

4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL  
EDUCATION SUMMIT  
ONLINE 

# Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future

6 - 7 D E C E M B E R 2 0 2 4 R E P O R T



ISTANBUL  
EDUCATION  
SUMMIT  
TURKISH MAARIF  
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EDUCATION  
SUMMIT**  
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This report covers summaries and highlights of the opening speeches, high-level meeting, three sessions, school leaders' and youth session, keynote speaker sessions of Istanbul Education Summit 2024. In addition, it includes information about exhibition of "Good Practices in Education", exhibition of the 5th International Maarif Photography Contest and award ceremony as side initiatives of the Summit. The views, themes and discussion points expressed in Istanbul Education Summit 2024 Summit Report are strictly those of the speakers and participants present at the summit, and do not reflect the official view of Istanbul Education Summit and Turkish Maarif Foundation.



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#### GRAPHIC DESIGN

**Burak Tekin**

#### CONTACT

ALTUNIZADE MAHALLESİ

ORD. PROF. DR. FAHRETTİN KERİM GÖKAY

CADDESİ NO: 22 ÜSKÜDAR / İSTANBUL

PHONE : +90 216 323 3535

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**ISTANBUL  
EDUCATION  
SUMMIT**  
TURKISH MAARIF  
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## 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT | 2024 REPORT

The Istanbul Education Summit, organized by Turkish Maarif Foundation, which aims to be a meeting point for institutions and actors distinguished by their international activities and efforts in the field of education, took place on December 6-7 2024 for the fourth time, as online, under the theme “Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future.” The summit was held online in 2021 with the theme “New Trends and Transformation in Education,” and its second edition with the theme “The Future of Schools: Post-Pandemic Needs of Education.” convened face-to-face in Istanbul. The third summit in 2023, which was held physically again in Istanbul, focused on the theme “Leading the Change in Education”. The fourth edition of the Summit operated within a global framework, addressing developments worldwide and facilitating the sharing of experiences from various countries. There were opportunities to discuss and learn at varying levels during the Summit. In the high-level meeting of the summit, the topic of “Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future” discussed with the

participation of education ministers from different countries. The three panels hosted academics and experts in the field to discuss various aspects of the main theme. The panel topics included “Rethinking Relations between State and Education,” “Social Justice and Education,” and “A New Sustainable School Culture.” Furthermore, two special sessions were named “Leading Schools Towards Equity: The Role of Principals in Shaping Fair and Inclusive Education” and “Shaping Tomorrow: How Youth Can Drive Equity and Sustainability in Education.” Additionally, the “Good Examples in Education” and the 5th International Maarif Photograph Contest created by Maarif Schools worldwide were presented during the summit. Turkish Maarif Foundation was proud to welcome His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, attended the opening session as the Guest of Honor. The opening speeches of the Istanbul Education Summit delivered by the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye, Prof. Dr. Yusuf Tekin, and then President of Turkish Maarif Foundation, Prof. Dr. Birol Akgün.



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## PREFACE | 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT

**Prof. Dr. Birol Akgün**

Then-President of Turkish Maarif Foundation



**T**urkish Maarif Foundation, Türkiye's window into the world and international brand in education, diversifies and improves its educational activities by signing cooperation agreements with

universities worldwide, publishing journals and books, and developing curricula and accreditation systems.

Building on that experience and know-how, it launched the Istanbul

## 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT | PREFACE

Education Summit to facilitate debate on contemporary issues in international education, global trends, and future challenges, while also making necessary contributions in these fields.

The 4th Istanbul Education Summit was held in 2024 under the theme "Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future." With the participation of education ministers from around the world, distinguished members of national and international academia, policymakers, intellectuals, and practitioners, the Summit facilitated comprehensive discussions on the balance between state and education, the role of justice and inclusion in learning, and the emergence of a sustainable school culture. These exchanges reflected our collective determination to shape educational systems that are both equitable and resilient, capable of preparing future generations for the profound challenges of our time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our President, His Excellency Recep

Tayyip Erdoğan, as well as the Minister of National Education, Yusuf Tekin, for their unwavering support for our Foundation and for honoring us with their participation. I also extend my gratitude to the education ministers of North Macedonia, Indonesia, and Liberia, along with all the participating academics and experts, for their invaluable contributions. Finally, my special appreciation goes to Associate Professor Dr. Zeynep Arkan, the coordinator of the Summit, for her dedicated efforts, and to the staff of our Foundation whose commitment and hard work made this event possible.

I believe that this report, which gathers the insights and perspectives of distinguished speakers from around the world, will make a significant contribution to the international education community. The lessons learned and the commitments expressed during the fourth Istanbul Education Summit will serve as valuable guidance in developing inclusive, fair, and sustainable education policies for the twenty-first century.



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Arkan**

Head of the Summit Organizing Committee



**T**he 4th Istanbul Education Summit has opened new avenues of discussion in education, both in theory and in practice, while making visible a set of shared principles that may guide the future. Throughout the sessions, contributions from diverse geographies demonstrated that educational policies can no longer be understood solely within national boundaries; they must be re-examined in a global context.

The deliberations highlighted, first and foremost, that the relationship between the state and education can no longer be defined as a one-directional structure of

regulation. It must instead be reconceived through the contributions of multiple actors. Education thus emerges not only as a public service but as a shared space of social responsibility.

Equally prominent was the question of justice and equity. Education may function at times as a mechanism that reproduces inequality, and at others as a transformative force that mitigates it. This underscores that beyond the content of curricula, pedagogical approaches and practical implementation play a decisive role in building social justice. Safeguarding cultural diversity, ensuring inclusivity, and guaranteeing access to quality education

were central to these conversations.

Another important insight concerned the nature of schools themselves. Schools must be considered not merely as sites of instruction, but also as ecological, cultural, and aesthetic entities. From architectural design to the organization of learning environments, every element shapes students' moral and cultural horizons, laying the foundation for a sustainable future.

Leadership and youth perspectives also came to the fore. School leaders were identified as crucial agents in embedding equity and inclusion into institutional cultures. Meanwhile, the contributions of young participants revealed that the future of education is not simply constructed in the present but is continually re-authored by new generations who bring their own perspectives and expectations.

One of the key lessons of the Summit concerned technology, particularly artificial intelligence. Rather than pursuing uncritical integration, participants emphasized the need for an ethically framed approach in which technological

innovation serves human dignity and sustainability. Innovation must therefore be evaluated not only by efficiency or speed but also by its alignment with justice and sustainability.

Beyond these thematic insights, the Summit succeeded in creating an intellectual sphere of exchange. Local experiences shared by participants met and intersected with global concerns, producing a richer and more nuanced whole. This encounter offered strong evidence that a common horizon for education is both possible and necessary.

In conclusion, the Summit has reminded us of the dual mission of education: to serve as a bridge that connects societies in their pursuit of justice, peace, and sustainability, and to open a horizon that points toward futures not yet realized but already imagined. Education, like translation, is an ongoing process—continuously renewed and reinterpreted. The ideas and shared principles emerging from this Summit will serve as a guide on the path toward building a fairer, more inclusive, and more sustainable world.



# TURKISH MAARIF FOUNDATION IN THE WORLD



Countries Where  
Education is Provided

64



Number of Students

70.000+



Number of Educational  
Institutions

583





**His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**  
President of the Republic of Türkiye



**D**istinguished members of our Foundation, esteemed guests, I extend to you my heartfelt greetings, with affection and respect. I pray to the Almighty God that the 4th Istanbul Education Summit, organized by Turkish Maarif Foundation, will bring forth auspicious outcomes. I express my gratitude to all participants

who contribute with their valuable ideas to this summit, held under the theme *"Education for a fair and equitable Society for a Sustainable Future."*

I believe wholeheartedly that this year's summit, which will address observations and proposals concerning the inequalities faced by students in

many countries around the world, as well as discussions on topics such as education and the state, and education and social justice, will also yield successful results. As of this year, our country hosts 338,161 international students in its universities. Representing 4.76% of our higher education capacity, this figure places Türkiye among the top ten countries worldwide.

Our Turkish Maarif Foundation exerts great efforts to carry the rich, fertile, and deeply rooted educational heritage of our nation to every corner of the world. With 446 schools, 1 university, 19 training centers, 11 Türkiye Studies Centers, and 44 dormitories operating across 55 countries, Turkish Maarif Foundation serves more than 50,000 students in total. By successfully implementing international educational methods alongside local curricula, our Foundation not only contributes to the cultivation of virtuous and qualified individuals but also fosters stronger communication among societies.

We provide, and will continue to provide, the necessary support to our Foundation, whose work we follow with appreciation and whose achievements we take pride in. On this occasion, I sincerely congratulate all members of the Foundation who serve with dedication in 55 different countries, from Kosovo to Colombia, from Jordan to Pakistan, from South Africa to Azerbaijan, and from Afghanistan to Somalia. On behalf of my country and my nation, I extend my gratitude to every teacher, administrator, and Foundation employee who, often under challenging conditions and at the risk of many dangers, proudly raise the flag of Turkish education. May God never let our efforts go in vain. I wish this summit success and extend to you all my warmest regards.

I also congratulate, first and foremost, our Turkish Maarif Foundation, as well as all institutions that have contributed to this important summit. May you remain in good health.



**Prof. Dr. Yusuf Tekin**

Minister of National Education, the Republic of Türkiye



**D**istinguished academics, experts, esteemed guests.

I extend to you my heartfelt greetings with deep respect. The 4th Istanbul Education Summit, organized under the leadership of Turkish Maarif Foundation with the theme *"Education for a fair and equitable Society for a Sustainable Future"*, bears great significance in addressing the transformative power of education in achieving the goals of social justice and sustainability. This theme will reveal an important perspective on generating solutions to the most fundamental problems facing humanity today.

I wholeheartedly believe that the Summit will establish a platform for consultation to guide the search for solutions to humanity's common challenges; that it will deepen an understanding

of education centered on equality and justice; and that it will demonstrate an important will to build a sustainable future. I am convinced that the knowledge and insights emerging from these consultations will help shape global education policies, while also contributing to strengthening our nation's educational vision at the international level. I sincerely thank all participants who contribute to the Summit, the experts who enrich this platform with their ideas, and Turkish Maarif Foundation along with all its employees for their efforts in making this organization possible.

Turkish Maarif Foundation is one of our most important institutions that carries our country's rich educational legacy to the international community. Today, serving more than 50,000 students in over 50 countries, our foundation implements a model that guides global education

policies while placing local values at the center. Turkish Maarif Foundation acts with an educational philosophy that respects local cultures and values in the countries where it operates and conveys to the world our nation's education approach based on peace, justice, and equality. These efforts not only ensure equal opportunity in education but also build bridges between civilizations, contributing to the shaping of a vision of civilization grounded in justice and wisdom.

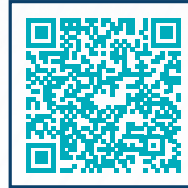
Esteemed participants, civilizations rise not only through material gains, but also through the spiritual values that encompass those achievements, an understanding of justice, and the ancient wisdom concerning humanity. Education is the most powerful instrument that carries this wisdom into social life, prepares individuals for the future, and shapes the destiny of societies. However, for this instrument to create genuine transformation, it must be built upon the principles of justice and equality. In this context, the theme *"Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future"* offers us a valuable foundation to understand the transformative power of education in rebuilding the social fabric and in establishing a more just order. Justice protects human dignity and signifies an order grounded in rights, while equality ensures that every individual receives their fair share of this order. Education, by cultivating awareness of rights and responsibilities, enables the internalization of values that prioritize social benefit and allows these values to take root in

every aspect of life.

Esteemed guests, Türkiye, with the rich civilizational heritage it has inherited, aspires to lead in building a more just and sustainable future by carrying education beyond being merely a tool of development. The Century of Türkiye Maarif Model is one of our most significant steps toward realizing this vision. Our Maarif model approaches education with a civilizational perspective that is nourished by the wisdom of the past and directed toward the needs of the future. Our goal is to raise our children not only as individuals equipped with knowledge, but also as individuals endowed with the wisdom of truth, imbued with a sense of responsibility, and guided by an understanding that prioritizes social benefit.

In line with this purpose, our priority is to provide our children with the opportunity to discover their own potential and to build an educational culture that will transform this potential into a production of value for humanity. God willing, our Maarif Model will continue to serve as the guide of this understanding, which shapes a sustainable future on the axis of justice and equality. Distinguished guests, with these sentiments and thoughts, as I conclude my remarks, I would once again like to emphasize my conviction that the 4th Istanbul Education Summit will guide our efforts to build a more equal and just society through education. I thank Turkish Maarif Foundation, our esteemed academics, and experts for their contributions to the realization of the Summit, and I extend to you all my warmest regards.





**Prof. Dr. Birol Akgün**

Then-President of Turkish Maarif Foundation



**Y**our excellencies, Honored Guests, Dear Participants and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to welcome you all to the 2024 Istanbul Education Summit, organized by Turkish Maarif Foundation. This year, main theme is “Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future,” calls us to reflect on how education can be a powerful tool to foster justice, equity, compassion, and global peace.

Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to address the recent events in Gaza. We are deeply saddened by the loss of innocent people and the suffering endured by countless families. As an institution dedicated to the betterment of humanity through education, we absolutely condemn violence and injustice, particularly against children and the most vulnerable. We believe that education is a force for cultivating empathy, understanding, and hope for a peaceful world. It is our sincere wish to see peace not only in Gaza but in every corner of the globe, where respect for human dignity is upheld.

Reflecting on the legacy of this summit, the Istanbul Education Summit has always provided a platform to tackle pressing issues in education. In 2021, we explored “New Trends and Transformation in Education.” In 2022, we focused on “The Future of Schools: Post-Pandemic Needs of Education.” Last year, we examined the critical role of leadership under the theme “Leading the Change in Education.” This year, we turn our attention to how education can serve as the cornerstone for building fair and sustainable societies.

This year’s high-level meeting, with the participation of education ministers from around the world, will center on the theme “Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future.”

Alongside this, three thematic panels will explore critical dimensions of the main theme:

“Rethinking Relations between State and Education”

“Social Justice and Education”

“A New Sustainable School Culture”

In addition, two special sessions will focus on:



**Prof. Dr. Birol Akgün**

Then-President of Turkish Maarif Foundation

“Leading Schools Towards Equity: The Role of Principals in Shaping Fair and Inclusive Education”

“Shaping Tomorrow: How Youth Can Drive Equity and Sustainability in Education”

The summit will also feature the presentation of “Good Practices in Education” and the 5th International Maarif Photography Contest, showcasing the creativity and achievements of Maarif students worldwide.

As Turkish Maarif Foundation,

We take great honor in our mission, inspired by the wisdom of Anatolia and guided by universal values. With over 450 schools in more than 50 countries, we aim to nurture individuals who embody both academic excellence and moral integrity. We aim to prepare young people who are not only skilled in the 21st-century competencies but also committed to building a peaceful, fairer and wiser world.

One of our most significant achievements is the International Program

(IM), a comprehensive curriculum that stands alongside globally recognized frameworks like Cambridge and the International Baccalaureate (IB). Our IM program integrates academic rigor with values of compassion, virtue, and wisdom. This is more than a curriculum—it is our contribution to forming a global society where fairness and equity prevail. By combining universal educational benchmarks with cultural richness, we strive to create individuals who are both competent and virtuous, or as we call them, “erdemli insan.” Our efforts extend beyond academics.

We are proud to teach the Turkish language in our schools—not as a means of influence, but as a bridge to cultural understanding and dialogue. Through teaching Turkish, we aim to foster mutual respect, friendship, and appreciation for cultural diversity in a globalized world.

Furthermore, we are at the forefront of innovation. Our Artificial Intelligence course, currently implemented in seven countries, equips students with the skills

needed to thrive in an increasingly digital world. We believe it is essential to nurture not only consumers of technology but also its ethical creators and stewards.

Dear Participants,

The world is rapidly changing. From technological revolutions to environmental crises and rising inequalities, education must adapt to meet these challenges. But as we innovate, we must also ensure that compassion, empathy, and collective virtue remain at the heart of our educational endeavors.

Through the dynamic discussions and sessions at this summit, we aim to develop practical solutions that make a worldwide impact. Whether addressing the role of the state in education, exploring social justice, or rethinking school cultures, this summit offers an opportunity to create meaningful change. Special sessions highlighting the

leadership of educators and the voices of young people will remind us that inclusivity and sustainability are vital for our shared future.

As we bring this opening to a close, the Istanbul Education Summit stands as a testament to what we can achieve when we come together. The ideas and collaborations that emerge here will undoubtedly shape the future of education worldwide.

On behalf of Turkish Maarif Foundation, I thank each of you for your participation and your dedication to creating a more compassionate, equitable, and sustainable world through education. Together, let us ensure that education remains a symbol of hope, a driver of justice, and a bridge to a brighter common future for humanity.

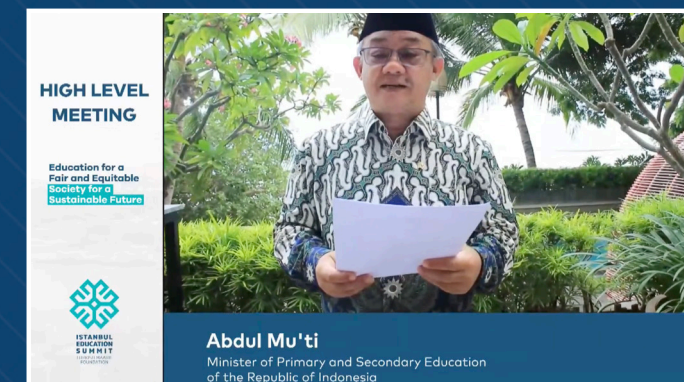
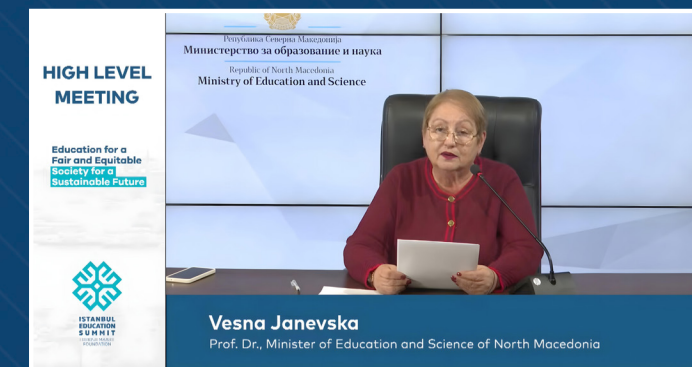


6 DECEMBER 2024  
**DAY 1**

# "Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future"

## Questions

1. What are the most pressing barriers to achieving educational equity, and how can policymakers and educators, as key players, collaborate to overcome these challenges?
2. How can sustainability be incorporated into education without overwhelming the already limited infrastructure of schools, especially in underserved communities?
3. In which way can schools contribute to sustainability by fostering environmental awareness and responsible practices among students?
4. How can educational systems be restructured to ensure that equity and sustainability are core principles at all levels of schooling?



This meeting emphasizes the critical need for education systems that advance fairness, inclusivity, and equal access. It highlights the importance of addressing social and economic disparities that affect students' opportunities, ensuring that every individual regardless of background has access to quality education. This vision advocates for integrating sustainability into educational curricula, preparing students for personal

success and active contributions to a more just and environmentally conscious world. By embedding sustainability within education, schools can cultivate a mindset of ecological responsibility, encouraging students to think critically about the long-term impacts of their actions on the planet. Fostering fairness, equity, and sustainability in education lays the foundation for a more resilient, inclusive, and harmonious future.





**Vesna  
Janevska**  
Minister of Education and  
Science of North Macedonia

Prof. Vesna Janevska, PhD (born 1958, Skopje), is a Macedonian pathologist and academic with over four decades of medical and teaching experience. She graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the University “St. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, where she became a specialist in pathology and earned her PhD. Her career began as a general practitioner before completing specialization in pathology and joining the Institute of Pathology in 1992. She advanced to assistant professor in 2001, associate professor in 2006, and full professor in 2011, also serving as Head of the Department of Pathology and later as Quality Manager until 2020. Since 2011, she has been a full professor and specialist pathologist at the Institute of Pathology. Beyond academia, she was a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia (2006–2008). She is an active member of multiple professional bodies, including the Doctor’s Chamber of Macedonia, the European Society of Pathology, and the Macedonian Medical Association.



