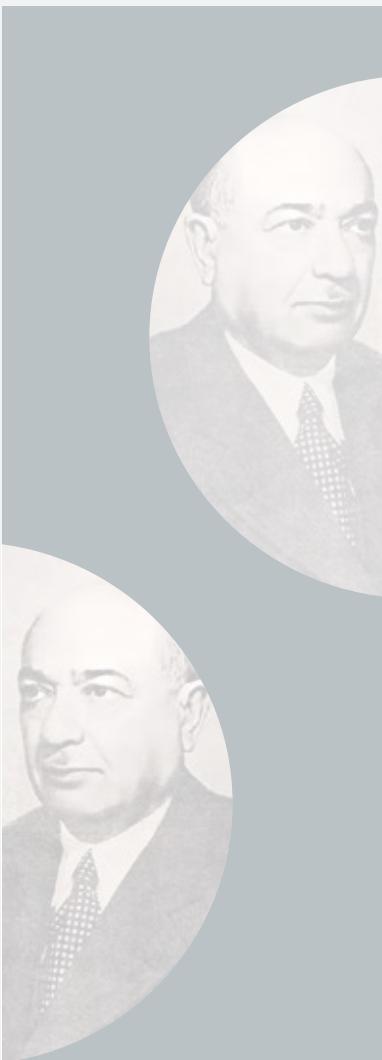
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lessons diligently, treated one another with kindness, and informed the teacher when educational supplies such as paper or pencils were running low. The custodial staff was responsible for keeping the desks and blackboards clean. The tailoring, shoemaking, and carpentry masters were assigned to train the children in their respective crafts, produce the items needed by the institution, and handle repairs to avoid the need for outside purchases.

FROM SCHOOL TO CHILDREN'S HOME

After the founding of the Republic, seventy students were enrolled in the five-grade primary school during the 1927-1928 academic

year, and seventy-six students attended during the 1929-1930 academic year. By the decision of the Board of Education dated 11 March 1940 and numbered 43, regional vocational schools were reorganized into two cycles of three and two years, and restructured as vocational schools. The school at Darülaceze was renamed Beyoğlu 8th Primary Vocational School, and the duration of education was set at five years. All the needs of the 300 students residing in one of the dormitory pavilions were met. The curriculum of the Ministry of Education was implemented, and students continued to receive vocational training in workshops in the afternoons. In 1945, among the school's 170 students



AN INTELLECTUAL BETWEEN TWO WORLDS:

MEHMET ŞEMSETTİN GÜNALTAY

Mehmet Şemsettin Günaltay is a prominent figure known not only for his political activities, intellectual transformations, and contributions to historiography, but also for his role as an educator and author of educational writings. He attracted considerable attention during the Second Constitutional Era, particularly as an educational writer among Islamist-Turkist circles.

He was born in the Eğin district of Erzincan to Müderris İbrâhim Ethem Efendi and Sâliha Hanım. After completing his primary education at Üsküdar Ravza-yı Terakkî İbtidâî Mektebi, he graduated from Vefa İdâdîsi. He then completed the Science Division of Dârülmüallimîn-î Aliye in 1905. Although he did not hold a formal medrese diploma (icazet), he took private lessons in religious sciences and learned Arabic, Persian, and French. Mehmet Şemsettin began his career as a mathematics teacher at Dariuçşafaka and later held teaching and administrative positions at the idâdis of Cyprus, Lesbos (Midilli), and Gelenbevî. In 1909, he was sent to the University of Lausanne for studies in natural sciences. Upon his return, he resumed his work as a teacher and school administrator.

While serving at the Midilli (Lesbos) İdâdîsi, he began writing on education, morality, and the reform of medreses in prominent political and intellectual journals of the Second Constitutional Era, gaining attention for his views. Starting in 1913, he contributed to İslâm Mecmuası. He was appointed to teach Turkish History and History of Religions at the Dârülfünun (Istanbul University). In 1915, he was elected as the deputy of Bilecik, and from that point on, his political interests and activities continued alongside his scholarly and pedagogical work. In 1922, he was appointed as a member of the Publications Board of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Foundations (Şerîye ve Evkaf Vekâleti), and a year later, he became the dean of the Faculty of Theology. During the





Şemsettin Günaltay touring the Bakırköy Linen Factory with Prof. Fahrettin Kerim Gökkay

National Struggle, he took on responsibilities within the Anatolian and Rumelian Defense of Rights Association (Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdâfaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyetleri) and held various positions, including acting mayor.