**D**ear President of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Dear President of the Maarif Foundation, Mr. Birol Akgun. Distinguished participants of the summit, representatives of other countries, ladies and gentlemen. We could use hundreds of well-known messages and wise thoughts from prominent personalities from all over the world in support to the thesis that education is the most important pillar of every society and therefore the basis of global development.

And in my country, we have no dilemma on the matter. Let me emphasize that we are a small country endowed with unbelievable natural beauties. However, we do not have a source of something tangible that we can export in abundance or be recognized for it that would generate high national revenues and hence make us an influence factor in our region or even wider. Therefore, we are faced with the exigency to invest in the knowledge of the citizens, in creativity and innovation, and to enable each individual to reach their full potential.

Hence, I strongly believe that every personal success is part of a mosaic that means national progress. I am part of a relatively new government in Macedonia, which came to office mere five months ago with a strong will and energy for change that will ensure a better and more inclusive education system.

I believe you will agree and it is clear that I am talking about two processes that are running in parallel both as the government and the Ministry of Education and Science at the moment. One is the commitment to a better quality of our education and the other is the commitment to a comprehensive education system.

The quality of education in Macedonia needs a lot of improvement. We are not satisfied with the achievements of our students in international tests like PISA and TIMSS. We probably never will be. No matter how much we progress with knowledge and personally, I hope that we hold on to that feeling as it will motivate us even further to invest more in a huge successful generation. I have a lot to say about the changes in education in our country, but allow me to briefly highlight the goals we are aiming at, for providing better quality of curricula and textbooks that integrate global innovations such as

artificial intelligence and provide content that strengthens digital and green skills. Improving the educational infrastructure to a process of optimization that will ensure the rational use of material and human resources, and by investing in improving the conditions in the facilities that will be used in the future, like procurement of new equipment, digitalization, and improved energy efficiency. Further, we are working on introducing only one shift in schools and keeping children longer in schools by providing not only classical instructions, but also extracurricular activities that are of interest to the pupils.

The next goal is to increase the motivation of our teachers. They are the most important part of the educational process. We have reached an agreement



**Education is the passport  
to the future. It provides  
for understanding of  
differences, mutual respect  
and tolerance. It unites  
and builds peace.**



with the teachers for higher salaries, up to 60% over the next three years. They will receive much more training that has been available to them so far.

We are also working on changes to the inclusion model, so that students with disabilities receive the right attention and exactly what they need so that they, too, can integrate even more and more easily into social processes. Another goal is to build a better higher education, which in a few years, I hope, will be interesting for some of young people, just like some of our students get their education in your country or in other countries. I am honored that in my mandate as a minister, we have established a national coordinating body for higher education reform that will work on all the aspects of the higher education, including its internalization.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, allow me to draw your attention to the basic aspects on which our, if I may say so, new education in Macedonia lies upon.

They are precisely equality, equal access, and the fair chance for everyone to be educated under the same terms as everyone else. The disparity in the accumulated knowledge of the different social groups in my country is evident,

and it is due to a number of reasons, actually factors that we are trying very hard to eliminate, or rather to neutralize their influence. There are differences in the knowledge of children from different regions of North Macedonia. There are differences in knowledge among students belonging to different ethnic communities. Differences in knowledge also can appear as a consequence of the social status of the families of the children, and so on and so forth. We are confident that by optimizing the school network, we will eliminate the first factor. Children from rural areas, or 12% of all students in North Macedonia will be transferred to central schools where socialization is more present, where there is greater competitiveness, and where schools are better organized and equipped. For children from socially vulnerable families, we provide special rights to financial support and stimulation for education. We are working on raising the awareness among the part of the population about the importance of education and about the greeted commitment to school, and with new and strengthened legislation. We will prevent segregation and any kind of discrimination in education. And I must say in all of our activities, we are not alone. We have a lot of support from the international community, from the European Union, from



the United States, and organizations such as the World Bank, but also from a number of countries that we have representatives here at this summit today.

I cannot help but mention the Turkish National Cooperation and Coordination Agency, TIKA, as far as many years we have counted among the sincerest supporters of Macedonia educational institutions, and I am thankful for that. I appreciate it when everyone who can afford it, in addition to putting things in order in one's yard, helps their friends to do so as well. Such global humanity only leads to building a better world and a better place for all of us to live in. I think it is a view shared by all of us. Correct me if I am wrong. If I'm not wrong, then let's continue to develop education together through innovation. Let's raise further the

standards of quality, and let's lend a hand to everyone to achieve those standards. Let's push boundaries to knowledge and opportunities for all our citizens. Education is the passport to the future. It provides an understanding of differences, mutual respect and tolerance. It unites and builds peace. But unity and peace, it seems, are sorely lacking in the present day, and hatred and a desire for destruction prevail. Let's change that as leaders through continual self-improvement and greater investment in better education for all. I believe that the recommendation that will emerge from this summit will be beneficial to all participants. My government will certainly take them into account when formulating further national policies. I wish you all the best from my beautiful hometown of North Macedonia.





**Abdul  
Mu'ti**

Minister of Primary and Secondary  
Education of Indonesia

Abdul Mu'ti (born September 2, 1968, in Kudus, Central Java) is an Indonesian academic and Islamic scholar, currently serving as the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education since October 2024. He has been the Secretary-General of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second-largest Islamic organization, since 2015. He holds degrees from IAIN Walisongo Semarang, Flinders University, and UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, where he also became a professor of Islamic education. Renowned for his interfaith dialogue efforts, Abdul Mu'ti has authored influential works on education and tolerance, solidifying his role as a key figure in Indonesia's academic and religious spheres.



**H**is Excellency, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Türkiye. His Excellency, Prof. Dr. Yusuf Tekin, Minister of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye. Her Excellency, Prof. Vesna Janevska, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia. Her Excellency, Dr. Jarso Maley Jallah, Minister of Education of the Republic of Liberia. Honorable Prof. Dr. Birol Akgun, President of Turkish Maarif Foundation. Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Good morning from Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, one of the provinces in the eastern part of Indonesia. First of all, I apologize for not attending this very important conference in person because of so many activities and agenda that are already set as part of my activities as the newly appointed Minister of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia. Secondly, allow me to thank you for the opportunity to address this distinguished gathering at the Istanbul Education Summit.

Although we are meeting virtually, the global community's shared commitment to building a more equitable and sustainable future through education brings us together as if we were in the same room. As the newly appointed Minister of Primary and Secondary Education in Indonesia, it is an honor for me to join this high-level meeting today and share our nation's vision and priorities for education as we look forward to the future. The theme of this summit, Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future, resonates deeply with the direction of our new government and with the foundational principles enshrined in our Constitution.

Ladies and gentlemen, in Indonesia, our vision for education is quality education for all. This vision reflects the ideals and aspirations of our nation's founding fathers, as well as the current government's commitment to strengthening human resource development. As the largest archipelago in the world, with over 270 million people Indonesia is blessed with incredible diversity. Our challenge, as well as our opportunity, is to ensure that every child, regardless of where they live, their economic background or their cultural identity, has access to the tools they need to thrive in the global society. To

this end our current education priorities are aligned with the global vision of a fair and equitable society, and we are actively pursuing policies to support that goal.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to share the key programs and initiatives of the newly established Minister of Primary and Secondary Education in advancing to support quality education for all.

First, in Indonesia, we believe that education must go beyond academic achievement to shape the character of our youth. A strong resilient society is built on strong values. This is why we are prioritizing the strengthening of character education including improving competencies in guidance, counseling, character development and creating



**Teachers are the heart  
of the education system,  
and their role is central  
to building a fair and  
equitable society.**

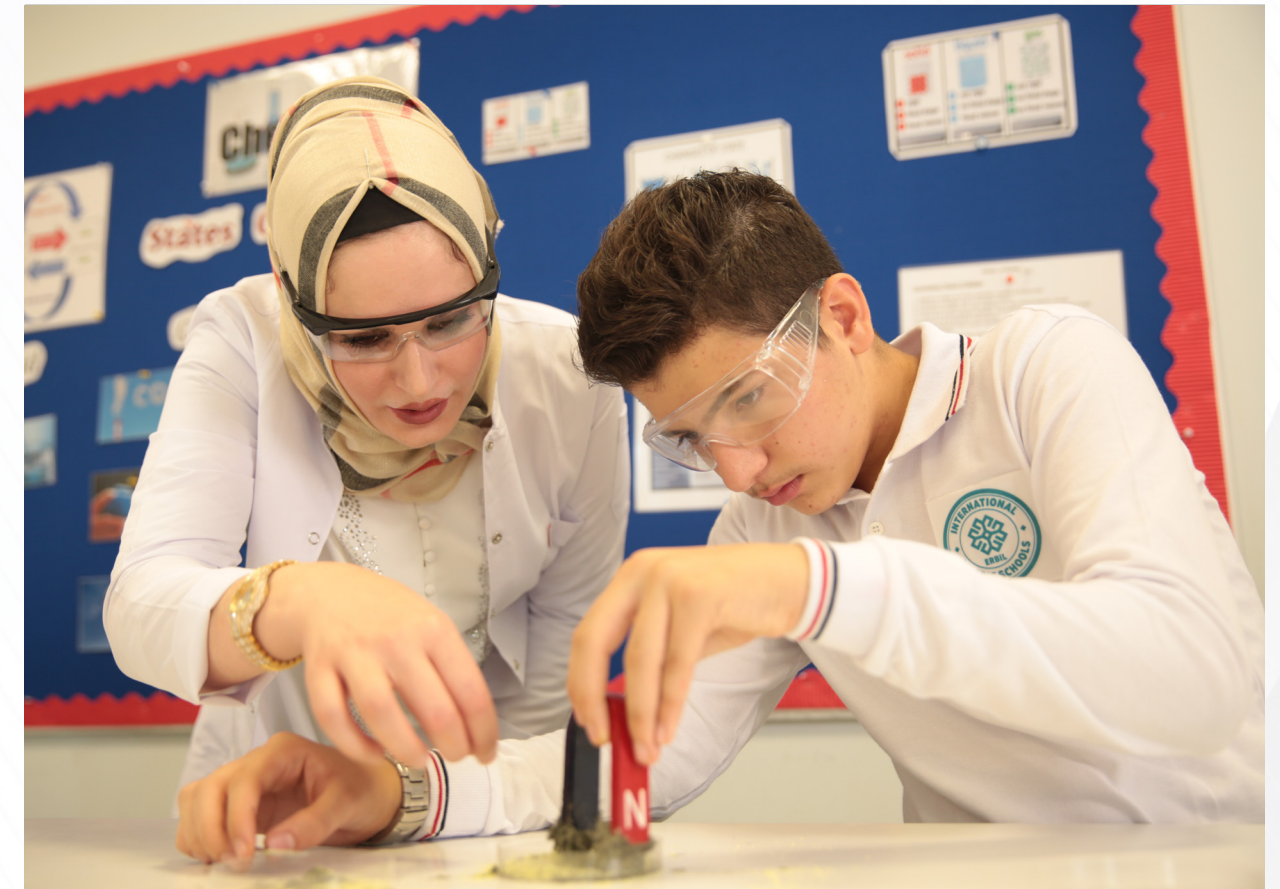


environments that support holistic growth. One of the key initiatives in this area is providing nutritious school meals to ensure that children not only learn but also grow in an environment that supports their physical and emotional well-being.

Secondly, a core focus of our new government is ensuring that every Indonesian child has access to at least 13 years of education that lasts from early childhood education to senior high education. This initiative guarantees that children from all work of life from urban centers to remote villages have the same educational opportunities. Thirdly, we recognize that the quality of education can only be as strong as the quality of our educators. Teachers are the heart of the education system, and their role is central to building a fair and equitable society. Therefore, we are focusing on improving teachers' qualifications, providing continuous professional development opportunities, and ensuring better welfare through certification programs. This will help teachers gain the tools they need to empower students and create meaningful, lasting education. Fourth, we believe that the future of our world depends on the strength of our education system in areas like literacy, numeracy, and science and technology. In Indonesia,

we are keen to strengthen these areas as early as childhood education and create specialized centers of excellence in schools across the country. Furthermore, we are committed to enhancing vocational education and technical training programs to equip students with the skills necessary for future careers in a rapidly changing world. Fifth, in regard to access to education, we acknowledge that it is not just about teachers and curricula, it also requires adequate infrastructure. We are actively planning and working closely with the local government to improve school facilities, especially in rural areas, to ensure that our students have the best environment to learn.

Last but not least, education in Indonesia is also about preserving our linguistic and cultural heritage while embracing global connectivity. We are working to elevate our national language, Bahasa Indonesia, while also protecting and promoting regional languages. In addition, we are planning to enhance literacy programs to ensure that every student can read, write, and communicate effectively both within our nation and an increasingly interconnected world. As we focus on these national priorities, we are mindful that education is not an isolated effort. It is part of a global movement



towards sustainable development. Our commitment to sustainable development goal to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, guides our action and policies. But achieving this goal requires collaboration and shared responsibility. Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, believe that by working together, exchanging ideas, sharing best practices and supporting each other through this summit, we can accelerate progress toward a fairer, more equitable global society. We must work

together across borders, cultures, and sectors to create an education system that empowers every child and prepares them to build a sustainable future. The theme of this summit, Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future, is not just a slogan. It is a call for action. Let us rise to that goal with determination, compassion, and a shared commitment to the future of our children. Thank you very much. Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.





**Jarso Maley Jallah**

Minister of Education of the  
Republic of Liberia

Dr. Jarso Maley Jallah was appointed as Minister of Education by the Liberian Senate on February 6, 2024. Before being appointed by President Joseph Boakai, he served as Vice President for Academic Affairs, a Student Division administrator, and an assistant professor at Delaware State University. Prior to joining Delaware State University, Dr. Jallah began his career at Rhode Island Community College, working as a coordinator/advisor for the federal Trio Program - Talent Search.



**G**reetings from Liberia. Prof. Dr. Birol Akgun. President of Turkish Maarif Foundation, Honorable Yusuf Tekin, Minister of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye, members of Turkish Maarif Foundation, esteemed colleagues and educators, ladies and gentlemen. It is both an honor and a privilege to be with you today as I deliver the keynote at this year's Istanbul Education Summit 2024, a gathering that embodies the hope and resolve needed to tackle the pressing challenges of our time. The theme of this year's summit, Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future, is both timely and imperative. Education has always been the cornerstone of human progress. It empowers individuals, fosters critical thinking, and drives innovation. Yet, as we face growing inequalities, environmental crises, and social unrest, it is clear that the way we educate must evolve to meet the demands of a changing world.



The challenges we face in ensuring quality education are vast, and they demand collaboration, innovation, and commitment from all of us. It is for this reason that I am particularly excited to be a part of this year's Istanbul Education Summit. For the past four years, this summit has become an essential platform for sharing insights, solutions, and strategies that can address the most urgent educational challenges of our time. With over 50 countries represented by a diverse group of thought leaders, policy makers, and educators, we have the unique opportunity to come together and explore how education can drive social change and contribute to achieving the global goals set by the United Nations.

A fair and equitable society begins with the access to quality education for all. However, millions of children and adults worldwide are denied this basic right due to poverty, gender discrimination, conflict, and systemic inequities. Addressing these barriers is not just a moral imperative, it is a



**A fair and equitable society  
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foundational requirement for global stability. As a collective body, we must prioritize universal access to education. Our policies and investments must focus on ensuring that every child, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, or geographic location, can access quality education. Our curriculum must be inclusive and reflect the diversity of all societies, teaching respect for different cultures,

gender, and perspectives to build empathy and reduce prejudice.

We must empower teachers by providing training, compensation, and resources to address the challenges of teaching in diverse and under-resourced environments. We must see education as a tool for sustainability. In recent years, we've been experiencing an unprecedented climate crisis, a threat

to our future. Education equips young minds with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to combat environmental degradation and promote sustainable practices. Moreover, environmental education must be integrated into school curricula worldwide, teaching students not just the science of climate change, but also practical solutions and the importance of stewardship. Furthermore, education systems should emphasize interdisciplinary learning, preparing students to tackle complex global challenges holistically.

In this era of rapid technological advancement, digital tools can serve as a bridge to equity. However, they can also widen the gap if not managed responsibly. To harness technology's potential, we must invest in digital infrastructure, particularly in underserved regions. We must teach digital literacy, ensuring that learners can critically navigate and contribute to the digital world. And we must address the ethical implications of artificial intelligence and technology, preparing students to use these tools for the greater good. A fair and equitable society for a sustainable future cannot be achieved through education alone, but it is impossible without it. This summit must serve as a platform for

collaboration, innovation, and actionable commitments.

Let us advocate for increased funding in education, especially in marginalized communities. Collaborate across borders to share resources, best practices, and innovations. Commit to lifelong learning as a societal value, recognizing that education does not end with formal schooling. Ladies and gentlemen, the power of education lies in its ability to transform individuals, communities, and societies. By prioritizing fairness, equity, and sustainability in our educational systems. We are not just preparing students for the future. We are shaping the future itself.



**Education equips young minds with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to combat environmental degradation and promote sustainable practices.**



## Keynote Speaker 1



### Richard A. Falk

Emeritus at Princeton University Albert G. Milbank  
Professor of International Law and Practice

Richard Falk is Albert G. Milbank Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University, where he taught for four decades. He has also served as Chair of Global Law at Queen Mary University of London, co-Director of its Centre of Environmental Justice and Crime, Research Associate at the Orfalea Center for Global Studies (UCSB), and Fellow of the Tellus Institute. Falk directed projects on climate change, democracy, and world order and was UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Occupied Palestine (2008–2014). His influential scholarship spans international law, global governance, human rights, and peace studies, with landmark works such as *This Endangered Planet* and *On Nuclear Weapons*. His memoir *Public Intellectual: The Life of a Citizen Pilgrim* was named best book of 2021 by the Global Policy Institute. A widely recognized public intellectual, author of both academic and literary works, and nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, Falk currently serves as President of the Gaza Tribunal Project.



I take inspirational guidance from Nelson Mandela, whose life embodied the politics of impossibility, emerging from prison after 27 years to lead his country to a peaceful post apartheid future. Mandela’s words, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Mandela’s uplifting affirmation of the importance of education leaves open the haunting question of how this may be done in various academic institutions throughout the world. It also leaves open the question of change for what.

In facing the darkness of our time, highlighted by the inability of the international system of norms present in the UN Charter, and the refusal of leading political actors to take steps to stop Israel’s genocide in Gaza, and even worse, these UN members actually facilitating the continuation of the genocide with unabated fury for the past 14 months, it would be easy to succumb to despair given these horrifying realities. We must struggle against such a surrender to these evil forces.

I believe that if we find the techniques and deploy the wisdom to manage this global transition, humanistic energies can bestow on future generations a world more peaceful, just, and resilient than what exists for most people today. This challenge centers on the sustainability of our natural habitat, a threat unprecedented in human history. These circumstances call for new thinking, new values, and adaptive visions of how we live together in ecologically durable and ethically fulfilling ways.

The deepest educational responsibility is to prepare students for a world of drastic change and profound challenges. At first glance, the priority seems to be digital skills, but more is at stake than digital literacy. What is needed is learning that equips students to contribute positively to a better future through social engagement. This means not being passive spectators. Innovative pedagogies can help ensure citizens of the future are committed to adaptive change.

Most education concentrates on distinct subject matter separated into silos of knowledge. This approach served the modern world until recently but encouraged a fragmented sense of reality with little sense of the whole. It was also



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insensitive to the fact that societies can no longer assume the sustainability of their natural habitat. These ways of breaking up reality are practical accommodations and should not be rejected, but rather enlarged, merged, and adapted. This shows the need to supplement traditional ideas about higher education with awareness of wholeness, interactivity, interdependence, and otherness.

Thus, if we take the Summit theme as seriously as it deserves, it will confront stiff opposition. Economic elites often resist equitable and ecological adaptations due to their short term negative effects on profitability or economic growth. Dominant political classes oppose changes that displace national security with appeals to human security. Nationalists and



fundamentalists, whether secular or religious, protect beliefs that privilege the part over the whole. Nevertheless, reality forces itself upon social consciousness sooner or later, and education helps explain why. Perhaps the best way of learning to face the future is by considering the past.

I offer three talking points reflecting the tension between change and resistance. Under wholeness, there is a need to develop a human or species identity. This is tied to the dangers of nuclear war, made more plausible by recent escalations in the Ukraine war. How should educators respond? Should students be shielded from the grim features of the human condition, or should we expose these dangers while also presenting ways to overcome catastrophic futures?



**The deepest educational responsibility and opportunity is to prepare students to live in a world facing drastic change and profound challenges.**

Equity requires unprecedented cooperation among national governments. Richer countries must help poorer ones to adapt, since late developers are far less responsible than the highly developed economies of Europe and North America for industrial development and reliance on fossil fuels. Preserving tropical rainforests currently under threat involves compromising territorial sovereignty to promote the global public good.

Otherness is also crucial. Identity politics stresses and privileges differences and generally views others with suspicion, hostility, and rivalry. The ultimate expression of hostile otherness is genocide, from the Nazi Holocaust to Israel's genocide against the population of Gaza. The UN and its members have been either unable or unwilling to stop this genocide. Shamelessly, the liberal democracies of the West, led by the United States, have been complicit.

Civic engagement is essential. Governments are preoccupied with the pursuit of national interests, while corporations and banks are focused on profitability and growth. Creative pedagogy would teach a greater appreciation of others. Instead of a worldview that presupposes a win lose



outcome, it would be helpful to find situations where a win win approach is viable. Respect for international law can free resources for constructive use in relation to fairness and sustainability.

Education shapes minds, transforms societies, and opens pathways to a sustainable, just, and peaceable future. It should prepare students for active societal roles, not passive spectators. Students must also be ready for technological innovations ahead. Artificial intelligence and robotics will increasingly shape future

lives in liberating ways and in patterns that may trouble educators. Creative and ethical innovations must keep pace with technologies that could render many forms of work obsolete.

In that context, it becomes so important to educate political elites that are still captive to an outmoded sense of what provides security and progress in the twenty-first century. Despite turbulent times, Mahatma Gandhi remains a guide for all humanity, and he once said, "Learn as if you will live forever, live as if you will die tomorrow."



# Rethinking Relations between State and Education

## Questions

1. How can education policies be designed to promote education and infrastructure across different socio-economic and geographic regions?
2. When developing new policies, what factors should the state consider, taking into account evolving technology, daily life, skills required for the new job environment, and other relevant issues?
3. How can funding models be redesigned to ensure equitable resource allocation across schools?
4. What role should local communities and schools play in decision-making around resource allocation, and how can the state support this process?
5. How do you think state-imposed curricula standardization impacts schools' ability to address local cultural and community needs in education?
6. What challenges and advantages arise when blending local and global viewpoints and needs in curriculum design?



This panel emphasizes the need to reconsider how policy and governance, funding and resource allocation, and curriculum and pedagogy are shaped by the state. In terms of policy and governance, there should be a balance between centralized control and local autonomy, with policies designed to promote equity, inclusion, and responsiveness to evolving technologies, daily life, and labor market skills. Funding and resource allocation

must be re-envisioned to address disparities and ensure fair distribution, while allowing schools and communities a stronger role in decision-making and encouraging cooperation between public and private institutions. Curriculum and pedagogy should maintain national standards while integrating local and global perspectives, supporting inclusive and culturally relevant approaches that reflect diversity and create more equitable learning environments.





## Mamphono Khaketla

Kingdom of Lesotho Dr., Former  
Minister of Education and Training

Mamphono Khaketla, PhD, is an academic, and a policymaker with more than three decades of service in education, governance, and management. She earned her PhD and Master's in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her career began in academia as a lecturer and administrator at the National Teacher Training College, later serving as Chief Education Officer in Lesotho's Ministry of Education. She was Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Development Management, Executive Director of the Centre for Accounting Studies, and external examiner at the University of Limerick. In government, she served 12 years as Cabinet Minister, holding key portfolios including Education, Finance, Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs, and Communications. She founded the 'Masechele Khaketla Education Foundation, supporting disadvantaged youth with scholarships and mentorship. Since leaving government, she has worked as a consultant for state and non-state institutions, continuing her lifelong commitment to education, leadership, and social development.



I have been a mathematics teacher, lecturer, and later became a politician, serving as Minister of Education in Lesotho. The education system is unique, with roots in missionary work. When the first French missionaries arrived in 1833, they found people already civilized but unable to read and write. Schools were set up to teach reading, especially the Bible, and to interpret for priests. Since then, there has always been a relationship between the state and the churches.

The government sets the curriculum, so all students follow the same program and write the same exams, even though most schools are not government-owned. About 86% of schools belong to churches, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Anglican, while the government owns only 11%. Yet the government dictates, because it sets the parameters of what can be taught, when, and how. The churches have their own interests, they want a religious and moral education, and so there's always a thin line between



church autonomy and government control. Because of the churches' struggling, the government decided to pay all the teachers in the schools.

We made primary and elementary education free from 2000 so that children could attend school regardless of family background. In primary schools, children receive free books and at least one meal a day. According to the World Bank, Lesotho is a lower middle-income country, with many pockets of poverty, especially in rural areas. For this reason, the government has taken over the running of schools even though it does not own them. It pays the teachers, sets the curriculum

and examinations, and builds or repairs school infrastructure.

The latest development is the arrival of private schools. These schools still follow the government curriculum but add subjects like coding, artificial intelligence (AI), and computer science



**We have to retrain our teachers, because what was taught 20 years ago has changed now.**



(CS). Unfortunately, they charge fees, leaving children who cannot afford them vulnerable, as they miss out on access to this fourth-industrial era. The state, therefore, has a critical role in establishing and running schools.

There was a question we were given about decentralization. I can understand how it makes sense for major countries, for example, the US with its 51 states, where each state could have its own rules about education. But for a small country like Lesotho, with a population of only two million, it doesn't make sense to talk about decentralizing education. What is needed instead



**These schools still follow the government curriculum but add subjects like coding, artificial intelligence (AI), and computer science (CS). Unfortunately, they charge fees, leaving children who cannot afford them vulnerable, as they miss out on access to this fourth-industrial era.**

is standardization; making sure that whether you are in Maseru (the capital of Lesotho) or in a rural area, you receive the same level of education.

In terms of opportunities for strengthening the relationship, first, there is regular policy dialogue among the state, the churches, and the private sector. We always note that many children complete school but remain unemployed. Why? Because what they are taught does not resonate with the needs of the private sector. That is why policy dialogue is essential. The private sector says: we need engineers. Therefore, schools should teach subjects that enable children to become engineers. Policy dialogue among these parties is crucial.

The second priority is investing in capacity building, especially training enough teachers. In Maputsoe there is only one teacher training college, a university, and a few institutions, so expansion and new financing models are needed. Public-private partnerships are crucial, for instance, if the private sector needs water engineers, it should work with the government to finance the curriculum.

I would like to emphasize that the



relationship between State-Church schools has been going on for almost 200 years. We have maneuvered, we have survived, and at this point I see no reason to change the status quo. What we need is to strengthen it through more dialogue between the government, the schools, and the private sector. I am not excluding the parents, because they also play a very critical role.

To conclude, the relationship between the State and education in Lesotho is complex but also interdependent. One cannot be divorced from the other, so we must work together to build a robust education system that meets all the needs of Lesotho.





## Amita Chudgar

Michigan State University Professor of  
Education Policy, College of Education

Amita Chudgar is a professor of education policy at Michigan State University. She is also the interim associate dean for international studies and the director of the Office of International Studies in Education. Her work examines the influence of home, school, and community contexts on educational access and achievement of children in resource-constrained environments. Through the analysis of diverse, large-scale, national, regional, and cross-national datasets, she studies the role of policy-relevant variables in ensuring equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. Her long-term interests focus on ensuring that children and adults in resource-constrained environments have equal access to high-quality learning opportunities, irrespective of their backgrounds.



To structure my remarks, I want to offer three observations to situate education in the relationship between education and state. If we think in terms of economics, we often classify goods as public or private. If something is a public good, then we have an argument for the state to play a role in its provision. Street lights, clean air are good examples. Most would agree education is also a public good, where the state indeed has a role to play, just as we were hearing from the Kingdom of Lesotho a few minutes ago.

With that in mind, let me present three ways to think about these challenges, already echoed by my colleagues who preceded me. One is the role of the state at different levels of education. For instance, ensuring all citizens have basic literacy and numeracy, write in the national language, and use basic math. One might argue that the state has a very important role to play at that level of education.

I present these ideas and questions



to lay out how, in terms of thinking about levels of education, we can see how there are different ways to argue about the importance of the state and the role it may or may not play in this context.

Now let me offer a different perspective: to think about the role of the state not in terms of the levels of education, but in terms of finance. Finance is crucial. So what should be the level of financial commitment that the state or the government makes in supporting national education systems? I am asking questions, not answering them, because these are the questions

that demand our attention, and there isn't one simple answer.

In the global context, the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report says



**Investing in children's learning early is extremely valuable to ensure that they are set up to be successful through their future education journeys.**



that to reach the 2030 goal of universal basic education, we will need to spend 461 billion US dollars every year until 2030. That huge amount makes clear that governments and states will indeed have a major role to play. In fact, the Education 2030 Framework for Action has set key financial benchmarks for the amount of contribution governments are expected to make to the education systems as a portion of the gross domestic product, or public expenditure on education. All of this shows there's a strong and steady argument for the state to fund its education systems.

What's striking is that in lower-middle-income countries, parents spend about 45% of education expenditure, while in rich countries it's only 20%. This shows that in richer countries, like the US, the state funds a much larger share than lower-income countries can. These are



**A good education system  
requires teachers who are  
prepared to take on the  
challenges**

recent UNESCO data. So again, in finance, the state's role is essential, but the key question is the extent of its contribution and the implications.

One final observation: think about the state's role not by education level or by finance, but in terms of policies and regulations. That's another important way the state shapes the education system.

As we saw in the remarks from Lesotho, the state may not always fund education, but it often plays a key regulatory role, setting policies and guidelines. The challenge is balance: policies can be so rigid they stifle innovation, or they can promote some ideas while curbing other ideas which might be aligning with the preference of the state. But, at the same time, is it wise to say that we don't want state policies and state regulations? Because indeed, the state does play a very important role as a regulator of quality, when we want to ensure that all of our children do have access to quality education.

To summarize: as we can see, the question of the role the state plays is indeed very complex, and I have laid it out in three different perspectives.







Fatos  
Tarifa

University of New York Tirana  
Prof. Dr., President of the Albanian  
Academy of Arts and Sciences

Fatos Tarifa is Professor of Sociology and International Relations at the University of New York Tirana, where he also served as rector. He holds PhDs in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and in Political Science from the University of Tirana. Tarifa has taught and held research positions across Europe and North America, including at Harvard, Duke, Stanford, NYU, Toronto, Amsterdam, Essex, Uppsala, and Hong Kong. His scholarship focuses on social and cultural change, political sociology, higher education, and globalization. He is the author, co-author, or editor of 55 books and more than 100 peer-reviewed articles and chapters. Beyond academia, Tarifa served as Albania's ambassador to the Netherlands (1998–2001) and the United States (2001–2005). A former member of Albania's Council of Higher Education and Scientific Research, he is currently President of the Albanian Academy of Arts and Sciences and recipient of numerous grants, honors, and international awards.



It is interesting that we discuss the state–education relationship, an issue at least 2,500 years old. Plato, in his Republic, was the first to ask: is the education of citizens a private matter, or is it primarily the concern of the state? He strongly emphasized the role of the state in educating its citizens. In his view, only with an ideal education could citizens create an ideal state.

Important questions remain: how much power should the state have over education, especially K-12, and how much freedom should higher education institutions enjoy?

Education is mainly financed by the state and is the largest item in public expenditure in most developed countries. This justifies the government's authority to appoint officials and shape education policy.

Education is a shared responsibility of families, educators, and governments, with states ensuring universal K-12 access



while adapting schools to a changing world. From K-12 to postgraduate levels, policymakers must help students succeed in a digital age shaped by the internet and artificial intelligence.

Today's students, Gen Z and Gen Alpha, are fundamentally different from all previous generations. They are no longer the students our system was designed to teach. They haven't just changed their slang, clothes, or style; they have changed almost everything. A big discontinuity has taken place, and there's no way back.

Due to the vast amount of information on the internet and their constant

interaction with it, today's students think and process knowledge in ways very different from those of their parents, grandparents, or previous generations. Let me conclude with this remark: most



**Education is too important  
to be left to teachers  
or schools alone. It is a  
responsibility that falls  
on the shoulders of many,  
many actors.**



of us, the adult generation and educators, continue to ignore or resist this new reality. In truth, many of us are unable to cope with it.

So let's not be mistaken. We are living in a world changing fast and in uncertain, turbulent ways. The sooner we understand and accept these new realities, the better. As Peter Drucker said, "the greatest danger in times of

turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic." This is the reality we live in. I'll continue later with my other points.

If this doesn't change, we as educators will miss a unique opportunity: to guide students in harnessing AI's potential while also teaching them to think critically about its limits. This is a challenge never faced before in human history. It means



we must abandon some of our pre-digital instincts and comfort zones, and remember that we are teaching students born in the 21st century, not the mid-20th.

One might ask: what's the government's role? Its responsibility is immense, advancing competitiveness and fair education requires investment and sound policies, as governments everywhere shape education and drive change.

Governments provide equitable funding, support teacher training and professional development, raise pay to reflect teachers' value, and approve credentials to ensure instructional quality.

Governments should better support modernized school facilities and subsidize broadband in rural areas, ensuring all students have access to schools and digital tools suited to today's era.

Governments have the duty to ensure students with disabilities develop digital literacy and to guarantee high-quality, free public education for all. Upholding education as a universal right also means keeping pace with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where digital, physical, and

biological systems converge to shape our future.

As for my last words, I have three comments. First, the reformation of the education system cannot succeed unless it extends across the entire pyramid of education. This requires rethinking how knowledge and learning at all levels can address future challenges and opportunities, in line with the vision of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, established by UNESCO in 2019 to look beyond the year 2050.

It is our responsibility to pass on an education system that equips future generations with the skills needed for the coming decades. Neglecting this duty means failing both our intellectual mission and our moral obligation, for which future generations will judge us.

Lastly, and related to the second point: the decision-making that shapes education and the professional development of the young remains in the hands of adults. It is politicians who decide, regardless of how wise or informed we may think we are. Our responsibility can only be fulfilled if we truly understand the skills, talents, and aspirations of the young generation, and invest accordingly.



# “Leading Schools Towards Equity: The Role of Principals in Shaping Fair and Inclusive Education”



## Q u e s t i o n s

1. What type of leadership approach can foster sustainable, equitable, and inclusive learning environments in schools? What strategies can principals use to ensure that such a culture becomes permanent?
2. As leaders, what specific challenges do principals encounter in their quest to steer schools towards equity and fairness, and what strategies can they employ to surmount these obstacles?
3. How can principals ensure that resource allocation in schools is both fair and sustainable over time, addressing disparities without compromising future needs?
4. How can fostering a sense of belonging and promoting culturally responsive teaching contribute to educational equity and long term sustainability within school systems?



This session highlights the critical role of principals in fostering equitable, fair, and inclusive learning environments. As school leaders, principals hold a unique position to shape school culture, implement policies, and support practices that address disparities in education. Creating inclusive environments where diversity is valued and students receive the necessary support to thrive is central to this

role. By advocating for fair resource allocation, promoting culturally responsive teaching, and cultivating a sense of belonging for all students, principals can help close opportunity gaps and ensure that every student, regardless of background, has access to a quality education. Leadership in this area is essential for building an education system rooted in fairness and inclusivity.





**Zerfishan  
Adnan**

International Maarif Schools  
Islamabad PhD, Principal

Dr. Zerfishan Adnan is an innovative school principal with over 24 years of experience in education, specializing in international curricula including IB, PYP, and IGCSE. Since 2020, she has led Pakistan International Maarif Schools, advancing academic excellence, professional development, and holistic student growth. IB-certified, she integrates global citizenship, environmental stewardship, and 21st-century skills into learning, and has represented Pakistan in UNESCO APCEIU's Global Citizenship Education project. Her earlier roles include Assistant Principal and Math Teacher at Pak-Turk Maarif International Schools, Math Teacher at SLS School, and Program Coordinator at Preston University. Holding an honorary doctorate in Education from the University of Maryland (2024), she has also completed leadership and pedagogy courses with UNESCO, IB Global Centre, Yale, Glasgow, and the British Council. A recipient of multiple national and international awards, including Educator of the Year at the World Schools Summit, she is recognized for inspirational leadership.



**A**s educators, we know the pivotal role a principal plays in building successful inclusive schools. Through my journey, I have come to realize that the principal's active participation is not just important, it is a cornerstone for driving meaningful change and improving services.

Speaking from my personal experience, inclusion is not a task but a continuous process. For me, inclusion is about learning how to live with differences, how to learn from differences, embrace them, and grow from them.

Inclusion is more than a concept. It is about breaking down barriers and ensuring the presence, participation, and achievement of all students. This belief is what has shaped my leadership approach, and today I am here to share how we turned this vision into reality in our school.

The journey begins with building a supportive school culture. Culture is the backbone of equity, and it is foundational to how fairness, inclusion, and overall school practices are implemented. Learners should not have to adapt themselves according to the education system. In fact, the education system should adapt itself to the learners' needs. When students do not feel welcome at school, they are less likely to learn, and this is everyone's loss.

To create an inclusive culture, principals must take certain steps. The first step is to set up a vision statement that is aligned with inclusion. A clear, equity-centered vision and mission must prioritize fairness, inclusion, and the holistic development of all students.

Then come the policies. Here I would like to discuss anti-discrimination. We developed systems to ensure fairness in admissions, grading, and discipline. We implemented a zero-tolerance policy for all kinds of discrimination and guided learners on conflict resolution. As a result, instances of discrimination decreased, fostering a safe and supportive learning environment for students.

We also implemented an inclusive curriculum to reflect diverse perspectives and unique needs. Students need a curriculum that is flexible, creative, and relevant to them. It is the duty of the principal to ensure that the curriculum is aligned with learners' needs. Equity audits became a regular practice, allowing us to assess and realign the distribution of resources and opportunities.

At our school, differentiated instruction became a powerful strategy. We tailored lessons to suit the diverse needs and interests of students, allowing them to choose the learning medium that matched their strengths. As a result, we observed improved academic performance and more confident



**Inclusion is not a task  
but a continuous process.  
It is a journey, a never-  
ending search for better  
ways to respond to  
students' diversity.**



students. Assessment methods were diversified to ensure every student had the opportunity to demonstrate their learning effectively.

We empowered students to take ownership of their learning by offering them voice and choice, encouraging active participation. They became co-constructors of their learning goals and success criteria. During this process, they helped their peers when support was needed.

Club activities and cultural festivals provided platforms for students to showcase their unique skills and interests. When assigning responsibilities, we considered their personal strengths, ensuring they

gained a sense of achievement, responsibility, and ownership.

Equity and fairness also require inclusive spaces. We had the advantage of spacious classrooms with flexible seating, interactive learning stations, and access to digital tools to support diverse needs. Students were given the choice of seating arrangements that best suited their learning style.

Diversity is about acknowledging and celebrating differences, while inclusion is about embracing those differences. They go hand in hand. Regular recognition of inclusive practices encouraged schoolwide celebrations of equity and diversity. We hosted cultural heritage days and exchanges.