His new era of active political life began in 1923 with his appointment as the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası) deputy for Sivas and continued until his senatorial position in 1961. In addition to being a member of the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu) in 1931, he became one of the leading advocates of the Turkish History Thesis.

He served as the president of the Turkish Historical Society for twenty years between 1941 and 1961. His historical work and educational approach were criticized for subjective interpretations of Turkish and Islamic history, as well as for ideologically biased teaching and conduct.

After 1946, he became one of the leading figures within the Republican People's Party (CHP) advocating for a new approach to the party's stance on religion and secularism. He was appointed Prime Minister on 15 January 1949 and served in this position until 22 May 1950, becoming the last prime minister of the single-party era.

During Günaltay's tenure as prime minister in 1949, significant developments took place in the field of education. In particular, he played a major role in shaping the course of religious education and instruction from that point onward.

His active political role within the CHP and his tenure as a senator, to which he was elected in 1961, continued until his death on 20 October 1961. He passed away in Istanbul and was buried in Ankara's Çebeci Asri Cemetery.

A VOICE FOR EDUCATION IN ISLAMIST-TURKIST THOUGHT

Mehmet Şemsettin Günaltay was known not only for his political activities, intellectual shifts, and work as a historian, but also for his

contributions to education and educational writing. During the Second Constitutional Era, he garnered significant attention as an educational writer within Islamist-Turkist circles. Through his articles on schools and madrasas published in *Sırat-ı Müstakîm*, *Sebilür-reşâd*, *Beyânülhâk*, and *İslâm Mecmuası*, he came to be associated with the modernist-nationalist Islamists of the time. In 1916, he compiled these writings into a book titled *Hurâfat-ı Hakîkata* (From Superstition to Truth). In his writings from this period, Günaltay often compared Eastern and Western civilizations through the lens of educational thought. He argued that Islam did not hinder progress, but that deep-rooted reforms were necessary within the madrasa system. Although he generally advocated for modern educational approaches and practices, he did not categorically oppose madrasas. He frequently addressed topics such as the influence of the family on children, the education of mothers, physical education, health awareness, handicrafts, the inclusion of stories and novels in school curricula, as well as arts education like drawing and music. In presenting his views, he frequently referenced well-known European educational thinkers and philosophers such as J. J. Rousseau, J. H. Pestalozzi, H. Spencer, and F. Froebel, and addressed topics such as cognitive development, physical education, and moral instruction in his writings.

A MULTIFACETED POLITICIAN

In 1925, when he republished his articles on education from the Second Constitutional Era under the title *Zulmetten Nûra* (From Darkness to Light), he made significant revisions, abandoning earlier views such as the importance of madrasas in the scholarly world and their continuation through reform. He later put forward controversial views on the influence of Islam on Ottoman and even Turkish history, which would be heavily criticized. In 1931, he took part in the new Turkish history project, and the book produced by the committee remained a mandatory textbook in middle and high schools until 1950 without alteration. From 1935 onward, he supported the Sun Language Theory and the removal

of Arabic and Persian words from Turkish, expressing the idea that the Turkish language was becoming liberated from Islamic influence. After 1925, he came to see Sufism, madrasas, religious officials, and members of lodges and zawiyyas as causes of decline, and became one of the influential figures shaping the relationship between religion and state, as well as the practice of secularism in the Republican period.

Significant developments in the field of education took place during Günaltay's tenure as prime minister in 1949, particularly in shaping the direction of religious education in the years that followed. Following the decision taken at the Republican People's Party's 1947 congress, steps were taken to broaden the policy of religious education and instruction, which had previously been defined in form and content under strict state supervision by Ankara. On January 24, 1949, decisions were made to allow optional religious education. The books written by Ahmet Hamdi Akseki were initially permitted to be taught as elective, non-curricular courses in village schools. That same year, the opening of ten-month-long imam and preacher training courses was welcomed by the public. The establishment of the Faculty of Theology at Ankara University, the reopening of the shrines of some prominent Turkish figures to visitors, the slight improvement of the Directorate of

Religious Affairs' institutional resources, the lifting of restrictions on pilgrimage, and the rise in religious publications and printed material also took place during his prime ministership.