Counselors provided consistent social and emotional support through regular check-ins and group discussions. These practices helped identify and address emotional challenges, stresses, or anxieties. Students felt heard and valued, open dialogue was encouraged, and confidence in managing emotions improved.

In inclusive schools, teachers are the key to turning vision into reality.



**Learners should not have to adapt themselves according to the education system. In fact, the education system should adapt itself to the learners' needs.**



Our Teachers underwent workshops on inclusive teaching methods. They embraced differentiated strategies, catering to varying learning styles, and the results were transformational.

Every student has been given an equal chance to thrive academically,

socially, and emotionally. Our school transformed into a community where inclusion was not just a policy but a way of life. I share this journey with you not as a blueprint, but as inspiration. What we achieved in our school is possible in yours too.





**Naoufel  
Nechi**

International Maarif Schools  
of Tunisia Vice Principal

Naoufel Nechi is an educator specializing in English, social studies, and global perspectives, with extensive experience in curriculum development and international education. He earned his BA (2013) and MA (2015) in English and International Relations at the Higher Institute of Humanities of Tunis, where he also joined the Human Rights and Debate Club. From 2015 to 2017, he taught Tunisian Arabic to non-native speakers, later teaching English and Social Studies and developing interactive methods to build language proficiency and critical thinking. Between 2018 and 2023, he served as Head of Social Sciences and Global Perspectives teacher at Tunis Maarif International Schools. Since 2023, he has been Cambridge Exam Officer and Global Perspectives teacher at the same institution. Committed to professional growth, he has earned TEFL/TESOL, Microsoft Innovative Educator, and Cambridge Global Perspectives certifications, alongside training in psychology and digital education tools, promoting research, analysis, and global awareness in teaching.



It is both an honor and a privilege to address you today on a topic that lies at the very core of our professional responsibilities as leaders: leading schools to equality. As deputy head of the International Maarif Schools of Tunisia, I have had the profound opportunity to witness the transformative power of education.

In our school, we have taken deliberate steps to foster a culture of equity and inclusivity. Equality in education is not just an ideal; it is a commitment to ensuring every student. At International Maarif Schools of Tunisia, this principle is embedded in everything we do, from offering scholarships to supporting underprivileged students, to adapting teaching methods for diverse learning needs. Equality is at the heart of our mission.

In our school, equality means providing access to high-quality education for all students while respecting individual differences. Whether a student comes



from a rural area or an urban setting, whether they excel academically or need extra support, our goal is to give every learner the tools they need to thrive.

As administrators and leaders at International Maarif Schools of Tunisia, our role is pivotal and crucial. We are not just managers; we are leaders tasked with creating a vision of equality and turning it into reality. At our school, this vision has been shaped by our commitment to inclusivity and our belief in the transformative power of education.

For example, we implemented policies that ensure no student feels excluded.



**By breaking down  
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Our disciplinary measures are designed to be fair and restorative rather than punitive. We also took steps to foster a culture of respect, where students and teachers alike feel valued and empowered. These initiatives reflect our belief that equality begins with leadership that is both visionary and compassionate.

It is important to note that teachers are the backbone of any educational institution. At Maarif Tunisia, we invest

heavily in their professional growth. We provide regular training sessions to help our teachers adopt inclusive pedagogies such as differentiated instruction and student-centered learning techniques. Our teachers are encouraged to collaborate, share best practices, and support one another. For example, we support peer mentoring programs where experienced teachers guide their colleagues in implementing inclusive strategies. This collaborative approach ensures every teacher is

equipped to meet the diverse needs of our student body.

In addition, at Maarif Tunisia we firmly believe that students are the heart of the educational experience. To this end, we have created avenues for student engagement that go beyond academics.

For instance, we have introduced student councils where representatives from different grades come together to discuss school policies and share their perspectives. This initiative not only empowers students but also gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Additionally, we celebrate cultural diversity through events such as International Day and Cultural Day, where students showcase their traditions and learn about others. Such practices promote a sense of unity and inclusivity within our school community.

Parents are also key partners in our mission to create an equitable and inclusive school environment. At International Maarif Schools of Tunisia, we have implemented several initiatives to foster strong parent-school relationships. Regular parent-

teacher meetings, workshops, and family engagement events are integral to our approach. By involving parents in decision-making processes, we strengthen the bond between home and school, creating a supportive and balanced network for our students.

To bring everything into perspective, the practices at International Maarif Schools of Tunisia demonstrate that leading schools to equality is not just a vision but a tangible reality. As we reflect on our successes, we must also look ahead and commit to continuous improvement. I urge each of you to take these principles to the next level: prioritize equity in every decision and policy, empower teachers to innovate and adopt inclusive strategies, engage students as leaders and active participants in their education, and strengthen partnerships with parents to build a united school community.

Together, we can ensure that International Maarif Schools of Tunisia and all other schools become models of equality and inclusion. By breaking down barriers, celebrating diversity, and fostering respect, we are not just shaping better schools but building a better future for our society.





**Lidra  
Meidani**

Maarif Tirana Campus New York  
High School Vice Principal

Lidra Meidani (b. 1954, Tirana) is an Albanian educator and school leader with decades of service in mathematics teaching and educational administration. A graduate of the University of Tirana in Mathematics (BA 1977, MA 1986), she began teaching in 1977 and later became Head of Mathematics at Ismail Qemali High School. From 1998 to 2014, she served as Vice Principal of the same school. Since 2014, she has been Principal of New York High School in Tirana and, since 2019, also Principal of New York Basic Education Elementary School. In addition to her educational leadership, Meidani has been active in civic and social causes, serving on the Tirana Municipal Council (2000–2003), as President and later Honorary Member of the YAPS Social Enterprise Foundation, and as an Honorary Member of the Albanian Children's Foundation.



**O**rganized by education specialists, the training offers a more practical and contemporary approach to teaching. We guarantee the necessary infrastructure, we distribute schedules to lighten the load of each colleague, while adapting to personal needs.

In these trainings, being flexible and prepared for any unexpected challenges that school work offers remains one of the activities of a model school that best responds to contemporary requirements in education. I never tired of saying that collaboration is the key word in teaching. But I am not only talking about the cooperation of the leader with the teachers in the hierarchical plan, where the leader assigns tasks and the teachers carry them out. Such relationships risk turning into formal statistics in institutional files, although these are necessary.

The spirit of cooperation in the school guarantees the success of



teamwork. According to this model, a leader encourages the exchange of values between actors participating in education: students, parents, teachers. The strength of each link becomes the strength of the school as a whole.

Plans for individual work with students can be compiled by teachers depending on the problems they see during class work. But the leader coordinates these plans across different subjects and environments. For students with behavioral problems, the psychologist gives professional advice, but the leader

creates bridges between teachers and psychologists. For emotional problems of the child, the same relationships are created with parents as participants in



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education.

Individualized work with students proves that the purpose of the school is not only grades but also the well-being and development of multiple intelligences of the child. In this context, our school for successful parenting

at Marif Tirana New York Campus, for seven years, has been a valuable asset in helping parents, students, and teachers.

The leader plays the role of a buffer in conflicts that may arise between teachers and parents. He is the negotiator and mediator of this

relationship. He does not take sides; the priority remains the interest of the child. Visionary leadership remains one of the key points of our work. Flexibility is not the absence of long-term platforms in the learning process but personalization and occasional changes depending on the situation or problems that arise.

The role of a leader is to accept diversity and respect the human values that emerge through education. Education today is changing at an extraordinary pace, questioning every rule that has worked so far. What used to be called normality at school is today seen as a violation of students' freedoms and rights. The culture of diversity is emphasized as an essential element of universal pedagogy.

Universal pedagogy sees each student as a unique, unrepeatable being with cognitive, mental, and emotional abilities different from any peer. When we talk about diversity at school, every young person has their own style and way of acquiring knowledge and skills. With a student aiming for Olympiads, we will work with advanced material and differentiated work. But the statement is even more important for students with behavioral or learning problems.

The inclusive approach to school considers its primary task the guarantee of a learning process as efficient as possible for everyone. The idea of equal chances is the best solution: they are different from other children, but they should have the same opportunity in education. They are equal to every other student in class, but they are not the same.

A good manager emphasizes diversity as one of the strengths of the institution, without being afraid of prejudice or stereotypes. A leader knows that diversity is a real factor in today's schools. Consequently, our plans and objectives must take this factor into account in the effort to create supportive and inclusive environments for students.

According to the philosopher Edgar Morin, "The treasure of humanity is its creative diversity, but the source of creativity is its unity." This best explains the concept of equity in our mission. As teachers, we recognize that our students are the product of this ever-changing age. Each of them is unique, but together they are our future, which we as parents, teachers, and decision-makers have educated them to become social beings.





Nsghah Samuel  
Siben

Maarif Schools of Cameroon  
PhD, Vice Principal

Dr. Nsghah Samuel Siben is a teacher and scholar with twelve years of experience in education. He earned his BA (2004), MA (2010), and PhD in Commonwealth Literature (2021) from the University of Yaoundé 1. Since 2023, he has been a lecturer in the English Department at Bertua-ENS University, and from 2010 to 2023 he also taught English to French-speaking students at the University of Yaoundé 1. His career includes roles as assistant principal at Cameroon International Maarif Schools, head of disciplinary and literature departments at a private school, and exam officer for English Literature at the GCE Board-Buea. Dr. Siben has participated in numerous seminars on inclusive education, competency-based teaching, and classroom management, strengthening his pedagogical expertise. He is the author of The Power of Detachment (2019) and The Mystery of Praise (2022), as well as academic studies on aesthetics, religion, and post-colonial literature in Africa.



To ensure that there is inclusive education that is fair and that leads to sustainability. We ensure that our lesson plans are well done, taking into consideration the competence-based approach, making every student belong and participate in lessons.

We equally have PTA as Parents Teachers Association in all the campuses. We make sure there is continuity and follow-up between the school and the parents.

In order to see how gifted the children are, we look at clubs to see their different performances. If we are teaching without making these children discover the competencies that are in them, then the teaching process is problematic. So we put a lot of interest in that, doing follow-up. We have different class masters and mistresses. In all the classes we have a teacher that follows all the children to see who actually needs help.



At times we refresh our courses with the kids. At times on Saturday we come to school and we work with them to make sure that they are inclusive in education. We do not have many children in the classroom, just to ensure that the teacher goes around using the kinesthetic method in teaching.

Violence is not acceptable in our school. The children must feel belonging. We must use diction that is welcoming. Impacting the children with knowledge calls for a lot of time taken in constructing whatever you're going to do in the classroom.

Let me talk about somebody who is looking at an approach. He called Paulo. He's saying that if we have to teach without constructing knowledge in the children then there is a problem. Here in



Teaching is not just to  
stand in one position.  
You need to move  
around.



Maarif Cameroon we make sure that it is participatory teaching and learning.

Participatory teaching and learning is interactive. The teacher cannot just be a monologue, talking all alone. In the past we used to have the objective-based approach where the teacher would come and present everything and the students just copy. In order to include them, we must understand that the children have something in them.

There are moments in the classroom you learn from the children, because

when you give them an opportunity to talk in your lesson, you guide them, and at the end of the day you discover that you have actually constructed the society.

The technique of participatory teaching helps us to make the children understand their cultural realities, their historical realities. They are able to fit themselves in the lesson, and as the lessons go through, by the end of the academic time you discover that the children have really been impacted and then they can impact the society.



**If we are teaching without making these children discover the competencies that are in them, then the teaching process is problematic.**

We equally look at aspects like brainstorming. You do not begin a lesson without brainstorming, because in brainstorming you discover that the children have something to say and you know how to help them. The principals have the role to let teachers know that they are facilitators, helping the children and guiding them into becoming responsible citizens.

We have different methods like the aquarium method that we equally encourage. We have role play in the classroom. A teacher comes to the class and he wants to teach the English language, for example, he wants to teach on adjectives, and then the students are there. He wants to make it inclusive. He notices that there is one child who is fond of coming late to school, and his objective is to solve a problem so that child stops coming late to school.

What does he do? He will come to the class and ask this question to the children. This is a question he will ask them: “Have you ever experienced a problem of darkness?” And there is one child who tells the teacher, “Yes, I have experienced.” The teacher will ask the question, “How do you think this problem can be solved?” Because the teacher wants to include the child in the learning process in order to transform the society. The child can tell the teacher, “I think that we can install street lights in our neighborhood.”

So inclusive education in Maarif Cameroon is the order of the day, and we make sure that the learning process is fair and equity is respected.



7 DECEMBER 2024  
DAY 2

## Social Justice and Education

### Questions

1. What are the most significant barriers to equitable access to education today, and how can we address them effectively?
2. The opportunity gap has been discussed for a long time. What kind of concrete steps can we take to fulfill equity?
3. How can educators effectively integrate social justice themes into the curriculum without compromising academic standards?
4. What are some examples of culturally responsive teaching practices that have successfully enhanced student engagement and learning outcomes?
5. What are the key elements of educational policies that successfully promote social justice, and how can they be effectively implemented across diverse school systems?
6. What are some successful examples of collaborative efforts between schools, communities, and policymakers to create more just and equitable learning environments?



This panel highlights the importance of equity in access and opportunity by addressing barriers such as socioeconomic status, geography, and systemic discrimination. Inclusive strategies like differentiated instruction, targeted support, and scholarships reduce disadvantages and enable all learners to succeed. Integrating social justice themes and culturally responsive pedagogy makes education more relevant,

fostering critical thinking and social awareness that empower students to challenge inequality. Equally, fair policies and active community engagement ensure resources are distributed justly and diverse voices are represented. By combining inclusive access, socially conscious teaching, and equitable policies, education systems can create meaningful opportunities for all and contribute to a more just society.





**Kerry John  
Kennedy**

The Education University  
of Hong Kong

Professor Kerry John Kennedy is Chair Professor and Advisor (Academic Development) at The Education University of Hong Kong and Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Johannesburg. An internationally recognized scholar in curriculum studies and civic education, he serves as Editor-in-Chief of Discover Education and leads multiple book series with Routledge and Springer. His co-edited Routledge International Handbook of Life and Values Education in Asia was published in 2024, with his forthcoming book Disruptions and Civic Education to appear in 2025. Prof. Kennedy is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators and Life Member of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association. His contributions have been honored with the Richard Wolf Memorial Award (2012), the Outstanding Achievement Award from CiCe (2019), and recognition of his book Civic and Citizenship Education in Volatile Times as Best Publication (2019). In 2024 he was listed among Stanford/Elsevier's Top 2% most cited educational researchers worldwide.



**T**oday, what I am going to report is a research project. We will look at some background perspective, objectives, briefly at methodology, the results and the conclusions.

There is withdrawal of support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the United States. What this means is that when equity and inclusion are dependent on legal and judicial decisions, there is always a danger that once those decisions are changed then diversity and equity are under some threat.

We decided to have a look at our own region, Asia, where DEI has not been embedded in legislative mandate. Institutions where more and more students are going are no longer a lead, and we wanted to see what we could identify about DEI. Our key question was: in a more deregulated United States, what kinds of initiatives have emerged, and what lessons are there for the future?



We did a very extensive literature review. We could not identify any integrated structures committed to DEI as a whole. In the United States, there are Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officers, but we did not find that in Asia. In Hong Kong, most universities have an Equal Opportunities Office, largely constructed to respond to legal requirements. We wanted to redefine

equity to ensure that there is concern with fairness and that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance. While diversity is about difference, our understanding here is that it is about very specific kinds of differences which we need to better understand. Inclusion is a process that helps overcome barriers related to participation and achievement.



Equity is a really important concern, especially in relation to admission to universities. In China, preferential policies are in place for ethnic minority students, and they get better scores that help them to enter university. These special provisions for equity are worth highlighting, because it suggests that while there is no integrated policy there are policies around some of the key areas.

In Hong Kong, the disparity between ethnic minority and Chinese students in universities is significant, and there is no policy supporting ethnic minority students. In terms of gender equity, women tend to do nursing and teaching, while engineering is not a profession all women can participate in. These barriers are important to understand, and while we cannot make generalizations, these examples show where the region is



heading. Inclusion does not seem to be a strong value within the Asian context, yet there are some interesting examples. There is a tradition of women's universities in Asia; many countries have universities dedicated to women, and some writers see this as an issue of gender empowerment. We do not find any detailed policy formulation across the universities that we looked at; in Malaysia there are Disability Support Officers that provide support, but not a clear policy framework. In the Sri Lankan example, universities continue to cope with problems that have been around for a very long time.

One of the areas we did try to look at closely was diversity and learning. Some students need better ways of learning. We found some examples of the use of AI and how this was helpful, but of course there are problems with access to AI and who has it and who does not have it. International students, who were not initially included in our study, increasingly are becoming part of how learning has to be designed for multiple students from different backgrounds. Online education is very important and is something that we could do much more work on.

In the United States, diversity, equity, and inclusion comes out of democratic values and principles. We are starting to think that in the Asian context neoliberalism is a greater push for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Because universities are becoming those places where most students will go, we think this is an important point in the Asian context: they will probably go there because this is where they get skilled, and so it is important to cater for all students and not just some students. We think the main conclusion for the future is about context and policymaking, and also including international students as a part of the mix in terms of diversity.



**Leaders need to  
become committed to  
diversity, equity, and  
inclusion, and lead  
their institutions with  
policies that send a  
strong signal.**





**Fella  
Lahmar**

The Open University Phd,  
Education

Dr. Fella Lahmar, SFHEA, is a scholar of Islamic and comparative education with over 20 years' experience and a strong focus on social justice and decolonisation. She holds a PhD and MA in Education from the University of Nottingham and an MA in Islamic Studies from Loughborough University. Currently a Research Fellow at The Open University, she leads the DEPA project in Algeria, exploring how artistic heritage fosters peace across diverse communities. She also consults for the Qatar Foundation, contributing to an MA programme in Comparative Education at Hamad Bin Khalifa University. Dr. Lahmar has held leadership and supervisory roles at the University of Bolton, Nottingham, NFER, Markfield Institute, and the European Institute of Human Sciences. Her publications address decolonised education, Islamic educational thought, peace education, and diversity in Muslim schools, with a forthcoming Routledge book on Islamic schools in Western Europe. Recognised as an inspirational leader, she received awards from the Muslim Association of Britain (2019) and BISCA (2016).



**E**ducation is far more than the transmission of knowledge or accumulation of skills; it is a force that shapes identities, defines cultures, and determines futures. However, for many, education has also been a tool of exclusion, domination, and erasure. Today I want us to reflect on how we can reclaim education as a site of liberation.

I want to address a stark contradiction in our global educational landscape: while global metrics and rankings celebrate innovation, the ethical consequences of their frameworks are ignored. Nowhere is this more evident than in Gaza, where education is an act of survival. Yet institutions like Technion are ranked and celebrated by the very metrics that ignore the destruction they help cause. Global education metrics like PISA and the Times Higher Education frame success through a Eurocentric, market-driven lens, rewarding outputs without ethical evaluation. The Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, ranks



highly in the Times Higher Education, promoting its reputation for research. While Technion's advancements are globally acclaimed, these innovations directly contribute to military operations in Gaza. Alan Aziz, CEO of Technion UK, states that Israel relies on Technion science for its defense. By contrast, Gaza's universities are excluded from these rankings; Gaza's education system, a symbol of cultural resilience, remains invisible. UN experts have condemned Israel's deliberate targeting of Gaza's education system. Gaza's last remaining university, Isra University, was demolished along with its central

archives. While Gaza's educational institutions are obliterated, Technion received global acclaim for research outputs that directly facilitate such destruction. This dissonance highlights the failure of current global education systems to prioritize equity and ethical accountability.

Israel's membership in the OECD, a body that professes to champion "better lives," exemplifies this dissonance. The OECD's PISA frames education as a tool for economic productivity, aligning with its origins in administering Marshall Plan aid and reinforcing Western economic



dominance. The Directorate for Education and Skills' claim of "fostering values that drive better jobs and better lives" raises critical questions: Which values are promoted, and who determines their legitimacy? Better lives in what ways, based on whose criteria and priorities? The OECD's reforms aim for citizens to develop the knowledge and values they need throughout their lives. However, this prompts further inquiry: Which ontological, epistemological, and ethical frameworks underpin these reforms? Despite Israel's well-documented breaches of international law, the OECD accepted its membership

in 2010, raising serious questions about the organization's ethical integrity in evaluating or reforming other nations' education systems.