Although Mehmet Şemsettin Günaltay received his education in the field of natural sciences, he became well known as a scholar and statesman through his work in general Turkish history and the history of religions, both as an educator and a writer. As a historian, he authored numerous works and criticized European historians in terms of historiography and methodology, asserting that Islamic historians produced more accurate historical accounts. While he supported the reform of madrasas during the Second Con-

stitutional Era, his opposing views during the Republican period led to criticism of both his character and scholarly integrity. So much so that, according to Peyami Safa, there seemed to be two different people: one being Mehmet Şemsettin Bey, the author of many religious books and articles, a religious scholar, a supporter of sharia and an opponent of secularism, and the other being Şemsettin Günaltay, a former Prime Minister from the Republican People's Party, a reformist, a secularist, and even more so, an opponent of religious education. These two personas had, for years, co-existed within the same body without conflict or dispute (Sebilürreşâd, 1956: 221).

Among Günaltay's numerous works, particularly on pre-Islamic Turkish history, his education-related publications include *From Superstition to Truth (Hurâfattan Hakikata)*, *History of Religions (Târih-i Edyân)*, *From the Past to the Future (Mâzîden Âtiye)*, *From Darkness to Light (Zulmetten Nûra)*, *History and Historians in Islam (İslâm'da Târih ve Müverrihler)*, *The General State of Central Asia at the Time of the Emergence and Spread of Islam (Müslümanlığın Çıktığı ve Yayıldığı Zamanlarda Orta Asya'nın Umumi Vaziyeti)*, and *Some Necessary Explanations on Our Language and History Thesis (Dil ve Tarih Tezimiz Üzerine Gerekli Bazı İzahlar)*.

He later put forward views on the influence of Islam on Ottoman and even broader Turkish history, which would go on to attract significant criticism. In 1931, he took part in the New Turkish History project.



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Asli Zeynep Aydin



The Collapse of Authority in Youth Series: **Where Do Family and School Stand in Digital Narratives**

Youth series rapidly multiplying across digital platforms portray school and family institutions as weakened and ineffective structures. In these narratives, authority figures are systematically sidelined. But what kind of worldview do they leave young people alone with?



FROM REALISM TO IDEOLOGICAL FICTION: THE NEW FACE OF YOUTH SERIES

Today, digital platforms are not only offering entertainment but also functioning as cultural tools with the power to shape and promote values. Youth series in particular often strive to present certain lifestyles and patterns of thought as “normal” or “inevitable.” Shows like *Sex Education*, *Elite*, *Never Have I Ever*, and *Heartbreak High*, which feature high school characters and target a young audience in form, frequently contain content that is more suited to adults.

Themes such as sexuality, substance use, and violence take center stage in these productions. While the intended audience is supposedly young viewers, the fact that nearly all of the content carries 18+ ratings makes this contradiction even more apparent.

SCHOOL: A SETTING WITHOUT EDUCATION

In these series, schools function merely as a backdrop where characters meet and relationships unfold. Yet, when a youth drama is set in a school environment, viewers naturally expect to see realistic portrayals of issues such as educational inequality, exam stress, and teacher-student dynamics.

However, scenes depicting students attending classes, engaging in academic effort, or participating in learning process-



es are extremely rare. Instead, the focus is placed on characters who constantly attend parties, are defined by their sexual identities, and act primarily on impulse. School and education are rendered almost entirely invisible.

THE FAMILY'S SHADOWED PORTRAYAL

In youth dramas, the family structure is often depicted as broken, passive and detached. Parents are either entirely absent or portrayed as excessively tolerant individuals unable to set boundaries. In *Heartbreak High*, for instance, a grandmother who supports her gay grandchild is shown within a friend group that also includes a gay character, suggesting that the storyline attempts to build an ideological foundation under the guise of inclusivity. Such portrayals can be interpreted as efforts to redefine moral norms under the banner of pluralism.

Meanwhile, the children in these series speak, act, and form relationships as though they were adults, in ways far beyond

what would be developmentally appropriate. This trend raises concerns not only at the individual level, but also in terms of broader societal implications.

THE TEACHER FIGURE: ABSENT OR ROMANTICIZED

Another striking element in digital youth dramas is the weak presence of the teacher figure. Teachers are either entirely excluded or portrayed in an idealised and unrealistic manner. The authoritarian teacher figure has been replaced by the familiar trope of the “friendly teacher,” someone who approaches students with unconditional tolerance and sets no boundaries. These teachers approach students’ lifestyles with indifference and position themselves as passive sources of approval rather than offering meaningful guidance.

RELATIVELY REALISTIC BUT STILL EXAGGERATED REPRESENTATIONS IN LOCAL TV SERIES

Compared to foreign productions, Turkish youth dramas tend to present more grounded storylines. *Aşk 101* (Love 101), for example, centers on the relationship between an idealistic teacher and a group of students with disciplinary issues. The series introduces a conflict between two types of teacher figures: an authoritarian vice principal and a younger, empathetic teacher. However, this conflict is also portrayed through two extreme characters, making it feel somewhat detached from real-life dynamics.



The young teacher's actions, such as drinking alcohol with students and sharing personal details, draw attention to blurred ethical boundaries within the teaching profession. Nevertheless, local series tend to portray family structures more visibly and remain relatively more faithful to the cultural norms of society.

HOW INVOLVED ARE PARENTS OR HOW DISTANT?

Although families are more visible in Turkish series, they often fail to establish meaningful communication with their children.

The advice they give is either overly idealistic or solely focused on material success. Parental involvement appears to vary by socioeconomic status, with wealthier families portrayed as more distant and emotionally detached. While families occasionally soften their stance, they are generally depicted as authoritarian and disconnected from open dialogue.

ABSENT AUTHORITY, BLURRED RESPONSIBILITY

The world portrayed in youth dramas systematically erases authority figures and

leaves young people without internal guidance. As traditional structures like family and school are weakened, the characters are reduced to individuals driven solely by impulse.

This situation is further exacerbated by the portrayal of characters who have the potential to serve as role models for children and adolescents, yet lack any sense of boundaries or responsibility. Teachers are either romanticized heroes or entirely absent, while parents are depicted as either overly permissive or completely disengaged.

WHAT KIND OF FUTURE AWAITS THE YOUTH?

As 2025 has been declared the "Year of the Family" in Türkiye, the need to critically examine how families and schools are portrayed in digital content has become even more urgent. The fact that the content most frequently consumed by young people tends to isolate them, distance them from core values, and detach them from a sense of responsibility should be seen not only as a cultural issue but also as a psychological and sociological threat.

THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

A STORY OF HOPE

**Abdullah Akbaba:
EDUCATION IS THE GREATEST WEAPON OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

Interview by: **Süreyya Emir**



Bringing together people from different ethnic backgrounds, local community members, and Qatari university students, Lana Feeha is a social initiative that fosters intercultural dialogue and highlights shared human values. With a focus on developing historical, cultural, and religious awareness, the initiative also aims to shed light on the Palestinian issue, which remains an open wound on the conscience of humanity. Committed to spreading accurate information and raising public awareness, Lana Feeha calls on individuals to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people. With its ancient heritage and a history of peace and prosperity on its own land, Palestine also stands out for the opportunities it offers in the field of education. In this context, we are pleased

to present to our readers an interview on "Education in Palestine," conducted by Abdullah Akbaba, researcher at the initiative, and Süreyya Emir, a sociology student at Qatar University.

What was the education system like in Palestine before the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts began?

Before the conflicts, the education system in Palestine consisted of four stages. The first stage was kindergarten, which lasted for two years. Although it was not mandatory, most families sent their children for at least one year. The second stage was primary school, which lasted six years and was compulsory. The third stage was a three-year middle school. In the fourth stage, students would move on to a three-

year high school, which was not mandatory. After the first year of high school, students were divided into three academic tracks: science, literature, and commerce. As for university education, although all universities in Gaza were private, the academic level was very high.

To what extent was it possible to continue educational activities after the attacks?

After the initial attacks, education came to a complete halt. Many schools and universities were bombed, and those that remained standing were turned into shelters for refugees. However, over time, people began to recognize once again the importance of continuing education. At first, individual initiatives emerged to teach children in



tents. These efforts gradually became more organized, and NGOs began setting up education tents. Universities resumed instruction through online classes and recorded materials. Primary and secondary education also continued through various applications and digital platforms. Although education has not returned to its previous state, the Palestinian people have not given up.