The OECD's rhetoric of "better life" becomes deeply troubling when juxtaposed with its member state Israel's atrocities in Gaza. According to a UN report, by 1 October 2024 the death toll in Gaza approached 42,000, with injuries nearing 96,000. At least 13,000 children, including over 700 babies, have been killed; over one million Palestinian children now require mental-health support. These atrocities are



live-streamed, committed by an OECD member state.

The enduring legacy of colonialism and colonial education, as critiqued by Frantz Fanon and Malek Bennabi, highlights its role in fostering psychological alienation and postcolonial dependency. Fanon revealed how colonial systems disconnected the colonized from their roots, privileging Western epistemologies. Bennabi expanded this critique, emphasizing that overcoming dependency requires cultivating civilizational attitudes and the intellectual and ethical capacities that enable societies to define their futures. To address this, postcolonial nations must develop educational systems rooted in indigenous knowledge and critical independence. Recep Şentürk's "civilizational multiplexity" bridges this effort, advocating a balance between preserving cultural authenticity and engaging with global interconnectedness. To reclaim education as a force for liberation, we must address the ethical failures embedded in global rankings, collaborations, and practices. Policymakers should dismantle colonial legacies by upholding indigenous knowledge systems and affirming cultural identities. Institutions must embed ethical accountability into collaboration and knowledge production.

Funding and policies should support equity in marginalized communities. International organizations must be held accountable to uphold human rights over economic priorities. Let me close with the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu: Israeli universities are an intimate part of the Israeli regime by active choice; while Palestinians cannot access universities, Israeli universities produce the research, technology, and leaders for maintaining the occupation. Tutu reminds us that neutrality in education is a myth; every decision either sustains oppression or fosters liberation and equity. Let us commit to the latter and reimagine education as an ethical endeavor for humanity.



**Education, as we know  
it, is far more than the  
transmission of knowledge  
or accumulation of skills;  
it is a force that shapes  
identities, defines cultures,  
and determines futures.**





## Robert Jenkins

Professor, Raduate School of Education, Harvard University, Former Director of Education and Adolescent Development, Programme Group (UNICEF)

Robert Jenkins, Lecturer, Harvard University, brings over 30 years of experience in international development and humanitarian programming in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Dr. Jenkins served as Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development for UNICEF from 2019-2024. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Jenkins served as the UNICEF Representative, Jordan, from 2014-2019, and Deputy Director, Division of Policy and Strategy in UNICEF Headquarters from 2009-2014. From 1995-2009, Robert Jenkins served with UNICEF in programme and management positions in Uganda (1995-1997), Bangladesh (1997-2000), Myanmar (2000-2003), India (2003-2006) and Mozambique (2006-2009). Dr. Jenkins earned a Doctor of Education Degree from the University of Bath and a Master's Degree from the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom.



**T**he link between education and social justice is integral, and education has great potential to promote social justice nationally and globally. Schools play a critical role, with three key elements shaping this relationship: access to education, the content of what is taught, and how it is taught. These elements strongly influence the potential of education to advance social justice. Looking again at those three elements of the school, I would like to propose that education can also serve as a catalyst for promoting social justice within a society and globally. It has the potential to empower individuals and communities. It enables the acquisition of skills to access employment and realize each child's potential, and ultimately it can help break the cycle of poverty. It can promote social cohesion through the promotion of inclusiveness. There is also a direct correlation with the level of support to teachers enable them to promote inclusiveness and to realize education as a catalyst for social justice and positive social change.



Let me highlight some current global challenges to realizing education as an enabler for social cohesion and social justice. Barriers to access often correlate with socioeconomic status, location within

a country, gender, and language; children with disabilities are often marginalized in many countries. In many countries, schools in different areas have very different levels of funding, quality of facilities, quality and



availability of teaching staff. Returning to the “what” and the “how” these are critically important: in some countries curricula lack representation and inclusivity of certain marginalized groups, as you mentioned at the opening of this panel.

If we zoom out to a 10,000-foot view, one of the greatest achievements in education over the last 50 years has been the significant increase in enrollment in primary education, including near parity in most countries for boys and girls. However, this significant achievement in access has not been matched by equal levels of learning. Although more and more children today are attending school globally, we have not seen the same level of success in having all children achieve expected learning levels; marginalized children in

particular face significant challenges that inhibit the acquisition of foundational skills.

On the global learning crisis: current snapshots and statistics show that these shortfalls in access and learning are curtailing education’s potential to influence and promote social justice. One of the key issues is understanding the “why,” and therefore what can be done. Funding is central. Comparing high- and low-income countries shows stark disparities in average years of schooling, per-pupil investment, and resulting learning levels.

It is helpful to follow a child along the learning journey. At school entry (around age five or six), roughly three-quarters of children are developmentally on track, “school ready.” By ages 10–12, when learners transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” needing foundational skills to succeed, only about half of children globally can read and comprehend a simple text. By age 15, only three in ten have a full range of secondary-level skills; beyond that point, the share with the full range of skills needed to access employment and realize their potential diminishes further.

Expenditures underscore the challenge. Over the last 20 years, comparing high-, upper-middle-, lower-middle-, and low-



**What I would like to define as social justice is the equal realization and enjoyment of rights and opportunities to education.**



income countries, we see not only large gaps in per-child public expenditure but a widening divide. This is exacerbated by household spending: in low-income countries, households devote a higher share of their resources to enable children to attend school, even as public resources are lower. The combination further exacerbates disparities and constrains education’s impact on social justice.

To conclude, for education to realize its full potential to promote social justice, disparities in both access and quality must be urgently addressed for all children. We need greater efficiency and effectiveness and a narrowing of the divide between high- and low-income countries by increasing

investment and support to the latter. Within schools, attention to both the “what” and the “how” remains vital to ensure every child can benefit and realize the right to education in a socially just system.



**Recognizing that all children have a right to education should be a responsibility for all of us moving forward.**



# Shaping Tomorrow: The Role of Youth in Advancing Equity and Sustainability in Education

## Questions

1. How can schools better support youth-led initiatives encouraging social justice and sustainability in education?
2. How can young people collaborate with educators and policymakers to ensure their voices are heard in shaping future education policies?
3. What roles technology and social media play in empowering youth to advocate for a more equitable and sustainable education system?
4. How can educational institutions cultivate a sense of agency among young people to address inequalities and advocate for sustainability within their learning environments?
5. To what extent can youth-led community-based initiatives contribute to reshaping education systems, and how can these efforts be scaled for a broader impact on equity and sustainability?



This session underscores the pivotal role that young people play as agents of transformative change within the education system, aiming for greater equity and sustainability. Rather than being passive recipients of education, youth are positioned as active contributors capable of addressing systemic inequalities and promoting environmental stewardship within learning environments. Their involvement is critical in shaping an

educational future where individuals are empowered and the system is aligned with the principles of fairness and sustainability. Through meaningful participation in decision-making processes, collaboration in educational innovations, and leadership in community-based initiatives, young people are instrumental in guiding education systems to serve all learners better while advancing sustainable practices.

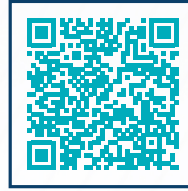




## Ümmühan Zeynep Bilgili

Harvard University Md,  
Harvard Medical School

Dr. Ummuhan Zeynep Bilgili is a physician and researcher at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, specializing in surgical research, robotic surgery, and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). She earned her MD from Bezmialem Vakıf University in Istanbul and continued her training in Türkiye and the United States, building a strong clinical and research portfolio. Her work advances understanding of surgical outcomes and treatment strategies for IBD, with the aim of improving patient care and long-term health. Actively engaged in international research collaborations, she contributes to global progress in gastrointestinal health. Beyond research, Dr. Bilgili is committed to medical education, mentoring future clinicians and researchers while addressing both technical and ethical aspects of care. Through her combined roles in research, teaching, and collaboration, she continues to shape innovation and patient-centered care in gastrointestinal surgery.



It is a challenge for all of us: how do we empower young people to shape a more equitable and sustainable future? And I guess that is why we are here today.

Think of a bird's nest. Birds build it from whatever they can find. Youth do the same with the resources we give them. They use what is available to create something extraordinary, often despite the imperfections of the system. But what if we give them better tools?

Equity in education is not just about handing out the same materials. It is about ensuring that every student, no matter where they're from, has resources and opportunities to thrive.

In medicine, we use the stethoscope to listen to organs. It's a simple tool that revolutionized how we understand the human body. What makes it remarkable is not just its invention, but what it represents: the importance of listening carefully to what cannot be seen with



the naked eye. I believe education needs its own stethoscope. We must amplify the voices of students and teachers, especially those often overlooked, and truly listen to their experiences and aspirations. Only then can we design systems that reflect their needs and potential.

Again, in medicine, we are always looking for the root cause. For example, if you have a cough and you go to a doctor, our main goal will not be to stop that cough, right? Our main goal will be trying to understand what is making you cough. So, if a student zones out in class, maybe it's not them. Maybe we need to look into the root cause.

I have seen very different scenes. As a doctor working in underserved areas, I have met students whose potential was



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their experiences and  
aspirations.**



trapped behind systemic barriers. And right now, as a researcher in Boston, I work in spaces brimming with resources but often siloed by privilege. In both worlds, I recognize that one truth is clear: youth are not waiting for permission to create change. They are already building the future with whatever tools they have. So our responsibility is to ensure that they have what they need to not just survive, but thrive.

Education overseas offers a wealth of lessons. In some systems, collaboration is key. In others, it is resilience. Education overseas, I believe, is not just about studying abroad. It is about creating a shared future where learning knows no borders. Turkish Maarif Foundation



**Youth aren't waiting for permission to create change—they're already building the future with whatever tools they have.**

is contributing to that a lot, as these students will work and travel all around the world. They will be the fundamentals of global education.

Maybe like in global health, we have a common saying that I really like: "Think globally, act locally." I think what works in one context will not always translate to another, so our goal must be to create education systems that honor local needs while drawing on global insights.

Education can be expensive but hear me out. The World Bank estimates that failing to provide quality education costs the global economy \$129 trillion in lost lifetime earnings. This number is staggering, but it is more than just a statistic. It is a reminder of the extraordinary ideas, dreams, and contributions that the world loses when we don't invest in equitable and accessible education. It is a loss we cannot afford, not for the economy, and certainly not for the human spirit.

Post-it Note was invented by accident. A scientist trying to create a super strong adhesive ended up with one that barely stuck. It could have been dismissed as a failure. But a colleague saw potential, and now it is one of the



world's most useful tools. I believe education also needs to recognize the so-called "failures" as hidden opportunities. A student struggling in one area might have a unique talent in another, like the Post-it note, what seems weak at first may actually be transformative if we nurture it correctly.

Equity is recognizing each student's strengths and needs to ensure success. Sustainability means opportunities continue beyond one project or year so every generation can benefit. I'm hopeful that by listening, collaborating, and acting, we can build an education that is sustainable, equitable, and inspiring for all.





## Yilmaz Acar

Chicago University Political  
Science Graduate Student

Yilmaz Acar is a political science graduate of the University of Chicago's Master of Arts Program in Social Sciences (MAPSS), where he specialized in Middle East politics. His research examines Turkish foreign policy toward the MENA region, with his thesis analyzing state capacity and the failure of Türkiye's Kurdish peace process (2013–2015). Acar graduated valedictorian from both Ibn Haldun University, where he earned dual BAs in Political Science and International Relations and Islamic Studies, and from Ömerli Anadolu Imam Hatip High School. He also participated in the Sulaymaniyah Madrasah Honors Program (2018–2021), combining academic and traditional scholarship. Fluent in Arabic and English, he has joined programs such as the Al Sharq Fellowship, ICYF Diplomacy Academy, and Doha Debates Ambassador Program, alongside summer schools and internships in the U.S., Morocco, and Germany. An award-winning debater, he contributes to outlets including TRT World, The Diplomat, and Middle East Monitor.



**A**s we came together to explore the transformative role of youth in advancing equity and sustainability in education, I want to focus my speech first on one of the topics you mentioned: the necessity of morality and value-integrated education as a foundation for sustainability and equity in the educational future. Under this theme, I argue that when education is rooted in values, it becomes a transformative tool for fostering justice, sustainability, and intergenerational equity.

At the heart of this approach is the concept of Maarif, not just this institution that hosts us, but also as an Islamic educational model that harmoniously integrates instruction with character development, emphasizing the cultivation of values and virtues as the foundation for meaningful learning. If we find time in the second round, I want to also focus on what youth have done so far and the role of youth activism as a driver of positive change in education systems. I want to



give two examples from my experience at the University of Chicago: the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and the contemporary pro-Palestinian student movements. These cases illustrate how youth have persistently driven transformative change in education.

Why do we need an educational model centered on morality and values? A sustainable and equitable education system must be rooted in ethics and virtues. Education should not merely prepare students for the workforce but should nurture character and cultivate a sense of responsibility toward others and society. We often associate sustainability with economy or environment, but it is

equally about intergenerational justice and equity, ensuring today's education system supports both contemporary



**Education is not about  
acquiring knowledge,  
it's about being morally  
good people who serve  
society and stand in  
solidarity with the  
oppressed.**



and future generations. Achieving sustainability requires a model that integrates ethical values and fosters responsibility.

Personally, drawing on my experiences both in madrasas in Suleymaniye and in modern academia, I believe the Maarif approach offers a holistic framework. Knowledge without a moral compass does not necessarily lead to good. A value-based education, building on the concept of hikmah (wisdom), goes beyond imparting knowledge to nurture morality, social responsibility, and virtue. It equips students with an ethical foundation to become morally grounded, socially responsible individuals able to drive change.



**Equity and  
sustainability in  
education cannot  
coexist with institutions  
profiting from apartheid  
and genocide.**

This is also rooted in the futuwwa perspective, a Sufi-inspired tradition emphasizing humility, generosity, and brotherhood. Futuwwa, meaning “youth,” focuses on shaping virtuous young people as agents of positive change. Similar moral traditions can also be found in Bushido in Japan or in chivalry in medieval Christian Europe. All emphasize cultivating virtue, integrity, and responsibility toward society.

Education is not confined to classrooms but must be community-oriented, giving youth a sense of responsibility. For me, from Mardin to Chicago, education is transformative when it creates individuals who serve society, stand in solidarity with the oppressed, and extend a hand to those in need. This guided me and many of my friends at Ibn Haldun University during the devastating earthquake in Türkiye in February 2023. We left our classes to lead recovery efforts, shared meals with people, and supported refugees in freezing conditions. That convinced me that education is meaningful only when it brings positive change in people’s lives.

Perhaps one of the proudest moments of my educational journey was when my story went viral in Turkish media, not for



recognition, but because it allowed me to inspire the children of my village, just as Nobel Prize winner Aziz Sancar inspired me. I believe an education system rooted in values and virtues transforms not only

students but society as a whole. Without such an approach, it is very difficult to achieve equity and sustainability in education.





## Bejda Torbani

Samsun University  
Biomedical Engineering

Bejda Torbani, born in Prizren, Kosovo, is a Biomedical Engineering student at Samsun University in Türkiye. A graduate of Turkish Maarif Schools in Kosovo, she combines her passion for science, technology, and education with a commitment to community development. She led Kosovo's first team at the FIRST Robotics Competition, gaining leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills while exploring how technology addresses real-world challenges. Beyond academics, she has written for İyi Fikir Magazine, sharing insights on education and inclusive societies. At Samsun University, she is active in the International Students Community management team and serves as student leader for Turkish Maarif Association, fostering belonging among peers. Focused on biomedical engineering research and projects, Bejda seeks practical solutions to healthcare challenges and advocates for equal access to education. Through her studies, leadership, and community engagement, she aspires to inspire others to pursue their goals and contribute to positive social change.



**W**hen countries make decisions about health, they make sure a healthcare professional takes part in the session. If they are talking about security, of course there will be a security expert. So if we are talking about education, there must be a seat for the students at the table, as we are the essential part of education itself. Young people play a critical role in shaping and proposing solutions, and the feedback they provide. But to truly contribute, young people first must be ready for this responsibility. We must think critically, distinguish between good and bad, and also know the skills of how to expose our ideas. Only then can our voices effectively inspire and shape a better educational system.

I am proud to have been a graduate of the International Maarif School of Pristina, whose mission is not just educating but also raising virtuous individuals. What does a virtuous individual mean, and how does this affect the educational



system? I will explain with experiences. First, it means to think beyond personal interest, to have empathy for others. For example, I remember once we had a running competition in my school and I lost to my friend by a small margin. I went and hugged her in congratulations. The teachers who witnessed this moment awarded me with another medal, not for winning, but for showing kindness. This was a message that it's not always about winning, it's also about how you treat others along the way.

Second is self-confidence, which is key for empathy. If we do not love ourselves, our ethnicities, our roots, how can we respect and love others? Even though Maarif was a Turkish-founded school, it gave education in Albanian, which was a sign of respect to our heritage. Our Turkish principal encouraged us to take part in an international robotics competition where I had the chance to represent my country for the very first time. It was really exciting. At Maarif we were often greeted with the phrase



“Good morning, future leaders.” It might be a short sentence, but it had really big values. Responsibilities became a natural part of our education, whether through organizing science weeks, managing school activities, or working on team projects.

Effective communication is a vital skill we learned. We had speaking days, which were tough for shy kids, but they built our confidence in expressing our thoughts clearly and engaging with others. If youth cannot communicate clearly, even the best ideas will go unheard. One of the most remarkable aspects I love about Maarif is its global reach. I have friends from the other side of the world who share the same educational background. For example, on the second day of university, I met a girl from Pakistan who was also a Maarif graduate, and we realized we had the same Turkish teacher. Two girls from

two different countries, meeting in a third country, sharing the same teacher, this shows education transcends borders, fostering understanding and solidarity between cultures.

Education isn’t just about what we learn in classrooms. I learned that it doesn’t matter where you come from, education can unite us. But while we talk about improving education, there is a problem in the world: not everyone has access to it. Take Palestinian children today. Instead of excitement in classrooms, they feel fear.

Ladies and gentlemen, we do not stand here as individuals, but as representatives of countless young people around the world who have only one dream: a world where education is a right, not a privilege; where sustainability is a priority, not an afterthought; and where equity is a foundation, not an aspiration. I believe Maarif is a powerful example of how we can reach this dream. To make it a reality, policymakers, leaders, educators, and students must come together to make education something that can shape a better future for all of us.



**Only the successful one  
keeps the microphone—  
so we must succeed to  
make change.**







## Ahmet Elkahlout

Kartal Anatolian  
Imam Hatip High School

Ahmed Elkahlout is a high school student recognized for academic excellence and active engagement in international initiatives. He completed his PYP diploma at NUN Middle School and earned his IGCSE diploma at Kartal Anadolu Imam Hatip High School, where he is currently a 10th-grade student. Alongside his studies, Ahmed contributes to global justice as a Secretariat Team member of the Gaza Tribunal Project. Passionate about international relations, he has participated in over 20 Model United Nations (MUN) conferences, representing countries worldwide and sharpening his diplomatic, negotiation, and leadership skills. These experiences have given him insight into pressing global issues and the workings of international diplomacy. Visionary and committed, Ahmed aspires to pursue a career in international relations and diplomacy, combining his strong academic foundation with practical experience in global forums. His journey reflects both academic dedication and a passion for contributing to dialogue, peace, and justice at the international level.



**H**ow can young people play a role in shaping tomorrow? First, for young people to take on such a role, they must have a tomorrow to shape. For over a year, before the eyes of the entire world, Israel has been massacring Gaza, stripping my peers and relatives of their basic right to lead a normal life, effectively robbing them of a future they could build. The horrors they endure are a grim reminder of what it means to lose one's tomorrow. In allowing these atrocities to continue, the global community has become complicit in this injustice.