How has the destruction or damage of schools affected children's education?

The impact has been enormous. Teaching in tents is extremely difficult because there are no desks, chairs, or other basic necessities. In addition, many teachers were martyred or forced to flee. This has seriously disrupted the continuity of education. Most importantly, students were deeply affected psychologically. For children who have lost their sense of safety and stability, learning under such conditions has become even more challenging.

Despite all these hardships, how do Palestinian students and families remain committed to education?

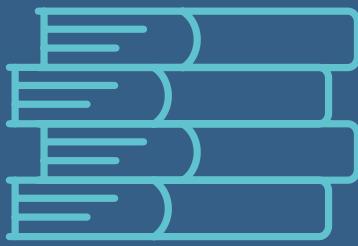
Palestinians remain incredibly committed to education. Families send their children to learning tents despite the dangers, distance, and lack of transportation. Young people walk for hours just to find an internet connection. For them, education is both a symbol of hope for the future and an essential part of their identity.

What is the rate of educational institutions being targeted in the attacks, and why is it so high?

The rate is extremely high. Israel has completely destroyed 137 schools and universities so far, and around 357 have been partially damaged. At any given moment, an educational institution can become a target. This is because education is the greatest weapon of the Palestinian people. Targeting highly educated individuals is a deliberate attempt to break this conscious resistance. The goal is to dismantle the awareness fostered through education and to crush the will of the Palestinian people.



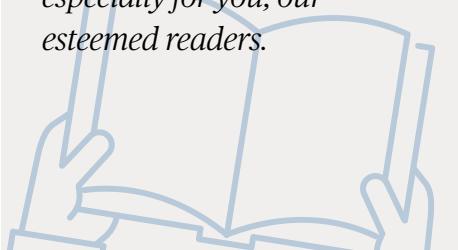
Library



Books That Shed Light on the Future of Education

"If you want to change the world, start with yourself," says Gandhi, inviting us on a journey of self-discovery.

On this journey, books not only illuminate the learning process but also guide us by helping us develop the ability to see from different perspectives. In this spirit, we present a selection of valuable books related to the theme of our current feature, curated especially for you, our esteemed readers.



SOCIOLOGY OF NEW MOTHERHOOD

Author: Zehra Zeynep Sadikoğlu

Publisher: Alpha Publishing

Year of Publication: 2023

"Behind my sociological curiosity about the sociocultural context of new motherhood lies the story of how my everyday experiences, particularly after becoming an aunt, evolved into an academic inquiry. I was just beginning my master's degree when I noticed something that surprised me: every mother in the group of neighbors who came to celebrate the birth of my nephew described their children not as naughty, but as hyperactive. My observations of both my own generation and the previous one, including my mother's generation, opened up a space for critical reflection. It was in this space that I began to academically question and examine the experience of motherhood. One of the most striking observations I made was that, regardless of how devoted they were, middle-class mothers like myself often felt inadequate and somehow guilty. The link I drew between these emotions and expert knowledge led me to ask: how do mothers engage with expert knowledge, and how do they make sense of this relationship? This book in your hands represents an effort to explore that very question."

(Excerpted from the introduction.)



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

RECLAIMING CONVERSATION

**THE POWER OF TALK
IN A DIGITAL AGE**



SHERRY TURKLE
AUTHOR OF *DATA BODIES*

RECLAIMING CONVERSATION: THE POWER OF TALK IN A DIGITAL AGE

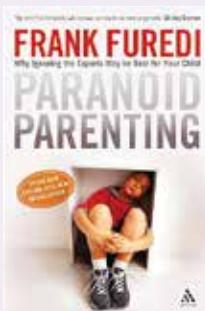
Author: Sherry Turkle

Publisher: Penguin Books

Year of Publication: 2016

We're not really talking anymore. Renowned author and researcher Sherry Turkle, who has focused the last six years of her thirty-year career on the digital age, brings to light an unsettling truth: At home, at work, in politics, and in love, we are caught in a loop of weakened communication, drawn in by the convenience of texts and emails instead of genuine dialogue. Our conversations have become shallow, and the connections we build lack depth. Reclaiming Conversation explores how the decline of face-to-face interaction is affecting emotional intelligence, empathy, and our ability to form meaningful relationships. It discusses how technology is changing human connection and what steps we need to take to rebuild deeper bonds. Based on research in homes, schools, and workplaces, Turkle argues that we now have a clearer understanding of where technology can and cannot take us. The time has come to strengthen our human ties once more. She calls on us to rediscover one of the most fundamental and uniquely human actions: conversation. This is why, with this work, we must reclaim the art of talking.

(Excerpted from the introduction.)



PARANOID PARENTING: WHY IGNORING THE EXPERTS MAY BE BEST FOR YOUR CHILD

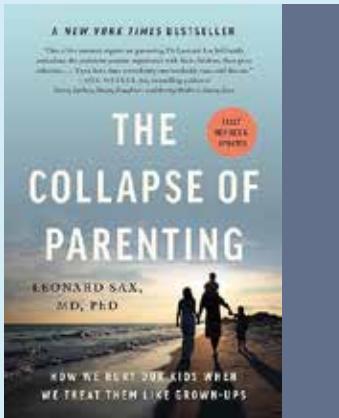
Editor: Frank Furedi

Publisher: Continuum

Year of Publication: 2008

In today's world, parents begin implementing specialized programs for their children as early as the crawling stage. This phenomenon is referred to as overparenting. Overly anxious parents who micromanage their children's lives and follow rigid, expert-designed parenting frameworks may unknowingly cast a shadow over their children's well-being. Frank Furedi's international bestseller exposes the pitfalls of raising "project children" and lays bare the consequences of treating parenting as a checklist of expert-approved tasks. The book offers clear insights into the attitudes and approaches parents should adopt to truly support their children's healthy development.

(Excerpted from the introduction.)



THE COLLAPSE OF PARENTING: HOW WE HURT OUR KIDS WHEN WE TREAT THEM LIKE GROWN-UPS

Author: Leonard Sax

Publisher: Basic Books

Year of Publication: 2015

In *The Collapse of Parenting*, New York Times bestselling author and one of America's leading child psychologists, Leonard Sax, delivers a compelling analysis of the crisis in modern parenting and offers a vision for how we can better prepare our children for the challenges of adulthood. Sax argues that the growing problems of obesity, anxiety, and depression among young people may stem from a widespread abdication of parental authority. As a result, children are being raised without clear standards of right and wrong, lacking discipline, and turning to their peers or the internet for guidance instead of trusted adult figures.

"Dr. Leonard Sax, a leading authority on parenting, articulates with insight the challenges parents face with their children and offers practical solutions. *The Collapse of Parenting* is at once scholarly and practical, simple yet profound. If you are to read only one book this year, make it this one."

—Meg Meeker, author of *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters* and *Strong Mothers, Strong Sons*
"Drawing on years of firsthand work with parents and children, Dr. Leonard Sax offers a vital perspective on modern-day parenting—where things go wrong, how to set them right, and how to avoid common pitfalls so you can raise your children more effectively."

(Excerpted from the introduction.)

PARANOID PARENTING: WHY IGNORING THE EXPERTS MAY BE BEST FOR YOUR CHILD

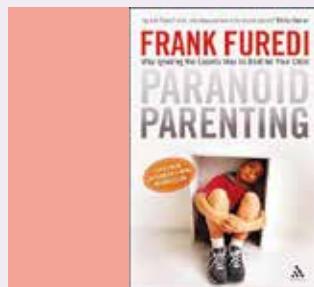
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(Excerpted from the introduction.)



THE PARENTING SCHOOL (ANA BABA OKULU)

Editor: Prof. Dr. Haluk Yavuzer

Publisher: Remzi Kitabevi

Year of Publication: 2011

Raising children in the modern world is no longer a task that can be guided solely by love and instinct. The complex social dynamics of the information age, technological developments, and the evolving definition of childhood have transformed parenting into a much more conscious and well-equipped process. At this very point, *The Parenting School (Ana Baba Okulu)*, prepared under the editorship of Prof. Dr. Haluk Yavuzer, one of Türkiye's leading child psychology experts, stands as a reliable guide for families and educators.

The Parenting School not only addresses child development but also approaches the family and school ecosystems as complementary dynamics. While explaining the developmental stages of children from birth to 18, the book offers both scientific and practical solutions to the key challenges encountered in each period.