The consequences extend far beyond Gaza. They reshape the destiny of all of us, including generations yet to be born. Many of the adults making decisions today seem oblivious to the long-term consequences of their actions, which will ripple through decades. Before returning to this point, I want to focus on inequality in education. Traditional ideas of equality in education often assume differences in achievement come solely

from individual ability. But this overlooks social and economic conditions, regional disparities, and biases based on gender or ethnicity. These differences are not purely individual, they are deeply rooted in social and environmental contexts.

In many countries, including my own, disparities exist even within the same nation. A child in a rural village has far fewer opportunities than one in a major city. Such inequalities undermine global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 4 specifically calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all, aiming to ensure no one is left behind. Yet this goal becomes very challenging in the face of such disparities. Without addressing socio-economic disadvantages, regional inequalities, and systemic discrimination, it is impossible to create a truly equal education system.

Formal equality may try to give identical opportunities, but when starting points differ so much, this often deepens inequality instead of eliminating it. Education must do more than improve individual lives. It is a vital tool for societal development. The United Nations has recognized education as central to achieving the SDGs, as it empowers individuals, reduces inequality, and fosters sustainable growth. But to

fulfill this role, education cannot remain static. It must prepare young people not for the world of our grandparents, but for the realities of today and tomorrow: climate change, technological advances, and shifting job markets.

If education does not evolve to meet these demands, it risks perpetuating inequality rather than solving it. Since the decisions of today's leaders primarily affect young people, it is only fair that youth have a seat at the table. Involving us in decision-making, including in education, is essential for meaningful change.



**We do not have a time machine to fix past mistakes, but we have the power to make thoughtful decisions today.**



## A New Sustainable School Culture

### Questions

1. What challenges do schools generally face when trying to implement sustainability initiatives, and how can they overcome these obstacles to create lasting change?
2. What are some of the most impactful best practices for creating environmentally sustainable schools?
3. How can schools effectively align their curricula with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to inspire students to take action on global challenges?
4. What are some examples of successful school-led sustainability projects, and what lessons can other schools learn from them?
5. What practical steps can schools take to effectively reduce their environmental footprint, and how can these steps be implemented in different school settings?



This panel emphasizes innovative approaches that align education with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by embedding sustainability in school life. Energy-efficient infrastructure, waste reduction programs, and the use of renewable resources reduce ecological footprints while school design can inspire motivation and learning. Integrating sustainability into the curriculum fosters environmental awareness, problem-solving skills, and virtuous citizenship,

preparing students to address global challenges. Practical steps such as eco-friendly events, sustainability committees, and community outreach projects engage students and staff, creating shared responsibility. By combining innovative design, curriculum integration, and active participation, schools can transform sustainability from theory into practice and build cultures that shape responsible, future-oriented citizens.





## Claire Alkoutli

University Of South Australia Phd In Human  
Development, Learning, And Culture

Dr. Claire Alkoutli holds a PhD in Human Development, Learning, and Culture from the University of British Columbia, with specializations in social-emotional development and Measurement, Evaluation, and Research Methodology. She is Lecturer at the University of South Australia's Center for Islamic Thought and Education, Research Fellow at Cambridge Muslim College, and Assistant Professor at Prince Sultan University. Her qualitative research explores how culture, relationships, and pedagogy shape human development, focusing on imaginative play, inquiry, dialogue, and teacher self-transformation. She has led multi-site studies on imaginative play in Muslim educational contexts across Abu Dhabi, Beirut, Riyadh, and Toronto, and currently examines Islamic research paradigms. As a teacher educator, she supports integration of evidence-based and culturally specific approaches into practice. Her work includes designing curricula for schools, community programs, and teacher education initiatives in Australia, Canada, and Saudi Arabia.



**A**s a beginning, let me remind everyone of SDG Goal Number Four: inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning and opportunities for all. But what does inclusive, equitable, and quality really mean? My main point is this: there is no inclusion, no sustainability, no quality without a robust educator at the center, engaging learners.

Educators are everywhere, education happens in every facet of life. They are in schools, teachers, staff, leaders, the whole environment, but also in the community. We are the adults in children's lives: parents, uncles, aunties, community members, leaders. So when I ask what this means at the level of the individual educator, I am speaking to everyone.

So, we are all educators, but what does this mean at the level of the educator-learner relationship? I want to pose three questions: Who is the human being we are aiming to educate? Towards what objectives are we educating this person?



And how can the educator catalyze development? These lie at the heart of educational sustainability.

So, first question: who is the human being we are aiming to educate and develop? We are more than a body and mind. According to Islamic psychologists, we have a fitrah responsive to truth, beauty, and goodness, a nafs needing discipline and refinement, aql unified with qalb, and a soul connected to a broader consciousness.

I am drawing from the work of Islamic psychologists with the hope that we can

reflect on the dimensions we want to engage. Knowing that a child has these dimensions changes how we approach



**There is no inclusion,  
sustainability,  
or quality unless  
you have a robust  
educator at the  
center.**



young people. As one participant said: “When you understand something, you’re in a better position to deal with it.” If we recognize these deep dimensions, we are better able to engage them, and that is where transformation happens.

Second question: what are we aiming for, towards what objectives? Who is the ideal human we aim to educate? This person may be a future companion, represent the country, and contribute beauty and benefit to humanity. We need to think of the highest end of human development.

The third question, the core of my presentation, is: how can the educator catalyze education and development? I will focus on two ways, and the first is love. Vygotsky said that the positive effect is the alpha and omega, the prologue and epilogue of all mental development.



**Every adult is an educator  
with the potential to  
catalyze learning and  
development.**

Since the Industrial Revolution, education has emphasized cognition over emotion, yet Vygotsky insists affect is central. Studies show children perform better with a positive relationship with one adult at school. The question is: how can we do that with every young person?

My final quote on this topic is: love, loyalty, and consistency matter more than methods of teaching. This suggests that all of us can be transformative educators, regardless of the subject or even the method. If we start with love, loyalty, and consistency, we can go far with our young people.

If you think about love as a developmental catalyst, here is what you can do. Love what you do, love learning, and show passion for it. Love your students, foster love among them, and express awe for existence. These are ways to center love within the learning environment, and the implication for inclusivity is clear: there are no barriers to this.

The second catalyst I want to highlight is final forms. Vygotsky noted that the final forms of child development are present in the environment from the beginning, and children are always



engaging with them. An older child moving toward idealized forms can inspire younger children, showing the power of role models.

One of my research participants said: “I can’t give something I don’t have. You cannot pour from an empty jar.” This pushes us to ask: what do we have, and how can we enhance it? In practice, we develop learners by developing ourselves.

As adult educators, we need holistic development to model the final forms for young people.

My take-home message is that every adult is an educator with the potential to catalyze learning and development. At the end of the day, we need to invest in our educators, and those could be adults in any area of education.





## Sabba Quidwai

Phd, CEO and Founder of  
Designing Schools

Dr. Sabba Quidwai is an author, educator, and entrepreneur who advocates that cultures of innovation begin with empathy. She is CEO of Designing Schools, where she helps organizations foster trust, creativity, and shared vision in an AI-powered world. Starting her career as a high school social science teacher, she later led innovation at USC and became an education executive at Apple. Her transition from classroom to corporate leadership reflects her lifelong commitment to reimagining education for rapidly changing times. As a social scientist, she designs learning experiences that prepare individuals with skills and strategies to thrive in an AI-driven future. She produced a 2020 documentary on design thinking as humanity's advantage in an AI world and currently hosts the daily Designing Schools podcast. Through her work, Dr. Quidwai continues to inspire educators, leaders, and learners to embrace empathy, creativity, and innovation as essential pathways to resilience and growth.



It is very hard to design anything meaningful if we do not keep the needs of people in mind. I want to reframe sustainability as more than just the environment. It is about aligning all areas: people, their well-being, and fairness across communities. It is also about prosperity, how we grow economically in responsible ways that do not harm people or the planet, all in service of protecting our natural world and its resources.

Prosperity and sustainability are being reframed today. As Sam Altman notes, AI gives us a new lens on prosperity and the ability to solve pressing challenges, opening the possibility of shared prosperity at a scale once unimaginable. For me, the key word is "can." The question is how to ensure everyone benefits from these opportunities. Too often we hear: "we can't do this because of that." But the real opportunity lies in looking beyond constraints, seeing possibilities, and finding solutions. There are many strategies we could share, but I want to focus on one example that has had a significant impact on how people see possibilities in their spaces.



The focus in bringing these students together was to ask, 'How do we design an experience that integrates artificial intelligence into sustainability-focused community service projects?'

In this experience we used a method called design thinking. What makes design thinking unique is that it begins with empathy. It starts by asking people in the community to talk to each other and move beyond silos. And I would add: design thinking is not just a method, begin with empathy, prototype, test, it is also a mindset. The mindset is: "Okay, we don't have the answer, but how might we come up with something? Step by step, we will work toward it, staying comfortable with ambiguity."

The students began with a list of topics for their projects, from environmental responsibility and better school environments to health, community, volunteering, and communication. We held three workshops. The first asked: what are the strengths of AI, what are your human strengths, and what does collaboration look like? The second: what topic will you choose, and how will you turn it into something actionable? The third:



**How do we create cultures  
of innovation that begin  
with a culture of empathy?**



presentation and pitching — show what you will test, how you will implement it, and your first steps.

It really does start young, and the earlier it starts, the more you can carry it into adulthood. When you are given strategies for addressing complexity, challenges, and ambiguity, such a constant part of our world today, you become more confident in dealing with the many variables you face.

This is not to say those challenges don't matter anymore, but they have become the norm. What people now look for are integrity, ethics, and the ability to motivate and inspire others. These students, though so young, gave some of the best presentations I have seen in a long time.



**Sustainability is so much more than just the environment—it's about people, well-being, and fairness across all communities.**

One of the frameworks we introduced addressed complexity. Too often, especially with AI, people want to ban, block, or restrict: you can do this here, but not there. Instead, we believe it is crucial for young people to learn and engage in the messiness of making decisions, in a safe space, with adults who love and believe in them. This way, they can fail safely, and learn again and again from those experiences.

One of the frameworks we often share, and encourage people to include in rubrics when students use artificial intelligence, is what we call WISE. This framework can be applied to any technology.

In the case of AI, it asks: does it affect my well-being and the well-being of those around me? Am I using AI with integrity? What skills am I learning, and what skills might I be losing? Does it help me engage better as a learner and improve my outcomes?

It was incredible to see the different ideas students had when given this framework and the agency to create within it. With the right structures and facilitation from adults, they were able to explore and innovate in meaningful ways.







## Takaharu Tezuka

Tokyo City University Prof. Dr., Faculty of Architecture and Urban Design Department of Architecture

Takaharu Tezuka (b. 1964, Tokyo) is a Japanese architect and co-founder of Tezuka Architects with Yui Tezuka. He earned his Bachelor of Architecture from Musashi Institute of Technology (1987) and his Master of Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania (1990), later working at Richard Rogers Partnership before establishing his own practice in 1994. He was Associate Professor at Musashi Institute of Technology (1996–2008) and has been Professor at Tokyo City University since 2009. His award-winning projects include Fuji Kindergarten, Sora no Mori Clinic, Muku Nursery School, and Nijijima Chapel, earning recognition such as the Architectural Institute of Japan Prize, UNESCO’s Global Award for Sustainable Architecture, the Moriyama RAIC International Prize, and multiple World Architecture Festival awards. His work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale and Carnegie International, and documented in monographs such as *Nostalgic Future/Erinnerte Zukunft* and *Tezuka Architects: The Yellow Book*. Tezuka also delivered a popular TED Talk, “The Best Kindergarten You’ve Ever Seen.”



First of all, I need to tell you my background because I am not an educator. I am a researcher and an architect, but at the same time, I design many pedagogical structures. I am currently in Los Angeles, talking about schools. My career has been complex, and the topic of the class here at UCLA is “the school for sharing.” This is an important theme for me.

In the past, schools were seen as places where knowledge was transmitted. Knowledge was often private, something you had to build up individually, and therefore it could not easily serve society. I believe we need to change this approach, transforming knowledge into wisdom, so that it can be shared. It is all about sharing, and I want to illustrate this with an example from my work.

One of our schools, known as “Donuts” for its circular form, is built around a central tree. Children use the space beyond classrooms—running on rooftops, jumping on nets, and playing freely. The



design blends nature and architecture, inviting exploration.

When we first designed this school, many doubted its feasibility, yet the OECD later recognized it as a new vision for education. Its central feature is the absence of walls between classrooms, creating a shared space where learners of all ages interact. The environment fosters freedom and movement. While the lack of walls raised concerns about noise, in practice children filter background sounds well, and ambient noise can even aid concentration.



**Students forget to observe—that’s the problem we’re facing.**



other, the principal gave a lighthearted but telling answer: “Nobody has died yet.” The classrooms in this school are designed without edges. Children move freely, and there is no strict boundary between inside and outside. This openness is the central concept of the design.

Alongside the school, I also direct a museum integrating art, prayer, and music. Contrary to the belief that children dislike classical music, what they resist are restrictions. In this environment, they can approach instruments closely and choose what they wish to do. Another project in India aims to create interactive learning while keeping a close bond with nature. On an 80,000-square-meter site,

the design integrates classrooms with trees, forming shared natural spaces. Instead of squares, five classrooms connect through a common area, shaping a fluid, organic structure that resembles a living organism.

The school was designed to embrace nature, with classrooms blending seamlessly into green spaces. Everywhere within the building, the relationship between learning and the natural environment is visible. One of the central structures is called the “Mother Ship,” a space created to share ideas. It consists of many open areas connecting five classrooms, each opening outward to green surroundings. Boundaries are intentionally minimized, making the layout organic and shared.

Another nearly completed project in Dubai follows the same philosophy. Designed for students up to age 18, it replaces classroom boundaries with open, cell-like structures inspired by traditional architecture. Set within Dubai’s Big Park, the school features an internal oasis and integrates museum-like spaces for creative activity. To preserve openness without distraction, careful sound absorption was included.



**There’s a big difference  
between love and  
compassion. Love is  
something specific,  
while compassion is for  
everyone.**

In the Himalayas of India, 500 kilometers from the nearest city, another project began 19 years ago and is now one of the region’s best schools, with 95% of students progressing to university. Rooted in Tibetan Buddhism, its concept is based on shunyata, transforming knowledge into wisdom through sharing. The architecture reflects this philosophy, using local construction techniques that sustain culture and environment alike.

The concept of outdoor learning is

central here. Around half of the building’s functions are located outside, meaning children spend much of their time in open air, engaging with light and natural elements as part of their daily learning experience.

In conclusion, I emphasize the importance of sharing, transforming knowledge into wisdom. This principle extends beyond schools into the wider community, economy, and natural environment.





## Keynote Speaker 2

**Prof. Mutlu  
Çukurova**

University College London Professor of Learning and  
Artificial Intelligence, UCL Institute of Education

Prof. Dr. Mutlu Çukurova is a Professor of Learning and Artificial Intelligence at University College London. Prof. Çukurova investigates human-AI complementarity in education, aiming to address the pressing socio-educational challenge of preparing people for a future with AI systems that will require a great deal more than the routine cognitive skills currently prized by many education systems and traditional approaches to automation. He directs the UCLAIT team and leads the Design and Use of AI in Education course at UCL. In addition, he is engaged in policy-making activities as an external expert. He was the programme co-chair of the International Conference of AI in Education in 2020, is part of UCL's Grand Challenges on Transformative Technologies working group, named in Stanford's Top 2% Scientists List, Editor-in-Chief of the British Journal of Educational Technology and Associate Editor of the International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction.



**D**ue to rapid technological advancements, societies have been grappling with questions about the future of education.

AI is considered a strategic investment to support learning and teaching, yet it also threatens human agency, risks privacy and security, and deepens systemic inequalities.

This is a pivotal moment for scientists, practitioners, and policymakers to envision a future of education aligned with societal values and ensure AI is used responsibly. Where do we start? What is the core of these changes, and how can we proactively guide them?

AI does not think like a human, nor process emotions, moral reasoning, or context the same way. Just as cars are not faster horses, AI tools are not smarter humans. Cars created a new paradigm and reshaped how we think about distance, travel, and connection. Similarly, AI tools redefine what intelligence can look like in context.

The first major point is that this unique capacity of humans, shaped by generations of wisdom, values, and virtues, should be central to education systems, recognizing strengths and vulnerabilities as the foundation of progress. Recognizing differences between human intelligence and AI helps us conceptualize AI in education, to externalize, be internalized, or extend human cognition.

The lack of transparency and explainability in the decision-making processes of AI systems also raises concerns about accountability and fairness. Furthermore, the environmental impact of these large-scale AI tools, given the substantial energy demands of training and running these large language models, stands in opposition to the principle of sustainability.

Although students gain productivity with AI, they would not necessarily learn from the university experience. For student-facing AI, we need to fine-tune models so they behave differently than commercial ones. For example, ChatGPT, when asked to write an essay on multimodal learning analytics, almost entirely writes it for the student. In contrast, a fine-tuned tutor model guides



**Just as cars are  
not faster horses,  
AI tools are not  
smarter humans.**

students to generate their own ideas and supports them through the essay-writing process.

As AI tools like ChatGPT become ubiquitous, we need assessment innovations that emphasize process rather than outcomes. Essay writing, for example, teaches crucial skills, self-regulation, researching, judging accuracy, synthesizing knowledge, and clear expression, that should be at the heart of assessment, especially given the ease of producing essays with AI.

Considering these systems and evidence of their effectiveness are not new, an important question is: why are they not prevalent in mainstream education worldwide? Numerous factors influence AI adoption beyond effectiveness in controlled studies.



These include policy landscape, institutional governance, school culture, technological infrastructure, and social support mechanisms for teachers.

In our recent work with over 800 school teachers, we observed that while AI-tools-related factors were important, they were not the most critical for AI engagement. Avoiding additional workload, teachers' knowledge and confidence, ownership, support mechanisms, and minimizing ethical issues were essential for adoption. We must remember these tools are part of a larger sociotechnical ecosystem. For AI

to address education's grand challenges, multiple ecosystem-level factors must be addressed in advance.

Evidence of impact in research often disappears when technology is left to real-world teachers rather than expert researchers. This highlights the importance of improving teachers' competencies and confidence in using AI. Key distinctions between AI and traditional ICT tools demand competencies related to human agency, ethics, critical thinking, and human-centered pedagogical design.

Third, education with AI in a "pedagogy for one" approach might be detrimental for the future of education. In this narrow sense, students working alone with AI may prioritize information gathering over tacit knowledge and wisdom from real-world experiences. Learning is not only about absorbing information, and education is not only about learning.

Affluent schools use AI to enhance critical thinking and collaboration, while under-resourced schools, constrained by finances, risk adopting AI mainly for efficiency, exacerbating inequalities.



**Rushing into any kind of scaled implementations that would replace human interactions without the long-term impact studies is potentially the greatest mistake that education systems can make.**



Without the development of such AI models, interacting with AIs is likely to have significant long-term implications on human capabilities and values. We are lacking long-term studies, and rushing into scaled implementations that replace human interactions without them is potentially the greatest mistake education systems can make.

Applications of AI in education should be informed by strategic evidence from research and multi-stakeholder dialogues. I started this talk with a question, and let me conclude it with the same one: What is the core of humanity that we must place at the heart of all education systems?



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Arkan**

Head of the Summit Organizing Committee



**D**istinguished guests and contributors, as we arrive at the final stage of the Istanbul Education Summit 2024, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you, our speakers, participants, and contributors, for making this event a resounding success. Your engagement, insight, and shared passion for education have been the driving force behind the meaningful discussions and ideas that have flourished over the past two days.

This year, the theme “Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future” has provided a powerful framework for addressing some of the most critical issues in education today. Together, we have explored innovative ideas, tackled pressing challenges, and forged a collective vision for a future where education becomes a cornerstone of fairness, equity, and sustainability. We have delved into how education can bridge social divides, provide equal opportunities for all, and lay the groundwork for sustainable

development. By addressing these interconnected values, we reaffirmed the transformative power of education, not only as a tool for individual empowerment but as a catalyst for creating inclusive, resilient, and thriving communities.