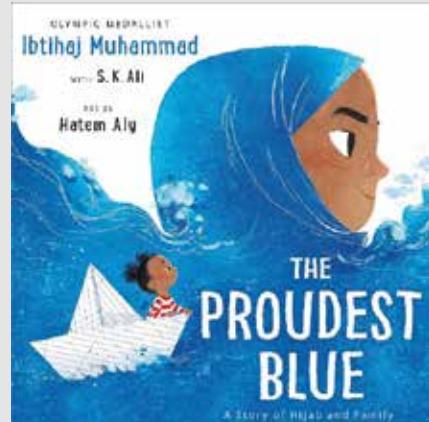
THE PROUDEST BLUE: A STORY OF HIJAB AND FAMILY

Author: Ibtihaj Muhammad, S. K. Ali

Publisher: Andersen Press Ltd

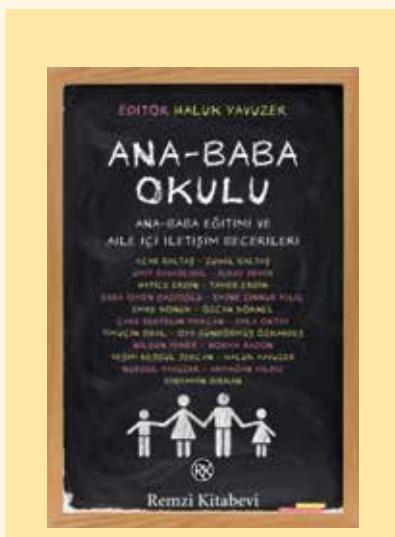
Illustrator: Hatem Aly

Year of Publication: 2023



The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family, co-authored by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali, is a distinguished work of children's literature that addresses themes of cultural belonging, religious identity, and family bonds with both aesthetic and pedagogical sensitivity. When Asiya wears her dazzling blue hijab to school for the first time, it becomes more than a garment. It transforms into a symbol of values, faith, and dignified presence. Told through the eyes of her younger sister Faizah, this story strengthens children's capacity for empathy while nurturing an appreciation for respect and diversity.

Enriched by Hatem Aly's illustrations that speak to visual memory, the book also demonstrates how cultural diversity can serve as a natural ground for learning within the classroom. *The Proudest Blue* is a powerful narrative that can hold an important place in education models attentive to cultural diplomacy, particularly within international school ecosystems.



Maarif Dictionary



Eyyup BOSTANCI

Chemistry and Laboratory Supplies

In this issue of our dictionary, we take a different approach. We begin with a brief journey into the origins of the word “chemistry,” then explore the names and meanings of materials frequently used in chemistry laboratories.

There are different views on the origin of the word “chemistry.” According to Ibn Sīnā, the purpose of this science is to remove the properties of mineral ores, to bestow upon them the qualities of other minerals, and to combine the characteristics of certain substances in order to obtain gold and silver.

The most intriguing view of its origin is that it derives from the word **kemi** in Ancient Egyptian, meaning “black.” This word later passed into Greek as **kemia**. Egypt, which some travelers referred to as the “black land,” is also regarded as the birthplace of this science.

In Western languages, the word for chemistry appears almost the same, with only slight phonetic changes. This indicates that the term entered these languages from Arabic. Through Latin translations, the term “*alchemia*” found its way into modern Western languages, with the prefix “*al*” reflecting the Arabic definite article “*al-*”. The English word chemistry is one such example.

The Turkish Language Association (TDK) Dictionary defines chemistry as follows: The science that studies the fundamental structures of substances, their compositions, transformations, and the methods of analysis, combination, and production.

Now let us turn to the materials we use when conducting experiments in laboratories.



Amyant Wire (Asbestos Wire)

A heat-resistant wire, somewhat like an oven mitt, used to hold a crucible. The word's origin is Greek: *amiántos* (ἀμιάντος) meaning “stainless, untainted, a mineral unaffected by fire, indestructible.” It is derived from the verb *miaínō* (μιαίνω) “to stain” with the prefix “an-” added. The distinctive feature of this wire is that when exposed to fire it loses its stains and impurities.