This shared commitment to fairness, equity, and sustainability will continue to guide us as we work toward a more just and balanced world. Education, with its transformative power, holds the potential to bridge the divides, heal wounds, and nurture a culture of dialogue and coexistence. Let us hope and work for a future where education empowers us to overcome conflict and build a world united in peace. May the lessons shared and learned here inspire us all to contribute to this vision, fostering harmony and hope through the power of knowledge and collaboration.

I want to particularly thank our President, Professor Birol Akgün, and the esteemed Istanbul Education Summit team from Turkish Maarif



Foundation for their tireless efforts and dedication in organizing this event. Their commitment to creating a platform for meaningful dialogue and global collaboration has been the driving force behind this Summit’s success. Although we get entirely online this year, the seamless coordination and thoughtful planning by the team have ensured that the Summit continues to serve as a beacon for transformative ideas and shared learning. Thank you for making this event possible and for inspiring us all to strive for a brighter and more equitable future through education.

As we look to the future, I am filled

with optimism and excitement. The connections we have made here, the ideas we have exchanged, and the energy we have created will ripple outward, influencing educational initiatives and policies worldwide. And as we prepare for next year’s summit, I’m confident that our discussions will reach even greater heights. Thank you once again for being part of this extraordinary event. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more equitable future, one idea, one action, and one shared commitment at a time. Let us continue this journey with renewed purpose, and I look forward to welcoming you again next year. Thank you.



## MODERATORS

## 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT

### Panel 1



**İbrahim Hakan  
Karataş**

Dr. İbrahim Hakan Karataş is Professor in the Department of Educational Administration at Istanbul Medeniyet University, where he has served as Head of Educational Sciences, Chair of Educational Administration, and Coordinator of the Teaching Development Center. He completed his BA and MA in Turkish Language and Literature at Boğaziçi University and earned his PhD in Educational Administration from Marmara University (2008). He has worked as teacher, researcher, and textbook author, and conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Northern Iowa (2012–2013). Karataş is founder of the School Heads Association and the international network LIFE, and served as founding coordinator of the Educational Policy Research Center at the İLKE Foundation. Currently Chairman of the School Administrators Association and Vice Chairman of EYEDDER, he has published textbooks, four authored books, four translations, and many academic works. His research focuses on school leadership, education policy, higher education internationalization, and civil society. He is now Visiting Researcher at Makerere University in Uganda.

### School Administrators' Session



**Khaldiya  
Mustafa**

Khaldiya Mustafa is an experienced educator and administrator with over two decades in K-12 education. She began as a substitute teacher in New Jersey (1993) and later taught at Al-Hikmah Elementary School, where she became principal in 2004. She earned her K-12 Teacher Certificate from William Paterson University (2001) and an MA in Educational Technology from Ramapo College (2005, 4.0 GPA). Since 2007, she has served as principal and director of guidance and special education at Al-Ghazaly Middle and High School, overseeing college counseling, exam coordination, and special education programs. She has collaborated with state and local boards to secure educational resources, led staff mentorship and certification programs, and partnered with universities to expand dual-credit opportunities. A frequent presenter on college preparation, she has developed strategic plans for curriculum and student achievement. Currently, she works with Cognia on school accreditation while continuing her commitment to advancing inclusive, high-quality education.

### Panel 2



**Macid Ayhan  
Melekoğlu**

Dr. Melekoğlu is Professor of Educational Sciences at Boğaziçi University, where he also serves as Department Chair and leads the Social Policy Department and GETEM Laboratory for Assistive Technology and Education for Individuals with Visual Disabilities. A graduate of Selçuk University (2001), he earned his MA (2005) and PhD (2009) in Special Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, focusing on learning disabilities and reading skills. Returning to Türkiye, he held faculty positions at Muğla University and Eskişehir Osmangazi University, becoming Associate Professor in 2014 and Professor in 2020, while also serving in various administrative and leadership roles, including the Council of Higher Education's Commission for Students with Disabilities (2015–2018). His research addresses specific learning disabilities, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, reading assessment, inclusive education, and teacher training. Author of numerous books, articles, and conference papers, he has led and contributed to national and international projects supported by TÜBİTAK, BAP, and the European Union.

### Panel 3



**Hayati  
Akyol**

Prof. Dr. Hayati Akyol is a leading Turkish scholar in reading education, curriculum, and teacher training. After completing his bachelor's at Gazi University, he earned his master's and PhD in Reading Education and Curriculum at University of Pittsburgh in the United States through a Ministry of Education scholarship, returning to Türkiye in 1994. He has served at Gazi University's Faculty of Education as lecturer, associate professor, and professor, and was Dean of the Faculty of Education at both Düzce University (2012) and Gazi University (2012–2015). Akyol chaired the Department of Classroom Teaching (2003–2012) and currently leads the Classroom Teacher Educators Association. He has contributed extensively to national education reforms, including curriculum design, teacher competency frameworks, and lifelong learning initiatives, while also advising TÜBİTAK and EU-supported projects. Author of numerous books and articles on literacy, curriculum, and pedagogy, Akyol is widely recognized for advancing reading and writing instruction, intertextuality, vocabulary development, and teacher education in Türkiye.

### Youth Session



**Hasan  
Umut**

Hasan Umut is an Assistant Professor in the History Department at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. He received his BSc in Industrial Engineering from Boğaziçi University and his MA in History from Istanbul Bilgi University. He obtained his PhD in Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, with a dissertation titled "Theoretical Astronomy in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: 'Ali al-Qūshjī's Al-Risāla al-Fatḥiyya." His research interests include the history of astronomy, history of science in Islamic societies, Ottoman science, and the historiography of science. His latest article, "Navigating Historiographical Boundaries in the Early Turkish Republican Period: Astrology, Nationalism, and Aydın Sayılı's Scholarship," was published in Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science. He is currently co-editing a volume on the scientific contributions of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, a prominent scholar who flourished in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.



Since their establishment, International Maarif Schools have earned global recognition for their successful initiatives and original practices in the field of education. Through innovative approaches and high-quality projects, the institution has secured an important place in the international education community and has made it a central mission to contribute to the universal values of education.

The “Good Practices in Education” platform is a concrete reflection of this mission. It aims to disseminate exemplary practices, strengthen communication among schools, and create an effective sharing network for educators around the world. More than an information-sharing space, the platform serves as a

bridge that fosters the development of intercultural ties.

The platform is structured around a four-stage roadmap adopted by the Good Practices in Education Commission. This roadmap consists of the following steps: Sharing Good Practices with the Commission, Evaluating the Good Practices by the Commission, Sharing Selected Practices with Educators, and Dissemination and Follow-Up. This systematic approach enhances the platform’s credibility and impact while encouraging the exchange of a greater number of initiatives.

The innovative practices implemented across Maarif Schools provide multidimensional benefits. They support

the professional development of teachers and enable students to grow in areas such as critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility. At the same time, the platform strengthens cooperation among schools, helping to build a community united around common goal. Bringing together Maarif Schools from different countries on a single platform offers shared experiences and learning opportunities within a multicultural environment.

Since 2018, the platform has been enriched with content from various countries and continues to expand each year with new ideas and practices. By 2024, six projects selected from this content pool were presented at the 4th Istanbul Education Summit. Among these, two exceptional projects that

went beyond traditional good practices and stood out for their unique character received special awards and served as an inspiration to participants. During the summit, video presentations showcased the good practices, and Good Practices Certificates were presented to teachers and administrators from around the world.

Turkish Maarif Foundation extends its sincere thanks to all administrators, teachers, and students who contributed to this process. Good Practices in Education platform will continue to inspire the educational world, open the way for innovative approaches, and uphold the universal values of education. We hope these important initiatives will reach ever wider audiences and bring benefits to all levels of education in the years ahead.



THE GOOD PRACTICES THAT WE PRESENTED  
AT THE 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT:

LITTLE TRAVELERS



*Different cultures come together under the roof of Maarif!*

The “Little Travelers” project was launched at the International Maarif Schools in Prizren, Kosovo, with the goal of introducing students to diverse cultures around the world. As part of the project, online meetings are organized with Maarif kindergartens located in different countries. The initiative seeks to increase students’ cultural awareness and enhance their self-expression skills.

The project is based on the “Getting to Know Different Cultures” theme within the social sciences area of the IM Preschool Program. The first planned meeting is with the International Maarif Schools Ethiopia CMC branch. Topics for these online

sessions include: a general introduction to the country, traditional cuisine, local costumes, native animals of the continent and country, and an overview of significant cultural works. Prior to each meeting, students conduct preliminary research on these topics and prepare presentations, which are delivered in Turkish.

Through the “Little Travelers” project, students have expanded their cultural awareness and recognized that they are part of a larger international family by communicating with peers in different countries. They have also discovered a key common bond: Turkish, the shared language they have learned under the umbrella of Turkish Maarif Foundation.





THE GOOD PRACTICES THAT WE PRESENTED  
AT THE 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT:

TERANGA – FRIDAY GREETING



*A visual celebration of Senegal's traditional costumes!*

The “Friday Greetings” project, designed to promote cultural awareness through the visual richness of Senegal’s traditional attire, was launched at the start of the 2022–2023 academic year in Turkish Maarif Foundation Senegal Schools located in Saint Louis, Thiès, and Dakar. As part of the project, students, teachers, and staff began coming to school each Friday dressed in the traditional clothing of their own tribes. This weekly “Friday Greeting,” which quickly became a colorful visual feast, attracted strong participation and was continued as a regular event.

Senegal is renowned for its openness and hospitality, embracing the cultural diversity of all its people. For this reason, the country is known locally

as “Teranga,” meaning tolerance. Each tribe in Senegal maintains distinctive traditional costumes that reflect its unique heritage, and these garments also serve to identify tribal affiliations.

In recent years, however, everyday clothing preferences in Senegal have increasingly shifted toward imported garments, and the richness of traditional dress has begun to fade from daily life. In response to this trend, students and teachers at the Maarif Schools recognized the need to raise awareness of Senegal’s cultural heritage. From this understanding, the “Friday Greetings” project was established and continues to operate across the Senegal Maarif Schools, supporting students’ appreciation of their nation’s traditions and cultural identity.





## THE GOOD PRACTICES THAT WE PRESENTED AT THE 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT:

### RHYTHM OF TURKISH



#### *Turkish keeps the “rhythm” in Vienna!*

**A**cross Europe, Maarif Educational Institutions give priority to initiatives that support the learning of Turkish, particularly for bilingual Turkish children. One such initiative is taking place at the Maarif Educational Institutions in Austria, which serves bilingual Turkish students aged six to twenty. The “Rhythm of Turkish” project, designed for the 2024–2025 academic year, uses music as a central tool to enhance students’ Turkish language proficiency, strengthen their cultural identity, and develop their musical skills.

The project teaches the Turkish language in connection with cultural elements and through diverse methods. Learning begins with percussion activities and is enriched with Turkish

words, sentences, idioms, and proverbs. A welcoming and enjoyable environment is created by incorporating instruments from different cultures. Drama activities further support the process, and thematic exercises in vocabulary, speaking, and listening are carried out.

In later stages, Turkish choir sessions are organized with groups formed according to language levels. Students learn Turkish while engaging in fun, music-based activities and share the rhythm exercises, new vocabulary, and games they acquire with their families at home. Parents have expressed their appreciation to the educators, noting clear improvements in their children’s Turkish language development and sense of cultural identity as a result of the project.





## THE GOOD PRACTICES THAT WE PRESENTED AT THE 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT:

### MAARIF ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEERS ENVIRONMENT CLEANING AND RECYCLING PROJECT



*The cleanliness of nature is the cleanliness of our future!*

**T**he International Maarif Schools in Prizren, Kosovo, implemented the “Maarif Environmental Volunteers” social responsibility project to help students become environmentally conscious individuals and active supporters of recycling. Prepared by the students under the guidance of the school’s geography teacher, the project aims to raise environmental awareness and encourage participation in team-based volunteer work.

The project team met regularly to discuss potential activities and agreed on a two-stage plan. The first stage focused on increasing public awareness in Prizren about environmental cleanliness and recycling. To this end, students created and distributed brochures highlighting the importance of protecting the environment

and promoting recycling.

In the second stage, with the support of the municipality and the active participation of volunteer students, the Prizren River, located in the Maraş district and regarded as a symbol of the city, was thoroughly cleaned. Birdhouses made to beautify the area were hung on trees along the riverbank. Stones collected from the river were painted in colors harmonizing with the city’s natural character, and flowers were planted. Information boards on recycling were placed in various locations across the city, especially in the park by the river.

The local press has shown great interest in the studies conducted and the project details have been featured on many media channels.





THE GOOD PRACTICES THAT WE PRESENTED  
AT THE 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT:

MAARIF ON THE MOVE THROUGH  
MOBILE EDUCATION CENTER



*With the mobile education bus, contributions are being made to equal opportunities in education!*

**T**urkish Maarif Foundation (TMF) is an international educational institution dedicated to supporting education in every country where it operates. In line with this mission, the TMF Country Representative Office in Mali launched the “Maarif on the Move Through Mobile Education Center” project to bring learning opportunities to regions with limited access to education and to help ensure equal educational opportunities.

Inside the specially equipped bus, designated areas were created for computer workshops, science workshops, art workshops, mind games activities, open-class applications, library services, and sports activities. The library—stocked with resources in French, Turkish, and Bambara—includes an outdoor reading area, allowing

students to read and write in the open air. During the process of transforming the bus into a fully equipped education center, students from Mali Maarif Schools actively participated, helping to arrange the materials and prepare the space. The Mobile Education Center spends one week at each school it visits, enabling direct contact with all students in the host schools. For many children in different regions of Mali, this project provided their first opportunity to access a wide range of educational materials.

Thanks to the positive feedback and requests from the public and local governments, it has been decided to continue the project, further expanding access to quality education across the country.





THE GOOD PRACTICES THAT WE PRESENTED  
AT THE 4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT:

DIALAGOUN ISLAND SCHOOL



*A Step Toward Equal Opportunity!*

**T**urkish Maarif Foundation firmly believes that education is not a privilege but a fundamental right for all. Guided by this principle, the Foundation has launched significant initiatives around the world to promote equal opportunities in education.

Within this framework, the “Dialagoun Island School” project, implemented by the International Mali Maarif Schools, is a distinctive effort designed to strengthen educational equity and provide access to quality education for children living in disadvantaged areas.

The project focuses on meeting the educational needs of the Bozo fishing communities. After visits to the Campement Bozo fishing settlements in Bamako, it became clear that children there had extremely limited access to schooling.

To address this need, a partnership was established with a small school located on Dialagoun Island. In line with Turkish Maarif Foundation’s mission to support education, the school was supplied with essential furnishings, stationery, and books. In addition, a Turkish teacher was appointed to deliver weekly Turkish language lessons, giving students the opportunity to learn about Türkiye and its culture. This initiative not only expanded educational opportunities but also fostered meaningful cultural exchange.

Through the project, students from the International Mali Maarif Schools have developed strong friendships with their peers from different backgrounds by organizing joint activities under a “sister school” program. This important initiative goes beyond educational support, nurturing empathy and social awareness among all participating students.





V. INTERNATIONAL  
MAARIF PHOTOGRAPHY  
CONTEST

4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL  
EDUCATION SUMMIT

MY COUNTRY  
CULTURE - ART - TRADITION

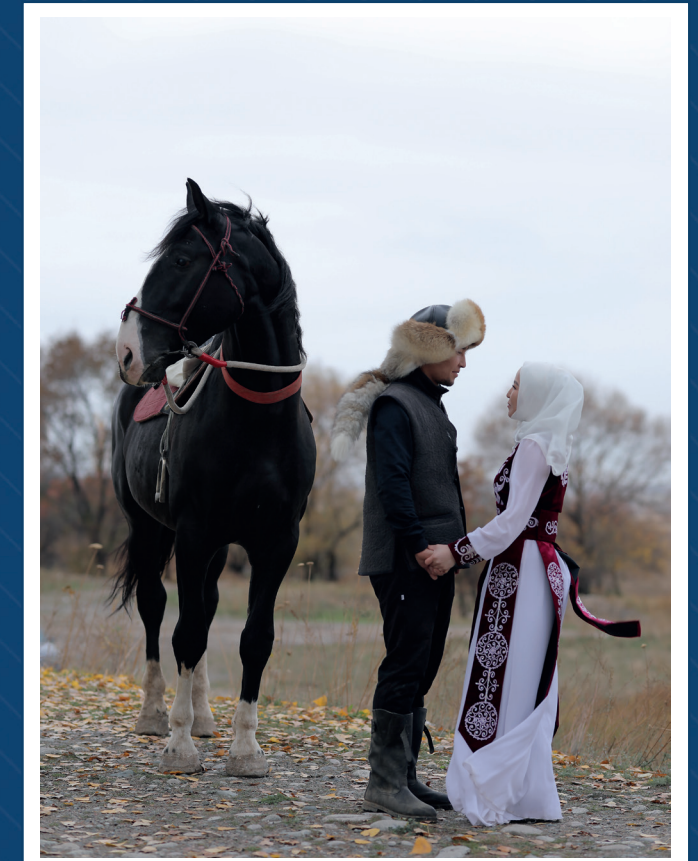


The Photography Contest organized by Turkish Maarif Foundation was held in September-October 2024 with the theme "My Country." Over 600 photographs were submitted from 32 different countries, and the winners were selected by juries. The contest was organized in two separate categories: students and school staff, offering participants the opportunity to express themselves through photography.



4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL  
EDUCATION SUMMIT

V. INTERNATIONAL  
MAARIF PHOTOGRAPHY  
CONTEST







## STUDENT CATEGORY

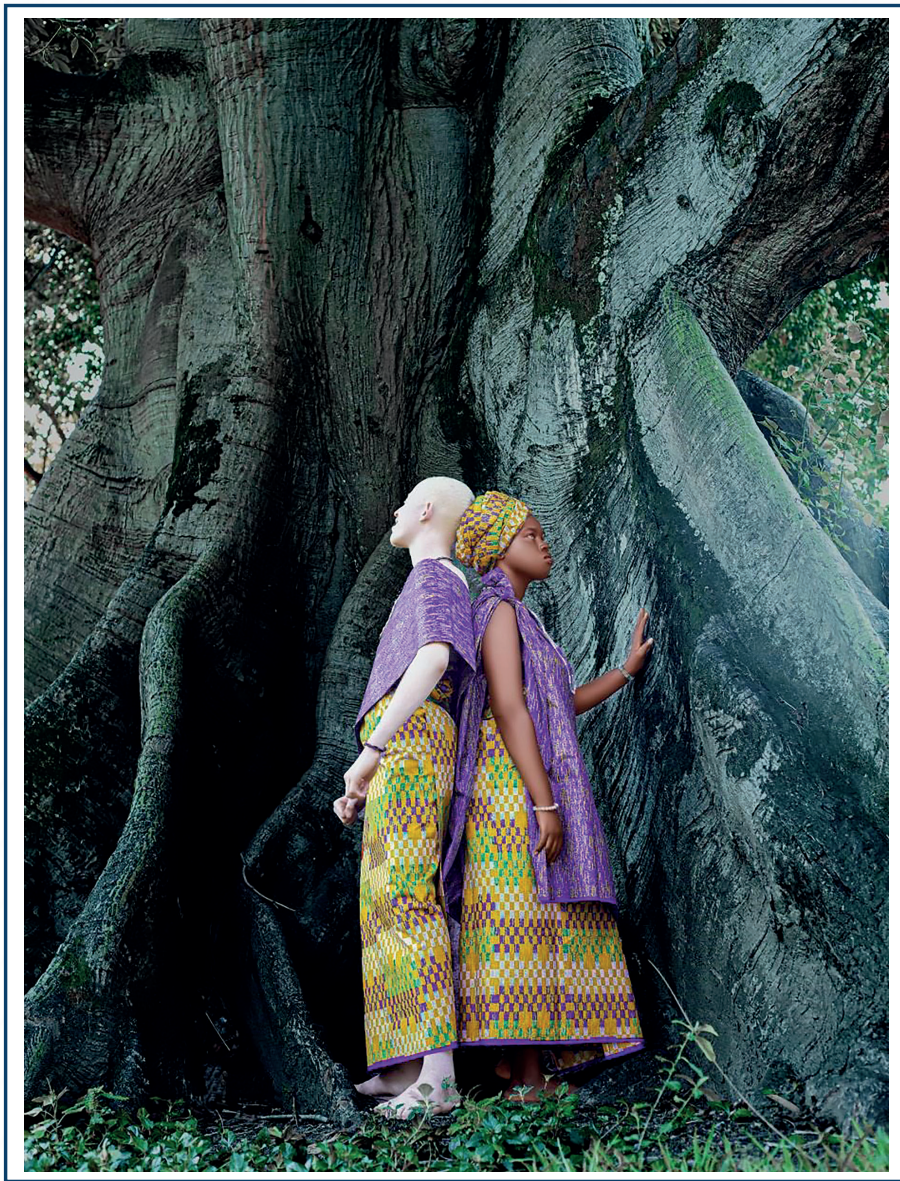
PLACE : FIRST PRIZE  
COUNTRY, CITY : AFGHANISTAN  
NAME SURNAME: MUHIBULLAH KALAKANI  
PHOTO NAME : THE STORY OF LITTLE HANDS AND BIG HEARTS AMONG OLD RUGS



## STUDENT CATEGORY

PLACE : SECOND PRIZE  
COUNTRY, CITY : PAKISTAN  
NAME SURNAME : AJWA FATIMA  
PHOTO NAME : WHIERS THE PAST THE TIMELESS ART OF CHURI MAKING





## STUDENT CATEGORY

PLACE : THIRD PRIZE  
COUNTRY, CITY : BURUNDI  
NAME SURNAME: ASAKA RUTH  
PHOTO NAME : AFRICA WITHOUT LIMITS



## CATEGORY OF MAARIF STAFF

PLACE : FIRST PRIZE  
COUNTRY, CITY : PAKISTAN  
NAME SURNAME : RAHAT ULLAH  
PHOTO NAME : SIP OF HERITAGE A JOURNEY THROUGH TEA





## CATEGORY OF MAARIF STAFF

PLACE : SECOND PRIZE  
COUNTRY, CITY : NIJER  
NAME SURNAME: FATIH YAVUZ  
PHOTO NAME : DESERT GIRL



## CATEGORY OF MAARIF STAFF

PLACE : THIRD PRIZE  
COUNTRY, CITY : AFGHANISTAN  
NAME SURNAME : HÜSEYİN BELET  
PHOTO NAME : FISHING TRADITION



MEDIA REFLECTIONS OF THE  
ISTANBUL EDUCATION SUMMIT

Sabah

## EĞİTİMİN KALBI, İSTANBUL ZİRVESİ'NDE ATTI

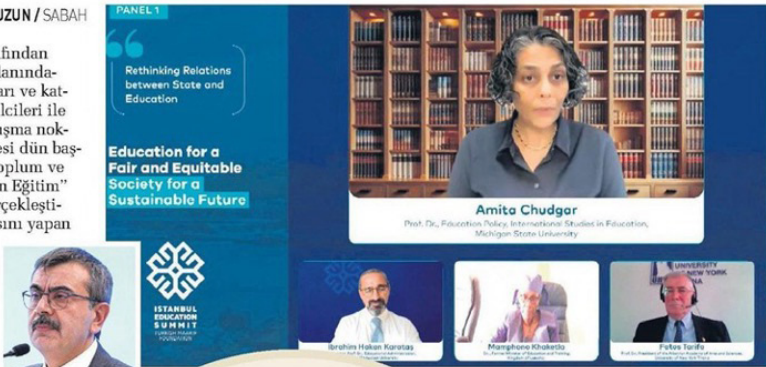
Sorumluluk sahibi  
bireyler yetiştireceğiz

Türkiye Maarif Vakfı tarafından düzenlenen İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'ne mesaj gönderen Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Bu yıl itibarıyla 338 bin 161 uluslararası öğrenciye üniversitelerinde eğitim veren ülkemiz dünya sıralamasının ilk 10'u arasında yer alıyor" dedi

Ceyda KARAASLAN - Muhammed UZUN / SABAH

Türkiye Maarif Vakfı tarafından düzenlenen ve eğitim alanında ki uluslararası çalışmaları ve katkılarıyla tanınan kurum temsilcileri ile alanında uzman kişilerin buluşma noktası olan İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi dün başladı. "Eşit ve Daha Adil Bir Toplum ve Sürdürülebilir Bir Gelecek İçin Eğitim" temasıyla çevrimiçi olarak gerçekleştirilen zirvenin açılış konuşmasını yapan Türkiye Maarif Vakfı Başkanı Prof. Dr. Birol Akgün, "Özellikle çocuklar ve en savunmasız gruplara yönelik şiddet ve adaletsizliği kesin bir şekilde kınıyoruz. Eğitimin, empati, anlayış ve barış için umut yaratma gücü olduğuna inanıyoruz. Dünyanın her köşesinde barış görmek en içten dileğimizdir" dedi. Akgün, 4. İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'nin dünya çapında bir etki yaratacağını vurgulayarak, "Bu zirvede yapılacak dinamik tartışmalar ve oturumlarla dünya çapında etki yaratacak pratik çözümler geliştirmeyi hedefliyoruz" diye konuştu.

Zirveye video mesaj gönderen Milli Eğitim Bakanı Yusuf Tekin ise, "Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli, bu vizyonun hayata geçirilmesine yönelik en önemli adımlardan bir tanesidir. Amacımız, evlatlarımızı yalnızca bilgiyle donatmış bireyler olarak değil, hakikatin hikmetiyle kuşanmış, sorumluluk bilinciyle yoğrulmuş ve toplumsal faydayı esas alan bir anlayışla mücehhez bireyler olarak yetiştirmektir" dedi.

Erdoğan'dan  
zirveye mesaj

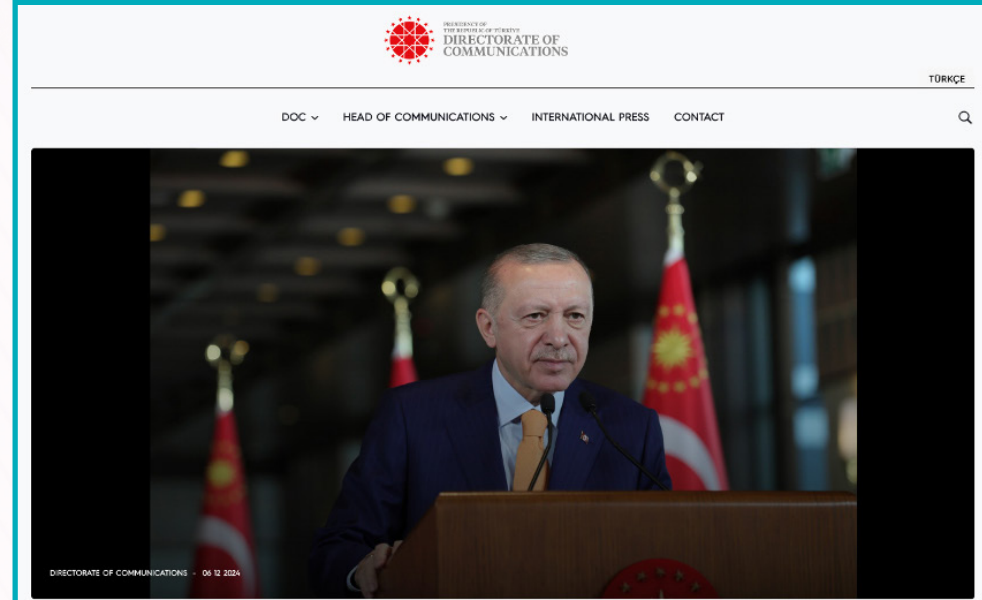
4. İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'ne mesaj gönderen Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan özetle şu ifadeleri kullandı: "Dünyanın pek çok ülkesinde öğrencilerin maruz kaldığı eşitsizliklerle ilgili tespitlerin yer alacağı, aynı zamanda eğitim ve devlet, eğitim ve sosyal adalet gibi konuların tartışılacağı bu yılki zirveden de başarıyla neticeler alınacağına inanıyorum. Bu yıl itibarıyla 338 bin 161 uluslararası öğrenciye üniversitelerinde eğitim veren ülkemiz, yükseköğretim kapasitesinin yüzde 4.76'lık kısmını ifade eden bu kontenjanla dünya sıralamasının ilk 10'u arasında yer alıyor. Türkiye Maarif Vakfımız da ülkemizin eğitim alanındaki zengin, mümbit ve köklü birikimini dünyanın dört bir yanına ulaştırmak için yoğun bir çaba sarf ediyor."

Oturuma önemli  
isimler katıldı

ZİRVE, farklı ülkelerden eğitim bakanlarının, dünya da eğitim alanındaki uluslararası çalışmaları ve katkılarıyla tanınan kurum ve kişilerin buluşma noktası olmayı hedefliyor. 4. İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'ndeki üst düzey oturumda, Kuzey Makedonya Eğitim ve Bilim Bakanı Prof. Dr. Vesna Janevska, Endonezya İlk ve Orta Öğretim Bakanı Abdul Muti ve Liberya Eğitim Bakanı Dr. Jarso Maley Jallah konuşma yaptı. Zirvede sosyal adalet kapsamlı paneller de gerçekleştirildi.

MEDIA REFLECTIONS OF THE  
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Presidency of The Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications



## President Erdoğan sends message to "4th Istanbul Education Summit"

President Erdoğan's message was delivered at the 4th Istanbul Education Summit, which was held online with the theme "Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future".

In his message, President Erdoğan expressed his wish for the summit to be auspicious and continued as follows:

"I believe that this year's summit, which will involve observations regarding the inequalities faced by students in numerous countries around the globe as well as discussions on topics such as education and the state, and education and social justice, will yield fruitful outcomes. As of this year, Türkiye's universities offer education to 338,161 international students, which accounts for 4.76 per cent of its higher education capacity. This quota places the country among the top 10 in the world. The Turkish Maarif Foundation is also making a concerted effort to disseminate the country's extensive, rich, and deeply rooted educational experience to all corners of the globe. The Turkish Maarif Foundation serves over 50,000 students across 55 countries, including 446 schools, 1 university, 19 education centres, 11 Türkiye Research Centres, and 44 dormitories."

Pointing out that the foundation has effectively integrated international education methods and local curricula into these educational institutions, President Erdoğan also noted that the foundation is dedicated to raising virtuous and qualified individuals and has contributed to the advancement of communication between societies.

Stating that they have provided the essential support to the foundation, whose endeavours they observe with admiration and whose achievements they take pride in, affirming their commitment to continue this support moving forward, President Erdoğan added: "On this occasion, I sincerely would like to congratulate all the members of our foundations who serve with devotion in 55 different countries around the world, from Kosovo to Colombia, from Jordan to Pakistan, from South Africa to Azerbaijan, and from Afghanistan to Somalia. On behalf of my country and nation, I would like to express my gratitude to all of our instructors, administrators, and foundation employees who proudly represent Türkiye's maarif banner by taking numerous risks, often under challenging conditions."

President Erdoğan expressed his hopes for a successful summit and extended his congratulations to the organisations that played a role in this significant event, particularly the Turkish Maarif Foundation.



MEDIA REFLECTIONS OF THE  
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## Ministry of National Education

**BAKAN TEKİN, 4. İSTANBUL EĞİTİM ZİRVESİ'NE VİDEO MESAJ GÖNDERDİ**

Millî Eğitim Bakanı Yusuf Tekin, Türkiye Maarif Vakfı tarafından "Eğit ve Daha Adil Bir Toplum ve Sürdürülebilir Bir Gelecek İçin Eğitim" temasıyla çevrim içi düzenlenen 4. İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'ne video mesaj gönderdi.

**SUMMIT  
SPEECH**

Education for a  
Fair and Equitable  
Society for a  
Sustainable Future

06 Aralık 2024 12:02

Video mesajında, eğitimin toplumsal adalet ve sürdürülebilirlik hedeflerine ulaşmadaki dönüştürücü gücünü ele almak açısından zirvenin büyük bir anlam taşıdığını vurgulayan Bakan Tekin, zirvenin temasının, insanlığın bugün karşı karşıya olduğu en temel sorunlara çözüm üretmek için önemli bir bakış açısını ortaya koyacağını kaydetti.

Zirvenin, insanlığın ortak meselelerine dair çözüm arayışlarına rehberlik edecek bir ışık zemini oluşturacağını, eşitlik ve adalet ekseninde bir eğitim anlayışını derinleştireceğini, sürdürülebilir bir geleceği inşa etmek için önemli bir irade ortaya koyacağını ifade eden Tekin, bu ışıklarından doğacak müktesebatın küresel eğitim politikalarına yön vereceğine, aynı zamanda milletin eğitim vizyonunu uluslararası alanda daha da güçlendirecek katkılar sunacağına inandığını belirtti.

Bakan Tekin, Türkiye Maarif Vakfı'nın Türkiye'nin eğitim alanındaki zengin birikimini uluslararası camiaya taşıyan en önemli kurumlardan biri olduğuna işaret ederek, "Bugün 50'den fazla ülkede 50 binden fazla öğrenciye hizmet sunan Vakfımız, yerel değerleri merkeze alarak küresel eğitim politikalarına yön veren bir model hayata geçirmektedir. Türkiye Maarif Vakfı, bulunduğu ülkelerde yerel kültürleri ve değerlere saygılı bir eğitim felsefesiyle hareket etmekte, ülkemizin barış, adalet ve eşitlik eksenli eğitim anlayışını tüm dünyaya taşımaktadır. Bu çabalar, eğitimde fırsat eşitliğini sağlamakta kalmayıp medeniyetler arası köprüler kurarak adalet ve hikmet ekseninde bir medeniyet tasavvurunun şekillenmesine de hizmet etmektedir." diye konuştu.

## Anadolu Agency

**Türkiye Maarif Vakfı Başkanı Prof. Dr. Akgün: Okullarımızda Türkçe öğretmekle gurur duyuyoruz**

Türkiye Maarif Vakfı Başkanı Prof. Dr. Birol Akgün, "50'den fazla ülkede 450'den fazla okulumuzla akademik mükemmeliyet ve ahlaki bütünlüğü temsil eden bireyler yetiştirmeyi amaçlıyoruz. Okullarımızda Türkçe öğretmekle gurur duyuyoruz." dedi.

Fatma Nur Duman, Zeynep Rakipoğlu | 06.12.2024 - Güncelleme : 06.12.2024

4<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL  
EDUCATION SUMMIT

Education for a Fair and Equitable  
Society for a Sustainable Future

MEDIA REFLECTIONS OF THE  
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## Anadolu Agency

**4. İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'nde "yeni değerler ve uyarlanabilir vizyon" vurgusu**

Princeton Üniversitesi Uluslararası Hukuk ve Uygulama Profesörü Richard Anderson Falk, "ekolojik açıdan dayanıklı ve etik açıdan tatmin edici şekilde yaşamaya dair yeni değerler ve uyarlanabilir vizyonlara" ihtiyaç duyulduğunu söyledi.

Silan Turp | 06.12.2024 - Güncelleme : 06.12.2024

GÜNDEM DÜNYA EKONOMİ SPOR ANALİZ KÜLTÜR INFOGRAFIK PODCAST VIDEO FOTOĞRAF

EĞİTİM

## Anadolu Agency

**4. İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'nde devlet ile eğitim ilişkisi ele alındı**

Çevrim içi düzenlenen 4. İstanbul Eğitim Zirvesi'nde "Devlet ve Eğitim Arasındaki İlişkileri Yeniden Düşünmek" başlıklı panel yapıldı.

İbrahim Hamdi Haccaferoğlu | 06.12.2024 - Güncelleme : 06.12.2024

GÜNDEM DÜNYA EKONOMİ SPOR ANALİZ KÜLTÜR INFOGRAFIK PODCAST VIDEO FOTOĞRAF

EĞİTİM

İbrahim Hakan Karataş  
Moderator, Prof. Dr. Educational Administration,  
Istanbul Medeniyet University

Fatos Tarifa  
Prof. Dr., President of the Akdeniz Academy of Arts and Sciences,  
University of New York State

Gündem

Kapıkule ve Hamzebeyli sınırlarında 26 kilo 868 gram uyusturucu ele geçirildi

Suriye'nin İstanbul Başkonsolosluğuna "devrim bayrağı" asıldı

DHM, "Suriyelilerin"



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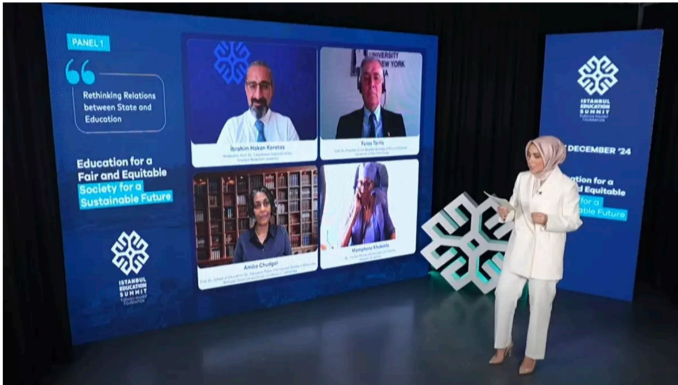
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## Daha adil bir toplum için eğitim

Doç. Dr. Zeynep Arkan/ Türkiye Maarif Vakfı Mütevelli Heyeti Üyesi  
17.12.2024

Doç. Dr. Zeynep Arkan/ Türkiye Maarif Vakfı Mütevelli Heyeti Üyesi

Türkiye Maarif Vakfı tarafından her yıl gerçekleştirilen ve eğitim alanında marka olma yolunda hızla ilerleyen İstanbul Eğitim Zirveleri'nin 4.'sü 6-7 Aralık 2024 tarihinde çevrimiçi olarak gerçekleştirildi. Farklı ülkelerden, dillerden ve kültürlerden akademisyen, politika yapıcılar, öğretmen, öğrenci, okul yöneticileri, aktivistleri ve eğitim alanının pek çok paydaşını bir araya getiren Zirve'nin önemli hedefleri bulunmaktadır.

MEDIA REFLECTIONS OF THE  
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Daily Sabah

Istanbul Education Summit 2024: A global  
agenda for education

BY RIDVAN ELMAS | JAN 08, 2025 - 4:10 PM GMT+3 |



Participants attend a seminar at the Istanbul Education Summit, Bağlarbaşı, Istanbul, Türkiye, Dec. 6. 2024. (Photo Courtesy of Turkish Maarif Foundation)

Istanbul Education Summit 2024 fosters global dialogue on justice, sustainability and transformative education

The Istanbul Education Summit, now in its fourth year, has solidified its position as one of the most significant global summits addressing pressing issues in education. Organized by the Turkish Maarif Foundation, the summit has become a cornerstone of the Foundation's mission to foster international collaboration and dialogue in international education. **This year's summit**, themed "Education for a Fair and Equitable Society for a Sustainable Future," continues to champion transformative ideas and practical solutions for a more just world.

As the driving force behind the Istanbul Education Summit, the Turkish Maarif Foundation has once again demonstrated its dedication to international education. Over **the past** four years, the foundation has not only expanded its network of schools and educational initiatives worldwide but also established the summit as a vital platform for addressing critical global challenges in international education. By bringing together diverse voices and fostering collaboration, the foundation reinforces its mission of building bridges through education by respecting local cultures and systems.





We sincerely thank our Board of Trustees and Board of Directors, Heads of Departments, Executive Board of Summit, Country Representatives and School Administrators for their unwavering support in the organization of the 4<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Education Summit, and our colleagues.



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