Beher (Beaker)

A cylindrical laboratory vessel with a wide mouth, often likened to the hat of a scientist. It can even be compared to open-minded students, ready to accept whatever is placed inside. The word originates from the German *Becher* meaning “cup, goblet,” which in turn derives from the Latin *bicarium* meaning “small jug.” The Latin form is related to the Greek *bikos* meaning “two-handled pot.”



Baget (Stirring Rod)

A scientific mixing stick used in laboratories. The word derives from the French *baguette* meaning “rod, stick,” which itself comes from the Italian *bacchetta* with the same meaning (“rod, staff, cane”).

Some sources suggest that the word passed into Western languages through Arabic. The Latin form is thought to have evolved from the Proto-Indo-European root “*bak-*” meaning “staff, rod,” although no written example of this form exists.



Büret (Burette)

A long, narrow glass instrument that functions like a syringe, yet with far greater precision.

It is used in experiments to measure and dispense liquids drop by drop. The name was introduced in 1824 by the French chemist Joseph Louis

Gay-Lussac (1778-1850), and it was quickly accepted without objection.



Bunsen Beki (Bunsen Burner)

The chemist's closest companion, this device produces a steady blue flame that can be used to heat almost anything. It is a small tool with a great effect, essentially a miniature fire machine. As with all laboratory equipment, it must be handled with care, for despite its size it can cause burns. As you may have guessed, the name also comes from a scientist. The instrument is named after the German chemist Robert Bunsen.



Piset (Wash Bottle)

A flexible plastic bottle with a narrow spout, used especially for dispensing drops of water, acids, or solutions. The word has an unusual origin. It comes from the French verb *pisser* meaning "to pour, to spurt," from which *pissette* was formed with the sense "small squirter, dripper." In other words, the idea of "a small water-dispensing bottle" emerged through this metaphor. The French verb *pisser* itself goes back to the Latin *pissiare* or *pissare* meaning "to pour water." One cannot help wondering whether the word arose as an onomatopoeic form, echoing the "psss" sound of liquid being poured. Why not? Borrowed into Turkish from French, *pissette* was adapted as *piset*.



Havan (Mortar)

Defined in the Turkish Language Association (TDK) Dictionary as "a vessel made of wood, stone, metal, or plastic, used for pounding and grinding," it is also employed in chemistry experiments as a type of grinder for breaking down substances.

The word originates from Persian *هارون* *hevân*, meaning "grinding vessel," which has been adopted directly into Turkish.



Puar (Pipette Filler / Rubber Bulb)

An intriguing little word. In laboratories, it refers to the small rubber suction bulb used with pipettes. Its meaning is straightforward, yet its form is what makes it interesting.

The term comes from the French *poire* meaning "pear," since its shape clearly resembles one. It's really shaped like a pear. In Turkish, *poire* was adapted as *puar* and has since been used in this form. The word may ultimately trace back to Ancient Greek *apion* or even further to the Proto-Indo-European root *pera* meaning "pear, fruit."



Kroze (Crucible)

A small vessel used to heat substances at very high temperatures, functioning almost like a miniature furnace. The word comes from the English *crucible*, meaning "melting pot," which has been adapted into Turkish as *kroze* or *kröze*.





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TURKISH MAARIF FOUNDATION DONATION ACCOUNT INFORMATION

IBAN

VakıfBank

TL	TR61 0001 5001 5800 7306 0925 82
USD	TR84 0001 5001 5804 8018 0952 52
EUR	TR42 0001 5001 5804 8018 0810 70

Ziraat Bank

TL	TR37 0001 0008 2481 9873 6050 01
USD	TR69 0001 0008 2481 9873 6050 07
EUR	TR42 0001 0008 2481 9873 6050 08

Halk Bank

TL	TR94 0001 2009 7530 0016 0000 38
USD	TR33 0001 2009 7530 0058 0003 90
EUR	TR60 0001 2009 7530 0058 0003 89

Türkiye Finans Participation Bank

TL	TR49 0020 6003 1903 6485 7400 01
USD	TR65 0020 6003 1903 6485 7401 01
EUR	TR38 0020 6003 1903 6485 7401 02

Albaraka Türk Participation Bank

TL	TR33 0020 3000 0398 8457 0000 01
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IBAN

Emlak Participation Bank

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Yapı Kredi Bank

TL	TR84 0006 7010 0000 0052 5409 64
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Vakıf Participation Bank

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Ziraat Participation Bank

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